

Import of Foodgrains

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*1574. **Shri Shree Narayan Das:**
Shri Linga Reddy:

Will the Minister of **Food, Agriculture, Community Development and Cooperation** be pleased to state:

(a) whether the final and precise estimate of the requirements of foodgrains imports to meet the requirements for the whole country during this year has been made;

(b) if so, the quantity assessed;

(c) the arrangements finalised for import of foodgrains giving country-wise figures;

(d) whether requirements of the States in the matter of supply of rice, wheat and other foodgrains by the Centre have been finally considered; and

(e) if so, the assurance given by the Centre in this regard?

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Food, Agriculture, Community Development and Cooperation (Shri Govinda Menon): (a) and (b). The requirements of foodgrains of a country with a developing economy like India are difficult to assess even in a normal year. In a year of extreme shortage like the current one, it is much more difficult to make any precise estimate. However, production during the current year is lower than the last year's by more than 12 million tonnes and an import of at least that quantity is obviously justified.

(c) Arrangements have so far been made for the import of 7.1 million tonnes of foodgrains. A statement showing the quantities to be imported from different countries is laid on the Table of the House. [*Placed in Library See No. 6268/66*]

(d) and (e). The requirements of foodgrains of each State are periodically examined in consultation with the State Government and the supplies available with the Central Government are distributed to the various States on a monthly basis in as equi-

table a manner as possible. All the State Governments have been assured that supplies from Centre will be strictly on the basis of relative requirements of the various States and the overall availability of foodgrains with the Centre.

Shri Shree Narayan Das: What part of these 7 million tonnes for which arrangements have so far been made will form part of the buffer stock and what part will be consumed this year?

Shri Govinda Menon: There is no question of the buffer stock just at present. We are in a very difficult situation and we can think of it only a bit later.

Shri Shree Narayan Das: The hon. Minister has just now said that to meet the requirements of this year we require about 10 or 12 million tonnes of foodgrains whereas arrangements for only 7 million tonnes have so far been made. What other arrangements are being made for the remaining part of the requirement?

Shri Govinda Menon: Attempts to get more are being made.

Shrimati Renuka Ray: In reply to part (a) of the question the Minister has said that it is difficult to make any assessment of the actual production in the country. I would like to know how they are able to assess what is the requirement or the deficit and how much is required to be imported if they have no idea of what is the production in the country and also, if they have no firm figure of the requirements. The reply to part (a) asking whether estimate of the requirements of foodgrains imports has been made was that it was difficult to make an assessment. If it is difficult, I would like to know how do they come to a firm assessment of the quantity that they actually ask for from different countries. I would also like to know . . .

Mr. Speaker: There ought not to be so many questions. Ladies have some privileges but not beyond limits.

Shri Govinda Menon: I think, the answer which I read out has been misunderstood. The question was as to what the precise estimate of the requirements of foodgrains imports is and the answer was that the requirements cannot be estimated because ours is a developing country . . . *(Interruption)*.

Shri Shree Narayan Das: Why can it not be made at least for one year?

Shri Govinda Menon: Every year the requirement will go up . . . *(Interruption)*.

Shri Shree Narayan Das: The question requires the estimate for this year only, not for other coming years.

Shri Govinda Menon: Since this year there has been a shortfall in production . . . *(Interruptions)* of the order of 12 million tonnes, it may safely be stated that at least that quantity will have to be imported.

Mr. Speaker: That means that what we produced was enough for our requirements, because 12 million tonnes we will be short of and we will require that much.

The Minister of Food, Agriculture, Community Development and Co-operation (Shri C. Subramaniam): The point for consideration is that this year the requirement cannot be on a normal basis of what we are entitled to consume. Because of the shortfall we have to tighten our belts to a certain extent. Therefore we cannot make up the entire deficit as far as the deficit can be estimated. What the Minister was referring to was that we try to calculate at least to maintain the consumption standard which we have reached, so that it may not go down. That is not adequate; I agree. Even in a bad year we do not want to go below the standard which we have already reached. On that basis we try to make up the short-fall in a particular year. But certainly that is not the requirement for a balanced diet; a proper diet for everybody is much more than that. That is why he said that it is not possible to take in-

to account the actual requirements, but we take into account the production pattern and what we have been consuming so far and on that basis we try to import.

Mr. Speaker: Even in an ordinary year, whatever are the requirements, those might have been given. I suppose.

Shri C. Subramaniam: That has been given.

Mr. Speaker: Not the requirement. Because the shortage is 12 million tonnes, that at least would be required.

Shri C. Subramaniam: On the present basis we have made an estimate. As a matter of fact, the Third Plan targets were fixed on the basis of what would be our requirement by the end of the Third Plan. We fixed it at 100 million tonnes which we have not reached. But that would be on the basis that everybody would get a particular standard, and because we have not been able to reach that, we have to be satisfied with the lower standard of consumption. *(Interruptions)*.

Shri Linga Reddy: Out of 7.1 million tonnes of foodgrains that are proposed to be imported from various countries, how much of it has been actually received?

Shri Govinda Menon: Out of 7.1 million tonnes which have been arranged, about 5 million tonnes have been received.

Shri Bhagwat Jha Azad: May I know what are the considerations—political or hunger or religious—for accepting 5,000 tonnes from Greece, 6,000 tonnes from the Netherlands and 2,000 tonnes from Vatican? While it is not possible to accept small quantities from other countries, why are such things accepted from these countries? Why are the bells allowed to be rung announcing starvation?

Shri C. Subramaniam: This is not the only commodity which was offered to us by these countries. In addi-

tion to this, milk power and various other things were offered. This forms part of a package.

Shri R. Ramanathan Chettiar: May I know what will be the value of these and whether the shipping freight will have to be paid in dollars?

Shri C. Subramaniam: We have to pay for the freight in dollars.

Shri R. Ramanathan Chettiar: What would be the value?

Shri C. Subramaniam: As far as the U.S. wheat is concerned, we pay round about Rs. 380 per tonne; that will be Rs. 5,000,286. Regarding the other commodities that we have received the wheat was under the free gift programme; as far as rice is concerned, the value will be Rs.550 to Rs. 600 per tonne.

Shrimati Savitri Nigam : May I know what are the countries which have insisted that the food should be imported by their ships and whether it is a fact that the freight which has been charged by those respective countries has been too high in comparison with the freight which is being charged usually.

Shri C. Subramaniam: Under the P.L. 480 arrangement, 50 per cent of the wheat will be moved in U.S. bottoms. The U.S. freight is much more than the world average freight, but the extra freight is borne by the U.S. Government.

बी हुकम चम्ब कछबाय : मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि चार छः रोज पहले एक समाचार पत्र में छपा था कि कलकत्ता बन्दरगाह पर घन्न से लदे हुए दस जहाज रुके हुए हैं, उनको खाली नहीं किया गया क्यों कि किन्हीं कारणों से मजदूरों ने हड़ताल कर रखी है, तो यह खाद्य सामग्री जो प्राची थी यह किन देशों की थी और किन देशों के जहाजों पर भरी हुई थी और क्या उनको पूरी तरह खाली कर दिया गया है या नहीं ?

Shri C. Subramaniam: I do not have the information immediately.

Shri P. Venkatasubbaiah: The Minister has just now stated that our requirement would be of the order of 12 million tonnes and the imported quantity is upto 7 million tonnes; the rest is supposed to be procured internally....

Shri C. Subramaniam: Not internally.

Mr. Speaker: He has not said that.

Shri P. Venkatasubbaiah: In that case, may I know whether Government have.....

Mr. Speaker: He has not said that our requirement would be 12 million tonnes. He has only said that because the shortage is to that extent, we shall require at least that much.

Shri P. Venkatasubbaiah: So far as our present standard of consumption is concerned, he has said that 12 million tonnes would be the minimum that has to be imported. May I know whether the hon. Minister is aware that in some places, especially in Andhra Pradesh where the new strain of paddy is being produced, the Food Corporation has not entered the market and procured with the result that the stocks have remained with the agriculturists, even though they have come forward to offer their food-grains at the support prices fixed by Government? May I know why the internal procurement is not working properly?

Shri C. Subramaniam: I am glad the hon. Member has given this information. I shall look into it. It is our policy, particularly, for the Food Corporation, to purchase everything that is available within the country.

Shri D. C. Sharma: Shri Asoka Mehta went abroad to the USA and the Soviet Union to get foreign exchange for aiding our Fourth Five Year Plan, and the Minister of Food and Agriculture also had been to the USA some time ago to get some food.

Since there is a shortfall between the assessment of our needs and what we have at present, will the hon. Minister of Food and Agriculture go abroad again to make good that shortfall?

Shri C. Subramaniam: There is no proposal for me to go abroad.

Shri Shinkre: In view of the fact that this year Government have successfully created famine conditions and stravation conditions in serval parts of the country, thereby causing a lot of deaths, can we assume that next year, the overall requirement of food assistance from abroad shall be comparatively reduced?

Shri C. Subramaniam: As a matter of fact, the target of production that we have fixed for the next year is 95 to 97 million tonnes, and naturally, that will also to a certain extent depend upon the monsoon behaviour.

Air Corporations

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- *1575. **Shri Madhu Limaye:**
Shri Kishen Pattnayak:
Shri Yashraj Singh:
Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia:
Shri Bagri:
Shri S. M. Banerjee:
Shri Firodia:
Shri Sarjoo Pandey:
Shri Linga Reddy:

Will the Minister of Transport, Aviation, Shipping and Tourism be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that when the I.A.C. flights had been suspended last time on account of the Pilots' strike, the General Manager of the I.A.C. had expressed a desire to fly to New York on the inaugural flight;

(b) whether the suggestion was then turned down by Government;

(c) whether during the present cancellation of the Air India flights, the Chairman with the Commercial Director, had been staying abroad

and had not thought it fit to return to India; and

(d) whether in view of the growing irresponsibility in the two Air Corporations in the public sector and the demand recently made by the employees' Associations and Unions, Government intend to order a public enquiry into the matter?

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Aviation (Shri C. M. Poonacha): (a) to (d). I lay a statement on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

(a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The Commercial Director left Bombay on 10th March, 1966 and returned on the morning of 20th March, 1966. He visited London and Geneva on important official work.

The Chairman, Air India left Bombay on the 12th March, 1966 and returned on the 25th March, 1966. The Chairman had a meeting with the representatives of India Flight Navigators Guild in regard to their grievances arising out of the National Industrial Award before he left on tour. There was no indication of a strike notice by the Guild or of an imminent strike by the Navigators when he left abroad, on the 12th March, 1966 on important official work. From the time the strike commenced, the Chairman was fully in the picture regarding all matters pertaining to the strike as the General Manager was in constant touch with him.

(d) No, Sir. In view of the fact that the Parliamentary Committee on Public Undertakings has only recently submitted a report on the working of the two Air Corporations after a thorough examination, an enquiry at this stage is not considered necessary. The report of the Parliamentary Committee is receiving the attention of the Government.

श्री कृष्ण पटनायक : एक प्वाइंट
 बाफ घाईर है। मैं यह एतराज करना