

Blue Print on Agricultural Development of Assam

3169. SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a study group led by Shri Bahaduri has submitted a blue print for the agricultural development of Assam; and

(b) if so, the salient features thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI R. V. SWAMINATHAN): (a) Government is not aware of any study group led by Shri Bahaduri having submitted a blue print for the agricultural development of Assam. However, a Central Task Force was constituted by the Ministry of Agriculture in March this year to go into the problems of agricultural development in Assam, identify the constraints and suggest measures to overcome them. This Task Force which was headed by Shri P. R. Dubhashi, Additional Secretary in the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, has submitted its Report to the Government.

(b) The Task Force has developed an Action Plan as a part of its Report which covers the following aspects of agricultural development in the State:

(i) Gearing up administrative organisation;

(ii) Strategy for changing the cropping pattern and supporting network of extension and inputs;

(iii) Increasing fertilizer consumption;

(iv) Strengthening of plant protection machinery;

(v) Development of irrigation including exploitation of ground-water resources and Command Area Development;

(vi) Construction of multi-purpose storage projects on rivers like

Brahmaputra for effective utilisation of water;

(vii) Flood control;

(viii) Rural electrification in Assam;

(ix) Development of post-harvest technology like marketing, processing and storage of agricultural produce;

(x) Strengthening the agencies for supply of agricultural credit;

(xi) Development of livestock and fisheries;

(xii) Control of shifting (Jhum) cultivation;

(xiii) Horticultural development;

(xiv) Forestry development;

(xv) Rural development programmes;

(xvi) Improvement of transport facilities.

Action has already been initiated, both by the Centre and the State Government, to implement the recommendations made by the Central Task Force.

Zone consideration for Promotion to T.E.S. Group 'B'

3170. SHRI MANOHAR LAL SAINI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Zone of consideration in the DPC for promotion to TES Group 'B' held in 1978-79 was kept five to six times of the panel as prescribed by Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms;

(b) whether the required number of eligible Junior Engineers were available for this D.P.C.;

(c) whether the reduction in size of zone affected the promotional aspect of Scheduled Tribe candidates; and

(d) if so, what are the reasons for reducing the zone resulting in great loss to Scheduled Tribes and what remedial measures Government propose to take in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI C. M. STEPHEN): (a) The Zone of consideration is to be normally 5-6 times of the panel. This is, however, subject to other administrative considerations.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The rules provide that all the S/C and S/T candidates in the zone of consideration and upto the reserved percentage for them should be included in the Select List, if they are not considered unfit. All the S/T candidates were included in the Select List of the DPC in question.

(d) Does not arise.

Area under Cocoa and its production

3171. SHRI A. A. RAHIM: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the total area under cultivation and the annual yield of Cocoa in the various States during 1977-78, 1978-79 and 1979-80 State-wise;

(b) whether an increase in the Cocoa production is being contemplated, considering the rapid expansion in the cultivation in all fields;

(c) whether keeping in view the estimated increased production, any increase in price to the growers is the thought of; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI R. V. SWAMINATHAN): (a) Official estimates of area and production of Cocoa in different States are not being compiled. However, according to a very rough estimate, the total area and production of cocoa during 1979 were about 13,000 hectares and 1,000 tonnes of cocoa beans, respectively.

(b) There are no definite estimates of the likely expansion in area under cocoa in future; however, there is possibility of cocoa production increasing with the increase in age of the existing plantations.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

I.C.A.R. on Farm Research for Poor Farmers

3172. SHRI R. R. BHOLE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the I.C.A.R. has done any farm research for the benefit of the poor and marginal farmers;

(b) whether by any research, the poor farmer can spend less and get more produce in food crops; and

(c) whether the scientists are doing the work as a team and whether they are encouraged by proper personal policies to work for the poor farmer?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL RECONSTRUCTION (SHRI BIRENDRA SINGH RAO): (a) Yes, Sir. Most research done by I.C.A.R. is scale-neutral and benefits small and marginal farmers. A large number of improved high yielding varieties of different crops have been evolved. New production technologies and packages of practices have been evolved, some of them non-monetary in nature or involving very small investment e.g. the improved seeds, optimum time of sowing, adjustment of spacing, depth and moisture content, appropriate seed rate to establish crop stand; seed treatment with rhizobial culture in pulse crops; application of Azolla in rice cultivation; proper and timely application of fertilizers based on soil tests and intercropping of millets with pulses and oilseeds etc.

Research on Dryland Agriculture has clear focus on poor and marginal farmers. Very relevant Dry Farming Technology has been evolved which