

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) what is the likely estimate of the deficit by the end of the current fiscal year;

(d) whether Government are contemplating any measures to reduce the deficit; and

(e) if so, the details of these measures?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The cumulative outstanding claims of oil companies from the Oil Pool Account stood at about Rs. 6000 crores as on 31.3.2000 (Provisional). Oil Pool Account gap depends upon various factors such as fluctuation in international prices of crude and controlled petroleum products fluctuation in foreign exchange rates, domestic prices of controlled petroleum products etc.

(d) and (e) With a view to contain the deficit in the oil pool account, the Government have taken a number of measures such as moving product prices towards import parity and gradual phasing out of subsidy on petroleum products.

Survey to assess the Natural Gas and Oil in Himachal Pradesh

†93. **SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR:** Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have conducted any survey to assess the quantity of underground natural gas and oil in Himachal Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof, alongwith results;

(c) if not, whether any such survey is proposed to be conducted;

(d) if so, by when; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY): (a) to (e) Exploration of hydrocarbons, *i.e.* crude oil and natural gas, is being carried out by Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. (ONGC) in the State of Himachal Pradesh since 1956. Based on the surveys, ten exploratory wells and five structural wells have been drilled. The exploratory efforts so far have yielded any commercial discovery of hydrocarbons.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

During the last three years (1997-98 to 1999-2000) ONGC has acquired 118 Ground Line Kilometres (GLK) of 2D seismic data. Also ONGC has plans to acquire 332 GLK of 2D seismic data and drilling of two exploratory wells in the State during the years 2000-01 and 2001-02. Additionally, Directorate General of hydrocarbons (DGH) has a proposal to carry out Aeromagnetic surveys, of about 28000 Line Kilometres, in the Himalayn foothill regions, covering parts of the States of Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh, in the near future.

Restriction on sale of Solvent and Naphtha to prevent adulteration

94. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have restricted the sale, acquisition, storage of solvents and naphtha in an attempt to prevent adulteration of petroleum products;

(b) if so, whether the Naphtha and solvents are freely mixed in petrol and diesel by petrol pump owners in the country;

(c) if so, whether the system to check adulteration of Naphtha or solvent is not effective; and

(d) if so, to what extent steps would be taken to ensure availability of petrol and diesel free from any type of adulteration?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY): (a) to (d) To check the adulteration of automobile fuels viz. Motor Spirit (MS) and High Speed diesel (HSD) by adulterants like Naphtha, Solvent, Reffinate and Slop, the Government have promulgated the Solvent, Raffinate and Slop (Acquisition, Sale, Storage and Prevention of use in Automobiles) Order, 2000 and the Naphtha (Acquisition, Sale, Storage and Prevention of use in Automobiles) Order, 2000 under the provisions of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955.

Further to check the adulteration and malpractices, the oil marketing companies carry out regular/ surprise checks of retail outlets, to control various malpractices including adulteration. In addition, special drives are launched by the oil companies both on their own and also under direction of Government from time to time check malpractices. To prevent adulteration various steps like blue dyeing of kerosene (PDS), furfural doping, filter paper test, checking of retail outlets by mobile labotatories, etc. are taken by oil companies.