

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : This is not a Zero hour.

(Interruptions)

SHRI SHAKUNI CHOUDHARY : Whenever we talk about the farmers you try to evade it...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Please take your seat.

(Interruptions)

Compensation to Farmers

*604. SHRI MUKAL WASNIK : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh alongwith several other courted arrest in Delhi on July 3, 1998 to demand payment of Rs. 5000/- per acre compensation to farmers whose crop had failed or damaged;

(b) whether a delegation had also met the Prime Minister in this regard;

(c) whether the Government had sent any team to assess the extent of damage to crops in Madhya Pradesh and other States;

(d) if so, the details of its recommendations and the reaction of the Government thereon;

(e) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(f) the decision of the Government in respect of paying Rs. 5000/- per acre compensation to farmers whose crops had failed or had been damaged?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) to (f) A statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

(a) to (f) On 3.7.1998, there was a demonstration of farmers of Madhya Pradesh under the leadership of Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, in New Delhi District to demand payment of Rupees Five thousand per acre compensation to farmers, whose crop had failed or damaged. The demonstrators, including Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, were detained under Section 65 of Delhi Police Act at 1145 hours and released at 1415 hours. A delegation headed by the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh subsequently met the Prime Minister the same day in connection with various memoranda submitted by the State Government of Madhya Pradesh in the wake of natural calamities which have affected the State in the recent Past.

2. On receipt of memorandum from the States seeking additional financial assistance from National Fund for Calamity

Relief (NFCR), a Central Team is normally deputed only in a case in which the situation is prima-facie considered as one of rare severity. Twenty-three Central Teams have been deputed to thirteen States so far, since 1st April, 1997, to assess the extent of damage under various Sectors including crops and requirements of relief and rehabilitation measures. In case of Madhya Pradesh, four Central Teams have been deputed during the above period. An amount of Rs. 67.76 crore has been released from the NFCR to the Government of Madhya Pradesh. Their request for relief measures due to heavy rains in the winter of 1997 will be considered by the National Calamity Relief Committee shortly.

3. Based on the report of the Expert Group constituted as a follow up of the recommendations of the Tenth Finance Commission, the Government of India adopted the norms of input subsidy to the farmers at the rate of Rs. 500 per ha. The State Level Committees can enhance it by 25%. The Government of India has set up a Committee to review the items and norms of assistance for relief in the wake of natural calamities, this Committee is expected to submit its report in about three months' time.

[Translation]

SHRI MUKUL WASNIK : Mr. Speaker, Sir, such a reply was not expected from a learned minister. I am very sorry to say that my question regarding compensation to the farmers has not been replied to properly. In part 'f' of my question I have asked what decision have been taken by the Government to pay compensation at the rate of rupees 5000 per acre to the farmers whose crop had failed or had been damaged? In this connection, the hon'ble Minister has only stated that a committee has been constituted. I want to know from the hon'ble minister whether he is aware that the workers and leaders of the Bharatiya Janta Party during the previous Lok Sabha elections had demanded compensation at the rate of rupees five thousand per acre to the farmers in Madhya Pradesh whose crops had failed or had been damaged. In view of that demand, the present Prime Minister and the then candidate for the Lok Sabha elections, had publicly said that if the Bharatiya Janta Party formed the Government at the Centre, we would give compensation to the farmers at the rate of rupees five thousand per acre. If he is aware of this fact then why a reply has not been given in this regard? I also want to know whether it is also a fact that the hon'ble Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh had led an agitation in Delhi and held a meeting with the hon'ble Prime Minister and demanded that the Union Government must provide Rs. 2960.32 crores to the State Government for providing compensation to the farmers. Despite this demand the Union Government have provided Rs. 67.76 crores to the State Government. The hon'ble Minister should give a reply in this regard.

SHRI SOMPAL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is true that the hon'ble Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh Shri Digvijay Singh had

led an agitation of farmers in Delhi on 3rd July and courted arrest and 65 people were arrested. After that a delegation had also met the Prime Minister. At that time hon'ble Chief Minister had said that the request for compensation of loss caused due to heavy rains and hailstorm during winter season of 1997 was rejected earlier, and hence the request should be reconsidered.

As far as payment of compensation at the rate of Rs. 5000 per acre is concerned, as per my knowledge, the Government had never made any such promise...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI MUKUL WASNIK : Hon'ble Atalji had said this publicly during Lok Sabha elections—you can deny it...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER Madam, what is this running commentary?

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Nothing will go on record except what the minister is saying.

*(Interruptions)**

MR. SPEAKER : Hon'ble Member please take your seat.

[Translation]

SHRI SOMPAL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, such assistance is given out of two funds. Hon'ble Member Shri Wasnik had asked whether any committee had been constituted for this purpose. I want to tell him that no committee has been constituted but a committee namely NCRC is already there for this purpose which functions as a sub committee of the National Development Council. All reports and assessments for such compensations are received by this committee and whenever a memorandum is received from any State, a Central team from the concerned Ministry is sent there. Decisions are taken by the committee on the basis of assessment of the said team. Their case is also under consideration. The meeting in this regard was scheduled for 23rd but due to certain reasons that meeting has been postponed but whenever the next meeting is held in August, it will be considered. There are certain norms and guidelines under which assistance is provided. The Union Government works within the constitution and the Government cannot take any arbitrary decision. We are bound by the constitutional requirement and as per the above provision, we shall consider to provide maximum assistance.

SHRI MUKUL WASNIK : Sir, I have information about the National Calamity Relief Fund and the Committee thereunder. I have referred to the same committee which has been mentioned by the hon'ble Minister in his reply. In his reply the hon'ble Minister had said that the Government of India

have set up a committee to review the items and criteria of assistance in case of natural calamities the report of which is expected within the three months. I have made a mention of this committee in my question while talking about compensation at the rate of Rs. 5,000.

Sir, my second question is about the huge losses suffered by the farmers of Maharashtra due to hailstorm and excess rain. It is an unprecedented loss. Due to this loss, 86 farmers committed suicide in Maharashtra and the State Government have provided assistance only to 23 families. I want to know from the hon'ble Minister whether the Union Government have sent any central team to take stock of the situation in Maharashtra and to assess the loss suffered there? What was the amount of assistance sought by the Government of Maharashtra out of the National Calamity Relief Fund and what was the amount actually provided to it out of the said fund?

SHRI SOMPAL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, as far as the question of payment of compensation in such natural calamities is concerned, a committee has been constituted for revision and review of criteria prescribed therefor. The hon'ble member himself has said that the report of the said committee will be received within two three months and only after that I will be in a position to say something. In that committee it is being considered that the assistance being given at present is certainly inadequate and there is need for improvement and revision therein. That is why the said committee was constituted. Report of the said committee is expected to be received soon and that report can be discussed in this House also.

As far as Maharashtra is concerned, Rs. 75.64 crores was to be allocated to Maharashtra during the current year out of Calamity Relief Fund. Out of it Rs. 56.73 crores was the contribution of the Union Government and the rest Rs. 18.91 crores was to be borne by the State Government itself. Out of this amount Rs. 28.37 crores has already been released in two quarterly instalments. So far as seeking assistance out of National Calamity Relief Fund is concerned, the Union Government have not received any letter from the Government of Maharashtra till date...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI FAGGAN SINGH KULESTE : Mr. Speaker, Sir, this question is particularly related to the farmers of Madhya Pradesh. I would like to bring to the notice of the House whatever has been said by the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh just before elections. The issue regarding enhancing the amount of compensation to the farmers of Madhya Pradesh under section 6/4 of R.B.C. cannot be raised without making an amendment in this section. Will the hon. Minister direct the Madhya Pradesh Government to amend section 6/4 of the R.B.C.; if so, the time by which the State Government is expected to make this amendment?

SHRI SOMPAL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, probably this matter comes under the jurisdiction of the State Government and it

depends on the State Government whether it wants to make an amendment in it or not. It is a duly elected and accountable Government and hence, perhaps it will not be appropriate for us to interfere in this matter.

SHRI MANIKRAO HODLYA GAVIT : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh has demanded payment of compensation to farmers of the State and the hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee had secured votes of farmers in the Lok Sabha elections and now the hon. Minister says that a certain amount will be paid, it is not proper. Farmers are being trapped in this matter also. I demand from the hon. Minister that promise made to the farmers in the State should be fulfilled. I want to know whether you are contemplating to provide compensation to farmers at the rate of Rs. 5000 per acre?

SHRI SOMPAL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon'ble Member has merely repeated the questions and I have already replied to these questions.

SHRI CHANDRAMANI TRIPATHI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, in his reply the Minister has said that there was an agitation led by the Chief Minister in which 65 people including the Chief Minister were arrested. I would like to know whether the Union Government are going to take action against the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh for violation the provisions of the constitution and violation of norms of protocol as he courted arrested as a Chief Minister. My second question is that rupees sixty seven crores have been allocated to Madhya Pradesh and Chief Minister of the State has committed bunglings in disbursement of the said amount. I want to know whether the hon. Minister will conduct an enquiry into it?

[Translation]

SHRI SOMPAL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, so far as the question of violation of constitutional provisions or any legislation is concerned, I have already informed the House that a total of 65 persons including the Chief Minister of the State were arrested and I feel that this action was enough for violation of law or breach of peace. As regards the question of corruption, I would like to tell that action in all such cases depends upon the sense of responsibility of the administrations of the centre as well as State Governments. Thus the question of inquiry does not arise.

SHRI MOTILAL VORA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, in 1997-98 the rabi and kharif crops grown on 2 crore 22 lakh acres of land were damaged. At that time the State Government demanded Rs. 2100 crore. The State Government stated that 90 lakh persons could be provided employment if this amount of compensation was given between March and June of that year. But the then Government did not pay anything out of this amount of Rs. 2100 crore. When under the leadership of Atal Bihari Vajpayeeji this BJP Government came to power... (Interruptions) Why are you worried about it I am coming to

the question. The Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh met Atal Bihari Vajpayeeji in April and hon. Prime Minister assured him that assistance would be provided. As you have told that Rs. 67 crore 76 lakh have been given to Madhya Pradesh from the National Calamity Fund, in this context I would like to know whether this total amount has been given to Madhya Pradesh Government or only Rs. 10 crore have been given so far. Sir, on the basis of the recommendations of the Tenth Finance Commission and report given by the Expert Group constituted for taking follow up action on it, Atalji promised to provide compensation at a rate of Rs. 500 per acre in case his party formed the Government...(Interruptions)

SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH CHAUHAN : Sir, he is making a wrong statement all along...(Interruptions)

SHRI MOTILAL VORA : Sir, I would like to know from the hon'ble Minister whether the said amount of Rs. 67 crore 76 lakh has been given to Madhya Pradesh Government?

You are recommending to pay Rs. 500 but you had given assurance to provide Rs. 5000 as compensation...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Vora, what is this? This is Question Hour, not Zero Hour.

[Translation]

SHRI MOTILAL VORA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is very important question and the hon'ble Minister should reply to it.

SHRI SOMPAL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon'ble Motilalji is one of the senior most Members of this House and he had been the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh. So far as his question regarding the assurance given to the Chief Minister by the hon. Prime Minister is concerned, I would like to tell that assurance was given to the Chief Minister that the memorandum of the State Government was under consideration and as per the prescribed norms and guidelines, maximum amount of assistance would be provided.

The second point raised by him is that whether this amount has been released or not? In this context, I would like to tell that Rs. 45.26 crore were given on 26th June 1997 and 22.50 crore were given on 14th January 1998 and thus the entire amount had been given to Madhya Pradesh Government.

His third question was about politicization of the issue and I have already replied to it.

Bio-Agriculture

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*605. SHRI SHIV RAJ SINGH CHOUHAN :
SHRI RAMESHWAR PATIDAR :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :