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Title : Need to reduce storage rentals in CWC godowns to increase foodgrain storage capacity.

SHRI P. LINGAM (TENKASI): Hon. Chairman, in our country we have been taking efforts to store food grains and the buffer stock meant for future needs. The godowns maintained by the Central Warehousing Corporation have been set up for this purpose. In many states we find these godowns are lying empty remaining unutilised. I would like to draw the attention of the Government to the announcement made by our Hon. Union Agricultural Minister that this year's food grain production has gone up beyond expectations and a good yield is there in 2011-12. He has also stated that a major portion of them are not stored in CWC godowns for want of facilities. But I would like to bring to your notice that the CWC godowns in Chennai city are lying empty without grains-storage. Neither the food grains of the Food Corporation of India nor the Civil Supplies Stock of the State Government are stored there. Not only that, even the private sector are also not utilising the storage facilities of the CWC godowns. The higher rate of rent to extend storage facilities have resulted in keeping the CWC godowns empty. The Centre's policy to have a uniform metropolitan rent-rate has resulted in a situation where even the private parties have moved away from the CWC godown facilities. I urge upon the Union Government to exempt Chennai city from the ambit of the uniform policy that covers the metropolitan cities. Only few companies are utilising them now. In the coming days, these godowns may face closure. Due to this policy of enforcing increased rent, these godowns are under-utilised resulting in loss of jobs. The labour force utilised in the storage work have been rendered jobless. So, I urge upon the Government to have a re-look and ensure that these godowns are saved from closure and the interests of the workers are protected.

* English translation of the speech originally delivered in Tamil