

Steps to gear up procurement machinery

42. SHRI G. Y. KRISHNAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken steps in the States to gear up the procurement machinery to provide the necessary support price for wheat, barley and gram to protect the farmers from the exploitation; and

(b) if so, the broad outlines thereof?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION (SHRI PARKASH SINGH BADAL):

(a) and (b). Government are anxious to ensure that the interests of the farmers are fully protected and in no case should any producer get for wheat, barley and gram of fair average quality less than the prices fixed by the Government. Detailed instructions were issued to State Governments and the Food Corporation of India in the second week of April, 1977 itself asking them to ensure that there are no areas in which support arrangements are found wanting and also to maintain constant vigilance in this regard. They have reported that adequate arrangements have been made accordingly.

Surplus grain as loan to needy countries

43. SHRI SUKHDEO PRASAD VERMA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken into consideration the suggestion made by the Director-General of Food and Agriculture Organisation in regard to the loaning of surplus food grain to needy countries; and

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION (SHRI PARKASH SINGH BADAL): (a) and (b). During the course of discussion with the Director-General of Food and Agriculture Organisation and his party held in the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation on the 9th May, 1977, an enquiry was made about the possibility of India making a part of stock of foodgrains available on loan basis to the needy developing countries on the specific condition that the same would be available to India whenever needed. This matter is under examination.

Drought in Orissa

44. SHRI P. K. DEO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION be pleased to state:

(a) the area in Orissa which has been affected by drought and also the number of persons affected; and

(b) steps being taken to meet the abnormal situation and to mitigate the distress of the people?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION (SHRI PARKASH SINGH BADAL):

(a) An area of 1.19 lakh square miles and a population of about 158 lakh have been affected by drought in Orissa.

(b) The following steps have been reported by the State Government to have been taken to mitigate the distress of the affected population:—

(i) Crops bundhs have been provided at a cost of Rs. 11.50 lakhs;

(ii) Lift irrigation points have been energised;

(iii) Diesel pumps have been repaired to pump water to cropped area;