

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY (SHRI VIKRAM MAHAJAN): (a) Government have already revised the average pit-head prices of coal produced by Coal India Limited and Singareni Colliery Company Ltd. at Rs. 123.02 and Rs. 136.85 per tonne respectively with effect from 14th February, 1981.

(b) Yes, Sir. An amount of approximately Rs. 400 crores has been earmarked in the Annual Plan Budget estimates for 1981-82 for replacement of obsolete equipment as well as for procurement of new machines/technology by coal companies.

Means to find out correct weight of Gas in cylinders

640. SHRI D. HEERACHAND: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that domestic gas consumers have no means to find out whether the gas in the cylinder supplied to them by the dealers is of correct weight or not; and

(b) if so, what steps Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI P. C. SETHI): (a) It will not be correct to say that domestic customers of cooking gas have no means to find out the correct weight of gas in the cylinders supplied to them. Cylinders which are filled at the bottling plants of oil companies contain a fixed weight of gas. The weight of the empty cylinders is marked on body of the cylinder. Customers, if required, can weigh the cylinders at the time of supply and find out the net weight of the gas in the cylinders.

(b) Does not arise.

Drilling in off-shore structure in Tamil Nadu

641. SHRI D. HEERACHAND: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that "Gettysberg" the U.S. Vessel chartered by the Oil and Natural Gas Commission to drill in the Porto Novo off-shore structure in Tamil Nadu, has struck oil and gas in its first two wells;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) whether Government are on the look out for a foreign company interested in off-shore and on-shore explorations in that area on lease basis; and

(d) if so, what decision Government have taken in the matter and which foreign company is being awarded the contract?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI P. C. SETHI): (a) and (b) The ONGC had drilled 3 wells in Porto Novo offshore structures near Pondicherry last year by deploying the chartered vessel "Gettysberg". On testing, small quantities of gas were encountered in these wells at depths ranging from 1230 metres to 3456 metres. Further exploratory programme will depend upon evaluation of the data obtained from these wells.

(c) No, Sir. The area around Porto Novo off-shore structures has not been opened for exploration by foreign parties.

(d) Does not arise.