

(b) No.

(c) The feasibility and scope of the project is being studied.

FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAMME

1152. SHRI HEM BARUA : Will the Minister of HEALTH, FAMILY PLANNING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have launched a vigorous family planning programme recently; and

(b) if so, a broad outline thereof as also the steps taken in the country to create a psychological atmosphere amongst people for the purpose ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH, FAMILY PLANNING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (DR. S. CHANDRASEKHAR) :

(a) Yes, the programme was re-organised in 1963 and further invigorated in 1966.

(b) A statement containing the required information is laid on the Table of the House. [*Placed in Library, See No. LT—2160/68*].

DAMODAR VALLEY TRANSMISSION LINES NEAR BURDWAN

1153. SHRI D. C. SHARMA :

SHRI BENI SHANKER SHARMA :

Will the Minister of IRRIGATION AND POWER be pleased to state :

(a) whether a 132 Kv power tower of the Damodar Valley Corporation transmission line near Burdwan toppled on the 8th October, 1968 plunging the Burdwan area in darkness for two hours;

(b) whether the similarity of this with the earlier sabotage in Nadia are striking; and

(c) the steps taken to look into the matter and the results achieved ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF IRRIGATION AND POWER (SHRI SIDDHESHWAR PRASAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The felling of a tower, of Gayeshpur in the Nadia District belong to the West Bengal State Electricity Board and

the felling of a tower, at Burdwan, belonging to the D.V.C. were acts of sabotage.

(c) Several arrests were made by police in respect of acts of sabotage committed during the strike of some of the employees of the West Bengal State Electricity Board, and their cases are pending with the courts. The tower at Burdwan has been replaced by the Damodar Valley Corporation. The strike has been called off on 11th October and 14th October, 1968. Power Supply has been completely restored.

12 hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE
ACUTE SHORTAGE OF PETROL IN CALCUTTA

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (Alipore) : I call the attention of the Minister of State in the Ministry of Petroleum and Chemicals to the following matter of urgent public importance and I request that he may make a statement thereon :

Acute shortage of petrol in Calcutta.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI RAGHU RAMAIAH): Immediately following the retrenchment by Burmah-Shell of 304 of their employees and termination of services by Caltex of their 88 employees at Calcutta on the 7th of this month, there was a sit-in strike by the employees of all the private oil companies, including Esso and Indo-Burma Petroleum Company. At that time, Indian Oil Corporation was holding some 27,000 Kls of petrol at its Maurigram installation in Calcutta and at Haldia. This represents over 2 months' stock cover in terms of Calcutta's requirements. Moreover, the striking workers of the private oil companies prevented movement of supplies to the 236 retail outlets of the private oil companies. This threw the burden of the retail sale in city without notice on IOC's 37 pumps, representing barely 13 per cent of the total, and resulted in hardship to the motorists. As soon as the position became known to the IOC, emergency measures were taken to strengthen the retail selling facilities at all of these pumps. Day and night product replenishments were arranged by hiring all available tank trucks in the city. As a result,

within 2/3 days, IOC's sale from it pumps increased from 30 Kls daily to 355 Kls, which represents the city's normal requirements of petrol. It also set up seven improvised retail selling pumps in Calcutta maidan and other areas of the city and more are in the process of being put up.

On the afternoon of the 15th instant, Esso and IBP staff called off the strike. As a result, 78 additional pumps are available for the retail sale of petrol. The augmented facilities of the IOC supplemented by the existing ones of Esso and IBP can adequately meet the city's needs without motorists having to queue up.

The position regarding the retail sale of diesel oils is much the same as for petrol. Here again, IOC quickly increased its sale from 30 to 158 Kls daily, which represents the city's normal requirements. With the Esso and the IBP pumps functioning again, the position should normalise.

As for the other products, we have organised full supplies through the IOC of kerosene, light diesel oil, fuel oil and aviation fuels. For jute batching oil, Esso should now be able to meet the demand. The IOC has also offered a substitute which has been accepted by the Indian Jute Mills Association.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : I am sure you would have also noticed in the newspapers a few days back a big half page advertisement issued by the Burmah Shell Company. In this they have set out their case why they were compelled to retrench these workers. I am sure the hon. Minister also must have seen this advertisement. The main argument put forward in this is that due to the emergence of the Indian Oil Corporation in the matter of marketing of petroleum products and due to the emergence of the public sector refineries in Gauhati and Barauni the competitive position of the Burmah Shell Company in the market has become very precarious.

Therefore, they have had to take certain urgent measures and therefore they are compelled to retrench the workers and it is because of this retrenchment, as he said, that the strike and all these troubles take place. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he accepts this

contention that due to the emergence and strengthening of the public sector refineries and the Indian Oil Corporation's activities, these foreign oil companies are really put in such a difficult position that they have no other go but to violate the assurances given before the Commission of Inquiry which has been appointed by the same Government to go into the question whether there is any surplus staff or not and carry out unilateral retrenchment and provoke a strike. Does he accept this thesis put forward by the company?

SHRI RAGHU RAMAIAH : If I may humbly submit, the Call Attention is in respect of shortage of petrol, and the question is in respect of the basic dispute between the foreign oil companies and their employees regarding retrenchment and so on. It is a matter for the Labour Ministry, but I shall answer to the extent that I have knowledge of it. This identical question, whether the surplus declared by them is really surplus and whether these surpluses are due to the reasons which the foreign oil companies have given—as my hon. friend knows—is before the Gokhale Commission of Inquiry, and whatever be the difference of opinion in regard to the basic allegation and assumptions, I would not like to express any opinion which may prejudice the report of that Commission and in any case my hon. friend should know—perhaps he knows it already—that my colleague Mr. Hathj has called a conference; at his initiative a conference was called and it met two or three days back. I was also present there, and every effort is being made to settle the matter, not only in regard to the settlement of the strike but the basic issues involved, and I understand the latest position is that there is every prospect of settlement.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : The Minister has merely evaded my question, I know he is not the Labour Minister, and I am not asking mainly about the labour aspect of it. I am asking him whether the contention of these companies that their business is very badly affected because of the Indian Oil Corporation's activities and therefore they have to take some drastic steps is true; does he share that view?

SHRI RAGHU RAMAIAH : When the Minister of Labour has appointed a Commission to go into the identical question, is it proper for me to express an opinion, Sir ?

SHRI TRIDIB KUMAR CHAUDHURI (Berhampore) : It has become really a sort of badminton game, and the shuttlecock is being thrown from the court of the Petroleum and Chemicals Ministry to the Labour Ministry and then from the Labour Ministry to the Petroleum and Chemicals Ministry without anybody going to the root of the question. The root of the question is very simple and quite obvious: that the private foreign oil companies do not want the business of the Indian Oil Corporation to extend. If we are really serious about this thing and want to find a solution, then we must tell the foreign oil companies in the plainest terms that this will not do.

I would like to draw the attention of the House to one part of the big advertisement put up for the days in the national newspapers in which the company has said that "it is unreasonable to expect the company to continue to hold up action"—that means the action of retrenchment—"when circumstances creating and enlarging this problem continue to have uninterrupted play with mounting impact on the company." So, the reason given by them means: it is the extension of the business of the Indian Oil Corporation and all that. Their motive is very clear they want the Indian Oil Corporation not to extend its business any further, and secondly to allow them a free hand so far as the retrenchment of workers is concerned, the computerisation is concerned and employment of contract labour is concerned. So, may I know from the Minister whether this whole aspect has been discussed with the private foreign oil companies and they have been told in the plainest terms that they will not be allowed to do this kind of thing? I want to know whether this has been done or not. Otherwise, how can the companies have the courage to do such things in order to coerce the Government ?

SHRI RAGHU RAMAIAH : This has been discussed a number of times at tripartite meetings held under the auspices

of the Labour Ministry. On Saturday the 16th, a similar meeting was held and I was one of those who pointed out in no uncertain terms that the action taken on the 7th by the foreign oil company was taken in undue haste and they could have waited till the Gokhale Commission made its recommendation. The whole matter, I understand, is likely to be settled during the course of today or tomorrow.

SHRI TRIDIB KUMAR CHAUDHURI : I would like to point out that a settlement has been arrived at and for 15 days the retrenchment has been kept in abeyance. That means the workers will again resort to strike after 15 days, unless you go to the root of the matter.

SHRI RAGHU RAMAIAH : Why not wait for 15 days and see whether the root of the matter is gone into ?

SHRI H. N. MUKERJEE (Calcutta North East) : It goes without saying that these mammoth oil cartels functioning in our country are a danger to the real independence of a country like ours. In this case, what has happened is that these companies are openly saying that the surplus in their staff has been forced by the operation of the IOC. These companies are openly practising automation and employment of contract labour, on which two issues according to the Government's declared policy, retrenchment cannot take place. This company gave an undertaking that during the pendency of the commission of inquiry, no retrenchment would take place, except—they made a caveat—in the case of early voluntary retirement scheme. This is the assurance they gave in 1967. I am quoting from a letter written to the General Secretary of the Petroleum Workers' Union by the Labour Ministry. In spite of all these, they practise retrenchment. The Prime Minister herself told a deputation led by a member of this House, Mr. Jyotirmoy Basu, in September that she would get the oil company not to take recourse to retrenchment before the commission's report is out. Mr. Hathi said the same thing, but pleaded helplessness in the matter. Government must speak with one voice. The hon. Minister cannot get away by saying that he does not belong to the Cabinet and the Minister of Labour is

not here. We have the Industries (Regulation and Control) Act and if Government has power to ban strikes, they can ban retrenchment also in some special circumstances. Do we have to take it that Government remain helpless, as the Prime Minister and Mr. Hathi have both professed to be helpless, in the face of the retrenchment attack by Burmah Shell and that kind of people?

SHRI RAGHU RAMAIAH : I am afraid there is no air of helplessness anywhere except in the imagination of my hon. friend. I have already indicated that efforts are being made by Mr. Hathi under the existing laws to call a tripartite meeting and tell them what is wrong and what is right and to come to a settlement. That is being done. What else can Government do?

SHRI H. N. MUKERJEE : I am quoting from a letter from the Ministry to the Secretary of the Petroleum Workers' Union, referring to an assurance given by the company concerned that they would not take recourse to retrenchment, pending the report of the commission of inquiry, except in relation to the early voluntary retirement scheme. These 400 and odd people do not come under the early voluntary retirement scheme and yet they have been retrenched. He says, I am getting things out of my imagination!

SHRI RAGHU RAMAIAH : We do not appreciate the reasoning given by them for the retrenchment. It was done in undue haste. How to set the things right is being negotiated. (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER : Papers to be laid.

12.15 hrs.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE
DROUGHT CONDITIONS IN THE COUNTRY

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (SHRI JAGJIVAN RAM) : I beg to lay on the Table a statement on the drought conditions in the country. [*Placed in Library. See No. LT-2161/68.*]

NOTIFICATIONS UNDER THE UTTAR PRADESH NAGAR MAHAPALIKA ADHINIYAM 1959 ETC.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH, FAMILY

PLANNING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (DR. S. CHANDRASEKHAR)
On behalf of Shri Satya Narayan Sinha :
I beg to lay on the Table :

(1) A copy of the following Notifications (Hindi and English versions) under sub-section (4) of section 540 of the Uttar Pradesh Nagar Mahapalika Adhiniyam, 1959, read with clause (c) (iv) of the Proclamation dated the 25th February, 1968, as varied by Proclamation dated the 15th April, 1968, issued by the President in relation to the State of Uttar Pradesh :—

- (i) The Nagar Mahapalika, Kanpur Regulation of Water Charges Rules, 1968, published in Notification No. 824-D/IX-B-3(14)-67 dated the 13th March, 1968.
- (ii) The Transit Pass (Amendment) Rules, 1968, for Nagar Mahapalikas levying Toll, Octroi or Terminal Tax or any two or all the three of these taxes, published in Notification No. 181-B/XI-C-34-67 dated the 15th June, 1968.
- (iii) The Nagar Mahapalika Varanasi Regulation of Water Charges Rules, 1968, published in Notification No. 2669-D/IX-B-4(28) WT-68 dated the 24th June, 1968.
- (iv) The Nagar Mahapalika, Lucknow Regulation of Water Charges Rules, 1968, published in Notification No. 2970-D/IX-B-4(23)-WT-68 dated the 24th June, 1968.
- (v) The Uttar Pradesh Nagar Mahapalika Water Supply Rules, 1968, published in Notification No. 3172-D/IX-B-304-W-61 dated the 25th June, 1968.
- (vi) The Nagar Mahapalika, Agra Regulation of Water Charges Rules, 1968, published in Notification No. 2971-D/IX-B-4(30) WT-68 dated the 26th June, 1968.
- (vii) The Uttar Pradesh Nagar Mahapalika (Oath) Rules, 1968, published in Notification No. 1851-A/XI-Kh-1968 dated the 19th July, 1968.