

[Translation]

Import of Palmolein

308. SHRI A.F. GOLAM OSMANI :

SHRI MAGANTI BABU :

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY :

SHRI SUBRATA MUKHERJEE :

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

(a) the total quantity of Palmolein and Soyabean oil imported August to October, 1998;

(b) the total expenditure involved in importing these oil brands;

(c) whether even after importing of huge quantity of Palmolein and other brands these are not available in the market;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor;

(e) the present demand of Palmolein and Soyabean oil and the steps the Government propose to take to meet the shortage of edible oil; and

(f) the facts of discussion organised by the Mahila Dakshita Samity regarding mixing of argemone with mustard seeds?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYAPAL SINGH YADAV) : (a) and (b) Based on the returns received from the importers till date, approximately 3.63 lakh MT of RBD Palmolein and 1.36 Lakh MT of Soyabean Oil was imported in the country during August to October, 1998. Out of this, 97,408 MT of RBD Palmolein was imported by the STC on Government Account for the PDS at the total CIF value of Rs. 283.19 crores.

(c) and (d) The availability of imported edible oils in the market is reasonably good.

(e) The demand of edible oils for the oil year 1998-99 (November-October) is projected around 82 lakh MT. The shortfall in supply from the domestic sources will be met by import of edible oils which has already been liberalised by the Government.

(f) The discussions organised by the Mahila Dakshita Samity was mainly on the general increase in the prices in which the question of probable suspects,

who mixed argemone with mustard seeds, was also raised.

Expert Views on Food Security

309. SHRI LAKSHMAN SINGH :

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY :

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

(a) whether food security experts have pointed out that Vegetables Onion, Patato and Salt crisis going through roof was caused by market manipulation rather than real shortage;

(b) if so, the extent to which the Government have examined the opinion of the experts; and

(c) the steps the Government proposed to be taken to check the market manipulation of these items?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYAPAL SINGH YADAV) : (a) and (b) The main reason for the shortage of onions and patatoes was the decline in production during 1997-98 of these commodities due to adverse climatic conditions. There was no shortage of salt in the country.

(c) The Government has accorded the highest priority to the control and stabilisation of prices of essential commodities. Apart from certain long term measures to increase the production of essential goods, imports of items which are in short supply like pulses and onions have been placed under OGL at Zero per cent import duty and duty on the import of edible oils has been reduced to 15 per cent from 25 per cent in order to augment the total availability of these items. The exports of onions, pulses and edible oils have been banned. Some of the essential commodities like rice, wheat, palmolein and kerosene are also supplied through public distribution at below market prices. Stringent actions are being taken by the States/UTs Govts. against hoarders, blackmarketeers and others indulging in unfair trade practices under the Essential Commodities Act and Prevention of Blackmarketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act. The scheme of market intervention by States and Union Territories for the supply of these commodities during the period of short supply has been cleared by the Government. The Government is also laying thrust on the development of larger capacities under cold storages and food processing industries in order to preserve the perishables and vegetables.