

**Shri Dasappa:** If the hon. Member looks into the Report, he will find that much of the ground sought to be covered by that reference has already been covered.

**Mr. Speaker:** In view of what the Chairman of the Committee has said, if anything more remains the hon. Member will draw his attention to that.

**Shri T. B. Vittal Rao:** Of the Chairman?

**Mr. Speaker:** He may write to the Chairman, Estimates Committee and draw his attention to that.

12-19 hrs.

STATEMENT RE: OIL WELL NO. 1  
AT RUDRASAGAR

**Mr. Speaker:** Now, statement to be made by Shri K. D. Malaviya. I find that the statement is very long.

**The Minister of Mines and Oil (Shri K. D. Malaviya):** It is about 3½ pages. As Shri Hem Barua has made a statement, I thought I might read it out.

**Mr. Speaker:** Very well; it is only 3½ pages.

**An Hon. Member:** It may be laid on the Table

**Mr. Speaker:** He may read it

**Shri K. D. Malaviya:** Sir, you directed me on Tuesday the 28th March to place a statement on the Table of the House in connection with the allegation made by hon'ble Shri Hem Barua that I had concealed from the hon'ble Members of the Parliament facts in regard to the first oil well at Rudrasagar and had thus committed a breach of the privileges of this august Body.

While replying to the allegation, it is necessary to recapitulate the sequence of events to dispel certain doubts in the minds of the hon'ble Members.

Sir, As you are aware, the whole thing started with the publication in a local daily of a news item on March 13, 1961. The news item sought to allege in details that: (1) the oil well at Rudrasagar caved in; (2) that exploration had been abandoned; (3) that Rs. 30 lakhs had been wasted; (4) that all efforts to salvage the well had failed; and (5) that the mishap might affect the original time schedule in that region.

The sensational way in which this news was displayed on its front page in banner headlines was bound to exercise the minds of the hon'ble Members who are the guardians of national interest and it was, therefore, natural that an adjournment motion should have been tabled. I was equally worried and on the basis of immediate enquiries, gave interim information on the same day promising to make a statement on receipt of authentic report. On the 14th March I informed the House that the report published in the local daily was absolutely baseless in all its above mentioned five details, e.g. that the well had not caved in; that exploration had not been abandoned; that no loss had occurred and that time schedule of the Commission in that region would not be disturbed in any way.

Now, Sir, before I proceed further I would like to state that Shri Mathur, the Director of Geology of the Oil and Natural Gas Commission, whom I asked to give a technical exposition of oil drilling operations, has nowhere in his talk to the Members of the Parliament suggested that the well had caved in or that exploration had been abandoned or that money had been wasted or that efforts to salvage the well had failed or that any mishap had occurred which was going to upset the original time-schedule.

I take this opportunity to reiterate here, Sir, that let no hon'ble Member of this House have any doubts in his mind about the unfortunate inaccuracies of the news item and I am sure my hon'ble friend Shri Barua is also convinced of it.

[Shri K. D. Malaviya]

While contradicting the news item I had with equal emphasis informed the House 'what has happened in this oil well during the time of testing is nothing unusual. Its behaviour is like most first wells of an oil field peculiar to itself and undoubtedly presents problems of a technical nature'.

I, therefore, offered to arrange a talk by the specialists of the Oil and Natural Gas Commission to explain to the Members of this House and also to the Press who may be interested in knowing what happens in new oil fields and test wells. Shri Mathur was asked to give this talk and I advised him to illustrate the talk by making special reference to the 'problems of technical nature' encountered in the Rudrasagar well.

Sir, what Shri Mathur had stated in the course of his talk, was only by way of elaboration of what I had informed the House. You will, therefore, agree Sir, that the question of any contradiction between my statement and the information given by him in his talk does not arise.

I will add a few words more in reply to certain points raised by Shri Hem Barua in his statement.

Shri Hem Barua alleged that "there was a defect, major or minor, which compelled the suspension of further drilling in the well till the arrival of a work-over rig presumably from Russia". The fact is that the drilling of the well was completed down to the required depth of 3817 metres and all the casings of different calibre had been cemented in the well. The question of suspension of further drilling in the well, therefore, does not arise. Besides the work-over rig was not expected from Russia, but was on its way from Calcutta to Rudrasagar for purposes of testing and repairing wells in Rudrasagar. Let it be known that when the object is to merely test a well or to carry out minor remedial operations in the well and when the

heavy rig is required for drilling of more wells in the neighbourhood it is more economical to use a lighter "work-over rig" for the testing work or for the remedial operations. It is for this reason that the heavy drilling rig was removed to another site on the Rudrasagar structure to start drilling of a second well. The further testing of the well of Rudrasagar was left to a work-over rig which was on its way from Calcutta.

Shri Barua then doubts my statement and criticises me for having said that the well was "awaiting to be tested for determining its potentialities" because he thinks that this statement of mine does not fit against the background of technical details given by Shri Mathur. As stated by me in the Parliament on the 22nd of December, 1960, the testing of the first 3 horizons on the first well in Rudrasagar did not indicate the presence of oil in adequate quantity. It was on the 30th December, 1960 that the testing of the 4th horizon showed signs of presence of adequate quantity of oil. Thereafter, it was considered desirable to carry out testing of the remaining two horizons—which are still to be tested—by a work-over rig and to remove the heavy rig for drilling of a second well. These two upper horizons are considered equally prospective and may give us some more oil. It is, therefore, not correct to say that the need of a work-over rig was felt as early as on 15th December, 1960.

The dismantling of the rig was started on the 25th January, 1961 and this work was completed by the 12th February, 1961. The rig was transported to and erected on the site of the second well and drilling on this new site was started on 18th March, 1961, more or less on the exact date that was estimated by the Oil and Natural Gas Commission.

To obtain maximum information in a virgin area, it is the policy to drill the first test well to as great a depth

as possible, consistent with the geological and engineering considerations. Therefore, a heavy rig capable of drilling down to 15,000 ft. has been used for drilling on the Rudrasagar structure. As a result, the time taken on de-rigging, transporting and erecting it at the site for the second well was longer than in the case of the lighter and more mobile rigs which are normally used for drilling production wells elsewhere.

As nothing has happened to the first well the question of saving the well or abandoning it does not arise. Therefore, there is no basis for Shri Barua to say "that the technicians did their best to save the well and gave up their effort only when they found that nothing further could be done."

Putting cement plugs between the tested horizons is a normal part of the operations of testing. Any defect observed in these plugs and the leakage, resulting therefrom does not in any way imply structural damage or mishap in a well. It can be easily set right by putting an additional length of cement plug with the work over rig. Such defects in cement plugs occur and are so rectified commonly all over the world.

Sir, as directed by you, I take this opportunity to place on the Table of the House a copy of the text of Shri Mathur's talk on the subject, which is self-explanatory. [Placed in Library. See No. LT-2799/61]. The honorable Members have already a copy of the text of the statement I made on the 14th March, 1961.

**Shri Hem Barua (Gauhati):** May I make a submission? I have listened to the statement made by the hon. Minister and I agree with him when he condemns the way this news was flashed in banner headlines in a newspaper.

**Shri T. B. Vittal Rao (Khammam):** It was in *The Hindustan Times*.

**Shri Hem Barua:** He has the liberty to condemn it, and he can condemn it more. What I was concerned with was this, namely that certain basic facts.....

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Minister has answered that.

**Shri Hem Barua:** No; I shall point out one or two things.

**Mr. Speaker:** What is it that the hon. Member wants? I would not allow a discussion on this matter now. I allowed him an opportunity earlier. The hon. Member may resume his seat and hear me. In these matters if an hon. Member takes exception to any statement made by a Minister or a Minister says that a statement made by a Member is incorrect, I give him an opportunity and ask him to state so that the other side may have an opportunity to refute it. He has stated it categorically now. The other day, the hon. Minister Shri K. D. Malviya made an oral statement, but I found that a number of allegations were made making reference to Shri Mathur's statement profusely.

Therefore, with respect to those items, I wanted an elaborate statement to be made, and the House was also anxious to have a text of Shri Mathur's speech; also arising out of that text and the criticism made of it or the mistakes pointed out by Shri Hem Barua, I wanted a categorical statement, and the hon. Minister has now made statement. The matter stops at that stage. There is no question of any further queries now. If the House is not satisfied, it can always raise a discussion some time after following the proper procedure and after giving notice.

**Shri Hem Barua:** May I seek a clarification?

**Mr. Speaker:** No; there is no question of any clarification now; otherwise it will be an endless business.