

enough stock to meet the present demand of the country. (*Interruptions*).

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will take care of all of you.

SHRI VIKRAM MAHAJAN: So, basically we are self-sufficient and our five year plan projections are also in the same nature. It is only in the case of coking coal that there is some marginal shortage which we are making up by importing.

(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You will get a chance in the next question. Now, the next question.

Crude Blocked in Assam Pipeline

*103. SHRI SATISH AGARWAL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 65,000 tonnes of oil are lying blocked in Assam Barauni pipeline for the last 10 months;

(b) whether it is also a fact that unless released this oil will freeze and cause heavy damage to the pipeline;

(c) if so, the steps being taken to have the crude cleared from the pipeline;

(d) what is the total value of the crude lying blocked in Assam pipeline and whether Government have made it clear to the agitators that it would be against the national interest to allow the oil to be frozen in the pipelines; and

(e) if so, their reaction in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI DALBIR SINGH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. About 65,000 tonnes of crude oil had been lying blocked in Assam Barauni Pipeline for about ten months and unless flushed out this oil would have gelled with the onset of the

winter which would have caused heavy damage to the pipeline.

(c) Flushing out of the de-conditioned crude oil by freshly treated crude oil has been taken up and is continuing.

(d) and (e) The approximate value of the blocked crude lying in the pipeline was about Rs. 14.95 crores at international prices. The implications of the pipeline being damaged have been amply brought to the notice of all concerned. The reaction of the agitators has not been helpful.

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL: May I know from the hon. Minister whether it is a fact that an offer was made by the Oil Employees Association to help them in this particular nature provided the army was withdrawn; if so, when was this offer made and why did the government spurn this offer?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI P. C. SETHI): The offer is said to have been made to the Adviser there. But the offer is highly loaded and it will be very difficult to accept the offer as it is.

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL: Highly loaded by what? The offer was made by the Oil Employees Association themselves that they will do the job provided the army was withdrawn. So, the only demand from them was to hold a judicial enquiry into the death of some employee there. But I am not concerned, at the moment, with that. I am simply concerned with this whether an offer was made by the Oil Employees Association that they will do the job provided the army was withdrawn; if so when and why did the government spurn that offer?

SHRI P. C. SETHI: As I said, the offer was made to the Adviser there and the offer was loaded in the sense that it had certain conditions. "If the army is withdrawn" could be

considered at an appropriate time. Secondly, the question is that they want the operation to be handed over to them. Now that cannot be done unless the normalcy comes over there. Thirdly, the offer was that the oil should not be pumped out of Assam to Barauni; and (4) was that Barauni should not be restarted. Now, we have not accepted this position that Barauni should not be restarted. We may or may not start it. That is a different matter. As far as the question of pumping out of the present oil is concerned, we have been saying repeatedly that this is a limited operation. But we cannot accept this proposition completely that Assam oil belongs to Assam only.

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL: The hon. Minister has stated in his reply and admitted the position that I stated in the question, that this position is continuing for the last 10 months. May I know why did they not freeze this oil some time in January when the blockade happened? That was the peak month of winter—January-February 1980. The winter has yet to start, so far as the position today is concerned. Why did they not freeze this oil in January-February? (2) You promised in the Lok Sabha on Monday, the 17th that the total flushing out of 65,000 tonnes of crude oil will be done within 8 days. Has it been completed, so far as the total quantity is concerned?

SHRI P. C. SETHI: The total quantity of 65,000 tonnes has been flushed out and the operation is complete; it was completed yesterday. But there are some loop lines where oil is still to be flushed out and that operation is continuing. That might take another 4-5 days. As far as freezing of this oil in the month of January last, oil was then quite fresh and I am not a technical man as Mr. Agarwal might be. But that time the technical advice was not that it will freeze.

DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY: The Minister in his reply says that the reaction of the agitators has not been helpful. However, military authorities yesterday said that their work went uninterrupted and they were able to flush out oil three days ahead of schedule. I should like to know: what is the meaning of a statement like this: the reaction of the agitators has not been helpful. Have they obstructed the operation of the military in flushing out oil. Otherwise it appears to me that the government is bent upon trying to defame the Assam agitators who are otherwise peaceful and adopted Gandhian methods.

SHRI P. C. SETHI: Here the use of the word is in a limited sense.

DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY: Oily sense?

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Your question was not very much oily.

SHRI P. C. SETHI: When we had taken a decision that oil had to be flushed out we requested them: let your cooperation come; it is a limited operation; let this operation be completed with your support and help. Unfortunately their support and help did not come. Not only that. The ONGC staff and Oil India staff were pressurised to go on strike and it was only about 100 officers of Oil India who are working, only six officers of ONGC who are working and doing the rest of the operation; taking the oil from the wells and pumping that and chemical cleaning of the crude are all done by them.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: I do not know why the Minister is so defensive. He knows fully well that the employees are not at all co-operating in pumping or refining oil in Assam. The Army has done a wonderful job. Would the Government of India consider not only pumping of oil out of Assam but also

start the refineries in Assam and refine oil in order to supply oil to Mizoram, Tripura, Arunachal and other parts which are very much suffering. As oil supply is an essential service, the employees who are asking for conditional acceptance should be asked to work unconditionally and the Army should be asked to refine oil in Assam refineries as it is national property. I should like to have a categorical answer for this.

SHRI P. C. SETHI: As far as the requirement of the northeastern region is concerned, the requirement is half as compared to the requirement of Assam. We have taken special care to see that even if Digboi and Gauhati refineries are not allowed to start, that region did not suffer. Aviation fuel is not allowed to be removed. Only kerosene is allowed to be removed. Therefore, we have taken ample care to see that the six states in the northeastern region do not suffer. There is a stock for one month and it is taking care of their requirement. We are augmenting their supply by sending it from other parts of the country. As far as the question of using army for starting Gauhati and other refineries is concerned, it is a question which cannot be decided like this; it has to be seen as part of the wider scenario which exists in Assam. And therefore we have been saying that as far as this flushing out operation is concerned this is a limited one and fortunately, with the very good help of the Army personnel, which the Hon. Member has said, we have achieved it and the pipeline is safe. Now, Sir, whether we continue the operation or not, it is a matter to be decided later on. The only basic thing we have said is that for all the time to come, we cannot accept this proposition that Assam oil cannot be pumped to Barauni.

SHRI K. A. RAJAN: Sir, this dangerous slogan "Assam Oil for Assam" has to be fought out in the

larger interest of the nation. I would like to know from the Hon. Minister, instead of talking of so many things and so many problems, what concrete and stringent measures have been taken out in the national interest.

SHRI P. C. SETHI: I am thankful to the hon. Member for his support that Assam oil is not meant for Assam. That is the general consensus of all the political parties, but the question is as to when and how we should start this operation on a permanent basis.

SHRI VIRBHADRA SINGH: I would like to know whether the Army has the technical capability to pump the oil in the oil wells and to run the refineries in case it is required to do so.

SHRI P. C. SETHI: Sir, the Army personnel have been trained not only to operate the pipeline in flushing out but also take out the oil from the oil wells and they have done wonderfully well. Not only that, the oil which was in the beginning 800 tonnes per day, now has pinned up to 5,000 tonnes per day and the quantum is increasing.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Sir, to put the record straight, I would like to know from the Hon. Minister, since he has repeated that argument twice here and also he had made the same argument in the meeting of the Opposition Leaders yesterday that the view point of the Assam agitators is that the oil from Assam belongs to Assam itself. Sir, after this particular information was given by the Hon. Minister I tried to contact the leaders of Assam agitation. They have made it quite clear that "it is not our position that natural resources of any particular region belong only to that extremists have actually taken that attitude, that is not the official attitude of the

two organisations that are leading the agitation and therefore that particular point of view the Government should not plan its strategy and perspective." Will it be acceptable to him?

SHRI P. C. SETHI: I am very happy that Prof. Dandavate has been able to contact the Assam students. I was under the impression that they have been taking a line, that all India parties, as far as they are concerned, they do not exist. However, in view of the fact that Prof. Dandavate has been able to contact them, we are happy to learn this situation and this offer from them that they have not taken this stand some extremists might have taken is welcome. Sir, I only want to assure ... (Interruptions)

PROF. MADHU DADAVATE: Are you not happy about it?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think he is happier than you.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Sir, we are equally happy because both of us are equally patriotic.

SHRI P. C. SETHI: Sir, as far as the question of the permanent operation is concerned, this will be decided in the context of the entire situation that exists in Assam. However, we are happy that Prof. Dandavate and practically all the leaders of the opposition yesterday took this stand that as far as this question is concerned, that nothing belongs to a particular State everything belongs to all India and therefore it is clear. But there may be a difference of opinion as to when and how it should be flushed and should be re-started on a permanent basis. At least this basic question has been decided and I am thankful to Prof. Dandavate for getting this information from the Assam students.

Illegal Trading of Silver by Film Laboratories

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*105. SHRI RAJNATH SONKAR
SHASTRI:

SHRI RASHEED MASOOD:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the illegal trading of silver recovered as a by-product by films laboratories in the country;

(b) if so, the *modus operandi* of the film laboratories in carrying out the illegal trading of silver recovered as a by-product; and

(c) the measures taken by Government in this regard?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (KUMARI KUMUDBEN M. JOSHI): (a) and (b) The Working Group on National Film Policy in their Report have stated that, on a rough basis, it is estimated that silver worth Rs. 8 to 10 crores per year can be recovered from the chemical bath used by the film processing laboratories. In their opinion, most of the labs show some sale of used chemical bath to small entrepreneurs but in actual practice recover silver clandestinely. The money thus generated is used for informal credit to film makers.

(c) It has been recommended in the Report that standards of recovery of silver from chemical wash should be laid down after scientific investigation. The recovered silver should be handed over to Hindustan Photo Films or any other manufacturing agency and the lab should be reimbursed only processing cost of silver recovery and not the cost of silver recovered. Appropriate action in terms of the recommendations made will be taken.

श्री राजनाथ सोनकर शास्त्री : माननीय मंत्री महोदया ने कहा है कि राष्ट्रीय फिल्म नीति सम्बन्धी कार्य दल