

(c) if so, the details of fresh initiatives taken or proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) Yes Sir.

(b) and (c) Keeping in view the working conditions of the CPOs, the Government has decided to rationalise their pay & rank structures. The Vth CPC has recommended the benefits of one month's additional Pay in a Year, in order to compensate difficult working conditions.

Locust Attack on Cultivation

2052. SHRI N. DENNIS : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government are aware of locust attack causing heavy damage on cultivation in the country;

(b) if so, whether the causes for such locust attack on cultivation have been detected ;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to check locust attack on cultivation in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The locust swarm incursion takes place from across the western borders. Also, local build up can occur, if weather conditions are favourable and locust remains undetected in the inaccessible desert areas of Gujarat and Rajasthan.

(d) The following steps have been taken by the Government to check the locust attack in the country :

- (i) The Government has set up Locust Warning Organisation (LWO) comprising its headquarters at Jodhpur, 5 circle offices at Barmer, Bikaner, Jaisalmer, Planpur and Jodhpur and 23 locust outposts.
- (ii) Intensive locust surveillance and monitoring in scheduled Desert Areas of Gujarat and Rajasthan is regularly maintained.
- (iii) Establishment of Wireless linkage between Jodhpur (India) and Karachi (Pakistan) is maintained from June to November each year to exchange locust situation informations.
- (iv) Requisite plant protection equipment, wireless sets, vehicles for control operations have been positioned.

(v) Close coordination with Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) is being maintained to take advance action against the possibilities of any swarm incursion.

Pilferage in Drug Department in Super Bazar

2053. SHRI AMAR ROY PRADHAN: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether some cases of pilferage in Drug Department of Super Bazar has come to the notice of the management of Super Bazar during the last two year ;

(b) if so, the details thereof ;

(c) the number of cases pending along with the amount involved in each case ;

(d) whether any action has been taken so far by the management to sort out the pending cases ; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and the outcome thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH) : (a) to (e) According to information furnished by Super Bazar, Delhi no case of pilferage/stock shortage during 1995-96 has come to their notice. The reconciliation work for 1996-97 has not yet been completed by them.

Inter-State Council

2054. SHRI CHITTA BASU :
SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA :
SHRI SULTAN SALAHUDDIN OWAISI :
SHRI P. NAMGYAL :
SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA :

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Standing Committee of the Inter-State Council recently held its meetings ;

(b) if so, the details thereof ;

(c) the details of the subjects discussed and the decisions taken thereon ; and

(d) the reaction of the Government thereto ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) to (d) Since its constitutio on 5.12.1996, the Standing Committee of the Inter-State Council has held four meetings. These meetings took place on 15.1.1997, 10.5.1997, 17.6.1997 and 8.7.1997.

2. The following subjects were discussed in these meetings :

- (i) Alternative Scheme of Devolution of Share in Central Taxes to States submitted by the Ministry of Finance.
- (ii) Amendments to article 356 of the Constitution.
- (iii) Centre- State Financial Relations (Chapter X) of the Sarkaria Commission's Report.

3. The Standing Committee reached a consensus on the question of Devolution of Share in Central Taxes to States as follows :

- a. (i) 26% the gross proceeds of all Central Taxes (excluding Stamp Duty, Excise Duty on Medicinal and Toilet preparations, Central Sales Tax, Consignment Tax and Surcharge) will be assigned to the States in lieu of the existing share in Income Tax and Basic/ Special Excise Duties and the grants in lieu of Tax on Railway passenger fares.

- (ii) In addition, 3% of gross proceeds of all Central Taxes (excluding Stamp Duty, Excise Duty on Medicinal and Toilet Preparations, Central Sales Tax, Consignment Tax and Surcharge) is to be assigned to the States in lieu of the existing share in additional Excise Duties in lieu of Sales Tax on Tobacco, Cotton and Sugar. These three items may continue to be exempted from Sales Tax and the additional Excise Duties in lieu of Sales Tax on these items may be merged with the Basic Excise Duties.

- (b) The Alternative scheme of Devolution share in Central Taxes to States would be implemented with effect from 1.4.1996.

- (c) The Scheme would be reviewed during the current Financial Year with a view to improving the share of States.

4. The above Scheme has also been approved by the Inter-State Council meeting held on 17.7.1997.

5. So far as the amendment of article 356 of the Constitution is concerned, no consensus could be reached either in the Standing Committee or in the Inter-State Council meeting held on 17.7.1997.

6. Instruction have been issued to the Administrative Ministries concerned to implement 54 recommendations as endorsed by the Inter-State Council. The Government is keen to complete action on the pending recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission at the earliest.

Study Tour of J & K State By Home Minister

2055. SHRI SATYAJITSINH DULIPSINH GAEKWAD:
SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA :

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether he has recently made a two week study tour of the State of Jammu and Kashmir to assess the activities of militants and the situation arising from continued infiltration by Pak-trained Militants and foreign mercenaries; and

(b) if so, the fresh initiatives taken by the Government on the observations made by him?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) No, Sir,

(b) Does not arise.

[Translation]

Hired Storage Capacity

2056. PROF. PREM SINGH CHANDUMAJRA :
JUSTICE GUMAN MAL LODHA :
SHRI V.V. RAGHVAN:
SHRI MOHAN RAWLE :

Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Food Corporation of India hires storage capacity instead of using its own storage capacity as appeared in the *Hindustan Time* dated July 7, 1997;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor ;

(c) whether the Corporation has not fully utilised its own godowns/hired godowns during the last three years;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor ;

(e) the amount paid annually by the Food Corporation of India for hiring storage capacity during each of the last three years; and

(f) the steps taken by the Food Corporation of India to fully utilise its own storage capacity instead of hiring the storage capacity?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH) : (a) and (b) The Food Corporation of India, in addition to utilising its own godowns, takes on hire godowns from other agencies like Central Warehousing Corporation, State Warehousing Corporation, State Governments and