

SHRI PARAG CHALIHA: Sir, the Brahmaputra Board, the very purpose for which we have put this question today, was constituted more than a decade ago with the purpose of solving some of these problems which have been referred to now. May I know from the Minister what the progress has been in the last ten years about the proper use of Brahmaputra *vis-a-vis* drainage and other things in other parts of the country?

SHRI SOMPAL: Sir, I require a separate notice for giving this particular information.

Prime Minister's visit to Trinidad and Tobago

*42. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister has, recently, paid a visit to Trinidad & Tobago;

(b) if so, the details of discussions the Head of Trinidad & Tobago had with the Prime Minister and other Members of the Indian Delegation;

(c) the outcome of the talks held; and

(d) to what extent the relationship with this country has been further strengthened?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH):

(a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

The Prime Minister of India paid an official visit to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on 8-9 February, 1999 at the invitation of the Hon'ble Basdeo Panday, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago. During the visit the Prime Minister held detailed discussions with President Arthur N R Robinson and Prime Minister Basdeo Panday. Both sides agreed to deepen the traditional cultural links between the people of the two countries and to expand the economic content of the relationship. An

agreement on Avoidance of Double Taxation was signed between the two countries during the visit. This agreement would provide an impetus to the flow of investments, technology, trade and services between the two countries. A Memorandum of Understanding for cooperation in the area of Low Cost Housing was also signed. The MoU aims at promoting mutually beneficial cooperation and assistance in the field of housing and human settlements development.

The two leaders reviewed the progress of bilateral agreements signed during the visit of Prime Minister Basdeo Panday to India in January, 1997. They agreed that there was great potential for intensifying cooperation for mutual benefit. Trinidad and Tobago sought technical assistance from India in areas such as small scale business development, planning, wood work, dairy development, aqua culture, film making and information technology. In the spirit of cooperation among developing countries and India's commitment to this cause, Prime Minister agreed to extend technical assistance and share Indian expertise in these areas.

During the visit, Prime Minister laid the foundation stone of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute for Cultural Cooperation in Port of Spain. A Low Cost Housing Support Centre was inaugurated by Prime Minister and Government of India gifted machinery for the Centre to the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

The visit of Prime Minister was symbolic of our interest in further strengthening ties with overseas Indian communities. It highlighted cultural commonality and perspectives for mutually beneficial economic links, including prospects of Trinidad emerging as a point for expanding links with Caribbean and Latin American countries.

SHRI ABANI ROY: Now, it has come out in the newspapers that by 2005 Trinidad and Tobago will be the largest

players in global oil and natural gas. Is there any hope to get that?

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: That was one of the purposes of the hon'ble Prime Minister's visit to Trinidad and Tobago. We have many links with Trinidad and Tobago...(interruptions). If the hon'ble Member would please sit down...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you hearing him?

SHRI ABANI ROY: Yes, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Then, why are you standing?

SHRI ABANI ROY: My second supplementary is this. The Prime Minister's visit to Trinidad and Tobago is expected to give a boost to bilateral ties, which at present have trade of \$12 million. What is our expectation?

कुमारी सरोज खापर्डे : सर, पहले प्रश्न का ही जवाब नहीं आता।...(व्यवधान)..

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Would the hon. Member please repeat the question?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please repeat the first question.

SHRI ABANI ROY: My first question was this. Trinidad and Tobago will be the largest players in natural gas and global oil. Is there any hope to get it?

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Sir, the hon. Prime Minister's visit to Trinidad and Tobago had many dimensions; cultural, ancient linkages etc. One amongst the dimensions of the visit was, of course, trade and, as a part of the trade, the aspect of undertaking some oil explorations in Trinidad and Tobago and utilising their hydro-carbon resources is certainly one of them. The question as to whether they will be utilised or not will depend on many factors after the potentiality in Trinidad and Tobago is fully realised, and after considering the economic viability of transportation etc.

SHRI ABANI ROY: My second supplementary is this. There is a boost to

bilateral ties, which at present have a trade of \$12 million. What is our expectation?

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Sir, our expectation is to raise the trade to the highest possible level.

Marketing of Petroleum Products by Indian Oil Corporation

*43. SHRI SURESH KALMADI:

SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO:

†

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have asked the Indian Oil Corporation to amend its pacts to market half of the petroleum products of Reliance Petroleum and Essar Refineries; and

(b) if so, what are the changes envisaged as a result of the proposed amendments?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI K. RAMAMURTHY): (a) and (b) Government have conveyed to Indian Oil Corporation that the entitlement of the Oil Marketing Companies for distribution of the controlled products of Reliance Petroleum and Essar Refineries will be as follows:—

Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. (IOCL)—50%

Hindustan Petroleum Corpn. Ltd. (HPCL)—25%

Bharat Petroleum Corpn. Ltd. (BPCL)—25%

The agreements are, however, yet to be concluded.

SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO: Sir, the Petroleum Ministry has directed the Indian Oil Corporation to amend its pacts to market half of the petroleum

†The Question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri K. Kalavenkata Rae.