

DR. KRUPASINDHU BHOI: In view of the fact that we are importing 16 million tonnes of crude oil. I would like to know whether the Government has any master plan to produce this quantity also indigenously. If so, what are the steps the Government has taken and within how many years, according to the master plan, we will be able to achieve self-sufficiency and what are the exploration and expansion programmes the Government has taken up and what is the amount of money the Government has provided in the coming budget and for the next five years?

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: So far as getting indigenous oil is concerned, we have got an organisation viz., ONGC. They have taken on a large scale off-shore and on-shore drilling works, I am not in a position to give the details. If the hon. member wants, let him put another question. I am prepared to give the details. They are spending a lot of money on finding oil.

Production of Streptomycin in Hindustan Antibiotics Limited Pune

*22. **SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO:** Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the production of Streptomycin has fallen considerably due to the strike by the employees of Hindustan Antibiotics Limited at Pune;

(b) if so, the impact thereof; and

(c) what are the steps being taken, by Government to meet the requirements in view of the loss of production?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL): (a) to (c). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

While there has been a loss of production of about 15 tonnes of Streptomycin at Hindustan Antibiotics Limited (HAL) due to the strike lasting from 18th March to 2nd May, 1980, this has not affected the total indigenous production of Streptomycin materially. In 1977-80 the total streptomycin production in the country amounted to 20.16 M/T as against a production of 220.73 M/T in 1978-79. Needed arrangements for import of streptomycin have also been made to supplement indigenous production in line with the practice in earlier years.

SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO: In the statement that has been laid on the table of the House, the hon. Minister has stated that though the production of Streptomycin has decreased by 15 tonnes, the total indigenous production was not totally affected as such. But the fact remains that during this strike period, the stocks of Streptomycin, I do not know whether it is due to boarding or some other reason, were not available in the rural markets, especially in the backward districts of Andhra Pradesh wherefrom I come. This is a very vital life saving drug, which is necessary to be used as a precautionary measure and also for several serious diseases. I would like to know from the Minister as to what measures he is taking to see that this particular medicine is distributed properly both in the rural and urban areas alike so that it reaches the common man in time. I am asking about the distribution aspect because he has said that the production has not been affected due to strike. Let him at least spell out the ways and means by which he is going to make a proper distribution so that the stocks available can be utilised by the people.

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: I have already made it clear that the shortage is very marginal and there is no short supply so far as this drug

is concerned and we have got enough stock. The position of availability as on 1-4-1980 is 33,734 tonnes. So, there is absolutely no difficulty about supplies.

SHRI V KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO: Even though the stocks are there, the people are not getting it. My question was about distribution. In spite of my putting an elaborate question, the Minister has not obviously understood it and has not answered my question.

MR. SFEAKER: He was asking about the distribution, non-availability in the market.

SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO: I had also asked about imports, how much you have been importing, how much you propose to import and how you propose to distribute it.

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: So far we are importing bulk drugs and we are supplying bulk drugs to formulators, those who convert the bulk drugs into formulations. For the current year, because of the shortfall in the production of HAL, instead of the ten tonnes that we had planned to import, we are importing 20 tonnes. We are giving in to the formulators. These are several formulators. If one brand of streptomycin is not available, other brands are available. Therefore, 'there is no shortage.

SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO: What about the distribution?

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: The manufacturers have got their own chemists and druggists. If there is any shortage and if it is brought to our notice—we, in the Ministry, also monitor—we contact the manufacturers and ask them to rush the supply.

DR. VASANT KUMAR PANDIT: Will the hon. Minister inform the House the total requirements of streptomycin in the country, as projected

by the Government and the local production and whether the Government is attempting to reach self-sufficiency by stopping the imports of bulk drugs which go to make Streptomycin?

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: So far as this drug is concerned, there are four producers which are manufacturing viz., Alembec, HAL, IDPL and synbioties. Their total capacity is 220.16 tonnes. So, it is not enough. We are therefore, importing it. Last year we imported 55 tonnes and for the current year we have got a programme of importing 20 tonnes. If it requires that we have to import more and the demand is more, we will do it.

SHRI M. RAM GOPAL REDDY: When there is a strike naturally, in the market there will be a scare and the people go on hoarding it and they go on increasing the prices. I want to know, by importing extra streptomycine how much foreign exchange is being spent and what steps the hon. Minister is going to take to end the strike, whether he is going to take stern action against the persons who are indulging in strike and whether he is contemplating to remove some of the leaders who are at the back of the strike.

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: I admit that there was some shortfall because of the strike in HAL. But I have already informed the House that it is not only HAL which is manufacturing these drugs but there are three other companies which are also manufacturing drugs and their production is all right. There is no difficulty about the production. But there is a shortfall so far as the production is concerned. Therefore, whatever the shortfall is, to that extent, we are, importing and, if the existing units want to expand their capacity, we have no hesitation in licensing the expansion.

SHRI M. RAM GOPAL REDDY: What about strikers, the people who are indulging in strike in such a vital

unit? Is the Government proposing to take any action, against these people?

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: As you know, the strike is not a new thing. It is not only in HAL. There are so many strikes that are going on. We have to deal with the people who go on strike, we have to negotiate with them and arrive at some agreement because we have to work with them.

DR. KARAN SINGH: From the replies given by the hon. Minister flows a broader and more important question with regard to self-sufficiency in life saving drugs. I think it is very unfortunate that after all these years we still have to import streptomycin. It is one of the most fundamental of the life-saving drugs. Will the hon. Minister kindly let the House know what steps have been taken on a plan that was drawn up about 5 or 6 years ago to achieve self-sufficiency in life-saving drugs? We cannot allow the lives of Indian citizens to be dependent upon the vagaries of international availability. There was a proper plan and now it seems we are short of even streptomycin. What steps are going to be taken by the Government to ensure that in the course of the current plan we achieve self-sufficiency in life-saving drugs?

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: The hon. Member is aware that in the year 1978, my predecessor laid on the Table of the House the statement of the Government of India based on the Hathi Committee Report. On the basis of the Hathi Committee Report, we want to achieve self-reliance so far essential drugs are concerned. So, about these international or multinational companies, which are working here, we are not allowing them to expand their capacity. If our Indian drugs companies and also the public sector companies come forward, we are here to encourage them. But it is not possible for us to achieve self-sufficiency in such essential drugs within a short time. It requires more time.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: Will the hon. Minister kindly enlighten the House as to which are the brand names that have been used by private sector instead of using the generic name with regard to these and other antibiotics? Is he aware of the fact that life-saving drugs which are coming specially from America are coming in substandard qualities and some of them are even adulterated which has been elaborately narrated in an article. In San Francisco and London and, if so, what special steps have been taken by the Government in this regard?

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: I require notice.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: Would you accept a short notice question?

MR. SPEAKER: You put a question; there is enough time.

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: I can assure the hon. Member that even if another question is put, I will be in a position to reply.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: What about short notice question?

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: I don't mind even short notice question.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: I am grateful to you.

Decision on Report of National Flood Commission

***23. SHRI LAKSHMAN MALLICK:** Will the Minister of IRRIGATION be pleased to lay a statement showing:

(a) whether Government have taken any decision on the report submitted by the National Flood Commission; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF IRRIGATION (SHRI KEDAR PANDAY): (a) and (b). As Flood Control is a State subject the Report of the National Flood