

I call upon the Government to discuss the issue with the Union concerned before implementing their decision.

(viii) **Installation of T.V. Station Birpur, Bihar.**

DR. G. S. RAJHANS (Jhanjharpur) : Birpur is a very important place on Indo-Nepal border. The people of Birpur (Saharsa) and of neighbouring areas have been demanding the installation of a TV Station here.

It is really unfortunate that whereas smaller and less important places in the country have been provided with TV Station, Birpur's case has always been ignored.

If a TV station is set up at Birpur, it will have a very healthy effect on Indo-Nepal relations since a large number of Nepalese population who live on the other side of the border, will like to see Indian programmes. It is, therefore, requested that the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting may set up a TV station at Birpur as early as possible.

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13.33. hrs.

DEMANDS FOR GRANTS  
 (GENERAL), 1985-86—Contd.

[English]

Ministry of Food and Civil Supplies  
 — Contd.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : We will now take up discussion on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Food and Civil Supplies.

SHRI CHINTAMANI JENA (Balasore) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I rise to support the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Food and Civil Supplies and I also oppose all the cut motions moved in this House. I must congratulate our Hon. Minister for Food and Supplies for bringing about a decline in the Wholesale Price Index to the extent of 4.1 per cent by August 1984 and also a further decline to the tune of 7.5 per cent by December 1984. There was also a fall of about 5.1 per cent, compared to the index a

year ago. The index for wheat in December 1984 was lower by 3.8 per cent compared to that in the corresponding period of the previous year. It was possible due to the record production of wheat, rice and other cereals and also because of easy open-market availability. I must congratulate the present Minister for Food and Civil Supplies because he was the then Agriculture Minister and during his time only, the food production could be improved.

I am grateful to our Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Ji that he has given the portfolio of Food and Civil Supplies to the present Minister perhaps after taking into account the fact that he as the Minister of Agriculture, had produced sufficient foodgrains for the country, making it self-sufficient in food. In his present capacity, he can distribute the foodgrains so produced, in a proper manner to our people.

The Ministry also deserves praise for bringing about a record procurement of 17.7 million foodgrains, surpassing the previous figure of 15.51 million tonnes of foodgrains procured from the 1982-83 crop. As on 16th March 1985, a quantity of 8.5 million tonnes of rice could be procured, which is an all-time high. Similarly, the procurement of wheat from the 1983-84 crop has touched a new high at 9.30 million tonnes, surpassing the earlier record of 8.29 million tonnes out of the 1982-83 crop.

The covered storage capacity available with the FCI stood at 9.26 million tonnes, which is not adequate to store the foodgrains. Even though the general warehousing facilities are provided to some extent, they are not adequate to cover the entire foodgrains produced. I would, therefore, request the Hon. Minister to look to this aspect on a priority basis, so that more general warehousing facilities are made available to the growers.

Even though 17 Save grain Teams operated to motivate farmers to adopt scientific storage godown practices, and to educate the farmers on this issue, they have had very little impact on the farmers in our country side. The Hon. Minister may kindly make necessary arrangements by which the farmers may have their own storage godowns, by taking loans from the nationalized and coope-