

(b) If the answer to part (a) above be in the affirmative, what precautionary measures have been adopted by Government to prevent the spread of this epidemic in India?

The Minister of Health (Rajkumari Amrit Kaur): (a) According to the latest epidemiological reports received from the W.H.O., the influenza epidemic is not prevalent in North Africa but a mild outbreak of influenza has been reported from the western towns of Turkey.

(b) All State Governments and Central Port and Airport Health Organisations have been warned of the likelihood of the spread of influenza to India and have been advised to take such measures as they can if and when circumstances require action.

Shri S. N. Das: May I know in what respect this influenza epidemic which is advancing towards the East differs from the influenza epidemic from which some people in India generally suffer?

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur: It is difficult for me to say what form the epidemic in Europe has taken. Probably, some of the forms are already prevalent in India.

Shri S. N. Das: May I know whether the intensity of this advancing epidemic is increasing or decreasing as it moves towards the East?

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur: I have already said that it is not really moving to the East in any alarming measure. As far as I can tell from the most recent information, it is even subsiding in Europe.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Why not allow the epidemic to cease? There is no danger of its coming here, unless it be that some hon. Members are terrified by the possibility.

Next Short Notice Question.

FOOD SCARCITY IN RAJASTHAN

Shri G. D. Somani: Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that acute food scarcity prevails in several parts of Bikaner, Jodhpur and Jaisalmer Divisions of the State of Rajasthan;

(b) if so, what steps have been or are being taken to meet the situation;

(c) what special aid has been sanctioned by the Central Government to supplement the efforts of the Government of Rajasthan to afford relief to the scarcity areas; and

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(d) what other measures Government propose to take to meet the short-term and long-term requirements of these regions suffering from chronic scarcity conditions?

The Minister of Agriculture (Dr. P. S. Deshmukh): (a) Scarcity conditions are prevailing in parts of the Divisions of Bikaner, Jodhpur and Udaipur in Rajasthan.

(b) The State Government are taking the following measures for the relief of distress:

(i) Relief works through revenue agency which consist of construction of Pucca wells and Kutcha tanks for storage of water for drinking purposes.

(ii) Arrangements to provide drinking water.

(iii) Conservation of Cattle.

(iv) Gratuitous relief to the disabled and infirm people.

(v) Metal breaking.

(vi) Construction of roads by P.W.D.

(vii) Taccavi advances.

(c) A ways and means advance of Rs. 1.5 crores has been sanctioned which contains an element of assistance towards famine relief. In addition the Government of India have agreed to render assistance to Rajasthan in accordance with the following formula:

(i) A grant equal to 50 per cent. of the actual expenditure on gratuitous relief. (Expenditure on transport of water for drinking purposes, non-recoverable expenditure on cattle feeding and cattle preservation would also qualify for such grants).

(ii) A loan to the extent of 50 per cent. of the actual expenditure on unproductive works; expenditure on the digging or deepening of wells and tanks intended purely for drinking water purposes (and not for irrigation) will fall in this capacity. Any works which are capable of yielding revenue will be treated as "productive works".

(d) A proposal to send a team of officers to Rajasthan to study the position on the spot and to recommend suitable measures for providing relief on a permanent or semi-permanent basis is under consideration.

Shri G. D. Somani: Is there any truth in certain press reports that there have been starvation deaths in some parts of Rajasthan?

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: Not to our knowledge, I can say there has been none.

Shri G. D. Somani: What is the reason for investment in unproductive channels being debarred from the grant proposed to be given to the Government of Rajasthan as explained by the hon. Minister in his reply?

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: What I have stated are emergency measures, and if it is a long-term project like an irrigation project, it will have to come in for investigation by the Committee which it is under our consideration to appoint.

Shri Kasliwal: Is it proposed to open fodder depots also in this area?

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: If circumstances demand it, the State Government will do so, and they will be entitled to receive some grant from the Central Government.

Shri T. N. Singh: There is a report in the papers today that there is an influx of certain parties from Pakistan owing to famine conditions near about the Rajasthan area. May I know if that is true, and if so, whether the influx is due to famine conditions in Rajasthan?

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Kidwai): This question is about famine in Rajasthan. We are not concerned with whether there is any influx from Pakistan or not.

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सेठ अचल सिंह : क्या मंत्री महोदय बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि जिन डिस्ट्रिक्ट्स में आठ पड़ रहा है क्या उन को फ़ैमिन रिलीफ़ डिपार्टमेंट कर दिया गया है ?

श्री किडवाई : राजस्थान गवर्नमेन्ट जो सुनाबिब समझ रही है कर रही है, हम से जो मदद मांगेंगे और वह हमारे बख़्शार में होगा तो हम देंगे ।

Shri Morarka: May I know how many people are affected by this scarcity?

Shri Kidwai: We have not yet received any detailed report from Rajasthan.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS LOCUST INVASION

*479. **Sardar Hukam Singh:** (a) Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state whether India is free of any locust invasion threats from any side this year?

(b) What precautions are being taken just at present for prevention of any invasion?

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Kidwai): (a) No. In view of heavy infestation in the desert breeding belt in the Middle East, particularly in Iran, a serious locust invasion is apprehended.

(b) We can do little in India to prevent invasion of swarms from India. Many of the countries to the West of us, from where these swarms come, have set up anti-locust organisations and we ourselves have recently sent help to Iran to assist that country in destroying this source of danger. A statement, showing our own arrangements for destroying locusts and hoppers is placed on the Table of the House. [See Appendix IV, annexure No. 17.]

SENIORITY COMMITTEES

*482. **Shri Frank Anthony:** Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) the dates on which Seniority Committees, if any, were appointed on each Railway in respect of Class III and IV staff;

(b) whether any Seniority Committee has completed its report on any Railway; and

(c) whether all confirmations have been suspended pending the completion of the work of these Seniority Committees?

The Deputy Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Alagesan): (a)

Name of the Committee	Date of appointment
Southern Railway Seniority Committee	28-9-1951
Western Railway Seniority Committee	2-1-1952
Central Railway Seniority Committee	17-2-1952
Eastern Railway Seniority Committee	2-6-1952
Northern Railway Seniority Committee	16-7-1952
North-Eastern Railway Seniority Committee	19-7-1952