

Prices of Agricultural Commodities

*1622. **Shri V. P. Nayar:** Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state :

(a) whether any scheme has been prepared for inclusion in the Second Five Year Plan for ensuring steady and high prices to the growers of exportable agricultural commodities like pepper, Lemon grass Oil, cardamoms, ginger etc. which are at present subject to serious price fluctuations; and

(b) if so, the broad details of such schemes ?

The Minister of Agriculture (Dr. P.S. Deshmukh): (a) and (b). No specific scheme has been prepared for inclusion in the Second Five Year Plan for this purpose so far. However, a scheme for Co-operative Marketing, Warehousing and Credit has been proposed for inclusion in the Second Five Year Plan, which may lead indirectly to the desired goal.

Shri V. P. Nayar: Are Government aware that owing to price falls in agricultural commodities which now show a price which is half of the lowest price in 1951 and 1952, a very large number of interests involved in agriculture are put to very great handicaps ?

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: We are aware of the problem by and large.

Shri V. P. Nayar: May I know whether Government have in their contemplation any scheme by which these price fluctuations in agricultural commodities will not be continued in future years, so that the agriculturists can depend upon a definite known income ?

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: As the hon. Member knows, in certain circumstances we have taken steps for price support, but the question was whether we have any scheme in the Second Five Year Plan to which I replied in the negative.

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri A. P. Jain): May I add that the Government has appointed a committee under the chairmanship of the Deputy Minister which will examine the question of price fluctuations and which will also suggest steps for steadying the prices both in point of time and in point of space.

Shri V. P. Nayar: May I know whether Government of India are aware that this price fluctuation is the result of manipulations by the exporters most of whom are in the grip of foreign monopolies ?

Shri A. P. Jain: That will be one of the questions before the committee.

Shri Punnoose and Shri T.B. Vittal Rao rose:

Mr. Speaker: Let Mr. Vittal Rao put one question.

Shri Punnoose: The question is in my name also ?

Mr. Speaker: There should be no argument.

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao: May I know whether the price fluctuation enquiry committee will go into these commodities mentioned ? It is only for foodgrains as far as I know.

Shri A. P. Jain: And the supplementary question was also about foodgrains.

Foodgrains Depot (Ferozepore)

*1623. **Sardar Iqbal Singh:** Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that foodgrains stored in the Government depot at Ferozepore have decayed ;

(b) whether it is a fact that foodgrain^s in the godowns depot are infested and mixed with stones;

(c) whether Government have received any complaint with regard to foodgrains stored there; and

(d) if so, the steps Government propose to take in the matter ?

The Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri M. V. Krishnappa): (a) No.

(b) As soon as the stocks showed signs of infestation they were fumigated and the infestation has been controlled. The grain is not mixed with stones.

(c) No complaint except about infestation has so far been received.

(d) Adequate facilities for disinfection and fumigation exist at the depot.

Sardar Iqbal Singh: May I know whether it is a fact that the Central Government have given subsidy to the Punjab Government for purchasing wheat ? May I also know whether the local dealers that purchased the wheat with this subsidy purchased the best quality but mixed it with the worst quality so that they could make more profits ?

Shri M. V. Krishnappa: That question refers to the wheat purchased by the Punjab Government. But here the question relates to the wheat that we have stored at the Central depot. As far as the wheat in the Central depot is concerned, there are no grains which

have deteriorated. In fact, we never allow the grains to deteriorate. We fumigate them and keep them always in good order.

Sardar Iqbal Singh: May I know whether it is a fact that the wheat that was stored in the Ferozepur depot or somewhere or taken from the Ferozepore mandies to some other mandies at the cost of the Central Government, has been mixed with lower grade wheat by the local dealers who purchased for the Central Government on behalf of the Punjab Government?

Shri M. V. Krishnappa: In the Ferozepore Kasu Begu depot we have got about 19,000 tons of wheat. All this is imported wheat which is recent origin. In fact, it was purchased only some three or four months ago, and stored there.

If the hon. Member's question refers to the wheat purchased by the Punjab Government, I shall enquire whether they had purchased such bad grain.

Sardar Iqbal Singh: May I know whether Government will make some enquiries in the matter?

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri A. P. Jain): In order to enlighten the hon. member I may inform him that there has been no such complaint. The wheat which we are purchasing in Punjab and elsewhere is FAQ of which full specifications have been laid down. We give the State Government a certain amount per pound for keeping that wheat as also for incidental charges of the purchase. So, there is no possibility of any bad wheat being purchased, because when we take, it will be FAQ quality.

Sardar Iqbal Singh: May I know whether in the specifications some percentage of mixture is allowed. May I also know whether Government are aware of the fact that the wheat that was purchased in the Ferozepur district is one of the best qualities of wheat, and that is why it was mixed with lower grade wheat, taking advantage of the percentage of mixture allowed?

Shri A.P. Jain: A certain amount of tolerance is allowed, and any wheat which comes within that tolerance is FAQ wheat.

Skymaster Aircraft

*1624. **Shri Kamath:** Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state:

(a) whether an agreement to acquire Skymasters has been concluded and signed between the Indian Airlines Corporation and the Air Carrier Service Corporation, Washington;

(b) if so when, for how many Skymasters and at what cost;

(c) when the delivery is expected;

(d) whether there is a penalty clause in the Agreement; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

The Deputy Minister of Communications (Shri Raj Bahadur): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The agreement was signed on the 25th July, '55 for the purchase of 3 Skymaster aircrafts, spare parts and equipment at a cost of U.S. \$2,015,000.00 or Rs. 97 lakh approximately.

(c) One aircraft was taken over by the Indian Airlines Corporation on the 17th August and the other two on the 1st September, 1955.

(d) and (e). No penalty clause was considered necessary in the agreement as:

(i) it was a short term purchase contract.

(ii) the delivery of the aircraft was to be effected within a few weeks of signing of the agreement; and

(iii) payment was to be made by means of a letter of credit on production of documents showing acceptance of the aircraft by the Indian Airlines Corporation.

Shri Kamath: Is it a fact that some time in 1953 an investigation was conducted by the Indian Airlines Corporation into an allegation made against the Air Carrier Service Corporation of inflated invoiced photostat copies of which were published in a Bombay weekly; and if so what was the result of that enquiry, and why was an order placed with such a company?

Mr. Speaker: I do not understand how this question can arise, because it refers to the past history of the company.

Shri Kamath: The point is that it is a near blacklisted company.

Mr. Speaker: That may be in the hon. Member's view. The question here is about the present agreement in pursuance of which Skymasters have been acquired. How is the hon. Member's question related to this?

Shri Kamath: The company had evaded our Indian law in respect of a previous transaction.

Mr. Speaker: I do not allow that question.

Shri Kamath: May I put my next supplementary? Is it a fact that some other manufacturers made cheaper offer for identical aircraft, and if so, who were