

- (iii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Aids Prevention and Control Project—Voluntary Health Services, Madras, for the year 1995–96.
- (5) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (4) above.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT. 1695/97]

Annual Report and Review of the working of the Hindustans Antibiotics Ltd., Pimpri for the year 1995–96 and statement for delay in laying the papers

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SIS RAM OLA) : Sir, I beg to lay the following on the Table :—

- (1) A copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) under sub-section (1) of section 619A of the companies Act, 1956 :—
- (i) Review by the Government of the working of the Hindustan Antibiotics Limited, Pimpri, for the year 1995–96.
- (ii) Annual Report of the Hindustan Antibiotics Limited, Pimpri, for the year 1995–96, alongwith Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.
- (2) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (1) above.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT. 1696/97]

[English]

12.06 hrs.

MESSAGES FROM RAJYA SABHA

SECRETARY-GENERAL : Sir, I have to report the following messages received from the Secretary-General of Rajya Sabha :—

- (i) "In accordance with the provisions of sub-rule (6) of rule 186 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Rajya Sabha, I am directed to return herewith the Appropriation (Railways) Vote on Account Bill, 1997 which was passed by the Lok Sabha at its sitting held on the 13th March, 1997 and transmitted to the Rajya Sabha for its recommendations and to state that this House has no recommendations to make to the Lok Sabha in regard to the said Bill."

- (ii) "In accordance with the provisions of sub-rule (6) of rule 186 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Rajya Sabha, I am directed to return herewith the Appropriation (Railways) Bill, 1997 which was passed by the Lok Sabha at its sitting held on the 13th March, 1997 and transmitted to the Rajya Sabha for its recommendations and to state that this House has no recommendations to make to the Lok Sabha in regard to the said Bill."

- (iii) "In accordance with the provisions of sub-rule (6) of rule 186 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Rajya Sabha, I am directed to return herewith the Appropriation (Railways) No. 2 Bill, 1997 which was passed by the Lok Sabha at its sitting held on the 13th March, 1997 and transmitted to the Rajya Sabha for its recommendations and to state that this House has no recommendations to make to the Lok Sabha in regard to the said Bill."

[Translation]

12.07¹/₂ hrs.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

Fifth and Sixth Reports

DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI (Allahabad) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to present the following Reports (Hindi and English versions) of the Public Accounts Committee :—

- (1) Fifth Report on Action Taken on 111th Report of Public Accounts Committee (10th Lok Sabha) relating to Building for Permanent Mission at New York.
- (2) Sixth Report on Action Taken on 107th Report of Public Accounts Committee (10th Lok Sabha) relating to Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad.

[English]

12.08 hrs.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

New Exploration Licensing Policy

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU) : Hon. Speaker, Sir, I have great pleasure in informing the hon. Members of this august House that the Government has recently approved a New Exploration Licensing Policy for petroleum operations.

As the hon. Members are aware, we are heavily dependent on imports to meet the rapidly growing demand for petroleum products—the current level of self-sufficiency being less than 50 per cent. At the current levels of projection of demand and supply, the level of self-sufficiency is likely to decline even further to about 35 per cent over the next five years. It will be readily appreciated that substantial efforts are necessary to boost the level of exploration activity in the country so that new finds can be made and the production of crude oil and gas significantly increased in the years to come.

India today remains one of the least explored regions with well density per thousand sq. kms. being among the lowest in the world. Of the 26 sedimentary basins, only six have been explored. It is thus evident that vast amounts of capital investments are necessary if exploration efforts are to be substantially augmented and, therefore, apart from boosting the efforts of the National Oil Companies, greater incentive will have to be given to the private sector to invest in this critical area.

With these broad objectives in mind, the Government has approved a New Exploration Licensing Policy which has the following salient features :—

- (1) The upstream Public Sector companies namely ONGC and OIL are to be provided a level playing field by giving them the same fiscal and contract terms as are available to private companies. This will, *inter-alia*, imply that oil companies including ONGC and OIL will be paid international prices of oil for discoveries made in the blocks offered under the new policy. They will, however, also have to compete with the private sector for obtaining petroleum exploration licenses instead of getting them on a nomination basis at present.
- (2) Exploration blocks under the new policy will be allotted on the basis of an open acreage system which means that companies can apply for exploration blocks at any time and not necessarily be restricted to bidding rounds.
- (3) A new comprehensive fiscal package has been proposed to provide adequate incentive for attracting investment capital in this critical area. Some elements of this package have already been announced by the Finance Minister in his Budget speech. This package includes :—
 - (a) Royalty payments at the rate of 12.5 per cent for the inland areas and 10 per cent for offshore areas.
 - (b) Half of the royalty from the offshore area will be credited to a Hydrocarbon Development Fund to promote and fund exploration related

activities such as acquisition of geological data on poorly unexplored basins, promotion of investment opportunities in the upstream sector, institution building etc.

- (c) To encourage exploration in deep water and frontier areas, royalty will be charged at half the rate for offshore for deep water areas beyond 400 metre bathymetry for the first seven years after commencement of commercial production.
- (d) It is proposed to completely abolish cess payments for blocks offered under the new policy.
- (e) ONGC and OIL will also be exempted from payment of customs duty on import of goods required for petroleum operations on exploration and exploitation under new policy to bring them on par with private companies who presently enjoy this facility.
- (f) A special thrust is to be given to boost exploration and production of petroleum in the North Eastern region and for this purpose, the hon. Finance Minister has already announced a tax holiday for seven years after commencement of commercial production from fields situated in this region.
- (g) A separate petroleum tax code is to be put in place to facilitate investments in this sector.

Some of the other features of the new policy are :—

- (i) There will be no compulsory state participation through ONGC and OIL and it will be up to the private companies to form strategic alliances with these companies if they so wish to do.
- (ii) There will be freedom to the contractors to market the crude oil and gas discovered in the blocks under the new policy in the domestic market.
- (iii) There will be no payments of signature, discovery or production bonuses under the new policy.
- (iv) Exemption from payment of petroleum exploration licence fee/area rentals.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH (Chittorgarh) : Sir, I do not wish to comment on what has just been announced because a part of it was contained in the hon. Finance Minister's Budget Speech as well. But my great regret is on two counts. One, this is coming at a stage when we will be denied a due and proper discussion on this. This is a very highly important area of national interest. This is, in fact, a part of the total national energy security that we are dealing with.

The second aspect is that while that has been taken into account—I do not wish to comment at all on the content of that—the one great lacuna in the entire pronouncement of the petroleum policy is that not even a word has been said about savings. All the changes that have been made here relate to what fiscal changes will be made, what exploration changes etc. will be made, which is an area of discussion by itself. But inculcating a sense of savings on energy which, I think, is a part of the total energy concept, too is absent. They remain the main areas of our concern.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL (Hooghly) : Sir, the announcement of such a policy declaration has serious implications on the economy of the nation. We do hardly have any time before the recess of the Budget Session which starts from the 21st of this month. So, my plea is that this House should be allowed a full-fledged discussion on the oil exploration policy.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM NAGINA MISHRA (Pudrauna) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have been trying to raise the problems of sugarcane growers for the last one week... [Interruptions]

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : You will get a chance. We have suspended the Lunch Hour. We have not suspended the Zero Hour. Do not worry. You will get your turn.

[Translation]

SHRI YELLAIAH NANDI (Siddipet) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to speak on electricity crisis in Andhra Pradesh ... [Interruptions]

MR. SPEAKER : All of you will get a chance to speak please sit down.

[English]

We will give you a chance. Let him speak first.

... (Interruptions)

SHRI P.C. THOMAS (Muvattupuzha) : I have been called to speak. Please permit me ... (Interruptions)

Sir, a very serious incident had taken place in NOIDA in Uttar Pradesh where, in a factory called 'Motherson Systems Limited,' the police have entered the factory. There are about thousand workers working in the factory including 700 women labourers. They have beaten these labourers with the connivance of the management ... (Interruptions) I may be allowed to submit.

12.13 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

[Translation]

SHRI RAM NAGINA MISHRA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, you are leaving the House, sugarcane growers are in great difficulty. They are not getting supporting prices for sugarcane.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : All of you will get a chance to speak.

[English]

SHRI P.C. THOMAS : Sir, I have not completed my submission. This is a very serious issue. Please allow me to speak ... (Interruptions)

On 13th of this month, a very serious incident took place. About several hundred women workers and other workers work in a factory called 'Motherson Systems Limited' which is situated in NOIDA in Uttar Pradesh. These workers were trying to form a union. They wanted to register it. But the influential management succeeded in not even giving a registration for the last one year. Now, there were some issues. The labourers were asking for some benefits.

Now, to see that the Union is cut to size, the management suspended about 40 leaders. They were suspended and they were not allowed to do the work. Then all the other workers, who are united, stood with them and sat on *dharna* on 14th of this month.

The work at the factory starts from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. So, they sat on *dharna* from 9 a.m. onwards. By at about 9 p.m., i.e., in the night, some policemen—only male policemen and not even a female policeman—rushed into the factory and with the help of some goonda elements started beating those people, poor labourers who were sitting in the premises of the factory peacefully. Many of the women had been looted, their hand bags were taken away. They had misbehaved with the women labourers. The lights were put off by the policemen saying that 'let us see, who is going to identify us'. But even then, those workers were able to identify the SHO, some policemen and others. They have given the correct names of some of the policemen and others who have assaulted them.

Sir, these working women are helpless. Many of them are from our State, Kerala; some of them are from Tamil Nadu and Andhra also. There are women coming from all over India. Yesterday, I came to know about it when one of their parents called on me and said that a very brutal incident had occurred. Three teeth of a child of a woman worker had been broken and she has also been injured very seriously but no action is being taken.

Sir, in this regard, on complaint had been lodged because the policemen were involved in the incident. Even the local police refused to lodge the complaint. Not even taking the cognizance of the complaint, even to receive the