

Explorations for Oil in North-West and North-East Off-Shore Areas

2191. SHRI R. R. SINGH DEO : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS be pleased to state :

(a) whether explorations are being conducted by the Oil and Natural Gas Commission in North-West and North-East off-shore areas; and

(b) whether Government expects some good results and if so, an account thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE AND PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI H.R. GOKHALE) : (a) Seismic surveys have been conducted in the Gulf of Cambay and Arabian Sea adjoining the Gulf of Cambay. No seismic survey is presently being conducted in the off-shore areas in Bay of Bengal.

(b) It is expected that favourable structures exist in the Off-shore area surveyed but results in regard to oil discovery can be known only after drilling is actually done.

Losses suffered by Air India after introduction of Foreign Travel Tax

2192. SHRI R. R. SINGH DEO : Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state the total loss incurred by Air India after the introduction of foreign travel tax by Government ?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (DR. KARAN SINGH) : While the foreign travel tax has had an inhibitory effect on travel from India, it is difficult to assess the extent of loss attributable to it.

Excise Duty on Aluminium and other Products

2193. SHRI PRABODH CHANDRA : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state whether Central Excise Duty on Aluminium and other products as per rules is levied on the sale prices of Stockists or of the manufacturers ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI K. R.

GANESH) : Where under the Central Excises & Salt Act, any article is chargeable with duty at a rate dependant on the value of the article, the value is determined in accordance with the provisions of Section 4 of that Act. The duty on aluminium and its manufactures is leviable on *ad valorem* basis and in making assessment the value is determined in accordance with the provisions of Section 4. Under these provisions the value shall be deemed to be the wholesale cash price for which an article of the like kind and quality is sold or is capable of being sold at the time of the removal of the article from the factory or place of manufacture or production, or if a wholesale market does not exist for such article at such place then at the nearest place where such market exists. Where such price is not ascertainable the value is deemed to be the price at which an article of the like kind or quality is sold or is capable of being sold by the manufacturer or producer at the time of its removal from the place of production. In either case, a deduction is allowed in respect of the trade discount and the amount of duty payable.

Opening of Branches of Nationalised Banks

2194. SHRI K. MALLANNA :
SHRI HARI KISHORE SINGH :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have given any instructions to the Nationalised Banks to open more branches in the country;

(b) the number of new branches opened in each State since nationalisation by each Nationalised Bank; and

(c) the number of new branches, indicating the names of places, likely to be opened in each State during 1972-73 ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YESHWANTRAO CHAVAN) : (a) One of the objectives of nationalisation was to extend the branch network of commercial banks so that banking facilities are available to hitherto neglected areas and sections of people. In pursuance of this objective, the banks in the public sector have opened 4047 branches between July 19, 1969,