

any foreign experts were associated and the countries to which they belonged ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI DALBIR SINGH) : (a) No efforts to explore for petroleum deposits in the offshore area adjoining the Andaman and Nicobar Islands have been made so far.

(b) Does not arise.

SHRI B S. MURTHY : Has the Ministry any idea about the petroleum deposits in offshore Andaman ?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI P. C. SETHI) : As far as Andaman-Nicobar area is concerned, it has been pointed out that no seismic work has been done ; but as far as Bombay High is concerned, that is being done.

SHRI S. C. SAMANTA : May I know whether any exploratory work was done in Andaman and if so with what result ?

SHRI P. C. SETHI : Only the geological field party of the ONGC has conducted some surveys about the rock structure there. A study is being done whether this rock structure is of interest. As far as seismic survey is concerned, we shall have to do it either by contract seismic vessel or by acquiring seismic vessels.

SHRI P. K. DEO : In view of the fact that in Sumatra there is plenty of oil and the great Nicobar island is only 75 miles from the tip of Sumatra, may I know whether any seismic survey or aero-magnetic survey has been done of Nicobar Islands ?

SHRI P. C. SETHI : As I pointed out, no seismic survey has been done in this area. Actually we want to do seismic survey of the entire continental shelf of India. We shall have to get seismic vessel and we are in touch with the parties concerned to either purchase a seismic vessel or hire it.

SHRI JAGANATH RAO : In view of oligopolistic tendencies on the part of the big oil companies who are rigging the prices of crude, have the Government thought of

intensifying their efforts to explore crude oil in the offshore area or other parts of the country ?

SHRI P. C. SETHI : It is certainly our desire and we are intensifying our search for crude in off shore and land areas where the deposits are likely to be found. But this question has to be viewed from the point of view of our technological know-how and the resources at our disposal. We are making sincere and honest efforts to do as much off shore work as possible.

Population Growth in Rural Areas of West Bengal

*1360. **SHRI SUBODH HANSDA :** Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY PLANNING be pleased to state :

(a) whether population growth in West Bengal is much more in comparison to other States ;

(b) whether this growth is in very high percentage in Industrial belt among the poorest section of the society in rural Bengal ; and

(c) what specific steps are being taken to stop such growth ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY PLANNING (SHRI A. K. KISKU) : (a) According to 1971 Census Provisional data, the State of West Bengal had a population growth rate of 27.24% during 1961-70 and was eighth highest amongst the States in India.

(b) In the absence of detailed figures of 1971 district-wise Census data and other characteristic of population which are still awaited, it is too early to express an opinion in this matter.

(c) The programme is being stepped up through concentration of motivation and services in populous districts ; setting up post-partum centres, special efforts in organised and industrial sectors, and by providing more services and facilities in rural areas.

SHRI SUBODH HANSDA : In accordance with the answer given by the hon. Minister, the growth of population in West Bengal is 27.24 per cent. I would like to know whether this rate of growth is not

higher than what Government expected with their present family planning programme, and whether any study has been made as to why this rate of growth has been so high.

SHRI A. K. KISKU : From the figures it appears that West Bengal does not figure very high in growth rate compared to other States, but in the last three or four years health and family planning centres were the special targets of attack by the Naxalites. On the other hand, the organised sector, especially the Chambers of Commerce increased their activities to a great extent. So, I would say that the observation made by the hon. Member is not correct.

SHRI SUBODH HANSDA : May I know whether Government is aware of the fact that the publicity machinery of family planning and the mode of publicity are very weak in West Bengal ?

SHRI A. K. KISKU : The publicity machinery is not at all lagging behind. On the other hand, I would say that various steps have been taken for intensification of the programme. They include intensive programme, post-partum programme, commercial distribution bureaux, which is the highest in Calcutta, nutrition programme and immunisation of mothers and children and setting up of main centres and sub-centres required according to the pattern in the rural areas and providing other facilities for the rural population.

SHRI K. SURYANARAYANA : Family planning propaganda is carried on only in the cities and urban areas, and there is lack of propaganda in the labour areas and in rural areas. This is true of West Bengal also. So, will the Government consider speeding up their machinery in the rural areas and labour areas, particularly in West Bengal ?

SHRI A. K. KISKU : This suggestion will be borne in mind.

SHRI M. RAM GOPAL REDDY : The increase of 2.7 per cent in West Bengal is very high compared to all-India average which is only 2.4. Is it on account of the influx of refugees or is it on account of non-practice of family planning methods ?

SHRI A. K. KISKU : This refugee influx has nothing to do with it.

SHRI M. RAM GOPAL REDDY : There was refugees influx previously also.

SHRI A. K. KISKU : The total programme in different sectors of family planning in West Bengal is in full swing.

SHRI D. N. MAHATA : May I know whether there is any kind of booklet on family planning in Santhal language to be distributed among the tribal people ?

SHRI A. K. KISKU : So far as my knowledge goes, there is no such book published.

SHRI SHYAMANANDAN MISHRA : How does the expenditure on family planning in West Bengal compare with the expenditure in other States ? More particularly, I want the figure of central assistance given to West Bengal as compared to other States.

SHRI A. K. KISKU : I do not have the exact figures specifically for West Bengal. If I am given notice, I will surely supply the figure.

National Health Service Scheme

*1362. **SHRI C. K. CHANDRAPAN :** Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY PLANNING be pleased to state :

(a) whether the question of introducing a comprehensive National Health Service Scheme in the country has been considered by Government ; and

(b) if so, the decision taken thereon ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY PLANNING (SHRI A. K. KISKU) : (a) There is no proposal, at present, to introduce a National Health Service Scheme on a country-wide basis.

(b) Does not arise.

SHRI C. K. CHANDRAPAN : May I know why Government is not considering such a scheme ?