

states to investigate, and we get reports from them. So far we have sent all the press cuttings we received and it has been proved that they were not starvation deaths; in most cases, they were natural deaths.

श्री विमूक्ति सिन्हा : क्या जानना चाहना है कि क्या सरकार कोई इस प्रकार की कार्यवाही करता है ताकि इस तरह के गलत समाचार प्रकाशकों से न हटें ?

Shri M. V. Krishnappa: It is for the State Governments to take any action they want. As for the truth of the reports in the Press, we leave it to the public to believe them or not. Naturally if something is repeated again and again without basis, people will lose belief in it.

Mr. Speaker: All that he wants to know whether the Central Government after inquiry and finding that the deaths are not due to starvation, publish their findings thus contradicting press reports.

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri A. F. Jain): The fact is that food is essentially a responsibility of State Governments. When we find such newspaper reports, we make enquiries from the State Government. It is for the State Government to prosecute the people or take any action they like.

Mr. Speaker: Is it published in the press that the reports are wrong or incorrect?

Shri A. F. Jain: In many cases, State Governments have done so.

Pandit D. N. Tiwary: Are Government aware that in many cases the deaths are not apparently due to starvation in the sense that due to starvation, other diseases occur and therefore, deaths take place? Are such deaths published as starvation deaths or deaths by disease?

Mr. Speaker: In due course, every man dies on account of languishing for a number of years.

Pandit D. N. Tiwary: This is really on account of starvation.

Mr. Speaker: Every disease arises out of over-feeding or under-feeding.

Shri Nagi Reddy: The Minister has told us that most of the deaths were not starvation deaths. What about others? When most are not, then, there must be some. The rest must be starvation deaths.

Shri M. V. Krishnappa: In most cases they are natural deaths; and that means that the other cases are deaths due to diseases and various other causes.

Shrimati Ha Palchoudhuri: May I know whether Government are aware that a child of 7 years died in front of its mother in Azamgarh and has it been investigated and what is the result?

Shri A. F. Jain: We have made an enquiry from the U. P. Government and they have informed us that no starvation deaths have taken place there.

#### Food Production

786. Shrimati Tarkeswari Sinha: Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

- (a) what was the estimated target of food production during 1956-57;
- (b) the actual increase in the food production;
- (c) whether there has been a shortfall in the estimated target; and
- (d) if so, the reasons therefor?

The Deputy Minister of Agriculture (Shri M. V. Krishnappa): (a) The target of additional production of food-grains during 1956-57 was fixed at 1.37 million tons that is 1 million tons under Grow More Food and .37 million tons under major irrigation.

(b) The actual increase is estimated at 3.64 million tons.

(c) No. On the other hand the target has been exceeded by 2.27 million tons.

(d) Does not arise.

**Shrimati Tarkeshwari Sinha:** The hon Minister said about annual targets. May I know what was the target fixed under the Second Five Year Plan for the increase in agricultural production and how much of that has been achieved?

**Shri M. V. Krishnappa:** We have fixed a target of 15.5 million tons for foodgrains for the Second Five Year Plan. For this year it was fixed at 1.37 million tons whereas we have exceeded the target by 2.27 million tons.

**Shrimati Tarkeshwari Sinha:** May I know whether, in view of the fact that seasonal fluctuations play a very important part in the production of foodgrains in the country, Government have tried to chalk out any policy regarding the maintenance of a reserve stock, and, if so, what is the present policy in regard to the buffer stock?

**The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri A. P. Jain):** I have stated more than once in the House that the Government is building stocks and, at present, our stocks would be to the tune of about 6 lakh tons. There are about 2 lakh tons of wheat in the holds of the ships waiting discharge and there may be 3 to 4 lakh tons on the sea. Of course, there have been some difficulties in unloading and we hope that our stocks will increase and be substantially enough to meet the demand.

**Shri Sinhasan Singh:** The Government have replied that the target has increased by over 2 million tons, whereas we find, all along, food scarcity and starvation deaths going on, in spite of this increase. Why has this scarcity come?

**Shri M. V. Krishnappa:** This has been explained a number of times. Though production has gone up, consumption has also gone up, developmental expenditure has gone up almost three times and there has been

an increase in various other factors. Only last week I read in the newspapers that 2,000 people starved and died in China. It is rather difficult to believe that in a State like China where people are producing more and more people could die of starvation.

**Shri V. P. Nayar:** The question asked for certain details of estimated targets of food production. But, the hon Minister's answer was confined to production of foodgrains only. I would like to know what are the targets for other items of food which have not been given in answer, for example, leafy vegetables.

**Shri M. V. Krishnappa:** The question was about food production and not other items.

**Shri V. P. Nayar:** By the word 'food' does Government mean only foodgrains or other articles of food also?

**Shri M. V. Krishnappa:** For this question it means only foodgrains.

**Mr. Speaker:** That is how it has been understood.

**Shri Ramanathan Chettiar:** In view of the fact that targets have been exceeded, will Government consider the question of reducing the import of foodgrains in order to save foreign exchange?

**Shri A. P. Jain:** This question of foreign exchange has been very often raised in this House, but unfortunately, some kind of misunderstanding prevails. The major portion of the foodgrains are imported not by paying foreign exchange but in terms of rupees. There are two agreements, one with Burma and the other with the United States. Any purchase that we make from Burma has to be paid in terms of foreign exchange. We are normally importing about 5 lakh tons of rice which costs us about Rs 25 crores. So far as wheat is concerned, we are importing under P. L. 480 Agreement from the United States of America and we have the option of paying them either in terms of dollars

or rupees over a period of a number of years. Of course, we are paying them in terms of rupees. But, in that agreement there is another clause whereby we are required to import for our normal requirements from sources outside this agreement. Part of this is imported from Australia. This year we are importing about 3 lakh tons which will cost about Rs 13 to Rs 15 crores. The foreign exchange involved in the purchase of foodgrains is of the tune of about Rs 47 crores which is less than 2 weeks' consumption of foreign exchange in this country.

**Shrimati Tarkeshwari Sinha:** The hon Minister said that the targets of food production for 1956-57 have already been exceeded. But the prices have also been rising in proportion as the hon Minister knows that since 1956 to February 1957, there has been 18 per cent rise in prices.

**Mr Speaker:** We are going away.

**Shrimati Tarkeshwari Sinha:** One question, Sir. I just wanted to know what are the basic reasons for this economic paradox that production has been increasing and prices have also been increasing.

**Shri A. P. Jain:** The hon Member would be aware that prices do not depend only upon the availability of stocks. They depend on other factors also, such as total amount of money in circulation. As the House is aware, we have been undertaking developmental expenditure on a large scale and there has also been deficit financing. The prices depend upon the availability of stocks and also on the monetary conditions. Naturally, in an expanding economy, prices have a tendency to go up. If we were producing more, perhaps, a further rise in prices might have been arrested. But there are more than one reason.

**Dr. Ram Subhag Singh:** May I know whether this increase in production has been uniform in all the States or whether it has gone down in some areas or States where starvation deaths have been reported?

**Shri A. P. Jain:** It is a separate question. In one or two States the production has also gone down.

**Shri Sinhasan Singh:** The hon Minister has replied that consumption had gone up and so, inspite of the fact that the target has been exceeded there has been scarcity. May I know how the consumption has gone up, whether the purchasing power has gone up or people have taken to eat more?

**Shri M. V. Krishnappa:** We have had very many undertakings. The developmental expenditure has increased 3 times, labourers who used to go without work are given labour or work throughout the month in the projects and National Highways and various other schemes and so the labourer who used to go without food when there was no work is able to have work and food.

**Shri Tyagi:** While the targets for foodgrains were fixed, were not all these elements taken into account?

**Shri A. P. Jain:** The Planning Commission estimated that over the period of the Second Five Year Plan the total increase in production would be of the tune of 15.5 million tons. It was expected that this will be able to meet the demands with some imports. The Second Five Year Plan clearly provides that as a result of the development expenditure and other financial operations, the demand in foodgrains will rise and the production will not go up at the same pace. They, therefore, provided that during the Second Five Year Plan period import of 6 million tons of foodgrains will have to be made from abroad and that is what we are doing. Production has been going up. The total targets have been split into different years. The present year's target was 1.27 million tons whereas actually the increase is 3.64 million tons. Yet, in spite of all caution, nobody can envisage the economic factors with absolute accuracy. The demand has been greater and the prices have been going up.