

LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Tuesday, February 28, 1989/Phalguna 9,
1910 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[English]

Delay in Supply of LPG

*82. SHRI P.M. SAYEED†:
SHRI DHARAM PAL SINGH
MALIK:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND
NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there was a crisis in supply of cooking gas for domestic and commercial use in the capital, in the first week of February, 1989;

(b) if so, the main reasons therefor;

(c) the arrangements made by the Indian Oil Corporation and Government to meet the situation; and

(d) the steps taken by Government to ward off similar situation in future and whether Government propose to increase the supply of kerosene oil to the people?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI BRAHMA DUTT): (a) and (b). A backlog in supply of LPG refills had developed temporarily in the Union Territory of Delhi, on account of transporters' and industrial relations problems in IOC leading to disruption in product movement.

(c) and (d). IOC made immediate arrangements to move LPG from other parts of India. The problems regarding industrial relations have now been settled and steps have been taken to make and to monitor supplies. Allocation of kerosene to various States/Union Territories are being made as necessary.

SHRI P.M. SAYEED: Mr. Speaker, Sir, according to his reply, it appears that the shortage or crisis is due to shortage of transporters, non-availability of vehicles and also industrial relations problems. He has also not elaborated in his reply whether the industrial relations problem is related to transporters' problems or the IOC's problems.

But Sir, the news which appeared recently in various newspapers and particularly I am quoting from *The Hindu* of 2nd February which says that "Shakurbasti and Tikri Kalan — these are the bottling plants — plants have come to a grinding halt by totally stopping the work and therefore this crisis has arisen. The workers have gone on strike on account of inhouse computers and non-revision of their wages."

This was the reason which the Press gave. It further says, "While the officials were still silent over the reasons, for the workers' strike, they concede that not a single cylinder was filled at either of the two bottling plants."

He has given reasons that it is due to the fault of the transporters that the crisis has arisen. May I know whether these two points which have been pointed out by the workers have been amicably settled and the crisis will be averted in future also?

SHRI BRAHMA DUTT: These two things are correct. The transporters also stopped working and we were talking about a long term settlement with the IOC employees. They also went on work-to-rule strike which actually meant stopping of work. I also intervened in the agreement which reached between IOC employees and the union. Now the things are going on smoothly and the backlog will be cleared very soon; it is being reduced drastically.

SHRI P.M. SAYEED: He has not answered the computer part of my question while giving reply. He may clarify that. May I know whether the government have got any information about the complaints lodged by the consumers of the LPG against the distributors? Due to the crisis, the distributors of LPG took an undue advantage and the consumers are being further harassed. After booking, it takes 10-12 days to receive a gas cylinder. Therefore, has he got any mechanism to monitor such faults by the distributors who are also adding to this problem and creating further confusion; if so, what is the number of LPG distributors in the Capital and whether is prepared to cancel their dealerships. Government must take some action against them. Already there are crises and these distributors are creating further trouble. Have they got any mechanism to monitor their faults and then take some drastic action against the distributors who are at a fault so that their dealerships can be cancelled? There is a lot of blackmarketing going on for getting a gas cylinder.

SHRI BRAHMA DUTT: Regarding introduction of a computer, the negotiations between IOC and the employees are at the final stage and they are going on smoothly. I hope will be settled very soon. Regarding complaints, we have got a complaint cell in the oil companies. I have also asked all the

oil companies to hold consumers camps throughout the country during March-April in which individual consumers will go there. The date and the place will be notified. One officer will be present there who will look into their complaints; and if a distributor persists in the fault, drastic action will be taken against him.

SHRI P.M. SAYEED: Are you prepared to cancel their dealerships?

SHRI BRAHMA DUTT: Definitely.

SHRI P.M. SAYEED: Have you received any complaint so far; if so, have you taken any action against the erring distributor?

SHRI BRAHMA DUTT: We receive complaints generally and action is taken against them. If the complaint persists, then, definitely, we will not mind cancelling their dealerships.

[Translation]

SHRI DHARAM PAL SINGH MALIK: Mr. Speaker, Sir, most of the gas agencies create shortage deliberately so that they can earn money through blackmarketing. In this way they deliberately create hardships for the people. Does the Government propose to set up Distribution Committees consisting of the subscribers coming under the jurisdiction of each gas agency and to authorise these committees to monitor the work of distribution so as to ensure that the dealers do not create any crisis and the gas supply is regular?

I would like to make one more submission here because I am directly concerned with this. The M.Ps have been authorised to recommend 60 gas connection during a year. We are feeling difficulties under the existing practice. I am of the view that either this practice may be totally abandoned or the quota of gas connections for the M.Ps may be increased. People in India know it very well that a Member of Parliament has got a quota for the supply of gas connections but

M.Ps find it difficult to help the people in getting them L.P.G. connections. I would like to suggest that either the quota be increased substantially or the practice should be abandoned totally, so that we may not have any difficulty. (*Interruptions*) The quota should be raised to at least 50 connections a year.

MR. SPEAKER: I may tell you that the point of abandoning the existing practice is more likely to be accepted.

SHRI BRAHMA DUTT: Sir, this will cause hardship to the people. We are bound not to accept this proposal. (*Interruptions*) Last year the quota was 12 per year and this year it has been raised to 18.

I would like to inform the hon. Members that the demand for L.P.G. connections is increasing in our country. We are producing nearly 18 million tonnes of gas. We propose to increase the existing capacity in Hazira, Vijaypur and them in Oriya. It may also be required that we go in for import. For import, we have only two terminals. One is at Vizagapattam and the other at Bombay. Vizagapattam, being a naval base, poses certain difficulties and Bombay is more congested. We are trying to sort out these difficulties and we need to be more careful in this regard. If we totally abandon this quota practice then it will cause difficulties for the distributors, because they must maintain their viability. We are trying to create a balance.

SHRI BALKAVI BAIRAGI. Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you I would like to make a submission to the hon. Minister and also seek some information from him. In his reply the hon. Minister has stated that the crisis arose due to work to rule by the employees. In this connection I would like to know from him that if there is some crisis due to work to rule and disturbance is created by this, will he take steps to see that the rules are right so that work done under pressure may not have any adverse effect and work done under work to rule may yield good results.

MR. SPEAKER: It is all right, but this subject does come under his purview.

SHRI BALKAVI BAIRAGI: The work should be carried on properly if it is done under rules. But here it is just the opposite, the work is stopped. It creates a crisis in the work. May I know whether he proposes to reconsider it and if so, when?

SHRI BRAHMA DUTT: Sir, I had made a submission that work to rule has been interpreted as the work has been stopped. The rules are all right. There arises no difficulty if the work is carried on under the rules. We are holding negotiations with them and we were also considering their demands sympathetically. But as a consequence to that there arose a crisis. As a matter of fact the volume of work to be done under work to rule was not done.

[English]

Energy Production Target

*84. SHRI RAM PYARE PANIKAJ:
SHRI VIRDHI CHANDER
JAIN:

Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) the target of production of energy from different sources during the current year;

(b) whether that target is likely to be fulfilled;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether World Bank aid is being sought to increase investments in power projects and increase power production; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and the projects expected to be taken up with the World Bank aid?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF POWER IN THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY (SHRI KALPNATH RAI): (a) to (e). A Statement is given below.