

(b) to (d) : Government had approved the proposal for finalisation of Production Sharing Contract for the block RJ-ON-90/1 in Rajasthan with a consortium led by M/s. Anadarko Petroleum Corporation, USA under the Fourth Round of bidding. During the last stages of negotiations, the company expressed some reservations regarding certain contractual aspects and proposed revisions in the contract terms which were unacceptable to Government.

(e) There will not be any impact on the oil exploration programme in the country, since efforts will be made to offer the area to other companies.

BAN ON BEGGING

2471. SHRI HARISH NARAYAN PRABHU ZANTYE : Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to put a ban on begging in Metropolitan cities and tourist Centres in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefore; and

(d) the steps taken/proposed to be taken for the rehabilitation of beggars ?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI SITARAM KESRI) : (a) No, Sir. There is no such proposal with the Union Government at the moment.

(b) : Does not arise.

(c) and (d) : The implementation of anti-beggary laws rests with the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations. Wherever the anti-beggary laws have been enacted the State Governments/Union Territories have set up Beggar Homes for the purpose of education, vocational training and rehabilitation of beggars. A new Central Sector Scheme for Beggary prevention has been formulated and introduced during the Eighth Five Year Plan Period. This scheme is in operation since 1992-93. Under the provisions of the scheme, the grant-in-aid is provided to State Governments, Union Territories and Voluntary Organisations for setting up of Work Centres in existing Beggar Homes for imparting technical education and vocational training to beggars.

WITCHCRAFT IN M.P.

2472. SHRI PARASRAM BHARDWAJ : Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state;

(a) whether some tribals in Madhya Pradesh especially in Jhabua district are still practising witchcraft;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the schemes formulated by the Government for eradication of this evil practice and welfare of tribals in the State ?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI SITARAM KESRI) : (a) yes Sir, witchcraft is practised in the interior areas of District Jhabua in Madhya Pradesh.

(b) : 22 witchcraft murders were committed during the year 1991-92 and 3 such murders are reported during the current year upto 15th July, 1993.

(c) : No special scheme has been formulated by the State Government of Madhya Pradesh for eradication of this evil practice. However, State Government has undertaken various developmental schemes for the welfare of tribals in the State.

NEGOTIATION FOR POLITICAL SETTLEMENT

2473. DR. JAYANTA RONGPI : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether any discussion with the Hmar Peoples Convention (HPC) for a negotiated political settlement has been held ;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the Union Government thereto ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P.M. SAYEED) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A total of eight rounds of negotiations have been held between representatives of State Government and the leaders of HPC. Nothing concrete has emerged so far. The talks with the HPC are still continuing.

(c) The Central Government has not participated in the talks.