

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MOHD. SHAFI QURESHI): (a) The statement of the former Minister of Railways at Trichur as reported in the press referred to the proposal for a new railway line from Bombay along the West Coast, which, if constructed, would provide an alternative route for rail communications to the South during agitations.

(b) The position in regard to this line is that reconnaissance engineering-cum-traffic survey for a new rail line from Apta to Mangalore has been completed and the report has been received. The proposal is under consideration. Arrangements have been made to start the earth work from Apta to Dasgaon (108 Kms.) as drought relief. Detailed Survey for the reach Dasgaon to Mangalore is also being taken up.

OIL EXPLORATION

*295. SHRIMATI SAVITA BEHEN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that oil exploration schemes have not met with any tangible success, specially during the past few years;

(b) if so, what efforts have been made in this direction during the past five years and the success achieved thereby;

(c) the details of the schemes for the next year in the field of oil explorations and also for the Fifth Five Year Plan; and

(d) the estimated requirement and availability of crude oil for the next year and for the Fifth Five Year Plan period?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI D. K. BOROOAH): (a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

Oil exploration in the country is being conducted mainly by the ONGC. The Oil India Ltd. has been conducting their operations on a limited scale in the areas leased out to it years ago in the North-Eastern region.

As a result of its operations during the last few years, the ONGC has discovered several new oil and gas-bearing structures. However, these structures are mostly small-sized. The ONGC has been vigorously pursuing a programme of various types of surveys with a view to finding more favourable structures in the different prospective areas in the country. The ONGC has also imported sophisticated instruments like digital seismic units in order to get better seismic data about these structures. Wherever such structures are found favourable enough to be tested by drilling, the ONGC has embarked on drilling operations. As a result of these efforts 14 new oil—gas—bearing areas have been discovered in the preceding five years, i.e. from 1967-68 to 1971-72. Insofar as the Oil India Ltd. is concerned, during the last years a total of 64 wells were drilled. The combined evidence from these wells and the production data obtained during this period has helped to increase the estimated total recoverable reserves in the areas leased to the Oil India Ltd.

The ONGC has drawn up a five-year plan, beginning from 1973-74, for intensification of operations. The last 4 years of this plan would coincide with the first 4 years of the country's Fifth Five-Year Plan. The main objects of the ONGC's plan are (i) to establish an additional recoverable reserve of 64 million tonnes of oil (ii) to step up production of crude oil in a manner so as to achieve a production rate of 8 million tonnes during 1977-78, and (iii) to establish a gas production rate of about 1090 million cubic meters per year by the end of 1977-78.

To achieve this, the ONGC intends to drill about 1.337 million metres, and undertake 104 party-years of geological work and 152 party-years of geophysical work during this five-year period. During 1973-74, ONGC also intend to drill 99 wells of an aggregate depth of 204,470 metres and to produce 4.65 million tonnes of crude oil and 455 million cubic metres of gas.

The forward plans of the Oil India Limited are based on a seven-year plan cycle. During the period 1973 to 1979, it is drawing up a plan to drill about 60 wells, of which a substantial number will be exploration wells. During 1973, hopes to complete 11-12 wells. Throughout this period of 1973-1979, OIL intends to maintain a crude oil production rate of about 3 million tonnes per annum.

During 1973-74, whereas the estimated requirements crude oil in the country would be 22.4 million tonnes, the estimated availability of indigenous crude oil would be 7.79 million tonnes. Figures for the last year of the Fifth-Plan period are estimated to be about 43 million tonnes and 11 million tonnes respectively.

HALDIA FERTILIZER PROJECT

*296. DR. R. K. CHAKRABARTI:
DR. K. MATHEW KURIAN:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS be pleased to state:

(a) by when the Haldia Fertilizer Project is likely to be completed and commissioned;

(b) by when it is likely to enter production;

(c) whether Fertilizer Corporation of India has utilised the total foreign exchange meant for this project; and

(d) if not, how the balance was utilised?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI D. K. BOROOAH): (a) and (b) According

to present indications, the Haldia fertilizer project is expected to be completed by January 1976. Commercial production is expected to start within about six months thereafter.

(c) and (d) Against a foreign exchange of Rs. 25.70 crores released so far, the Corporation has placed orders to the tune of Rs. 16.58 crores. The balance amount is also expected to be utilised shortly.

DELTA SUNDARBANS PROJECT

*297. SHRI SANAT KUMAR RAHA: Will the Minister of IRRIGATION AND POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have agreed to approve the West Bengal Government's scheme of Delta Sundarbans project for protecting large area of land from saline water;

(b) if so, the details of the scheme; and

(c) by when the work on this project will begin?

THE MINISTER OF IRRIGATION AND POWER (DR. K. L. RAO): (a) to (c) The Sundarbans Delta Project is a complex project of large magnitude intended to benefit in first phase 50,000 hectares through agricultural development and fisheries. So far only preliminary investigations have been carried out by the Government of West Bengal. Detailed investigations and preparation of a detailed project report by Government of West Bengal are on hand.

783. [Transferred to the 4th March, 1973.]

APPOINTMENT OF PERSONS FROM S.C./S.T. AS CHAIRMAN/MEMBER-SECRETARY OF RAILWAY SERVICE COMMISSION

785. SHRI N. H. KUMBHARE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any persons drawn from the Scheduled Castes and the