

action, which I could avoid answering; but I would not like to do it. There are obvious difficulties in giving any assurance with regard to the supply of LPG in the far remote areas of the desert. It is a costly fuel. It is difficult to reach there. Well, so far as the crude oil availability is concerned, it is a costly fuel, because the more LPG distribution that we encourage, the more crude oil we will have to import. LPG come out of crude. And we have less crude. Therefore, we cannot unfortunately encourage the distribution of LPG. Therefore, something else has to be done. We are also considering the distribution of cheap kerosene chulhas in such areas, and within the next few weeks or months we shall be able to supply such kerosene Chulhas to the areas which have been referred to by the hon. Member.

**SHRI R. S. PANDEY:** I am sure the Minister will agree with me that there is a good demand for cooking gas in the rural areas. Taking that demand into consideration, how are you going to meet that demand?

**SHRI K. D. MALAVIYA:** We are trying to do our best. When the Bombay High gas comes, we shall try to convert it into LPG.

#### Takeover of Arrah-Sasaram Light Railway

\*39. **SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE:**

**SHRI RAMAVATAR SHASTRI:**

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to take over the Martin Light Railway of Arrah-Sasaram as per assurance given to the Union leaders earlier; and

(b) the salient features thereof?

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS**

**(SHRI MOHD. SHAFI QURESHI):**

(a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

**SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE:** The Minister knows the conditions of the Martin Light Railway of Arrah-Sasaram. Several times this issue has been brought to his notice, not only by me personally but also by the leaders of the trade unions. It has also been raised on the floor of the House. The Ministers has stated repeatedly, and recently in a letter to me, that they will see to it that the railways is running and it is not stopped. He told me that if the company fails to run the railways, the Government will take it over. But that is now denied by Shri Qureshi. Our hon. Speaker comes from that area and he knows the whole position. Is it not the position that ultimately you will have to take over this railways, because there is not the slightest possibility that the Company would be able to run it for a long time? The employees are not being paid their dues and there has been stoppage of running of trains. The running of trains has been disrupted several times. I have made several representations in the matter, as also the trade unions. The State Government of Bihar have also requested the Railway Ministry to take it over. In view of the fact that several representations have been made to the Ministry for taking it over, if the Railway Ministry have not already decided to take it over, will they consider taking it over, as early as possible, and thus enable the railways to be run efficiently and save the misery of the employees?

**SHRI MOHD. SHAFI QURESHI:** As the hon. Member knows, this Company is working under an agreement with the District Board of Sasaram. When they were having terrific financial difficulties, the Central Government came to the rescue of this particular railway Company. In December 1974, for instance, a notice was

given by this Company to close the railways altogether. At that time, the matter was raised by some hon. Members and it was brought to the notice of the Railway Ministry. Immediately, we paid this Company Rs 25 lakhs as advance to tide over the initial difficulties. Subsequently, we found that this Company has not paid even contributions to the provident fund regularly. But there is another aspect to this problem. A large number of permits were issued by the State Government on this particular route, which has made this line uneconomic. That is why it is losing on its operations. The Company was unable to pay Salaries and Wages to its Staff for December '75 and January '76 and the Staff stopped operation of services from 6/7-2/76. We found that a subsidy of Rs 361 lakhs was due to the Company from us. We immediately paid that money so that the Company would be in a position to meet the demands of the staff. The Company has issued notice to the staff on the 27th February 1976 to resume duty and to receive their salaries for December 1975 and January, 1976. The working of this Company has been reviewed again by the Ministry and we have taken a decision that in order to bring it back to normal health, we should permit the company to raise its overdraft limit with its banker, from Rs 5 lakhs to Rs 10 lakhs. That would give them considerable leeway to meet the demands of the staff. We have taken another decision that the subsidy which is to be paid to the Company should be paid at more frequent intervals, so that the Company can meet its commitments. The Company in their Budget Estimates for 75-76 made a provision for renewals and replacements at a cost of Rs 2 lakhs and this expenditure has been approved by the Ministry of Railways. We hope with these measures this Company will be able to improve its financial position and also operational efficiency.

**SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE** These things he has stated repeatedly, but

we think that there is no hope of reviving it simply with this kind of aid. That is why taking over is very important and urgent. My question is why you are refusing to take over. Is it only because it is not running at a profit? Please give a direct reply to this.

**SHRI MOHD. SHAFI QURESHI:** That is also a point, but the basic fact is that this company is running under an agreement with the District Board. The District Board has the option to renew the agreement every seven years or terminate it. In 1972 this option was available, but they did not exercise it. Now that the Central Government has stepped in, all these matters would be considered as to what would be the condition for taking over, its economic and operational liability etc. We will have to consult the State Government also because, as I have already said, this route has to be made economically viable and it can be done provided the rolling stock and operational efficiency are improved and also the number of bus route permits issued by the State Government are curtailed. If there is a parallel road running and large traffic is diverted to it, this company cannot be economically viable.

**SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE** After seeing their performance for some time will you reconsider it? If their performance is not satisfactory, will you think in terms of taking over?

**SHRI MOHD. SHAFI QURESHI:** We will consider after these new methods have been adopted.

श्री डी० एन० तिवारी : सरकार चाहे कितना भी प्रयत्न करे, कम्पनी का वरिष्ठ इम्प्लू नही होने वाला है। गठिया चलाने वा उद्द्य है कि यात्रिया को सुविधा हो। वहा गाडी इतनी धीमी चलती है कि पैदल चलने वाला भी उससे आगे निकल जाता है, साइकिल और टमटम की बात है। कहे।

लोग जहाँ चाहें उतर जाते हैं और फिर चढ़ जाते हैं। अगर सरकार ने इस रेलवे को चलवाना है, तो वह ठीक से चलाये, वर्ना इसको बन्द कर दे। वर्तमान स्थिति में मुसाफिरो को तकलीफ होती है, कम्पनी को लाभ होता है और सरकार की सबसिडी भी बढ़ती जाती है। सरकार जितनी सबसिडी दे रही है, उससे कुछ अधिक खपया देकर वह इस रेलवे को टेक ओवर कर सकती है। यह स्पष्ट बात है कि जब यह रेलवे सरकार के अन्दर आ जायेगी, तो वह इम्प्रूव करेगी। मंत्री महोदय ने कहा है कि रेलवे लाइन के परैलल रोड है वहा पर चलने वाली बसों को बहुत से परमिट दिए गए हैं और इस कारण रेलवे को घाटा होता है। वह पलत बात है। वास्तव में कम्पनी का प्रबन्ध खराब होने के कारण उसको घाटा होता है। इसलिए यह जरूरी है कि सरकार इस रेलवे को टेक ओवर कर ल, अन्यथा यही स्थिति जारी रहेगी, यात्रियों को तकलीफ होगी और कम्पनी को घाटा होगा।

श्री मुहम्मद शकी कुरैशी : इस रेलवे से यात्रियों को दो किस्म की सुविधायें हासिल हैं। जैसा कि कहा गया है, एक ता गाडी की कम रफ्तारी की वजह से वे जब चाहे चढ़-उतर जाते हैं और दूसरे, वे बिना टिकट स्फुर करते हैं। इस वजह से कम्पनी का नुकसान हो रहा है। ये तमाम बातें देखनी पड़ेगी और उसके बाद यह फैसला किया जायेगा कि गवर्नमेंट उसको टेक ओवर करे या नहीं।

#### Seismic Survey for Oil Exploration under Deeper Continental Shelf

\*21 SHRI B S BHAURA  
SHRI C JANARDHANAN

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM be pleased to state

(a) whether the Seismic Survey for offshore oil exploration under the

Deeper Continental Shelf project has been completed;

(b) if so, the broad features and results thereof, and

(c) what further action has been taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM  
(SHRI K D MALAVIYA) (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The data collected in these surveys are presently being processed. The results will be known only after the data are processed and interpreted.

(c) Depending upon the results of these surveys exploratory drilling is planned to be taken up in the Deeper Continental Shelf area during this year.

श्री भान सिंह भीरा : मैं मंत्री महोदय से जानना चाहता हू कि यह कब तक पता चलेगा? आपने कोई टाइम निर्धारित किया है कि कब तक इस डेटा का पता चल जायगा।

श्री के०डी० मालवीय : हमने और ज्यादा तेजी तो बड़ा मुश्किल है। यह एरिया जो इतनी दूर है, बम्बई से करीब डेढ़ सौ पौने दो सौ किलोमीटर दूर वहा पर एक प्रलग समुठन बना कर सैस्मिक सर्वे वगैरह का काम और उसका इंटर-प्रिडिशन किया जा रहा है। उस में समय लगता है। ऐसे ही हम पांच करोड़ रुपया खर्च करना मुनासिब नहीं है। इसीलिये मैंने कहा इस साल के अन्त तक इस एरिया में एक बड़े क्षेत्र के अन्दर हम खुदाई कर लेंगे।