

SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM: As far as allotment of cement is concerned we are doing it. Specific allocation is made by the State Government.

PROF K.V. THOMAS : This is a general answer. We have been asking for cement for specific purpose. If the things proceed this way we will not be able to complete any project. Water supply scheme is a very important scheme. We have got many problem villages.

MR. SPEAKER: Why can't you provide cement to them?

SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM: As far as we are concerned we are giving cement. For specific projects it has to be allotted by the State Government.

[Translation]

Black-Marketing In LPG Connections

*330. **DR. CHANDRA SHEKHAR TRIPATHI:** Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether complaints regarding black-marketing in cooking gas connections in different parts of the country are increasing day by day;

(b) if so, the main reasons thereof and whether Government have inquired into the reasons ;

(c) whether Government propose to take any steps to check the black-Marketing and if so, the details thereof ;

(d) whether Government propose to allot more gas agencies in the country keeping in view the demand for gas connections ; and

(e) if so, when and if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR SINGH): (a) to (e). A statement is given below

STATEMENT

(a) In the normal course of business oil companies receive complaints also regarding black marketing in LPG connections by

distributors. These are investigated and appropriate action is taken ranging from issue of warning letters to termination of distributorships.

(b) The main reason for such cases is the desire of some unscrupulous distributors to take undue advantage of the keen demand for new LPG connections in most parts of the country.

(c) The oil marketing companies carry out periodical and surprise inspections of LPG distributorships under the Marketing Discipline Guidelines and take action in terms thereof in appropriate cases.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) LPG distributorships are being continuously set-up in terms of the oil industry's annual marketing plans at various locations all over the country.

DR. CHANDRA SHEKHAR TRIPATHI : The hon. Minister deserves congratulations for admitting that black marketing does take place, because upto now an effort was always being made to cover up the facts, which was not a good thing.

For the time being, I would like to know the number of complaints received against the distributors in Uttar Pradesh, how many of them were issue warning and in how many cases the dealership was terminated ? What were the reasons for not terminating the dealership of the rest ?

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR SINGH : I do not have figures relating to the various states at the moment. I had tried to collect this information. There is no arrangement of collating such figures again and bringing them before the House. However, at different places, from where such complaints were received, action was taken ranging from issue of warning letters to termination of dealership. I do not want to quote these figures because their number is not very high and they may not reflect the actual position, but we are trying to ensure that periodic inspections are made and wherever such complaints are received, stringent action ranging from issue of warning letters to termination of dealership is taken.

DR. CHANDRA SHEKHAR TRIPATHI : Generally, complaints are received from all over the country that L.P.G. dealers also keep hot plates and gas chullahs and

force the connection holders to buy gas chullah from them so that they could indulge in over-charging of Rs. 200 to Rs. 400. Will the hon. Minister issue directives that no L.P.G. dealer should sell gas chullah and that there should be a separate dealer for that so that the consumers are not put to inconvenience?

MR. SPEAKER : In that case there will be two thieves.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR SINGH : A number of such complaints have been received and in this connection.....

PROF. K.K. TEWARY : Also take action thereon.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR SINGH : Action has also been taken. But to demand that the dealers should not keep hot plates would not be proper, because most of the people buy hot-plates from the dealer with whom their gas connections mature. However, there are clear instructions that the consumer should not be forced to buy from the dealer. Instructions have also been issued as to how its inquiry and inspection at two stages is to be conducted so as to ensure that similar complaints are not received in future. Special action has been taken with regard to the point raised by the hon. Member and it is hoped that good results will follow.....
(Interruptions).....

SHRI CHIRANJI LAL SHARMA : Have such complaints come to the notice of the hon Minister that the quantity of gas in L.P.G cylinder is generally found short? If so, what action is being taken against this practice?

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR SINGH : Such complaints have been received at the level of dealers and now a mechanism in the cylinders is being introduced so that such complaints are reduced to the minimum.

(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI SUNDERWATI NAWAL PRABHAKAR : Mr Speaker, Sir, whenever the consumer makes a telephone call to the dealer for a refill, he does not get the telephone line. It is heard that the dealer puts the receiver off the cradle or is not prepared to answer the call. Secondly, when a consumer personally goes to get a refill, he gets the reply that the gas is out of stock. I want to know whether L.P.G. is

actually in short supply or the consumers are harassed unnecessarily.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR SINGH : Action is taken when specific complaints are received. As of now, there is some shortage in the northern region and efforts are being made to remove this shortage. It is hoped the situation will return to normal within a month or two.

[English]

SHRI AJOY BISWAS : Perhaps the Minister is aware that in the matter of establishment of manufacturing units of LPG cylinders, there is a lot of regional imbalance. I am told that the State of the Central Minister incharge of Petroleum Ministry gets the highest number of LPG cylinder manufacturing units. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether it is a fact that when his predecessor was the Minister of Petroleum, the highest number of LPG cylinder manufacturing units were sanctioned in the state of Gujarat.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR SINGH : For the manufacture of LPG cylinders no licences are required. They have only to register themselves and go along with the manufacturing process. So, there is no scope for favouritism in this respect.

SHRI RAM PYARE PANIKA : It was stated by the then Minister, Shri P. Shiv Shanker that all the towns with a population of 20,000 in the country would have gas agencies. I would like to know from the Minister, whether he is going to give agencies to such towns having population of 20,000 or more.

MR. SPEAKER ; Why only towns with population of 20,000 people? Even villages with 500 population should have this facility.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR SINGH : We agree that it should be made as liberal as possible, but the constraints that operate are that the business should be of an order which is viable and profitable. Otherwise some black-marketing or some wrong practices will develop. So, we are sanctioning the outlets keeping in view both these requirements. I would like to tell the House that whatever be the number of outlets, by the end of the Seventh Plan

period, the customer population is likely to go up from one crore to two crores approximately.

Export of Crude oil and Import of Refined oil

*331. SHRI R. P. DAS : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

- (a) whether it is a fact that the export of crude oil has since declined ;
- (b) if so, by what quantity ;
- (c) whether import of refined oil has also declined to the same extent ; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR SINGH) : (a) to (d). A statement is given below.

STATEMENT

(a) to (d). There is no export of crude oil at present. A quantity of 6.5 million tonnes was exported in 1984—85 and only 0.525 million tonnes upto May in 1985—86. However, the net import of refined petroleum products came down from 5.2 million tonnes in 1984—85 to an estimated 2.6 million tonnes in 1985—86. These two do not exactly match due to reasons like increase in demand for products reduction in quantity after refining, inventory adjustments and export of products surplus to our requirement.

SHRI R. P. DAS : The statement says that the export of crude has come down from 6.5 million tonnes to 0.525 million tonnes, which is a very negligible quantity. It is because of a fall in the production of crude in the country.

MR. SPEAKER : It is only due to an increase in our refining capacity.

SHRI R. P. DAS : Yes Sir, Secondly, it is because of an increase in the refining capacity. The statement also says that import of refined oil has also come down from 5.2 million tonnes to 2.6 million tonnes, just half of the total refined oil. The most important point is this. The declared

policy of the Government is to attain self-sufficiency in oil. And actually, the level of self-sufficiency attained at the end of the Sixth Five Year Plan was about 70 per cent. But in the meantime, there are some signs of erosion in the level of self-sufficiency in oil and it may come down to 61 per cent during the Seventh Five Year Plan. I would like to know from the Minister as to what effective measures have been taken to check the erosion in self-sufficiency in oil.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR SINGH : Sir, firstly there has been absolutely no question of a fall in the production of crude in the country. On the other hand, it is going up. This has been brought down as a result of the expansion of our refining capacity as has been explained. But the hon. member is correct when he says that the degree of self-sufficiency in oil and petroleum products shall go down during the Seventh Plan period from a level of 70 per cent in the year 1984—85 to 61 per cent in the terminal year of the Seventh Plan. It is primarily because our demand is growing at an average rate of 3 million tonnes per annum. Our production has not been able to keep pace with it. The present projections are that during the Seventh Plan period, unless we are lucky enough to strike a very good reserve, the gap is going to widen and the degree of self-sufficiency shall come down. But a package of measures have been taken to tackle the situation as best as possible. Firstly, we are trying to intensify our exploration work and to step up our production programme by evolving correct and modern strategies. Also, we are trying to contain the growth in the rate of consumption of oil and petroleum products. Both supply management and demand management are being exercised to meet the situation.

SHRI R. P. DAS : The hon. Minister has just said that, he has taken some steps to curb the consumption of petroleum products in the country. But during the current year, the rate of consumption has increased to the tune of 7.9 per cent. How can it be possible to check the consumption of petroleum products in the coming years? Therefore, Sir, I would like to know categorically from the Minister and he has to spell out the measures that would check the rise in consumption of petroleum products in the country?