

SHRI T. A. PAI: I do not think there is any discrimination between the pay scales of either this or that force nor is it because of the shortage of policemen that these things happen. The House will agree with me that Rs. 3 crores is not a small amount which we are spending in order to get these services. But, invariably, I think—that is the complaint, I do not know—all people who are not wanted in any other Department are sent to the Government Railway Police.

श्री सतपाल कपूर मैं आपके जिये मिनिस्टर साहब से जानना चाहता ह कि पिछले माल जो डकैती और कत्ल के बाकयान हुए उन में कितने रेलवे मुलाजिम इन्वाल्ड थे ?

दुसरे अभी जो कत्ल के बाकयान हुए, कौन अभी आपकी इश्युरिस स्कीम लागू नहीं हुई है इसलिये क्या रेलवे उनको मुआविजा देने पर विचार कर रही है या नहीं ?

SHRI T. A. PAI: I am not able to give an answer straightway to this question about the number of murders that have taken place. I have also been seriously thinking whether the Railways should not accept the responsibility also to meet such cases. Particularly, in this case, the man who was killed was a man who tried to pull the chain. He was not the one who was attacked. But he wanted to give protection to other passengers by trying to pull the chain and stop the train. That was his crime and, therefore, he was shot. I feel, we are perfectly justified in compensating him. I shall, certainly, look into what best can be done.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: In how many cases stolen railway goods, that is, the profit of robbery has been recovered from the R.P.F. personnel as well as the State police personnel?

SHRI T. A. PAI I request for a separate Question

MR. SPEAKER. Does he sometimes put knowingly the questions that are not relevant and still they have to be answered, or he does it just innocently? Next Question

Shri Bhola Manjhu—absent; Shri Giridhar Gomango—absent; Shri Bishwanath Jhunjhunwala—absent; Shri K. Suryanarayana—absent; Shri D. P. Jadeja—absent, Shri Nanjibhai Ravjibhai Verkaria—absent So many Members are absent, in whose names the Questions are there Do they know that their Questions come every day or do they come from office? I must say, they are every day on the List. If they had known that they had sent the questions, they should have been present here. It is not a question of one day or two days. The office keeps working, but the Member is unaware

Review of the Working of Ministry of Petroleum and Chemicals

206. **SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH:** Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a review has been made of the working of the Ministry of Petroleum and Chemicals;

(b) if so, the purpose thereof, and

(c) the decisions arrived at and the steps taken or proposed to be taken to implement the same?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE AND PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI H. R. GOKHALE): (a) to (c). A review of certain areas of operation of the Ministry of Petroleum and Chemicals was made recently. The object was to ensure speedy execution of development programmes and removal of difficulties therein. The major decisions taken

as a result of this review are as follows:—

(i) With a view to improving the economics of production of fertilizers from fuel oil and Heavy Stock, the excise duty leviable on such stock has been waived when it is used for production of fertilizers.

(ii) It has been decided that the programme for oil exploration should be speeded up.

(iii) Strengthening of the Ministry so as to improve the technical and policy levels has been sanctioned to enable it to attend to its vastly expanded functions.

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH: May I know whether any concrete steps are being taken to expedite the execution of the many fertiliser projects that are slowed down and which is resulting in dearth of fertilisers in the country? Many projects are on hand; what efforts are the Ministry taking to see that they are executed in time?

SHRI H. R. GOKHALE: The delay in the executive of the projects which are on hand is not attributable to one single reason in each case. But the reasons which obtain in each case have been identified and attempts are made to remove these bottlenecks and see that the inordinate delay, in some cases, does not take place and the projects do go into commission as early as possible.

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH: With regard to oil exploration programme that is in collaboration with other foreign agencies, about off-shore drilling, etc., the impression is gaining ground that the ONGC and other agencies that are engaged in these operations are not able to give that satisfactory results which are expected of them because there has not been the proper strengthening of the organisations. In that case, what specific efforts are being made to see that

these organisations are strengthened and proper operations are executed in time?

SHRI H. R. GOKHALE: Although the hon. Member referred to off-shore exploration, I believe, the question was wider in the sense that the ONGC organisation has not been functioning, according to the hon. Member, as effectively as necessary to meet the requirements of greater efforts of exploration in off-shore and on-shore.

So far as off-exploration is concerned, the hon. Member knows that the time is now very ripe and the exploration activities in the Bombay high area will start very soon. In fact, it was expected that the self-propelled platform which has been ordered from Japan would have been delivered to us by this time, but it has taken a little more time and it is expected that before the middle of December this platform will be delivered by Japan and the work on off-shore exploration in the Bombay high area will begin.

So far as on-shore part is concerned, the hon. Member is also aware—because I have taken the House into confidence on earlier occasions also—that a concrete plan for intensive on-shore exploration was worked out by a joint team of ONGC and Soviet experts; they have projected this for a period of five years which might ultimately, result, if fortunately we are successful, in discovering reserves to the tune of 63 or 64 million tonnes of oil. But the first five-year part of this programme envisages that there will be an addition of 4 million tonnes. Let us hope for the best.

With regard to the overall question of reorganisation of the ONGC, I will assure the House that this has been receiving not only my top-most attention but also the entire Government's attention—the entire Government is concerned with this. We are now very seriously and very carefully con-

sidering the recommendations of the Malavika Committee with regard to this, and I hope that we will be able to come and say before the House that some concrete steps in the positive direction have been taken

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA I would like to know whether this review of the working of the Ministry has included any review of what should be or whether the present relationship between the Ministry and the various corporations which are connected with fertilisers, petroleum and so on needs any kind of revision or improvement. Specifically I would like to know from him for example in the case of the high officers of the Corporation that is to say the Indian Oil Corporation who have been very pungently criticised by an august body like the Committee on Public Undertakings of Parliament and who are facing charges before a Commission of Inquiry in such a case what is supposed to be the attitude of the Ministry towards those officers? Is it the job of the Ministry to protect those officers or is it the job of the Ministry to try to see that the recommendations of the Public Undertakings Committee in that respect are carried out?

SHRI H R GOKHALE I have no hesitation in answering the last part of the question first. The Ministry cannot get away with the answer that we have no responsibility in this matter and, it is certainly the job of the Ministry not to protect those who have been found to be guilty and certainly to see that the functioning of these parts of the public sector undertakings is improved. There can be no difference of opinion on this.

With regard to the first part of the question which I regard as certainly very important whether the Ministry has been having a review and whether it includes a review of the relationship between the Ministry and the various public sector organisations like the Fertiliser Corporation and

Indian Oil Corporation and so on, yes it does so include and at least with regard to the fertiliser part of it I am in a position to tell the House that a high-level committee was appointed which again has appointed an action taken committee, which committee includes representatives of the Planning Commission and also and that committee has recently submitted a report to the Prime Minister and has also given it to me and we are at it and are trying to examine the whole basis not only of the relationship of the Ministry and this Corporation but also the question whether it requires any restructuring or reorganisation and the same in broad terms applies to the other public sector organisations under the Ministry.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA My question was suppose the Public Undertakings Committee has recommended that departmental action should be taken against certain officers what is the Ministry's responsibility in that case? Should it not initiate any departmental action against them?

SHRI H R GOKHALE In the very beginning I have answered this question because the suggestion was that the Ministry's job is not to protect and there I entirely agree that it is not the job of the Ministry to protect guilty officers. (Interruptions) If any specific instance is pointed out I will look into it and let you know what attitude the Ministry has taken. But there is no attitude.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA It is well known to you that there is the pipeline inquiry case going on and there is the recommendation of the PUC that departmental action must be taken against them. Why is it not taken?

SHRI H R GOKHALE It did not occur to me that the hon. Member had the pipeline inquiry in his mind. So far as the pipeline inquiry is concerned, it is a matter *sub judice* and the

inquiry is still proceeding. But, I am sure the PUC report which was really the main basis for the setting up of this inquiry would be considered as very relevant in this inquiry by the Judge concerned who holds this inquiry. There is no intention on our part to see that any recommendation of the PUC is ignored and is not implemented. But we are awaiting the report of this Commission.

DR. HENRY AUSTIN: May I know from the hon. Minister whether the Ministry has taken steps in the direction of starting off-shore drilling in places other than Bombay? The hon. Minister knows that several other places have been identified and I myself have written to him regarding prospects and sent him study reports of prospects of off-shore drilling in Cochin area and that it gives besides ample scope for further expansion of the fertiliser complex in Cochin as well. I would like to know whether any steps have been taken in that direction for off-shore drilling elsewhere than Bombay.

SHRI H. R. GOKHALE: I would like to clarify that we must, in all these matters of exploration, whether off-shore or on-shore, distinguish between drilling and preliminary surveys like seismic surveys which precede drilling. Now, so far as off-shore area is concerned in the Bombay High preliminary surveys have been done and the results of these surveys do show a good hope of finding oil as a result of drilling and, as I said, the operations are likely to commence very soon. With regard to other areas, these surveys have not yet reached a concrete stage where it is possible to say that drilling should start. But, these surveys are certainly in operation and are in progress in other areas also.

SHRI G. VISWANATHAN: I would like to know from the Minister why action has not been taken against the particular officials against whom the

Chairman of the Pipelines Inquiry Commission, Mr. Justice Takru, has passed severe strictures. I would like to quote only one sentence:

"The patience of the Commission has been exhausted as the IOC has taken about 18 months to produce some of the relevant files whereas the IOC should have placed all the relevant files at the disposal of the Commission voluntarily immediately after the Commission was constituted and in any case within 4 or 5 months and the production of the files in instalments has obstructed the progress of the inquiry."

We pointed out this thing in this very House on the 4th and 5th May. Instead of taking action against the culprit officials, how is it that Government has promoted one of these officers? I refer to the project officer of the pipeline project. How can this be done and what is their explanation? May I know when this Ministry is going to stop connivance with these culprits and assure us that they will take action against the guilty officials?

SHRI H. R. GOKHALE: The question about strictures has been raised in this very House on more than one occasion. I had myself said in the House that the files had to be produced both by the IOC as well as by the Ministry. I do not remember the exact number, but I think the files came to about 4,000 or so, to be produced by the IOC as well as by the Ministry. There were about 350 files required from the Ministry which were produced by the Ministry. If the Commission feels some other files necessary to be produced, we will have no hesitation to produce them. There will be no hesitation on the part of the IOC or the Ministry to produce them. Action has been taken now to provide the assistance of investigators so that they can look at the files, identify areas in which investigation is to be made and correlate the files to the point at issue before the Com-

mission. They have been made available to the Commission. They have begun investigation, but if the Commission wants any files, I have hesitation that they will be produced.

SHRI G VISWANATHAN The Official has been promoted; you are encouraging them

SHRI R S PANDEY. The Chemical and Petroleum Ministry is very important, so also the Minister. I am very happy to know that the Minister is reviving the functioning of the Ministry. Long ago a decision was taken to put up this fertiliser plant at Korba which is a coal-based project because inferior quality of coal could be found there. The German team came and they surveyed the area and submitted their report. May I know whether this scheme still stands or has been given up?

SHRI H. R. GOKHALE We have not given it up.

Pensionary benefits to Retired Railway Employees

*207 **SHRI M. KATHAMUTHU:** Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been a demand from ex Railway employees who have retired during the current year (1972) that they be allowed to opt for the pensionary benefits as in the case of employees who had retired earlier, and

(b) if so what decision has been taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI T. A. PAI). (a) and (b) Yes Sir. A representation was received that railway employees who retired before 15-7-1972 should also be given an option for the Pension Scheme in the light of a fresh option given in response, to requests from Organised Labour, to railway employees in ser-

vice on 15-7-1972 to opt for the pension scheme. It was decided that it would not be possible to allow a fresh option to employees who retired before 15-7-1972.

SHRI M. KATHAMUTHU: After liberalisation of the scheme the employees have come forward to opt for the pension scheme. I know personally of those employees who opted for pension but retired before 15-7-1972 pending decision, on their request. I would like to know from the Government whether Government will consider the case favourably of those who retired prior to 15-7-1972 at least.

SHRI T. A. PAI The scheme was introduced for the first time in 1957 and thereafter the employees were given option to change over six times. In 1971 we had the conference with the AIRF and it was agreed that the possibility of another general option for pension could be examined and this matter was then processed in consultation with the Ministry of Finance and with their concurrence the order was issued on 15-7-1972 to cover those who were in service on that date and secondly, those who quit service thereafter to elect the pension scheme. The option was to be exercised by 21-10-1972. It may be stated that orders were also issued to the effect that the widows and family members of the railway servants who were in railway service on 15-7-1972 and who died without exercising the option within the time allotted, that is, 21-10-1972 may also be permitted to elect to be governed by the pension scheme including family pension scheme, 1964, subject to certain conditions being fulfilled. Besides the above, in implementation of a decision taken at a meeting of the National Council under the joint consultative machinery for government servants held in July, 1972, orders have also been issued extending a similar option to widows and family members of railway servants....