

In this respect, apart from the condition precedent of giving consent by the Central Government for the institution of each and every suit or civil proceeding against the ex-rulers of former Indian States, there is another anomalous position brought into this section. Even if the suit is instituted after obtaining the consent of the Central Government, if the suit or proceeding results into passing of a decree that decree cannot be executed without a fresh or further consent of the Central Government. That is to say, all the trouble that is taken for the institution of a suit even after obtaining the consent of the Central Government becomes infructuous and useless inasmuch as further consent is required for the execution of the decree. Then, if you obtain consent for the execution of the decree that is passed as a result of a civil proceeding, in case there is no property to satisfy the claim of the decree then, for enforcing the decree by way of arrest as is applied in the case of other citizens, consent for a third time is required to put the process of civil procedure into operation. That is to say, the first consent that is taken for the institution of the suit does not cover the later stages which are inevitable in civil proceedings, that is, passing of the decree and its execution; if the decree is not satisfied by the defendant ex-rulers then coercive measures such as arrests cannot be taken except with a further consent. This is the anomalous position which has not been properly gone into when the original section was brought as an amendment to the Code of Civil Procedure in 1951.

In this connection, I would also refer to the assurance of the then Law Minister, the late Dr. Ambedkar, who was good enough to assure the House during his speech in reply to the debate on this amended section that the protection that is granted to the princes by way of a special provision in 87B of the Code of Civil Procedure will not be there for a very long time, that it is only a temporary measure to protect the princes from any vexatious or frivolous litigation or suits that may be brought in by the citizens or by the natives of the former Indian States out of any personal malice or grudge that they may have against these rulers.

MR. CHAIRMAN : The hon. Member

may resume his seat and continue his speech during the next occasion.

17. 28 hrs.

HALF AN HOUR DISCUSSION

Oil drilling at Bodra in West Bengal

MR. CHAIRMAN : We will now take up the half an hour discussion. I would request Shri Basu to be as brief as possible because I want to observe the half an hour limit.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BASU : (Diamond Harbour) : Since the subject is a little complicated, may, I request you to give me a little more extra time ?

MR. CHAIRMAN : Kindly be brief.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BASU : The demand for oil is increasing every year. It is increasing by about two million to three million tonnes and we expect that by the end of the Fourth Plan it will go up to about 30 million tonnes. The foreign monopolists of this country had completely monopolized the oil trade till the other day.

The public sector project had made some inroad but today these foreign monopolists are trying to regain their old position with great vigour. They have abandoned this oilfield in Bodra, a place in West Bengal quite near the Bay of Bengal, abruptly. Here it says :

“Oil-structure at Port Canning”—

near to that place —

“is very interesting. In addition to the favourable and positive indications shown by the Geological data as collected by the scientists and technicians of the Commission, during the progress of drilling at Bodra well No. 1, the technicians of the ONGC and USSR encountered very high pressure gas zone.....there had been repeated findings and show of fluorescence in the samples, brawn around

[Shri Jyotirmoy Basu]

3920 metres of depth drilled in the Bodra well No. 1. And results of Gas logging was very much encouraging. The Gas logging results have reported existence of higher hydrocarbons upto iso-Pentane, and even n-Pentane, which are associated with Petroleum. Then why the drilling in the well No. 1. was abandoned.....?"

I will come to that a little later.

Bodra is very near Calcutta, one of the biggest markets where oil is consumed every day. If we get oil from there, it will go a long way to help the consumers. Once this being started people in West Bengal in particular were watching the whole thing with great hope and expectations. With the sudden decision of Government they are wondering why the Government has suddenly dropped the idea.

The Centre's policy is a political game. They want to practise the scorched-earth policy in West Bengal for the advancement of their political party. On top of that, we understand, they are subject to severe pressure from foreign monopolies who are anxious to gain ground again. Under these circumstances the Centre abandoned the project and the hope of the people of West Bengal of having a petrochemical complex went into deep sea. We do not think that under the present regime it will again be revive. As a result of this, 500 hands were unemployed after spending Rs. 221.82 lakhs of people's precious money.

Dr. Sen, I am afraid, is a prisoner in the hands of reactionaries and bureaucrats. We have seen very recently in the purchase of IAC planes how a bureaucrat in this country, for a handful of foreign money, was trying to sell the interest of the country. I will not be surprised if we find a second confirmation of that in recent days in this case also. We have known in Assam the Oil Ministry in those days, for the sake of a similar type of gain, had given prospecting and working rights by losing several crores of rupees. I am told, it was over Rs. 25 crores.

Why did they abandon this idea having totally ignored a decision taken by the ONGC on 30th April, 1965 in which it said :—

"Dr. D. N. Wadia was of opinion

that further seismic work might not lead to much useful information and would certainly delay the exploration of an area believed, on geological considerations, to have good prospects. Dr. B. C. Roy and Shri S. K. Guha agreed with this view. Shri B. S. Negi favoured postponement of decision till the results of the next season's seismic work were available, though this would be by the middle of 1966. Shri G. Kohli pointed out that the proposal to undertake drilling in this area should keep in view a programme of at least 5 wells costing approximately Rs. 3.0 crores before any satisfactory conclusion could be drawn."

The Soviet experts—

"Mr. Eremenko and Mr. Kachishoilli agreed with this view."

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS AND MINES AND METALS (DR. TRIGUNA SEN) : Read a few lines more. Go ahead.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BASU : I am coming to that. We usually do not do that.

DR. TRIGUNA SEN : Do not distort.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BASU : I take serious exception to this. I have not finished yet. We know exactly what you are and what you are doing. Sir, he says that I am distorting. Am I distorting ?

Then, it says :

"The commission, after a full consideration of the case, came to the following conclusions :

- (i) that a well be drilled at Bodra in West Bengal during the current year ;
- (ii) that more wells upto a maximum of 5 might have to be drilled in this area but a consideration of the matter could be deferred till the additional seismic data become available ; etc. etc."

Now, my question to Dr. Sen through you, Sir, is : Why is it that when the recommendations were for five wells' you are anxious to abandon the project after drilling only one well and that too not to its full length of 5000 metres? Why is it that they do not want to do the second one, the third one, the fourth one and the fifth one? Why is it that he is in such a desperate hurry to distort, as I put it back to him, the ONGC recommendations, tell us the cock and bull story and run away from Bengal on master's advice by following a policy to destroy Bengal's economic prosperity and advancement. I am saying this on his face he can answer that.

Then, the Chief Soviet Adviser—not our men, Dr. Sen—Mr. V. A. Nogaev said :

“.....West Bengal is one of the most prospective out of the oil exploratory areas on land in India.....”

These are minutes of the discussion recorded :

“Mr. Nogaev also stated that thickness of the prospective oil/gas area is more than anywhere else in India and dipping down extends towards the Bay of Bengal.....It was explained by him that after drilling and testing of Well No. 1 and “reinterpretation of Seismic dates, at Bodra contrary to the expectations of a closed structure, was found to be a big region consisting several blocks extending upwards Calcutta city.”

In spite of that, Dr. Sen feels it is a closed chapter.

After that, there were telegrams which passed through the project centre there and their headquarters the O.N.G.C. in Dhara Dun. This is a telegram from the Director of Geology of 14.3.67. It says—

“AGREED TO THE RELEASE OF BODRA WELL NO THREE AND FOUR AT THE POINTS STAKED BY YOU”

Another one says :

“BODRA LOCATION NO THREE REPEAT THREE AT POINT SUGGESTED BY YOU APPROVED IN ‘B’ REPEAT ‘B’ CATEGORY,”

‘B’ Category means clearance for final preparatory works. In spite of that he wants to believe that there are no prospects of oil there.

Then, on 9th December, 1968, in reply to the Starred Question No. 627 in the name of Mr. Indrajit Gupta and myself, the then Minister of Petroleum and Chemicals said on the floor of the House as follows :

“Information regarding indications of gas, fluorescence in cuttings and drilling mud and later of oil was furnished by the Project to the ONGC. A press release was issued by the ONGC giving the above information.”

Then, he said :

“The sample was found to consist of diesel oil, not crude oil or condensate.”

Again, in reply to another Starred question No. 678 on March 24, 1969, this is what Dr. Triguna Sen said :

“The Press note issued by the Oil and Natural Gas Commission in June, 1968, only gave factual information about the results obtained. In the course of drilling, namely, interesting existence of a sand at depth which gave indication of oil under fluorescence and indications of oil in drilling mud. The Press release clearly stated that while these indications appear to be favourable, it was too early to say whether or not this well had revealed the presence of an oilfield and that this will be known only after several wells had been drilled.”

Kindly note the words, only after several wells had been drilled.” Now after this,

[Shri Jyotirmoy Basu]

Dr. Sen is carrying His Master's Voice saying, there is nothing; we are packing up.

So, I appeal to Dr. Sen. I am not fighting with him; I am not anxious to fight with him. On behalf of the people of West Bengal, I am requesting you not to abandon this project but to carry on the original recommendations of the O.N.G.C., drill all the five wells and see what is there before you abandon it and waste people's hard earned money to the tune of Rs. 3 crores.

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS AND MINES AND METALS (DR. TRIGUNA SEN) : I heard Mr. Basu with rapt attention and it reminded me of the lectures that I heard when I was a student. I am surprised that Mr. Basu has raised this issue because on the 11th of this month I went to Calcutta by previous appointment to meet the Council of Ministers there to discuss among other things, about Bodra drilling, and I found many of the Members of Parliament present in that meeting. I took with me the Director of Geology of the Oil and Natural Gas Commission to explain the reasons why the drilling had been discontinued only from techno-economic point of view. The discussion lasted for more than an hour. Of all people, Mr. Basu, as usual, was the most vocal. Every aspect of the matter was discussed thoroughly by questions and answers. We left the meeting with the impression that there was no doubt in the minds of the Government or of the Members of Parliament present about this issue.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA (Contai) : You did not invite the other Members of Parliament who are also equally interested. I am interested.

DR. TRIGUNA SEN : I wonder what then could have been the motive of Mr. Basu in raising this question in Parliament. Is it to keep up the tension between the Centre and the State which is a pet slogan of Mr. Basu ? (*Interruptions*).

Mr. Basu, in his letter to you, has mentioned the following points as arising

out of the answer given to Unstarred Question No. 147 on 21-7-1969 :—

- (1) Reply given is not complete.
- (2) It is evasive.
- (3) The opinion of the Soviet experts is not divulged. It is insufficient.

Let us see the Unstarred Question No. 147, given by Mr. Basu, on the 21st July. I shall prove that it was a lie.....

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BASU : I object to it. (*Interruption*).

DR. TRIGUNA SEN : I shall prove to the Chair and to the House that the allegations that you have made are not true. The first part of the question was :

"Whether it is a fact that after drilling a well at Bodra near Canning in West Bengal at a depth of nearly 4000 metres it was suddenly stopped."

The answer was :

"The drilling was stopped at the depth of 4197.5 metres on account of a stuck up of the drill string which could not be released in spite of all efforts."

The second part of the question was :

"Whether gas with highest pressure (3000 atmosphere) has been found in this well and crude oil was extracted."

The answer was :

"No."

Part (c) of the question was :

"If so, the reasons for suspension of further drilling."

The answer was that, on account of a stuck-up of the drill string which could not be released in spite of all efforts, further drilling was not possible.

Part (d) of the question was :

"Whether in the same area another site Bodra-3 was selected for drilling

and nearly Rs. 10 lakhs have been spent for preliminary work but it was stopped and the equipments for the well drilling were sent to Jammu and Kashmir State."

The answer was :

"A location for drilling another well (Bodra-3) had been released and an expenditure of Rs. 4.036 lakhs (exclusive of the compensation for use of land (had been incurred on that location. Subsequently it was decided not to drill at that location.

"The drilling rig has not been sent to Jammu and Kashmir State. It remains in West Bengal. Some of the ancillary items of drilling equipment and materials are, however, being sent to the other projects of the Oil and Natural Gas Commission where such items are in short supply."

"(e) if so, the reasons therefore",

"The decision not to drill Bodra 3 was taken in view of the results of drilling Bodra 1. Being structurally lower than Bodra Well No. 1, Bodra Well No. 3 is not expected to find oil or natural gas in view of the unfavourable results in Bodra Well No. 1.

"(f) the steps taken by Government for full scale and early exploration of oil resources in the Canning and other areas of South Bengal and the coastal region of the State".

"Seismic surveys are being continued in the region. If the surveys lead to the discovery of a favourable structure, undertaking drilling to test the structure will be considered",

Was this reply incomplete or evasive ?

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BASU : It is a matter of opinion.

DR. TRIGUNA SEN : I am asking you, Sir.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BASU : I am submitting to you, Mr. Chairman.

DR. TRIGUNA SEN : Then it was said that the opinion of the Soviet experts was not divulged. I have read out the question. In this the opinion of the Soviet experts was not asked; so the reply did not deal with that aspect.

In this explanatory note, Shri Basu has alleged that the Government has conceded that oil drilling in Bodra met with good success and there were possibilities of finding undisturbed strata of oil and gas in the said area. It is not correct to say that Government has conceded that oil drilling in Bodra has met with good success. On the contrary, oil drilling in Bodra has been a failure largely on account of certain drilling complications which hampered the progress of drilling at this well. At one stage, indications of the presence of hydrocarbons were noticed. This gained wide publicity. Perhaps Shri Basu referred to this fact when he says that Government have conceded that oil drilling in Bodra met with good success. I will explain, if time permits later, to Shri Basu and others how the indications of the presence of hydrocarbons had turned out to be misleading. This is so far as his notice and explanatory note is concerned. From this, you will see that there is no substance in the point raised by Shri Basu in his notice or in his explanatory note.

He requested me at the end to carry out the recommendations of ONGC of 30th April 1965. He read only a part of them. I requested him then to read the whole of it and not to distort. I have got a copy with me. To be frank, I got this copy from one of the Ministers of West Bengal. I did not see it before.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BASU : Wonderful administration !

DR. TRIGUNA SEN : It says :

"...the proposal to undertake drilling in this area should keep in view a programme of at least 5 wells costing approximating Rs. 3 crores before any satisfactory conclusion could be drawn. Mr. Eremenko and Mr. Kachishoilli agreed with this view.

[Dr. Triguna Sen]

"The Commission, after a full consideration of the case, came to the following conclusions :—

- (i) that a well be drilled at Bodra in West Bengal during the current year" —

Which has been done—

"(ii) that more wells upto a maximum of might have to be drilled in this area but a consideration of the matter could be deferred till the additional seismic data become available".

This has reference to the distortion which I mentioned. What does it mean? That further 5 wells might be drilled...

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BASU : Further 4.

DR. TRIGUNA SEN : A maximum of 4 might have to be drilled in this area, but the consideration was deferred till additional seismic data became available. So we are heaving a seismic survey of the whole place. Unless we get the data, we should not consider drilling other wells.

Lastly, he mentioned the name of the Soviet expert who had been to Calcutta and met the members of the ONGC Employees' Association, Shri Sanyal, who is the Vice-President and one Shri Kar Gupta, who is the General Secretary.

What did he say? With this, I will finish. He said :

"The recommendation in regard to the question of drilling of Bodra Well No. 3 is quite clear. I have made it quite clear that on the basis of the results of Bodra Well No. 1, the drilling of Bodra Well No. 3 was ruled out."

This is what the Soviet expert said, and he is working with the Oil and Natural Gas Commission on whose guidance we also work. (*Interruption*)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Order, order. The hon. Minister does not yield. Let him go on.

DR. TRIGUNA SEN : Then he goes on to say :

"As regards the location for the next well what I meant to say was that the next well would be drilled in the above mentioned large region to the south, south-east and east of Calcutta. And this will, of course, be done only in the event of the seismic surveys leading to the discovery of a favourable structure in the aforesaid region. It was not my intention to say that the next well would be drilled in the area covered by the local structure on which Bodra Well No. 1 and the location for Bodra Well No. 3 are situated. It is clear from the results of drilling of Bodra Well No. 1 and from the results of the seismic surveys, that drilling of another well in the local area of Bodra, that is, in the area containing the local structure on which Bodra Well No. 1 and the location for Bodra Well No. 3 are situated and the immediately adjoining area, is ruled out."

He clarified further that for the present, we should continue the seismic surveys over the abovementioned large region and make efforts to obtain seismic data of good quality, and thus discover favourable structures. Drilling can be undertaken only after favourable structures have been discovered.

I mentioned that the drilling of five more wells will cost us about Rs. 3 crores, and with the seismic survey that we have, we cannot locate the exact position where we should drill. As advised by our Soviet expert, we had to ask for sophisticated computerised seismographs which are available in America and we will have to spend free foreign exchange to the tune of about Rs. 60 lakhs for which we are arranging. After we get this equipment and complete the whole survey and find out the actual location where we should drill, surely we will drill. But the point is should be, in the meantime, with our scarce foreign exchange, and, as you know, our financial position, spend Rs. 5 more crores and drill anywhere without any result? We felt that the decision of the Oil and Natural Gas Commission which was taken in April, 1965 was correct, and the Government is following that.

श्री जार्ज फरनेन्डीज (बम्बई-दक्षिण) : सभापति महोदय, मंत्री महोदय ने विदेशी मुद्रा की बात पर ही अपने बयान को खत्म किया। यह तो मानी हुई बात है और मैं नहीं समझता हूँ कि मंत्री जी इन्कार करेंगे कि विदेशी पूंजी हमारे तेल उद्योग को आगे न बढ़ने देने में काफी प्रयास करती रही है, और आज भी यह प्रयास हो रहा है। एक तरफ तो 50 करोड़ ६० सालाना का क्रूड आयल खरीद लेते हैं...

MR. CHAIRMAN : Only one question please. No preamble.

श्री जार्ज फरनेन्डीज : मंत्री महोदय का उत्तर है कि सीसमिक सर्वेज उनको करने हैं, उसके लिए यंत्र और विदेशी मुद्रा नहीं है। हम तो जो तेल मिट्टी से निकालना है उस बात को लेकर प्रश्न पूछ रहे हैं। मैं यह भी बता रहा हूँ कि उनकी यह शिकायत है कि 60 लाख रुपये की मशीनों लानी पड़ेंगी। क्या यह सही नहीं है कि इस समय 50 करोड़ ६० की विदेशी मुद्रा हम खर्च कर देते हैं क्रूड आयल मंगाने पर, दूसरे यहां की विदेशी तेल कम्पनियां रुपया लिए जा रही हैं। तो मैं पूछना चाहता हूँ कि बंगाल, आसाम और नागालैंड, ये जो इलाके हैं, इनमें इतना तेल भरा हुआ है कि उस तेल को मिट्टी से निकालने के लिए सरकार की ओर से कोई भी ठोस कदम उठाने का काम इस समय नहीं हो रहा है। यहां तक कि आसाम में सभापति महोदय, अभी भी...

MR. CHAIRMAN : The questions are meant by way of supplementaries arising out of the Minister's reply. Just put a question.

श्री जार्ज फरनेन्डीज : इस इलाके में जो तेल है उस तेल का भी इस्तेमाल नहीं हो रहा है

अन्त में मैं यह कहना चाहता हूँ कि बौद्रा वाला प्रश्न आया कैसे ? उस इलाके में तेल है,

उस तेल को निकालने के लिए जो कार्यवाही होनी चाहिए वह नहीं हो रही है। जिस आयल इण्डिया के द्वारा आसाम में तेल निकालते हैं उस तेल को वह एक तरफ आसाम आयल कंपनी को 17 ६० टन के दाम से बेचते हैं, जब कि वही कम्पनी सरकार को उस तेल को १० के हिसाब से बेचती है। इसलिए मेरा प्रश्न है कि आयल इण्डिया लिमिटेड के द्वारा आसाम में और उस इलाके में आप जो इस समय तेल को मिट्टी से निकालते हैं, इस कम्पनी को जो मुनाफा सालाना करोड़ों रुपये का, बर्मा आयल कम्पनी को देते हैं, जो विदेशी कम्पनी है, आसाम आयल कम्पनी को, जो तेल कम दाम पर बेचते हैं, तो ये दोनों कम्पनियां बहुत सारी विदेशी मुद्रा मुनाफा के रूप में देश के बाहर ले जाती हैं, उस विदेशी मुद्रा को रोककर आसाम, बंगाल और नागालैंड, इन तीनों प्रदेशों में तेल का ज्यादा से ज्यादा सर्वे करके उस तेल को मिट्टी से निकालने की आपके पास क्या योजना है ?

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (Alipore) : The hon. Minister had just said that drilling for oil on this Bodra region proved a failure. As he himself has stated, one well was drilled and they were not able to drill more than 4090 feet because, what he called, stuck-up took place and they could not drill further. I would like to know from him how on the basis of this one incomplete drilling which had to be abandoned due to a stuck-up have they come to a sudden conclusion that in that area no further drilling can be usefully done unless seismic surveys with American equipment worth Rs. 60 lakhs are carried out, because they had originally selected this area on the basis of original date Stanvac, a foreign company, had given. If this stuck up had not taken place—let us take for the sake of argument that this stuck-up did not take place—then the question of fresh seismic survey would not have arisen at all. Taking advantage of the fact that because of one drilling the stuck-up took place the whole idea is being abandoned indefinitely until some expensive equipment is obtained for carrying out fresh

[Shri Indrajit Gupta]

surveys. 20 million tonnes deficit of crude oil will still be there in our country in 1972. He has written to me a letter saying that we have very scarce resources and we can only drill wells where there are proved deposits. But drilling projects have been undertaken in other places like Cambay off-shore drilling, where there are no proved deposits. What about Jammu and Kashmir drilling? There are no proved deposits. I do not mind them. But only in the case of Port Canning Area because they say there are no proved deposits they are not going to do any more drilling. Sir, this is why people suspect that there is pressure of foreign oil companies on the Government and also discrimination shown by the Government.

18 hrs.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : Sir, according to the opinion of the Russian expert, I think it is Dr. Nogaev, the southern part of Calcutta and the coastal region of West Bengal are floating on oil. I am sorry to say, before Dr. Sen assumed responsibility of the present Ministry this conspiracy was hatched and given effect to and he is now only in the midst of it. Somehow, I do not know, he is not in his usual characteristic boldness. I do not know whether he has failed. But as I know him, he has never failed. Sir, as a student of science I am going to say something. May I know whether it is a fact that at well No. 1 was drilled up to a depth of 4197 metres gas having the highest atmospheric pressure of 200 emerged out of it? No where in India was such very high pressure gas available after drilling. I want to know whether it is a fact that in those gases isopentane and n-pentane type hydrocarbons, which are very rich in fuel content, were found by the chemical experiments and, if so, what is the reason why if oil was not found the possibility of exploration of this rich hydro-carbon gas was not exploited. Secondly, the instruments that were available with O&NGC could have drilled up to the extent of 5,000 metres. So, I want to know why another 800 metres were not drilled. Thirdly, when some preliminary crude oil was found a sample of it was sent to Dehra Dun where chemical experiment was done. A similar sample was sent to Jadavpur University. Since Dr. Sen happened to be the time Vice-Chancellor of Jadavpur University

some back and he has close relations with that University, I want to know whether it is a fact that there was a controversy regarding the experimental findings as to the nature of the crude oil between the conclusions arrived at by the Jadhavapur University and by Dehra Dun. Dehra Dun said that the oil that was found is not crude mineral oil from the expected deposits but only the diesel oil that was used for the purpose of drilling. But if it was diesel oil then specific gravity, viscosity, dielectric constant and also hydro-carbon compounds found in these oils should have been the same; but it has been found the oils had two different types of specific gravity, viscosity, dielectric constant and also hydro-carbon compounds. I want to know whether it is a fact or not.

Then I want to know whether it is a fact that the same strata from where there are prospects of oil deposits at Bodra has continuation up to Pakistan and whether it is a fact that Pakistan has already made an exploration of that same strata in which oil can be found. If Pakistan started drilling just on the border of West Bengal then there is every possibility that the oil and gas resources of that stratum may be extracted by Pakistan before oil drilling work is started here again.

Dr. Sen is also a scientist. He knows that oil deposit does not remain in parallel sediments; it is found in curvature structure. It may be that in well No. 1 while drilling it struck a rock which could not be penetrated by the drilling instrument, but near about in another curvature as oil usually remains in structure of curvature—perhaps lesser drilling at a lesser depth would have struck oil.

Lastly, I challenge Dr. Sen if he is ready to set up a Parliamentary Commission with a few chemists included in it who are experts in oil, not of the O&NGC to go into the facts in the case I have mentioned just now. It seems that some sort of conspiracy is going on about the whole aspect of oil exploration in West Bengal.

DR. TRIGUNA SEN : Shri Fernandes has raised a pertinent question but other Members have imputed motives that Dr. Sen is not bold enough, that he is being pressu-

rised, that a conspiracy is going on against West Bengal and all these things. I need not refer to them.

I may tell you and the House that I myself went to Dehra Dun to study the whole thing. The Director of Geology, to convince my Bengali friends' is a Bengali, Shri Sen Gupta.

SHRI JYOTIRMY BASU : We do not talk about Bengali and all that.

DR. TRIGUNA SEN : He, the Director of Geophysics and I discussed with maps and everything for a couple of hours to convince myself that their decision was correct. After that, as I said, I made an appointment with the minister of West Bengal to explain to them the technological aspect. I took the directors with me for this purpose. If I give the whole story, it will take some time but I will try to do it.

I want to tell my hon. friend, Shri Fernandes, that there is no pressure from any foreign concern on me or the Government to delay the drilling in Borda to find oil. As a matter of fact—I need not tell it now what we are doing to have the maximum exploration—we have decided to spend all money that we have got in the proved area of Gujarat and Assam. It is not correct to say that in the Assam region it is only the oil company that is drilling; ONGC has been drilling on a vast area and Oil India, as per the agreement of long standing, doing it in a restricted place.

श्री जार्ज फ़रनेन्डोज : उसको छोड़िए, पिछले साल 3 करोड़ रुपये ले गए वह लोग ।

DR. TRIGUNA SEN : I know that.

ONGC is also doing it and they have struck oil. We are concentrating on proved areas because we are eager to stop this drain of foreign exchange. We are doing it in Assam.

It has also been proved beyond doubt that sufficient oil is available in the Tripura State; so, we are carrying on seismic study and exploration drilling. The ONGC is making all its efforts to find out all available oil on the land itself. Also, with the Russian experts we have now just started to

take steps to exploit the shallow water portion of Bombay High or Cambay. We are talking expert opinion to go into Bombay High.

We have divided the whole country into two divisions. One is that we must place all our efforts, energy and money on the proved area where we can immediately explore more oil and free the country from the drain of foreign exchange. The other part of the country, where general seismic studies indicated that there is oil we are trying to prove it and are continuing with more seismic studies to find out exact position so that we can drill Borda is like that.

It is no, doubt that the Russian experts expect that there is a big oil reservoir in the Bay of Bengal basin.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BASU : He himself said in this House in December that unless several wells are dug they cannot come to a conclusion. Why is he escaping from that ?

DR. TRIGUNA SEN : If several wells are dug, it will cost about Rs. 3 crores. The experts have advised that we should not do it unless further seismic survey is done,

Professor Samar Guha has raised several questions. He was also teaching in the Chemistry Department in the Jadavpur University and I think he has not forgotten that Jadavpur University has no equipment to test whether there is oil in some substance that has been found out. What we did in our geological laboratory and the chemistry laboratory was to test the soil and the liquid that we found. It was never proved... (Interruption).

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : The head of the Department of Physics undertake this test and the viscosity, the dilactic constant, the specific gravity, n-pentane and other hydrocarbon contents were found out.

MR. CHAIRMAN : If you go on arguing and he goes on replying, there will be no end to it. It is very difficult to allow any interruption now.

I request the Minister to be very brief.

DR. TRIGUNA SEN: Yes.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : With your permission, Sir, may I submit I have raised three specific points.

MR. CHAIRMAN : I am sorry; you have taken a lot of time.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : I have raised certain specific points.

MR. CHAIRMAN : I am sorry; I am not going to allow you. Certain procedure is to be adopted.

DR. TRIGUNA SEN : I am going to explain. Let him wait and listen to me.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please don't interrupt now. Afterwards, if necessary, I will allow you to ask a clarification.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : All right. Sir.

DR. TRIGUNA SEN : He knows, the Indo-Stanvac Petroleum Project, from 1957 to 1960, drilled 10 wells and then they had to drop the project. They abandoned it in 1960. But the O.N.G.C. studying the data decided to try again in another area, the eastern area, namely, Bodra No. 1. We have no sophisticated instrument, as I explained, to go down deep in Bodra. We drilled only upto 4000 metres. Then, there was some mechanical trouble. We could not drill further and had to stop it there. I need not go into details as to what are the results of testings of the soil and liquid. It will take time of the House. But I am agreeable to accept his suggestion. If there are two or three chemists here in the House, who are willing to go and make a study, they can do it. We will give them all facilities, whether in the O.N.G.C. or in Jadavpur University. Let them for themselves come to a decision about the whole thing. We have an open mind. It is not a question of any pressure or anything. They are welcome to go to the O.N.G.C. laboratory and Jadavpur University laboratory, see the test reports and convince themselves whether what I have said is correct or not, whether our decision is correct or not. I am prepared to do that.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : Sir, I raised three specific points. He did not say whether it is a fact that the gas that was available was of 200 atmosphere pressure, the

highest ever found anywhere in any well in India and whether, in that gas, high hydro-carbon content, like n-pentane and isopentane, were found. He did not answer that. Secondly, whether the data that are available after the experiment in Jadavpur University and the Geological Centre at Dehra Dun were found to be divergent and whether the data that were found in Jadavpur University concluded that the oil had been found. This is the second question I asked and he did not answer that. Thirdly I have myself gone there—there should be a Parliamentary Committee consisting of a few experts also which can go and compare the data.

DR. TRIGUNA SEN : Sir, if you will allow me time. I can reply.

MR. CHAIRMAN : You can reply briefly.

DR. TRIGUNA SEN : The well had been projected to a depth of 5000 metres. At a depth of 4197 metres, however, a stuck-up took place which could not be released below 3626 metres. After prolonged fishing operations, it was decided to abandon the operation of the well below 3626 metres and to test the operation above this depth. The electrologs, however, indicated that the horizons at which these indications were obtained were not encouraging.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : What about the chemical content of the gas, the pressure and the hydro-carbon content ?

DR. TRIGUNA SEN : The indications of the presence of natural gas were obtained in the logging unit. Fluorescence was also noticed in the mud which is generally an indication of the presence of crude oil. Some fluid looking like crude oil/condensate was also seen in the drilling mud. On the basis of these indications, the possibility of crude oil having been met with in the well was entertained. With this, they went on drilling further. There was every possibility that these indications might leak out and a false hope of the existence of an oilfield might be entertained.

They went on taking electrologs step by step. There were pressures, including water. As I said, Sir, they had to abandon. I

have accepted his offer that if there are chemist Members in Parliament, they are free to come and we shall give all the facilities to look into these.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : An Expert Committee should be there.

DR. TRIGUNA SEN : If the Member feels that he is an expert, he is welcome.

MR. CHAIRMAN : The House stands adjourned till 11 A. M. on Monday.

18.16 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Monday, July 28 1969/Sravana 6, 1891 (SAKA).