

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news item captioned "80,000 children turn blind every year", appearing in the Hindustan Times dated 12 January, 1991;

(b) if so, whether thousands of children become blind every year due to deficiency of Vitamin A and lack of proper diet; and

(c) the steps Government propose to take to make conscious in this regard?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE AND DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY (SHRI DASAI CHOWDHARY): (a) to (c). Government is aware of the news-item. It is stated, however, that countrywide detailed study on the actual incidence of blindness due to Vitamin A deficiency has not been carried out so far to give exact number of children going blind every year.

There is a scheme of Prophylaxis against blindness due to Vitamin A solution is administered to children in the age group 1-5 years. About 30 million children are being covered every year. Further during the current year the first dose of vitamin A will be given to all infants along with measles vaccine at 9-12 months.

Nutritional education about intake of Vitamin A rich foods is being provided through multi-media activities. Supplementary nutrition under Integrated Child Development Scheme programme by the Ministry of Welfare, fortification of milk with Vitamin A are other measures in this direction. With all these steps prevalence of nutritional blindness is gradually coming down.

#### **Demand and Supply of Edible Oils**

706. SHRI B. N. REDDY: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) the gap between demand and supply of edible oils in the country at present; and

(b) the steps taken by the Government to bridge the gap?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (RAO BIRENDER SINGH): (a) A gap of about 10.58 lakh MTs is estimated between the demand and supply of edible oil on the basis of present production estimates of edible oilseeds during the oil year 1990-91 (November-October).

(b) Edible oil is being imported to bridge the gap between demand and supply to the maximum possible extent.

#### **Sale of Refined Groundnut Oil and Pulses through F.P.S.**

707. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that prices of edible oils especially groundnut refined oil and pulses have risen very high during the last two months and if so, the extent thereof;

(b) whether the Government propose to sell these commodities through Fair Price Shops;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (RAO BIRENDER SINGH): (a) The Wholesale Price Index (WPI) of sub-group of Edible Oils exhibited a rise of 7.5% over two months as in January, 1991. The price index of Ground-nut oil registered a significant rise of 20.1%.

The WPI of Pulses as a sub-group