

information. We have not got that information. It takes about 4 to 5 years to complete such projects.

SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO: Keeping in view the execution of the Aluminium Plant at Koraput, may I know whether the captive plants will be executed by the Ministry of Energy or by the National Aluminium Company? I want a categorical answer from the Minister keeping in view the execution of the Aluminium complex there.

SHRI VIKRAM MAHAJAN: Captive power plant will be set up by the company. This is a captive power station and they will do it. So far as the date of execution is concerned, the hon. Prime Minister has laid the foundation stone of this project. As the hon. Minister has pointed out already, generally it takes about 4 to 5 years to complete such projects. We do hope that this will be getting completed as per schedule.

Exploration for oil in Sundarban areas of West Bengal

*1054. **SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE:** Will the Minister of PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the off-shore exploration for oil in Sundarban areas of West Bengal has commenced;

(b) if so, who are doing it;

(c) the other spots in West Bengal where on-shore exploration for oil is going on;

(d) who are doing it; and

(e) with what results?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI DALBIR SINGH): (a) to (e). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Seismic surveys are being carried out by Western Geophysical Company U.S.A. for ONGC under Contract.

(c) Seismic surveys are being carried out in Barasat, Ranaghat, Debagram and Tamluk areas of West Bengal. Precision gravity survey is being conducted in Chinsurah-Howrah area. Exploratory drilling is in progress in Nadia district near Abhay. Drilling in another well at Jaguli, also in Nadia district, will be started shortly.

(d) All current on shore surveys and drilling are being carried out by ONGC.

(e) Field data from the current Seismic and precision gravity surveys are being acquired. Seismic data already acquired are under computer processing for interpretation. Results of these surveys will be available on completion of processing and interpretation. Abhay-1 well has reached a depth of 1620 metres on 27-4-1981 and further drilling is in progress. The main zones of interest in this well are yet to be reached.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE: Sir, in reply to the first of my question namely:—

“whether the off-shore exploration for oil in Sundarban areas of West Bengal has commenced?”

the Hon. Minister has replied:

“Seismic surveys are being carried out by Western Geophysical Company, USA for ONGC under contract.”

My Supplementary (a) is this. When was this contract entered into? How long has this contract been under execution? When is this expected to be completed, if and when any time-schedule is stipulated in the contract?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Minister can reply.

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI P. C. SETHI): So far as this contract is concerned, ONGC entered into this contract with the American company. The survey operations started in 1979. Now they have covered 1100 K.M. of survey lines by May, 1980. From May, 1980 the survey work was suspended. That was from May, 1980 till December, 1980. Now the Company has commenced survey operation after the monsoon in January, 1981 and has covered 475 K.M. of survey work till February of 1981. The entire survey work is expected to be completed by end of June, 1981.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE: With regard to the other part of my question namely:—

"the other spots in West Bengal where on-shore exploration for oil is going on".

the Minister has given answers in parts (c) (d) and (e). But the reply clearly shows that uptill now no tangible result has come about. There is only one well which he has mentioned where he has said that further drilling is in progress. Then he says:

"The main zones of interest in this well are yet to be reached."

My specific question is this. On on-shore work, this type of exploration has been going on for a long time but no result has been produced as yet. This is the position. There is often a complaint that the procedures take a very long time, due to the fact that ONGC is working from Dehra Dun. The Headquarter is in Dehra Dun. So it takes a long time for the files to come and go. This is one complaint apart from certain other complaints which have come up so far. I would like to know the thinking of the hon. Minister. Will the Minister consider any proposal of shifting of the main ONGC, or having a branch, giving it

specific responsibility, so that the delay in the matter of movement of files is avoided and decisions can be taken quickly, instead of every file going to the head office, to be directed from Dehra Dun, for all the exploration work all over the country? Will the Minister consider shifting of the Dehra Dun office or splitting up this office and making that unit independent so that these files can move quickly?

SHRI P. C. SETHI: I would like to assure the hon. Member that we are doing everything possible for oil. In West, Bengal, we have exactly spent Rs. 45.00 crores and we propose to spend another Rs. 54 crore in the next couple of years. As far as shifting of Dehra Dun office is concerned, this would not be feasible. However, if the work and necessity demand, we shall consider opening of a Zonal office there.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Sir, as far as off-shore seismic survey and exploration work is concerned, I think this is not the first time that this work has been entrusted to American Companies. Previously a survey was also carried out some years ago. And nothing came out of it. I would like to know the terms of the contract under which this particular company is now working there and how much are they to be paid irrespective of whether they find anything or not? Or do the terms also include that if any oil is found then they will be given some share of the produce when it is extracted?

SHRI P. C. SETHI: Sir, in this contract there is no question of giving any share of the oil. They are only doing the seismic survey for which they are being paid in terms of man hours and as far as finding of oil is concerned, after computerising the data collected by the Seismic Survey Party, the ONGC itself will take up the drilling operations in the prospective areas. Therefore, the question of giving any oil to this foreign company does not arise.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Is it aerial survey or ground survey?

SHRI P. C. SETHI: It is ground survey.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: How can it be a ground survey? I am referring to the off-shore work. How can it be a ground survey?

SHRI P. C. SETHI: Whether it is in sea or on ground, it will be called ground survey.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Seismic survey is done either aerially or on ships. How can it be done on the off-shore?

SHRI P. C. SETHI: No, no. This is not aerial survey.

SHRI NIREN GHOSH: Sir, we heard reports that the Soviet oil experts surveyed this area and gave their opinion that the sea is floating with oil. That is the opinion they gave. I would like to know whether it is correct or not. Secondly, as I remember in 1970, 1971, and 1972, some American company were given contract for survey in the Bay of Bengal, just near Sunderbans. What work did they do? Is it not so that the data collected by them was in a perfunctory manner and there is also a question of on-shore where some drilling operations were undertaken & after reaching a certain depth pressure was felt and therefore it was abandoned? Is it not so that a new machinery would be brought and drilling operations would be continued up to 6000 metres? The oil is generally and in commercially viable quantities may be found at the depth of 6000 metres. But it was dug upto the depth of 3000 metres and when pressure came it was abandoned. Why was it not continued? An assurance was given on the floor of this House. When the ONGC is fully equipped with technical know how, etc. to conduct surveys why has this work been given to them? What is the

guarantee that they will do it seriously? The expert opinion is that oil is found where oil structure is there and here the structure is the same.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The hon. Member, Mr. Niren Ghosh, is so short but his question is very long.

SHRI P. C. SETHI: As far as oil survey and exploration in West Bengal is concerned, it is being taken up both on-shore and off-shore. As far as on-shore is concerned, we have taken up the Diamond Harbour area, where I would like to inform the hon. Member and the House we have gone to the depth of 5500 metres which is the deepest well so far drilled in India, but unfortunately we did not strike oil there. Similarly, in the Radha well No. 1, we have gone upto 3500 metres. However for the time being the Diamond Harbour area has been abandoned, but we would again come back to this area with further rigs and more instruments and the new structures which we now propose to take up would be Netra, Kalyanpur, Abhay and Jagauli. As far as Jagauli is concerned, we propose to go upto 5500 metres, in Abhay we propose to go upto 3000 to 3500 metres; in Kalyanpur we propose to go upto 3200 metres and in Netra we propose to go upto 5000 metres. Wherever deep drilling is necessary, we are doing that.

As far as off-shore drilling is concerned, I have just now pointed out in reply to Shrimati Mukherjee's question that the geophysical survey of the area is being conducted in collaboration with an American Company. The seismic survey is being undertaken. When they compile the information after this survey, that will be computerised and after computerisation, wherever the possibility of hydro-carbon is there, we shall take up the drilling in the off-shore areas also.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : He has not replied to my question as to how much the American company is be-

being paid under the terms of the agreement for doing the seismic survey.

SHRI P. C. SETHI: As I said, we will be paying them in terms of man hours; there is no question of paying them in kind or oil.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: I know something about the drilling operations in Diamond Harbour and other places because I am associated with the union. The general complaint of the employees who are connected with the drilling operations is that while the experts say that in West Bengal region, West Bengal basin, deep drilling is necessary upto the extent of 7000 metres, from the reports we have understood that the Government have only reached the deepest depth of 5000 metres, as in the case of Diamond Harbour.

SHRI P. C. SETHI: 5500 metres.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: Therefore, the need is to go deeper. In none of the sites there has been an attempt made by the ONGC or the drilling party to strike the deepest structure to find oil. In respect of the West Bengal region, will the Government revise the decision and see that drilling is done upto the depth of 7000 metres?

SHRI P. C. SETHI: We do not decide upto what depth they have to drill. Based on the data available by the seismic and other surveys, ONGC's technical staff has to decide as to how much they have to drill. But I can assure the hon. Member that new rigs with capacity to go for more than 7000 metres are available and if the necessity arises, ONGC would certainly take up deep drilling.

SHRI SATYASADHAN CHAKRABORTY: In view of the fact and in view of our past experience, that these foreign companies are not really interested in finding oil, why is it that we are not depending on our experts? There are certain international consideration also. Oil is

a very precious commodity. What specific steps is the Government taking to see that we can exploit our indigenous sources, develop our own expertise and do not depend on these foreign companies, whose interests sometimes run counter to our national interest?

SHRI P. C. SETHI: Sir, as a matter of fact most of the geophysical survey right from the beginning is being taken up by ONGC and Oil India. But the seismic survey operations have recently technically improved a vast deal. And therefore, in order to acquire the most up-to-date data, we have to import certain equipment which is not readily available. Therefore, in such areas we have to bring in the foreign companies. Here they are concerned only with the survey work. After the data is compiled by them, ONGC will take up the on-shore and off-shore operations based on that data. On-shore they are carrying on; off-shore they will take on themselves.

SHRI SATYASADHAN CHAKRABORTY: Sir, how dependable will be the data? I remember well that previously these foreign companies declared that in some areas oil would not be found. It was the Soviet experts who came and then said, yes, oil would be found; and actually that was found. The question is, the data that they will supply, how far will that be dependable? Will that also not depend upon the policy of those Governments to which the companies belong?

SHRI P. C. SETHI: Sir, I would like to bring to the notice of the House and also to his notice and I think he will recall that it was during the time of late Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru that the foreign oil companies of the West had discouraged India from taking up any oil find operations. But that was not a technical decision; that was more or less a political decision. Therefore, the Soviet experts were invited. They went to Gujarat and took up the operations. Oil was struck and now we are

striking oil. But as far as the technical operations carried out by any foreign oil companies are concerned, they are oil companies of repute, who are doing the work not only for the sake of money, but because they are finding ample work throughout the world. Therefore, we do not think as far as the computerising of the data is concerned, they would deceive us.

SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN: Just now the Minister has said that already Rs. 45 crores have been spent but why have North Bengal, particularly the districts of Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar been excluded from the oil exploration when there is expert opinion that there is an ample scope of oil in the Himalayan belt, particularly in Darjeeling and Sikkim areas. I would like to know whether the Hon. Minister will come forward with a definite proposal to make a survey, particularly in the North Bengal, Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar area?

SHRI P. C. SETHI: Sir, it will be difficult for me to give any categorical assurance of this nature, because any operation in any area would depend on the geophysical and the seismic surveys which are being undertaken by ONGC.

SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN: No, I am asking about the geophysical survey which has not been taken up in our area.

SHRI P. C. SETHI: As far as geophysical survey is concerned, may I assure the Hon. Member that geophysical survey is practically complete all over India?

SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN: In North Bengal it has not been completed as yet. I think the Hon. Minister has been misinformed.

SHRI P. C. SETHI: Sir, if there is any lacuna in my information, I will try to complete it.

Implementation of policy decisions on Dandakaranya Project

***1057. SHRI GIRIDHARI GOMANGO:** Will the Minister of SUPPLY AND REHABILITATION be pleased to state:

(a) how far Government of India have implemented the policy decision on Dandakaranya Project since the starting of the project up to the year 1980-81;

(b) how far the tribals of this project area have got promotion of their interest by his Ministry;

(c) whether the Dandakaranya Project Authority and respective State Governments have formulated schemes programmes and action plan and implemented them to achieve the objectives in Five Year Plans upto the Sixth Plan;

(d) if the project authority and State Government have been discussing from time to time regarding the settlement and tribal development, how the project authority is not aware of the investment made by the State Government on tribal and tribal areas in Plan periods; and

(e) the measures taken by his Ministry for better coordination of these two for administration and development programmes?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF SUPPLY AND REHABILITATION (SHRI P. K. THUNGON):

(a) The Government of India have duly implemented the objectives for which the Dandakaranya Development Authority had been set up in 1958, namely, effective and expeditious settlement of displaced persons from former East Pakistan and integrated development of Dandakaranya area with particular regard to the promotion of the interests of the area's tribal population.

(b) Till February, 1981, 34,277 acres of reclaimed land had been dereleased by the Dandakaranya Project to the Governments of Orissa and Madhya