

Double line from Delhi to Saharanpur

1394. SHRI M. RAM GOPAL REDDY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have approved the double line track from Delhi to Saharanpur; and

(b) if so, the reason for delay in its execution?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SHEO NARAIN): (a) and (b): On Delhi-Saharanpur route, the section between Delhi and Ghaziabad is already doubled. Work on doubling the track between Ghaziabad and Muradnagar is in progress. The present overall progress is 36 per cent. Work on provision of a BG line from Shahdara to Saharanpur is also in progress and this will provide an alternative goods route between Delhi and Saharanpur. Therefore for the present doubling from Ghaziabad to Muradnagar only has been undertaken.

Gas burnt at Bombay High

1395. DR. VASANT KUMAR PANDIT: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Gas worth about Rs. 6 lakhs is being daily burnt at the flare at Bombay High;

(b) have Government drawn any proposal of utilization of this Gas for domestic fuel purposes; and

(c) if so, when cooking gas would be available to the Bombay Consumers and whether it would be distributed through pipelines or cylinders?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA):

(a) to (c): The laying of the submarine pipeline for the transport of gas from Bombay High field and North Bassin field to Uran as well as the laying of the transfer lines from Uran to Trombay was taken up under

Phase-III development of Bombay High and has been completed recently. Till the pipelines had been laid, associated gas produced along with oil had to be flared. The value of gas flared cannot be specified as its value would vary according to the use to which it is put.

It has recently been decided to set up a gas fractionation plant at Uran for extraction of LPG which is likely to be completed by middle of 1980. The LPG extracted from this plant would be supplied to domestic, industrial and commercial consumers in cylinders or in bulk in the same way as the LPG presently being supplied in Bombay.

Separately the Government of Maharashtra has also been requested to study the various issues connected with the proposal for the supply of offshore gas through a net work of pipelines to domestic consumers.

Agitation by Indian Oil Officers

1396. DR. VASANT KUMAR

PANDIT:

SHRI MADHAVRAO

SCINDIA:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian Oil Officers have threatened direct action, if the service conditions are not restored to pre-emergency period;

(b) what are the concessions withdrawn and conditions imposed in the Emergency period in the service conditions of these officers; and

(c) whether Government have taken any action to prevent agitation by the officers on this issue?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA):

(a) to (c) The revision of pay-scales and perquisites of officers of the Indian Oil Corporation was approved by the

Cabinet Committee on Economic Policy and Coordination (CCEPC) in February, 1976. Earlier the IOC officers had been allowed an increase in Dearness Allowance w.e.f. 1-8-1974 on the basis of approval by CCEPC in April, 1975.

2. The revised pay-scales approved by the CCEPC were derived by merging a portion of the DA with the existing pay-scales, and were required to be given effect to from 1-8-1974 i.e. the date from which the DA revision was also given effect to.

A fitment benefit of Rs. 70/- was allowed to the officers while bringing them on to the revised pay-scales.

Simultaneously, the following modifications were made in the perquisites allowed to the officers:—

(a) The Special Oil Allowance which was introduced w.e.f. 1-1-1973 for all officers who work 48 hours a week, in consideration of the fact that they were working 11½ hours extra per week compared to their colleagues whose normal work week is 36½ hours, was frozen and it was decided to withdraw it over a period of 5 years by withdrawing 20 per cent of the allowance each year. This would have meant that the Special Oil Allowance would have been completely withdrawn by February, 1981. The Special Oil Allowance was being allowed at the rate of 10 per cent of the basic salary, and 51 per cent of the officers were not entitled to this allowance. It was further decided that no new officer, either recruited or transferred to a 48 hour-work-week should get this allowance.

(b) Reimbursement of expenses for maintaining and operating a conveyance was made need-based. However, the existing quantum of reimbursement being drawn by individual officers was protected.

(c) As the rates of House Rent Allowance (HRA) allowed to the officers was higher than what is admissible under the guidelines

approved by the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE), the HRA rate was modified on the same lines as allowed to the IOC staff in the various classes of stations. However, the actual quantum of HRA being drawn by individual officers was protected, but was not allowed to be carried forward to another station, where the HRA entitlement is at a lower rate.

(d) As the house rent recovery at the refinery sites was only 5 per cent of the basic pay, it was decided that this should be progressively raised by 1 per cent each year from 1978, so that by 1-1-1982 the rate of recovery will increase to 10 per cent. All new staff and officers at the refinery sites were required to pay 10 per cent of their basic pay for the residential accommodation.

3. Orders were issued by the IOC Management on 5-10-1976 for implementing the Government decision for revision of pay-scales and perquisites. Representations, however, continued to be received from the IOC Officers' Association. The President of the Officers' Association, Smt. Ambika Soni, alongwith the representatives of the Association, met former Minister (Petroleum) in January, 1977, and pressed for the acceptance of their proposal that Rs. 75/- should be added to the minimum and maximum of the pay-scales, and that *status quo* should be maintained in regard to their allowances. As the revised pay package as approved by Government had by and large been implemented by the IOC Management, it was pointed out that to the extent the decisions had been implemented no deferment was possible at that stage, and that deferment would only be possible in respect of, (a) exercise of option by the officers for the revised pay-scales, and (b) the date of withdrawal of the Special Oil Allowance, subject to the withdrawal being completed by February, 1981 as decided earlier. With the approval of the former Minister, implementation of

decisions on these two matters was deferred till the end of April, 1977.

4. With the change of Government, the IOC Officers' Association came up with a strongly worded representation to the Chairman, pressing for acceptance of their demands and for withdrawal of the orders issued by the Management on 5-10-1976 on the revision of pay-scales and perquisites. They also threatened to go on mass casual leave on the 15th April, 1977.

On 13-4-1977, Minister (Petroleum) had occasion to address the IOC Officers Association. While advising the officers to give up agitational approach, it was indicated by the Minister, that the legitimate demands of the officers would be looked into by the Management.

The threatened mass casual leave was called off by the Association. Further dialogue was initiated between the Management and the representatives of the officers. Pending the discussions between the Management and the representatives of the officers, the implementation of Government decision on the time limit for exercise of option for limiting the revised pay-scales, and for the withdrawal of the Special Oil Allowance, was deferred for a further period of three months upto the end of July, 1977, with the approval of Minister, Petroleum.

5. There have been further discussions between IOC Officers and the Management. There was again a threat by the Officers' Association to go on a day's mass casual leave on the 24th June, 1977. While disapproving of the agitational approach by the officers, Minister advised the Management to ask the Officers' Association not to indulge in such methods as mass casual leave. With the approval of Minister, the following decisions were taken:—

(a) Withdrawal of oil allowance which had been deferred till the end of July, 1977 was deferred for a further period of 6 months or till a decision was taken on the rationalisation of salaries and perquisites of

the Management staff of Bharat Petroleum Corporation and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation. The benefit of the frozen oil allowance was also allowed to officers transferred after 1-2-1976 from 36½ hours to 48 hours week jobs.

(b) As per the decision of the Cabinet Committee, 35 per cent house rent allowance (HRA) had been allowed for the cities of Bombay, Delhi, Madras and Calcutta, as allowed to the IOC staff in these stations. Prior to the Cabinet decision, HRA was being allowed at 35 per cent for the cities of Bombay, Delhi, Madras, Calcutta and Hyderabad, as against HRA admissible as per the BPE guidelines of 30 per cent for Bombay and Delhi and 25 per cent for Madras, Calcutta and Hyderabad. In view of the high rates of HRA prevailing in some of the public sector organisations, as a purely interim measure, 30 per cent HRA was allowed in all the four Metropolitan cities, and in 'C' class cities instead of 15 per cent of the minimum of the scale. 15 per cent was allowed on the actual basic salary. It was felt that once a uniform decision was taken in respect of HRA for all the public sector undertakings, this decision should be made applicable to IOC also.

6. The Officers' Association came up with their renewed demands in March this year. On 22-3-1978 the officers went on mass casual leave for one day to press their demands. Referring to the agitational tactics resorted to by the IOC Officers, during the course of the Demands for Grants for the Ministry in the Lok Sabha on 30-3-1978, Minister (Petroleum) remarked as follows:—

"...the officers have to behave and understand that they cannot function as a trade union. Their association will be recognised as long as they behave like a responsible officers' association. Should they behave in a trade union manner while getting a salary upto Rs. 1600. A poor ploughman cannot get two

behave in a trade union manner drawing a salary of Rs. 2200 go on strike. This is not a sector, segment which can be allowed to go hay-wire. And I am very happy that in the House nobody has taken notice of them; I am happy about it and I thank Hon. Members for this."

7. The mass casual leave resorted to by the IOC officers on 22-3-1978 was considered by the IOC Board which expressed its extreme unhappiness, and decided that the absence should be treated as unauthorised. The Board also desired that once the pending demands were satisfactorily resolved, a drive should be launched to inculcate a greater sense of discipline and commitment amongst the officers.

8. While the legitimate demands of the IOC officers will be looked into sympathetically by the Government, it is an essential prerequisite that the Officers do not resort to agitational tactics for redressal of their demands.

Report on Vasai Railway Accident

1397. DR. VASANT KUMAR PANDIT: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have received the final report on the causes of the Vasai Railway Accident;

(b) if so, what are the finding of the preliminary and final report and on whom the responsibility has been fixed for the accident;

(c) what action do Government propose to take against the defaulters; and

(d) whether on the basis of the said report, Government propose to plan new technical and automatic measures to prevent human error becoming the cause of accident?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SHEO NARAIN): (a) No.

(b) According to the provisional finding of the Additional Commis-

sioner of Railway Safety, Bombay, the accident was due to the failure of railway staff.

(c) On receipt of the final report, suitable action will be taken against the defaulting staff, if any.

(d) With a view to reducing dependence on the human element which is the primary cause of collusions, various sophisticated aids like track-circuiting, axle counters, route relay interlocking, panel interlocking, automatic warning system etc. are being introduced progressively.

Thana-Turbe Railway Line

1398. DR. VASANT KUMAR PANDIT: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the sanctioned project of Thana-Turbe Railway line is being delayed due to non-cooperation of the Maharashtra State Government in acquiring land for the new lines;

(b) have the Railway authorities investigated into the cause of delay and what steps have been taken to expedite the acquisition of land for this railway project; and

(c) what was the cost of this new line when the project was sanctioned and has the delay resulted in an increase in costs?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SHEO NARAIN): (a) As there is no station 'Turbe' on the Central Railway it is presumed that the reference is to Thana-Trombay line. There is no non-cooperation on the part of the Maharashtra State Government in the acquisition of land.

(b) The delay in land acquisition is primarily on account of the slum-dwellers having constructed their hutments on the land and their resistance to vacate the same. Efforts are being made to have the same vacated, with some financial assistance to the slum-dwellers, where necessary, for the purpose of their rehabilitation.