

17.49 hrs.

GRAINS BOARD BILL

by Shri Yadvendra Datt

[English]

SHRI YADVENDRA DATT (Jaunpur): I beg to move:

"That the Bill to provide for establishment of an autonomous Board for fixation of minimum prices every year of all the agricultural commodities in the nature of foodgrains and for matters connected therewith, be taken into consideration."

I am very glad that the hon. Minister has just now spoken about agriculture. Is agriculture economical?

What really happens is that by and large agriculture has become a hand to mouth affair. Except for a few big farmers who have surplus to sell, for the rest it is hand to mouth. Now, how to correct this position? Every year, you see the strange and unusual phenomenon in our country, that immediately close to the harvest period the prices of the foodgrains decline and the farmers are left at the mercy of the traders and as so on as the lean period starts the consumer has to purchase the same foodgrains at a very high price and they are left at the mercy of the traders.

This is a phenomenon occurring year by year. It is said that there was a prising board. The Government is selling and purchasing. And, do you think Madam, that any producer will fix a price which will not suit him? This is the only industrial affair in the world where the producer is not allowed to fix his price. Someone heaps a price over his head.

If I manufacture a pen I fix a selling price. If I manufacture a boot, I fix the selling price. But if I farm the land and become the *Annadata* the poor *Annadata* is shouted down by some purchaser which is the Government

itself. This has got to be remedied. How to remedy it is the question. There is only one way to remedy it. That is, for the foodgrains prices there should be a board, a permanent autonomous board which is not controlled by the Government at all. The Government may have a representative in it. But the Government should not be the boss of it. That board should be autonomus.

It should have the purchasers in it, the small, the big, the medium and the marginal. It should have established economists on it, especially agro-economists.

I will tell you my experience of one great agro-economist in this country because people have been talking too much of planning, and planning. That gentleman produced a paper in 1978 probably when my friend Shri Kumaramangalam was not here. That agro-economist wrote that with one acre of a land if a farmer was putting tobacco he earned a profit of Rs.20,000. When I read that paper, as that great agro-economist was a good friend of mine, I went to him and said, "My friend, I will give you an acre of land in my house, Come on, make all the investment that you can, on this tobacco and give me Rs. 18,000 as profit. I will sell that piece of land to you. But land is not a rubber affair. There is a diminishing return on it.

How much will you be able to produce in it?" I asked him. With the high cost of inputs, of the fertilizers, of the tractors, of the labour charges, how much will it produce? For God's sake, let us therefore be done with such dreamy economists. I want in this Board real agro-economists.

There is another question. If my friends travel around into the country, especially on the Mandi side what do we see on the railway stations? The Government which has purchased the food grains, at a support price—mind you, that is a support price not a fixed price—from the farmer, that foodgrain is lying in the open, uncovered. Probably a tattered plastic sheet is spread over it. The foodgrains are a welcome food for all the rats around about it. I regret to say, even for human rats. whatever colour they may be. Millions of

[Sh. Yadvendra Datt]

tonnes of foodgrains are being destroyed. That is why I have added that this Board shall deal with the matter connected therewith and the biggest matter connected therewith is storage. How to store it? There is a lot of talk of modern, what you call, storage bins. Are those amount of bins is sufficient? I have been hearing in the Parliament. Many questions have been put. Oh, we are building this much of bins and that much of bins. It is like pie in the sky. Why do you forget your old method, khati system, which is as much waterproof as modern bins are? At a very small cost, khati system could be introduced in the villages.

Let us handle first whatever people know how to do best. We have not taken one step and we start flying in the air to crash down to absolute destruction. This board will also deal with the creation and the building of the bins. For the information of my friends, I may tell them that in older days, even till I was 45 years, the bins were made in the villages, a deep cave was dug in, it was burnt and then foodgrains were put in and sealed water tight.

Madam, it is true that in this khati, grains could be maintained for two years. But then you did not have to poison your grain to protect them from youṛ rats and every variety of insects. We have seen what happened in Basti. Poisoned wheat was given and people died. It was a natural way of protecting the grains. So, for the purpose of storage, for the purpose of protection, this Board should be given full rights to do it.

Then, the question arises about inputs. Let me take first the question of irrigation. I do not know what has happened in South.

MR. CHAIRMAN: From irrigation, you can continue next time.

Now, let us take up introduction of Bills which were left out.

Shri Kumaramanglam.

17.59 hrs.

ARCHITECTS (AMENDMENT) BILL*

(Amentdment of section 25)

[*English*]

SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM (Sa-lem): I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the Architects Act, 1972.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the Architects Act, 1972."

The motion was adopted

SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM: I introduce the Bill.

18.00 hrs.

CURTAILMENT OF EXPENDITURE ON MARRIAGES BILL*

[*English*]

SHRI PRAKASH KOKO BRAHMBHATT (Baroda): I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill to provide for the curtailment of expenditure on marriages and for matters connected therewith.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is::

"That leave granted to introduce a Bill to provide for the curtailment of expenditure on marriages and for matters connected therewith."

The motion was adopted