

कुल मिलाकर When you think of the whole society, I would always believe

एक मुसलमान अगर अपने धर्म के प्रति, अपने मज़हब के प्रति प्रामाणिक है, अगर कोई आर्यसमाजी है और वह अपने मत के प्रति प्रामाणिक है, अगर कोई बौद्ध है, कोई जैनी है, वह प्रामाणिक है तो— On an average, he is likely to be a better individual.

वह एक अधिक अच्छा व्यक्ति, एक अधिक श्रेष्ठ व्यक्ति होगा। इसलिए मैं हमेशा कहा करता हूँ कि— we should never try, in any way, to underplay or disregard tradition and religion. मैं समझता हूँ कि जहां तक सरकार का सवाल है, इस लीगल सिस्टम के बारे में हमको मिल करके विचार करना चाहिए, चिंता करनी चाहिए और स्पेसिफिक केसेज के बारे में जितनी शीघ्रता से हम अपराधी को दंडित कर सकें उतना अच्छा होगा और इस दिशा में गृह मंत्रालय प्रदेश की सरकार से लगातार सम्पर्क में है। उनसे हमने रिपोर्ट भी मांगी है और हम आशा करेंगे कि वह कार्रवाई करेंगे।

MR. CHAIRMAN: The House is adjourned till 2.05 p.m.

The House then adjourned for lunch at five minutes past one of the clock.

The House reassembled after lunch at seven minutes past two of the clock, The Deputy Chairman in the Chair.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, we have two things pending. We have a Bill pending and we have the Special Mentions. Let us finish the Bill first because we had kept the Bill half-way through. There are only three speakers.

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU (West Bengal): Madam, normally, the Legislative Business gets precedence.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That is what I am saying. Let us complete the Legislative Business. Then we can have Special Mentions. Dipankar Ji, have you finished your speech?

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE (West Bengal): No, Madam.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I thought you had said that now you did not want to speak anything. Actually, your party's time is over.

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: I know that, Madam.

I. Statutory Resolution Seeking Disapproval of the Oilfields (Regulation and Development) Amendment Ordinance, 1998

II. The Oilfields (Regulation and Development) Bill, 1998—Contd.

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE (West Bengal): Madam, I was quite happy when the Minister gave an assurance regarding the coal-bed methane in RNA block in Raniganj basin. But unfortunately, in spite of that, the Minister has dragged the State Government in this. As per my information, this was the issue on which I was, probably, shouting yesterday; I am sorry if I shouted—with regard to this area, the clearance of the West Bengal Government very much exists, with effect from 8.1.1996. The State Government of West Bengal has already given the clearance. I am not sure whether the Minister, knowingly or unknowingly, has misinformed in the House. (Interruptions) I would like the Minister to clarify this point.

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI K. RAMAMURTHY): Madam Deputy Chairperson, the hon. Member has given the fact that the clearance was given by the West Bengal Government on 8.1.96. Even Yesterday, I told him that I had just received the information from the officers; I would verify that and come out with the facts.

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: No, I have not understood.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: He is saying, I have not understood.

SHRI K. RAMAMURTHY: My officers have given me information that

so far the West Bengal Government has not cleared it, but your information is that the clearance was given on 8.1.96. I will verify it and come with the facts. ...*(Interruptions)*...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please come with the facts because your officers may have given you wrong information. ...*(Interruptions)*... Just a minute. The officers may have given you wrong information, but if you as Minister give this information in the House, you will be responsible. It would be better if you are careful. Don't follow the officers blindly.

SHRI SANGH PRIYA GAUTAM (Uttar Pradesh): Madam, he is very careful; that is why, he is saying that he will verify it and come with the facts.

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: I, therefore, take it that in R.N.A. block in Raniganj, where the State Government's clearance is very much there, the Minister assures me, the coal-bed methane project work will be taken up by the ONGC.

Madam, I am quite happy to further note that the Minister has agreed that they are having this royalty, and he would be in touch with the State Government. He had already contacted the State Government and he would also be in touch with the State Government. I would suggest that, if he thinks of a small Committee in future when the royalty rates have to be changed, both for on-shore and off-shore, as and when he feels it necessary, the representatives of both the State Governments and the Central Government should also be associated with that Committee. Then, there will, probably, be a little better coordination between the Central Government and the State Government. As pointed out by Mr. Dave, the oil has to come from the State, the State Government has its own share, but, unfortunately, in the eastern part, we don't have much of oil. In anticipation, the Minister should do something to see to it that oil is explored gas is explored, more expeditiously in the eastern region, in West Bengal, and also

in the north-eastern region, in Tripura. I hope this will also be taken care of. Madam, I thank you very much. I have already taken a lot of time of the Minister. I am sure it will have a happy end like all is well that ends well, and no further misinformation will be given. I want three rigs in Tripura and the coal-bed methane in Raniganj. Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Shri C. Ramachandraiah not there. Shri Drupad Borghain.

SHRI DRUPAD BORGOHAIN (Assam): Thank you, Madam, for giving me time to raise a few points on these Amendments. Let me first express my disapproval to the promulgation of Ordinances. This has become a habit of the Government to promulgate Ordinances. The Government should not amend Acts in a hurry, as is done in this case. If the Government takes this position, then, perhaps, it will be very difficult. This Bill could have been taken up in the normal manner. Had it been taken up in the normal manner, it would have been better.

Let me come to the Amendments as passed in the Lok Sabha. I have seen, I have observed, that only a few Amendments have been adopted in the Lok Sabha. The first one is, sub-section (4)(b) of Section 6A of the Original Act has been removed. That is one Amendment. Sub-section (4)(b) of Section 6A of the Original Act gives power to the Central Government to enhance the royalty in respect of any mineral oil once in a period of three years. That is now being removed. If it is removed, then, it will create certain difficulties for the oil-producing States. Every oil-producing State of India has a right to have royalty being enhanced by the Central Government. The original Act gives an opportunity to the States to demand enhancement of royalty once in every three years. The States have a chance to calculate their share of royalty, for three years, which enables them to plan the development work.

Since it is sought to be removed, the States may have some difficulty. This may further aggravate the Centre-State relations in certain cases. So, I think this type of an amendment will not help and the Government should rethink about this point.

Secondly, the amendment of sub-section (5) of the original Act brings in the provision of exempting generally and absolutely the whole or any part of the leviable royalty in respect of offshore exploration areas. To my mind, it is detrimental to the national interest. I have an apprehension that the Government wants to invite multinational corporations, transnational companies and other private companies to explore the oil fields. This amendment of exempting royalty, wholly or partly, was sought for the purpose of giving an incentive to the private companies. Will it not go against the national interest? Moreover, the States have a right to share the levy on offshore exploration. This exemption may deprive the State Governments of their legitimate share of royalty. So, I have an apprehension that the amendments will go against the interest of the oil-producing States like Assam, Nagaland, Gujarat, Maharashtra and others. A State like Assam depends on the royalties to a great extent. So, the amendments may create difficulties for such type of States. Therefore, I request the Government to withdraw the amendments at this hour itself. This is my humble submission. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Shri Viduthalai Virumbi. You will have to be extremely brief because you have only three minutes.

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI (Tamil Nadu): Okay, Madam, Madam Deputy Chairperson, today we are dealing with a subject which is going to affect not only the present generation but also the coming generations. Considering the present demand and the present rate of petroleum products, we have to shell out nearly Rs. 40,000 crores in foreign ex-

change. It may vary a little here and a little there depending on the international rate of the products. Though fifty years have passed since we got independence we have not achieved the result which we ought to have achieved in this fields. In one way, I can say that it is the brain-child of the United Front Government. We are having a foreign exchange reserve of 27 billion dollars. Everybody knows that though the quantity is sufficient, the nature of the foreign exchange reserve is volatile. If there is no capital out flow, we will be in doldrums in terms of import of petroleum products. Therefore it is pertinent and important for us to see that more crude is exploited from our own soil. Recently, thirty-seven blocks, which are not exploited so far, were identified. Out of that, twenty-eight were offshore and nine were onshore. A huge amount of money is essential for it. Had it been exploited a decade ago or a quinquennium ago, the problems that we are confronting today would not have been there. At least they have woken up. In today's newspapers I read that the Patronet Ltd. has announced something I feel that it has been delayed a little bit. This was decided by the United Front Government. This Government could have announced it some six months back when it came to power. The Department woke up when this issue was raised in the other House. Even in the advertisement they have mentioned only about Cochin. We have been talking about the Southern Gas Grid. We thought that it would come into existence. But now we feel that we have been deceived by successive Governments. Whether we would get it from Oman or Iran—Pakistan has not at all allowed us to conduct a survey, leave aside other activities—if it is beyond 400 metres, it is very difficult to get it repaired if something happens. We were told that it would come into existence. Now we have come to know that this questions was discussed with the delegates who came from across the border. Then they kept mum. They went away. We feel that instead of the Southern Gas

Grid, a cross-country pipeline system be thought of. What is its fate?

One pipeline for Cochin, Karur and Trichirapalli was earmarked. Another pipeline was earmarked from Chennai to Madurai via Thanjavur—Pudukottai. Another pipeline was from Vijaynagar to Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh. What is the present situation of these three pipelines?

In Tamil Nadu recently we have introduced one system called Rural Mobile Marketing Unit. It means they will go to the rural areas and they will fill up the gas cylinders then and there. I would like to know whether this system is in operation. If so, what is the development? I would also like to know whether the Department has planned to improve the unit system. If so, at what stage is it?

In Tamil Nadu, there was a proposal to establish 20 bottling units. Only one or two bottling units have come into existence. There was a plan to establish such units at Thanjai, Nellai, Kovai and several other places. What is the present position? Then a fractionator was established at Narimanam. I would like to know whether it is in order. If no what are the reasons? If it is working, all right, But I don't think it is working. I hope the hon. Minister would go into this matter also.

There was a proposal to set up LNG terminal in Gujarat, Cochin and other places. We felt that by establishing this terminal the expenditure on road maintenance would come down. Since the transport is taking place through pipeline. There was a plan to establish such a port in Gujarat, Cochin and other places. I would like to know whether such a port system has come into existence. What is the Government doing in this regard?

Apart from that, if we introduce that systems, fishes and even vegetables can be stored. We can also say that even the sideline business can be benefited out of this. So along with the terminal system, we want to know from the hon. Minister regarding this system also. Regarding the

bottling unit, as I mentioned just now, nearly in 20 places, namely, Nellai, Trichy, Mannargudi, Kovai, and in case my memory has not failed, even in Cuddalore, it has been developed. We want the response from the hon. Minister regarding this also. Regarding royalty, you say that it will be revised once in three years. There is no harm in it. But, at the same time, if possible, we must find out some norms taking into consideration the inflation which is taking place every year. Now, once in three years, you are settling it. In Australia, when inflation takes place, there is a law that whenever the Government announces the rate of inflation, automatically, the limit in the income-tax is raised. In the same way, taking into consideration the fact that inflation is taking place every year, the royalty should automatically be enhanced. That will be a scientific method and that will be beneficial to the States. Accordingly, you can fix the price.

Madam, since the time at my disposal is not adequate to deal with the Bill elaborately, I have constrained myself to the State to which I belong. I hope that the Minister will respond to my points.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Shri R. Margabandu. You have only two minutes. You explore your oil within these two minutes.

SHRI R. MARGABANDU (Tamil Nadu): Madam Deputy Chairperson, this amendment is aimed at encouraging exploration of oil and natural gas in this country. It is only to give exemption that this amendment has come. Madam, in this country, petrol is sold at the rate of Rs. 30 per litre, whereas in America, one litre petrol is sold for Rs. 10 only. Even America is importing this petrol from those countries which are extracting it. In the same way, we are also importing petrol here. But why is it that this petroleum price is increasing like this every year in our country? Even though there are several places which have been identified in India with petrol

potentialities, yet why have these areas not been explored? Is it a fact that nobody is coming forward to venture into this exploration or is it that this Government is not interested in exploring petrol and oil in India? If the entire potentiality is explored within our country, then our country can become self-sufficient or at least this much of cost can be reduced and petrol can be sold at a rate affordable to one and all. In America, even a coolie or a scavenger is having a car and he goes by car everywhere. He can afford to buy petrol. But, here, not everybody is able to have a car. Only the middle-class people or above are able to have cars and buy petrol. The rise in prices is alarming and every year it is increasing. We should put an end to this and see that the price of petrol comes down. Now, Madam, with reference to this amendment, it seeks to have new sub-sections (4) and (5) in Section 6A. There seems to be some anomaly. I am subject to correction. It is for the Government to think over this matter. I would like to quote section 6A. "The holders of a mining lease granted before the commencement of the Oilfields (Regulation and Development) Amendment Act 1969..." If so, that section 6A contemplates with reference to the leases, the mining leases, which were granted prior to the 1969 Amendment Act. Whereas it runs in contrast in sub-section 2 of section 6A. "The holder of a mining lease granted on or after the commencement of the Oilfields (Regulation and Development) Amendment Act, 1969..." So, there seems to be some contradiction. That can also be looked into. Madam, this Ordinance has been promulgated hastily and now they want its ratification. Whereas, in this amending Bill, clause 1(2) says: "It shall come into force on such date as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint," i.e. it is the discretion of the Central Government to notify this Act as and when it feels. I want to point out one issue. In this, the Central

Government is holding the power. For example, as far as advocates are concerned, in 1961, Section 30 was enacted, but for nearly 40 years, it has not been notified. So, when that bonus is given to the Central Government, what is the urgency in bringing this Ordinance and now this Bill? Now, coming to sub-section (4) everything is repeated. The only thing added is this. Different rates may be notified in respect of same mineral oil mined, quarried, excavated or collected from areas covered by different mining leases. This is the only thing that is being added. But, in the Statement of Objects and Reasons, it is said, "confer upon the Central Government the power to notify more than one rate of royalty in respect of the same mineral oil produced from the different classes of leased area; to empower the Central Government to grant partial or full exemption from the payment of the royalty in respect of offshore areas." So, what is said in the Objects and Reasons is not reflected in the proposed amendment. The only thing that is sought for compared to the existing Act is: different rates may be notified in respect of the same mineral oil in different classes." So, the Objects and Reasons does not tally with the proposed amendment. These are my submissions.

SHRI BRAHMAKUMAR BHATT (Gujarat): Madam, I want to make certain observations about mining which is before the House for discussion. One thing which is very clear is, the Government has equated the price of imported crude and indigeneous crude. But the crude price will remain the same in the country. In view of that, what is the difficulty for the Government in fixing the royalty? Firstly, for every year, there is a uniform royalty. If the price of crude is going to be uniform, both imported and indigeneous, then why should there be a differentiation between one State and another State for the payment of royalty? The royalty is given on an *ad hoc* basis. Why should it be *ad hoc*? The price is fixed. It is a uniform

price, both for indigenous and imported oil. When the price is fixed, the royalty should also be fixed. There should be no discrimination between Assam, Maharashtra, Gujarat or any other State, which are the producing States. Therefore, my submission to the hon. Minister will be that this demand of the States has been pending for several years now and it is being tackled by the Central Government only on an *ad hoc* basis. The royalty is a substantial income to the States and that royalty is not given in time. Proper royalty is also not given. Both the points are there. Therefore, both these points should be considered by the Government.

Then, there is another equally important point. You have said, "Different rates may be notified in respect of the same mineral oil". How can there be different rates for the same mineral oil, when the mineral oil is the same, the market price of the mineral oil is the same? Now, the Government tries to distinguish between the market price and the well-head price. The well-head price is not the real price. The real price is the market price. So, it is the market price which should decide the royalty. The Government is fetching a particular price and that price should be the basis of the royalty. Otherwise, it is not doing justice to the the States. By this amendment, the Government will be empowered to either enhance or reduce the rate of royalty. In which circumstances, does the Government want to reduce the royalty, and in which circumstances does the Government want to enhance the rate of royalty? This should be clarified by the Government. There should be no discrimination. If this power is given to the Government to discriminate between one State and another, then it would be sheer discrimination which should not be allowed, in view of the fact that the price of crude oil is going to be the same in the country and, therefore, the price of the oil will be the same. Therefore, I would like to know the circumstances under which this discriminatory authority, that

is being given to the Government, is going to be used. It should be made clear by the Government.

There is one more thing that I would like to point out to the Government. As per the statement of the hon. Minister in this House yesterday, 48 blocks are demarcated or kept open for exploration by multinational companies or foreign companies. But the point is that the Government is thinking of giving exemption on royalty so far as those companies are concerned. Why? Why are you giving special concessions to those who are coming from outside the country for exploration of oil here? Why should they get special concessions? Why are you discriminating against our own companies, our ONGC and other companies? It the companies from outside come here, well and good. It is okay. If it is the policy of the Government to bring in all the multinationals into the country in every sphere of life, bring them. But, why do you give them special concessions, like, they have not to pay the royalty? They will have greater chances to make and more profits. If that is in the mind of the Government, then it is highly objectionable. Special concessions should not be given to the multinational companies. If they come here, they will have to compete. Let there be a fair competition between our own Indian companies and the companies that come from outside. If there has to be a competition, let it be totally fair competition. So far as the royalty is concerned, no exemption should be allowed to them.

Madam, I want to tell one thing to the hon. Minister that the Government should prove itself as a very good employer, the best employer. But, unfortunately, what are we seeing in every public sector company of our country? The case of ONGC is not the same as that of the other PSUs because it is making a profit of crores of rupees. Here, the Government is not giving a fair treatment to its own employees. For example, a fair amount of operational work of the

ONGC is going on in Gujarat. Out of 10000 workers in Gujarat, 5000 are contract labour. If there is a vacancy, no regular man is employed. If a vacancy falls, a contract labour is employed. As a result, the number of regular employees and the number of contract labour in the ONGC has become the same. There are 5000 regular employees and 5000 contract labour. Even if the contractor is changed—this is the most unfortunate part of it — the persons working under the labour contractor remain the same. These people have been working for the last 15 to 20 years. During all these years, a person under the labour contract is the same. He has not been regularised. He is not getting bonus and other facilities. He is not getting pay and other allowances. So, he is totally exploited by the labour contractor. The ONGC wants that this exploitation should go on. This is not the case as far as the other public sector companies are concerned. Their case is different. Here, the ONGC is making a profit of crores of rupees. Still 50 per cent of its employees are working under labour contract, which is highly objectionable. They have stopped regular recruitment. The Union, General Mazdoor Sabha, has written a letter to the hon. Minister and asked for a court of inquiry. I appeal to the hon. Minister that the court of inquiry should be appointed to look into the proper demand of the employees who are working there for the last 15 to 20 years. These persons are being exploited. Therefore, this discrimination between the regular employees and the persons working under the labour contract should be abolished. At least, where the Government is making profit of crores of rupees, they should prove that they are the best employers. Set an example here in this organisation. I hope the hon. Minister will seriously consider this issue and give justice to the poor workers who are working there for the last 15 to 20 years as persons under labour contract.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I want to mention something. जब हमारा कोई बिल

इंट्रोड्यूस होता है, डिस्कशन के लिए आता है तो सभी पोलिटिकल पार्टी को अपने वक्ता का नाम पहले दे देना चाहिए। जो ऐड होते रहते हैं नाम,

As the discussion goes on, names are added. This makes all our agenda of discussion in the House go haywire. आपका नाम कल नहीं था, आज आपका नाम आया है। आपकी पार्टी की ओर से तो बोलना ही है, चाहे पांच मिनट का समय ही हो। अगर बोलना है तो आप शुरू में ही नाम दे दिया कीजिए क्योंकि सब लास्ट में नाम ऐड होते हैं तो काम करने में बहुत अड़चन होती है, तकलीफ होती है।

श्री ईश दत्त यादव (उत्तर प्रदेश) ठीक है, मैडम।

उपसभापति: इससे सब चीजें पीछे चली जाती हैं, नाम ऐड होते रहते हैं।... (व्यवधान)... भले ही समय हो, सवाल यह नहीं रहता कि पार्टी का समय है। ... (व्यवधान)...

श्री मोहम्मद आजम खान: (उत्तर प्रदेश) मैडम, वैसे भी आपको तकलीफ का मौका कहा दिया जाता है। ... (व्यवधान)...

اعظمی محمد اعظم خان: میز پر
میں آپ کو تکلیف کا موقع بیان دیا جا رہا ہے

उपसभापति: हां, सरकार का कोई एजेण्डा ही नहीं है, तकलीफ क्या होगी। अब इसके बाद शॉर्ट इयूरेशन है, स्पेशल मेंशन है, तो वह भी हम लोगों को लेना है। ईश दत्त जी, आप बोल दीजिए आप लास्ट स्पीकर हैं।

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI (KERALA): Madam, I want to know as to when the remaining Special Mentions would be taken up.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: They will be taken up after the Short Duration Discussion.

[Transliteration in Arabic Script]

श्री ईश दत्त यादव (उत्तर प्रदेश): ठीक है, मैडम, आपने जो निर्देश दिया है, उसका पालन किया जाएगा। गलतफहमी के कारण नाम पहले नहीं दिया जा सका था।

उपसभापित महोदय, तेल क्षेत्र (विनियमन तथा विकास) संशोधन विधेयक, 1998 का मैं समर्थन करता हूँ। इस विधेयक के ज़रिए दो संशोधन किए जा रहे हैं — एंजल्टी को बढ़ाने और घटाने के संबंध में सरकार अधिकार चाहती है और दूसरा, समुद्र के अंदर जो खनन का काम किया जाएगा, सरकार उसे एंजल्टी मुक्त करने का भी अधिकार चाहती है। ये दोनों संशोधन ऐसे हैं, जिन पर मुझे और मेरी पार्टी को कोई आपत्ति नहीं है।

मैडम, हमारे देश में पेट्रोलियम पदार्थों की जितनी आवश्यकता है, उतनी आपूर्ति नहीं हो पाती है इस देश के खनन से, इसलिए हमें पेट्रोलियम पदार्थ बाहर से मंगाने पड़ते हैं और इस पर बहुत अधिक मात्रा में विदेशी मुद्रा व्यय कर्नी पड़ती है। इसलिए सरकार का यह प्रयास है कि नए क्षेत्रों की तलाश की जाए, नई शक्तों पर की जाए और खनन के माध्यम से पेट्रोलियम पदार्थों का उत्पादन देश के अन्दर बढ़ाया जाए। सरकार के इस प्रयत्न की मैं सप्रशंसा करता हूँ, लेकिन देश के अंदर इस विषय में दो खतरे दिखाई पड़ रहे हैं। पहला यह है, मैडम, कि जिस तरह से विदेशी कंपनियों को आमंत्रित किया जा रहा है, प्रस्ताव दिया जा रहा है, इसका प्रभाव जो हमारी भारतीय ऑयल कंपनियाँ हैं, उनके ऊपर बुरी तरह से पड़ने की संभावना है और अभी लग रहा है, जैसे कुछ प्रोडक्ट उन्होंने तैयार किए हैं लुब्रिकेंट्स वगैरह, अब हमारी भारतीय कंपनियाँ जो लुब्रिकेंट्स वगैरह तैयार कर रही हैं माननीय पेट्रोलियम मंत्री जी को शायद जानकारी होगी कि उनकी बिजली प्रभावित हो गई है, जो इंडियन ऑयल कंपनियाँ हैं, भारतीय कंपनियाँ हैं, उनकी बिजली प्रभावित हो रही है और इस तरह से अगर विदेशी कंपनियों का इस देश में पूरा वर्चस्व कायम हो जाएगा तो यह खतरा है, संभावना है कि अपने देश की जो ऑयल कंपनियाँ हैं, कहीं बुरी तरह से प्रभावित होकर के उनका अंत न हो जाए। इस पर सरकार को गंभीरता से विचार करना पड़ेगा क्योंकि यह खतरा नज़र आ रहा है। इसके अलावा जो जानकारी हमें मिली है, उसके अनुसार खनन क्षेत्रों की, तेल क्षेत्रों की खोज करने का, खनन करने का ज्यादातर कंट्रैक्ट, खनन पट्टा, प्राइवेट कंपनियों को दिया जा रहा है और जो अपनी ऑयल कंपनियाँ हैं, उनको उसमें कम हिस्सा

दिया गया है। तो यह भी एक खतरा हो गया है कि कहीं मोनोपली न हो जाए प्राइवेट कंपनियों की इस देश के अंदर।

दूसरा, मैडम, मैं निवेदन करूँगा कि पेट्रोलियम पदार्थों की कीमतें, जो बेतहाशा पड़ती चली जा रही हैं, सरकार को इस पर गंभीरता से विचार करना पड़ेगा और कभी-कभी किसी वर्ष में तो यह एक, दो या तीन बार भी बढ़ जाती है। यह जरूर है कि कभी 2 पैसे, 3 पैसे प्रति लीटर की कमी भी सरकार या ऑयल कंपनियाँ कर देती हैं, लेकिन कीमतें बढ़ती चली जा रही हैं। मैडम, इन पेट्रोलियम पदार्थों का देश के विकास से संबंध है और हर व्यक्ति के जीवन से इनका संबंध हो गया है। आप जिस दिन डीज़ल का दाम पढ़ा देते हैं, रेल मंत्री जी रेल का किराया बढ़ा देते हैं। टैक्सी वाले टैक्सी का किराया बढ़ा देते हैं और टैक्सी वालों का अगर किराया नहीं बढ़ा, दिल्ली प्रशासन ने नहीं बढ़ाया तो हम लोग जो टैक्सी पर चलने वाले हैं, कभी-कभी रेलवे स्टेशन से पैदल आते हैं नॉर्थ-ब्लॉक तक। यह स्थिति आ जाती है

महोदय, किसान प्रभावित हो रहा है डीज़ल का रेट बढ़ने से। किसान के जो पंपिंग सैट्स हैं, वे बंद हो जाते हैं और सिंचाई नहीं हो पाती है। जब डीज़ल महंगा हो जाता है तो किसान का पंपिंग सैट नहीं चल पाता है। तब इस देश का उत्पादन कम होता है। मैं इस बारे में विस्तार से बात नहीं करना चाहूँगा। अभी कल यहाँ खर्चा हुई महंगाई पर। देश के उत्पादन में जो कमी आ रही है, उसका एक मुख्य कारण सिंचाई है और सिंचाई में जो कमी आ रही है, उसका एक मुख्य कारण डीज़ल की महंगाई है। गरीब किसान महंगा डीज़ल नहीं खरीद पाता और खेतों की सिंचाई नहीं कर पाता। इसलिए मैं आपके माध्यम से पेट्रोलियम मंत्री जी से कहना चाहूँगा कि वे पेट्रोलियम प्रॉडक्ट्स की कीमतों पर नियंत्रण करें। यह काम मुश्किल है लेकिन इस पर आप गंभीरता से विचार करें। सरकार को इस पर गंभीरता से विचार करना चाहिए क्योंकि पेट्रोलियम प्रॉडक्ट्स की कीमतों को बढ़ाने के लिए सरकार भी बहुत ज्यादा मायनों में दोषी है। फिजूलखर्ची सरकार करती है। सरकार के जितने विभाग हैं, चाहे वे केन्द्रीय सरकार के विभाग हो या प्रदेश सरकार के, स्वयं अधिकारी लोग उसका दुरुपयोग करते हैं, कारों में, अन्य स्थानों में।

इसलिए सरकार को इस पर गंभीरता से विचार करना होगा और पेट्रोलियम प्रॉडक्ट्स की कीमतों और खास करके डीज़ल की कीमत पर सरकार को नियंत्रण करना पड़ेगा

वरना इस दश का विकास प्रभावित होगा, इस देश का किसान प्रभावित होगा और अन्य पदार्थों में कीमतों में और यात्रा-किराए में बढ़ोत्तरी हो जाएगी।

महोदया, इन दो आशंकाओं के साथ कि प्राइवेट कंपनियों की मोनोपली न हो जाए और पेट्रोलियम प्रॉक्ट्स की कीमतों में, विशेषकर डीज़ल की कीमत में वृद्धि के कारण देश के विकास में बाधा न पहुँचे, मैं सरकार से निवेदन करूँगा कि वह इस पर गंभीरता से विचार करे। इन शब्दों के साथ मैं इस संशोधन विधेयक का समर्थन कर रहा हूँ। आपने मुझे अंत में बोलने का समय दिया, चेतावनी के साथ, इसके लिए मैं आपका हृदय से आभार प्रकट करता हूँ।

उपसभापति: चेतावनी तो पूरे हाऊस को दी थी मैंने।

SHRI K. RAMAMURTHY: Madam Deputy Chairperson, I am thankful to all the hon. Members who have participated and contributed their wisdom towards this Amendment Bill. Even though it has a very limited scope, the Ministry of Petroleum has been discussed here very extensively. I will be very brief as regards the Bill and to some of the points which have been raised by the hon. Members. Madam, the present Act, that is, the existing Act contains all these salient features. (A) The royalty on crude oil and natural gas is payable at the rate specified in the Schedule of the Oilfields (Regulation and Development) Act, 1948. (B) The rate of royalty can be enhanced once in three years. (C) It cannot be more than 20 per cent of the sale price of crude oil or natural gas. (D) At any given point of time, only one rate for any mineral oil can be specified. (E) The royalty from on-shore goes to the States and from off-shores it goes to the Central Government. So, this is the existing Act. Now the amendment which is being discussed here will be implemented in consultation with the State Governments.

These amendments are going to help the States because the concerned States and the Central Government have already agreed to fix on-shore royalty at 12.5 per cent. It is high when compared

to royalty paid at the international level. The States were insisting that the royalty rate should not be decided once in a block period of three years. I had narrated this during my initial speech that from 1993 to 1996 and till 01.04.1998, we could not finalise the royalty payable to the oil-producing States because we have to get the certificate from the C & AG. Unless we get the certificate from the C & AG, I can't disburse the entire amount. Even the Government of Gujarat, the Government of Andhra Pradesh, the Government of Assam and the Government of Tamil Nadu were all insisting why you don't pay royalty arrears, on *ad hoc* basis and adjust it afterwards. My hands are tied and I cannot pay it. We are waiting for the certificate from the C & AG. We are taking necessary steps. CAG is one of the bodies created by the Constitution of India. We have already conveyed the sentiments of the States to the office of the C & AG. Hence, Madam Deputy Chairperson, it is necessary that we have to say good-bye to this "Once in a three-years block period." We have to say good-bye to fixation of royalty on *ad hoc* basis. This has been approved by the State Governments in the meetings and hence this amendment. And whenever it is felt necessary, the Central Government can fix the royalty for on-shore. Yes, definitely in consultation with and with the concurrence of the State Governments. About the off-shores, yes, it is in the wisdom of the Central Government.

A point has been raised as to why there should be a differential rate of royalty for the same mineral oil. The existing provision is, wherever you find condensate or crude oil or gas — whether it is on-shore or off-shore or shallow water or deep water — the rate of royalty is the same. Now what we want to have is, we have decided to fix 12.5 per cent royalty for the States. The differential rates are now agreed upon. For on-shore, we are going to pay 12.5 per cent; for shallow water, we are going to pay 10 per cent; and for deep water, we are going to

pay 5 per cent royalty. So, for crude oil which we are getting from deep water, we are going to pay only 5 per cent royalty for seven years. If we are getting the same crude oil explored from shallow waters, we are going to fix 10 per cent. And, if we are getting the same crude oil from on-shore, 12.5 per cent royalty will be payable. It is beneficial to the State Governments.

The other point raised by the hon. Members is, why we should exempt some of the companies coming under the new Exploration Licensing Policy. Madam Deputy Chairperson, since you have widely travelled, you know that investment on exploration, for petroleum is a very risky investment. It is a capital investment. At the international level, blocks are offered to private or joint ventures. In most of the countries this system is in vogue i.e., in practice. This would apply not only to private companies but also to our own national oil companies like Oil India Limited, ONGC, etc. Any exemption taking place means, it is also applicable to ONGC, Oil India Limited, etc. Some of the people in spite of investing millions of dollars, are not getting anything. Then, we think that it is necessary to consider this case. That is the reason why we wanted this power should be under the Central Government's purview for exempting certain categories in offshore areas which come under this new exploration policy.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, yesterday while I was hearing the discussion, I found that not only petroleum products like petrol and diesel are used as fuel in cars and vehicles, but other fuels like methane which are under the coal-belt or coalmines, are also used. Why does not the Government bring a comprehensive policy which covers every kind of fuel which is going to be used? Because, now recently gas is being used to run cars. So, there should be a comprehensive policy on fuel like we have for power and energy. in the same way you

can have a fuel policy and that will remove all the discrepancies, if there are any.

SHRI K. RAMAMURTHY: Madam, I agree with your suggestion. But, the problem is that the availability is uncertain. That is also one point which we have to consider. For power we can say that this year or in the coming five years, power generation would be of the order of 12,000 megawatt. But here we cannot fix it like that. We cannot say that crude oil production will be such and gas will be such. It is not that I am simply negating your suggestion. It is not my intention. The suggestion you have given is a good one. *(Interruption)*

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Madam, what you meant was not only the supply side, but the demand side should also be considered.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Yes.

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: The demand management to fuel should be there. It is equally important to save fuel to the extent we produce fuel. So, an integrated fuel policy should be there.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That is exactly what I meant. I know everything is dependent on availability.

SHRI K. RAMAMURTHY: Madam, as far as we are concerned, we are only tied up with the Ministry of Power for their power generation demand. Whatever the fuel, whether they want condensate; or they want naphtha; or they want natural gas or whatever it is. We are tied up with it as at present. Definitely we will consider your suggestion.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, no. You have not followed what I meant. It has no link-up with power. What I am saying is that so far as the fuel which is used for running vehicles and fuel for burning is concerned, there should be a common policy. Because it comes under your Ministry. There should be a comprehensive policy on that, so that there may be a possibility of exploration of alternative fuel other than petroleum.

(Interruption). It is just a suggestion, after hearing all the speeches.

SHRI K. RAMAMURTHY: Madam, I agree with your suggestion. Your suggestion is well-taken. But the problem is, for example, now all vehicles are running on petrol and diesel, now CNG and even some part of LPG which is used for cooking is also used by people for running cars. Even though it has so far not been permitted, it is going on. Particularly, for LPG there is a demand that it should be allowed to be used for running cars. As far as Petroleum Ministry is concerned, we said that we do not have any objection. You can go ahead with the parallel marketeers because we are subsidising LPG. Since we are subsidising LPG, we cannot afford to give it to parallel marketeers for supplying to cars. But it is to be vetted by the Ministry of Surface Transport, the Environment Ministry, and also safety measures have to be taken. So, what Mr. Yadav said is that we can very slowly approach your suggestion. This is what we can say at the present moment. It is very complex because every year we are paying Rs. 7,200 crores as subsidy on kerosene and LPG only. Some Members including the hon. Member, Shri Yadav, raised a point as to why the prices of petroleum products like petrol and diesel should go up. Whatever we are earning by hiking the prices of petrol and aviation turbo-fuel which is used in aircraft alone is nearly compensating these subsidies. Otherwise it is difficult to maintain this subsidy ratio which we are paying on LPG as well as

on kerosene. Madam, the other point was raised by the hon. Member, Shri Dipankar Mukherjee. I have just now received a copy of the letter addressed by the ONGC to the Secretary, Department of Commerce and Industry, Government of West Bengal, Writers' Building, Calcutta. "Attention: The Assistant Secretary. Subject: Grant of petroleum exploration licence for 240 square kilometres in North Raniganj Area, West Bengal w.e.f. 23.11.1998". The letter was addressed to, the Secretary, Department of Commerce

and Industry on 23.11.1998. This is for your information. My information is correct. If you permit, I will pass it on to Dipankar Ji.

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: I am sorry. There are a lot of changes. This is something for North Raniganj block for which the application has been made recently. What I have been talking about, and your Ministry very much is aware, is something different. Still now I do not know why all this has been happening. What I have been talking about is this. I have been pursuing with your Ministry from May onwards. I have got all the documents. This has got nothing to do with it. The ONGC directorate wrote a letter to me on July 10, 1998 saying all applications for grant of PEL in respect of CBM were turned down by the Ministry on the plea that the CBM exploration shall be covered under NELP specially formulated in this context. In the same letter of July 10, 1998 he has mentioned about the West Bengal business. PEL in respect of block is to be granted by the West Bengal Government, though the application was made for grant w.e.f. 10.12.95. I have got a clarification with regard to this from the Government of West Bengal. I wrote to the Chief Minister of West Bengal and Govt. of West Bengal has clarified that this clearance was given from 8.1.1996. The State Government has already accorded a working permission to ONGC over an area of 170 square kilometres in South of Asansol, which is known as RNA. That is a block I am talking about for the last one year. The Chairman of the ONGC knows about it. Your Ministry officials know about it. I have marked a copy of this letter to Mr. P. K. Gopalsamy, Director (Exploration) ONGC. After this, I again wrote a letter to your Minister, Mr. Gangwar. He went to Calcutta, addressed a Press Conference, talked about coal-bed methane. Immediately I wrote to him and that letter is dated 24.10.1998. All these things are linked up with one particular area, which is known

to your Ministry. Then why are they playing this game with me? I do not understand this. I do not blame you, but Parliament is being misled like this. This is something else. I am talking about something else. Please give me permission to lay these papers on the Table of the House.

SHRI JIBON ROY (West Bengal): They are misleading the hon. Minister also.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Instead of laying these on the Table, it is better if you hand them over to the hon Minister, because he would know about it.

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: I have been talking to every one. I do not mean anything against the Minister, but my point is, I am unable to understand what they actually want. You mean for another year I should again talk to the Minister. Let him ask for all the papers and have an inquiry on this and give me an assurance. I will assist him on this, but I am not going after Minister after Minister.

SHRI K. RAMAMURTHY: Madam Chairperson, the hon. Member should have patience. He should not get agitated. I have invited him to my office today itself for a detailed discussion. He would agree with me on that point. Yesterday itself he has fixed up the time that he will be meeting me at 7'o clock.

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Mr. Minister, I have been very soft towards you. I do not want anything else. If you are calling me, it is all right. If you are calling me, please get the whole inquiry done about how you have been misled. Here is a question of misleading the Parliament. Yesterday your colleagues there were laughing when you said: "If the State Government gives a clearance, I will give clearance." What clearance have you been talking about? All these papers are here with me.

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Madam, it is not a question of one individual Member and the Minister. Something has come up in the House. It is the property of the House. There is certain information given to the Minister and he in the best of faith relates the same information to the House. I think it will not be properly addressed just by the individual Member meeting the Minister. It is something more than that.

SHRI K. RAMAMURTHY: Madam Deputy Chairperson, my intention is not to mislead the House.

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: We are not charging you....(*Interruptions*)....

SHRI K. RAMAMURTHY: I am sorry. Please listen. I am also having 23 years of experience in Parliament. I must inform you that this coal bed methane subject was under the Ministry of Coal. It was transferred to my Ministry only one year back. So, I do not have the continuation and other things. Madam, I have invited the hon. Member for a discussion. I will invite the Secretary and other officials. He can discuss everything with them. We are prepared to solve it. It is not my intention to hide anything from the Parliament.

Madam Deputy Chairperson....

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: I want an enquiry....(*Interruptions*).... It is a question of privilege. You get the whole thing enquired, get the papers, then, you call me. It should be like that.(*Interruptions*)....

SHRI K. RAMAMURTHY: I never took it like this.

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Please get it enquired thoroughly and get the feed-back from the officials within three days. Then, you call me. During the Parliament session, I can come and meet you. I do not want to meet your Secretary and other officials just like that. Again, some bla, bla, it will go on like this. Let it be enquired into.

SHRI K. RAMAMURTHY: Please tell me, how to solve it?

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Please get it enquired into within three days. Then, you get the enquiry report. You know what exactly has been my contention. Based on that, I can have a meeting with you.

SHRI K. RAMAMURTHY: Please do come. If your contention calls for an enquiry, I will not hesitate. I can assure that. Please do come and discuss with the Secretary. You can place all your facts.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I know that whenever we discuss about petroleum, there is a lot of fuel....

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: It is highly inflammable.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Yes. I have to put some water over it. Now, the Minister is going to enquire into it. He can inform the Member as well as the House what the exact position is. That is the best way to solve the problem.

SHRI K. RAMAMURTHY: Madam, yesterday, Mr. John Fernandes, had raised a point that why can't we have an appropriate licensing authority. In this connection, I would like to share some of my views. As such, as on date, we do not have any proposal for setting up of a licensing authority because there are two variations. The House will appreciate that licensing of telecom services or for investment in highway sector, which was quoted by Mr. Fernandes, is of a different nature. There, you authorise the investment in services. Here in the hydrocarbon sector, the granting of licence for exploitation of non-renewable source of energy means—in short, if I have to say—you are allowing them to exploit the national wealth. That is why the world over, licensing for exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons is regulated by the Government itself. We also intend to continue with the same.

Madam, I would like to inform the House that the Government have decided to set up a Hydrocarbon Regulatory and Development Authority. The Cabinet has already approved the proposal. The

Rajya Sabha Committee on Subordinate Legislation has made certain recommendations in this regard which are being examined. Thereafter, a Bill will be introduced in Parliament. The proposed Authority will look after all aspects of hydrocarbon development and regulation in the country, except licensing.

The hon. Member, Mr. Fernandes, and other Members have mentioned that we are encouraging, more and more, joint ventures and private parties and discouraging our own ONGC and Oil India Limited. The ONGC and Oil India Limited are our national companies. So far, whatever discoveries have been made, are because of these two companies only. Even after the announcement of the New Exploration Licensing Policy, the ONGC have applied for some licences. And we are going to grant these licences to the ONGC on nomination basis not on any tender or competition. The ONGC and the Oil India will continue to get Government nomination. On nomination, blocks will be given whenever, wherever, they want. Madam, there are two confusing issues. There are about 13 contracts which we have already signed. These were offered to private parties in the year 1993. It was getting delayed. No agreement had been reached. There were demands for changes in the clauses and some concessions. Many demands were there from the parties. Ultimately, after the new Government was installed in the months of July and August, we were able to sign 13 contracts which has nothing to do with the New Exploration Licensing Policy. That is a different thing and this NELP under which we are going to offer for 48 blocks is a different thing. These blocks NELP only, in order to have more transparency and attract some foreign capital. Billion of dollars are necessary for our hydrocarbon sector. So, in order to attract more and more foreign capital into this sector of exploration and producers, we are giving certain concessions. Under the concessions, there are some exemptions. In deep-sea and other places

where they may meet with failure in their venture, there is no other way but to exempt them from the royalty. The ONGC has the option to take up 40 per cent participation interest in all the exploration blocks granted for private participation under the earlier bidding rounds. That is in regard to the 13 blocks we have signed. In all the contracts, the ONGC can take 40% as equity participation. Under the New Exploration Licensing Policy, the ONGC and the Oil India Ltd. will also have to participate in the bidding process. They will also be given blocks on nomination basis. Suppose they want to participate in these 48 blocks particularly earmarked for the NELP. They have to participate in the bids along with the other parties.

Some hon. Members wanted a clarification on the three slabs of royalty approved by the Government of India. As I have already mentioned, they will be, on land—12.5 per cent; shallow water—10 per cent in the initial 7 years and 10 per cent after completing seven years of production. The Bill seeks nothing but an enabling provision to the Central Government to notify the above rates and the on shore royalty rates will be notified after obtaining the concurrence of the States concerned. There are two things, Madam. Under the amended Act, any revision of royalty rates or the period of royalty rates, will be notified. All the notifications will be submitted to both the Houses.

I now come to some of the points raised by Mr. Virumbi, particularly with regard to Tamil Nadu. He has claimed that this NELP is the brain-child of the United Front Government. (*Interruption*).

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI (Tamilnadu): The Bill.

SHRI K. RAMAMURTHY: All right. There is no difference of opinion in this respect. He has also referred to some of the parking plans which were to come to Tamil Nadu. He has mentioned some places also. As per the decentralisation

policy, the Ministry does not have any control over the creation of the parking plans. Only the oil companies have to bid. We are only planning it. You have done it in the Eighth Plan, you have to do it in the Ninth Five Year Plan. They are doing it. But I would like to assure Mr. Virumbi that whatever has been planned, nothing is going to be dropped. That much assurance I can give to him in this House. He has also referred to the Southern Gas Grid. He has also explained the behaviour of Pakistan in the Economic Zone when we started our survey. There is a difficulty in bringing the sub-sea pipeline from Iran or Qatar. He has also explained that point. But Still the Ministry has not given up its hope. We are still pursuing that matter. Mr. Virumbi has also referred to the pipeline from Vjsakhapatnam to Hyderabad via Triupati, and Cochin-Karur-Trichy—Madurai, and Madras-Nagapattinam. This is now in an advance stage. I am happy to inform him that these projects have been taken up earnestly, and in our review meeting last month, the progress was reviewed. The cross-country pipeline is one of our dreams. Even though the laying of the pipeline has been entrusted to petronet, the Government is trying to find out whether it is possible to offer the job of laying the pipeline to some of the private parties, who are coming forward for their complete investment. So, this matter is under consideration in the Ministry. We wanted to reduce the burden on the road transport and the rail transport. This pipeline will be the safest possible way by which we can transport the petroleum products.

The hon. Member, Shri Brahmakumar Bhatt, has raised a very important point about the contract workers working in the ONGC in Gujarat. The hon. Member, Shri Venkaiah Naidu has also said about that I am basically a trade union leader. I agree with Mr. Bhatt that in some of the undertakings, the number of contract workers and casual workers in more than the permanent workers. By

adopting this *modus operandi* they can show profits in the balance-sheet. This is one of the things which they are doing. I assure the hon. Member that any exploitation of the contract workers by the public sector undertakings, particularly, the ONGC, will not be allowed. If the hon. Member has any specific information with him, he can pass it on to me and I will take it up at my level and see to it what best we can do in this regard.

Mr. Yadav had raised the point that if we given this kind of exploration work to the private and joint companies, then the multinationals and the transnationals who are coming to our country, will swallow our oil companies, particularly, the ONGC. Am I right? I will inform Mr. Yadav that India is a very vast country. These forty-eight blocks are nothing but a peanut in the context of our deposits earmarked for different types of blocks. The ONGC is one of the five hundred fortune companies in the world and it is one of the biggest companies in this country. It will not succumb to any pressure or competition or challenge from the multinational or the transnational companies. Madam Deputy Chairperson, one thing more I would like to assure the House, that none of the public undertakings in the Ministry will be privatised. That assurance I give. But as regards disinvestment, yes, we are going in for disinvestment, as suggested by the Disinvestment Commission. There should not be any apprehension that these public undertakings, which are all very good, fortune companies, particularly created by the Government of India over a period of four decades, will be handed over to any private person. They will continue to be public undertakings under the control of the Government of India. Thank you, Madam. With these words I conclude.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Chitharanjan is not there to withdraw. I put the Resolution moved by Mr. Chitharanjan to vote. The question is:

"That this house disapproves of the Oilfields (regulation and Development) Amendment Ordinance, 1998 (No. 17 of 1998) promulgated by the President on the 3rd September, 1998."

The motion was negatived.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I shall not put the Motion moved by Mr. K. Ramamurthy to vote. The question is:

"That the Bill further to amend the Oilfields (Regulation and Development) Act, 1948, as passed by Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We shall not take up clause-by clause consideration of the Bill.

Clause 2 to 4 were added to the Bill.

Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Title were added to the Bill.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, Shri K. Ramamurthy to move that the Bill be returned.

SHRI K. RAMAMURTHY: Madam Deputy Chairperson, I move: "That the Bill be returned."

The question was put and the motion was adopted.

SHORT DURATION DISCUSSION Sugar Policy

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We will not take up the Short Duration Discussion on Sugar Policy.

SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY (Andhra Pradesh): I thank you very much, Madam Deputy Chairman, for calling me to initiate the Short Duration Discussion on sugar policy of the country, Madam, everyone of us is aware that our country is the largest sugar producing country and also the largest sugar consuming country in the world. In fact, India is known as the original home