

(b) if so, reasons therefor; and

(c) the action proposed to be taken to overcome the crisis?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI PRANAB KUMAR MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b). The Agra Iron Founders Association had sent in a representation explaining the difficulties faced by them in the matter of procurement of hard coke and steam coal and urging the opening of a coal/coke dump at Agra. The units being in the small scale sector, their requirements are taken care of by the State Director of Industries.

(c) On investigation of these complaints, the Government have been informed that the State Director of Industries has already sponsored and recommended the requirements of the Members of the Association to the authorities concerned.

#### **Inquiry into the Incident of Lucknow University**

3971. SHRI K. LAKKAPPA:

SHRI P. GANGADEB:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether U.P. Government is considering to hold an inquiry into the incident of Lucknow University in May;

(b) if so, whether mutiny by PAC will also be the subject of inquiry; and

(c) if so, what will be the terms of reference of such an inquiry.

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI F. H. MOHSIN): (a) to (c). According to the information received from the State Government, nine cases were registered by the police in connection with incidents of violence that took place in Lucknow University from 10th May to 21st May, 1973. Out of the nine cases, three cases have been challaned and sent to Court. Three cases are under investigation and

three cases have ended in final report. Some personnel of PAC and State Police are involved only in two cases which are under investigation. The State Government do not propose to order any other inquiry into these incidents.

12 hrs.

#### **CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE**

##### **REPORTED WASTAGE OF IMPORTED FOOD-GRAINS IN BOMBAY PORT**

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Dinesh Joarder—  
not here. Shri P. K. Deo.

SHRI P. K. DEO (Kalahandi): Sir, I call the attention of the Minister of Agriculture to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon:

“Reported wastage of foodgrains, imported at prohibitive prices and worth several lakhs of rupees, in Bombay Port due to lack of godown facilities.”

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI F. A. AHMED): Indian ports, particularly Bombay, are well equipped with facilities to handle foodgrains and other cargoes having adequate transit storage facilities. During the current year, about 6 lakh tonnes of imported foodgrains were handled at Bombay Port.

When the ships are on the high seas, sometimes the foodgrains get damaged due to causes beyond the control of the shippers. In all such cases, damaged grain, after unloading from the ship, is required to be subjected to an independent survey to enable the charterers to lodge claims against the ship owners. These stocks of damaged grain, therefore, cannot be removed from the docks till this survey is completed.

Out of the 6 lakh tonnes of imported foodgrains handled at the Bombay Port during the current year, about 1400 tonnes was reported to be damaged during voyage. This represents about 0.2 per cent of the total tonnage of foodgrains

handled at Bombay during the year. The Hon'ble Members are perhaps referring to such damaged foodgrains awaiting survey in the Bombay docks. After survey, necessary claims are lodged with the shipping agents. Simultaneously, drying and salvaging operations are conducted to utilise such grains to the extent possible as cattle/poultry feed and/or for industrial uses. At the handling stage, adequate care is taken to avoid loss of foodgrains.

The Hon'ble Members will appreciate that there has been no wastage of imported foodgrains through carelessness or negligence. Government are very much aware of the need to conserve and utilise the foodgrains.

SHRI P. K. DEO: As a result of persistent pursuit of wrong policies and priorities in the field of agriculture this green revolution and self-sufficiency have become a myth. We have to depend upon the imported foodgrains. This mess in the matter of production and distribution of foodgrains is manmade. The Ministry is entirely responsible for them. It is a matter of great concern to all of us that precious foodgrains which were imported at prohibitive prices in the world competitive market have become unfit for human consumption. It is brought in old junks, those junks which were chartered by the Transchart of the Transport and Shipping Ministry. It was inspected by the India Supply Mission. Large quantities of them were lying in the Bombay docks. The Minister could not make sure that there were adequate facilities in the Bombay dock to handle the foodgrains. We know definitely that because of the congestion in the Bombay docks the foodships had to wait for 2 to 3 weeks in the sea before being unloaded. The question now is the dispute between the foreign shippers and the Government of India and the matter is being investigated by the Ships Surveyor. Before any conclusion is arrived at finally the Minister comes out with a statement as if he is holding a brief in favour of the shippers. He says, this damage is beyond the control of the shippers. This statement is absolutely without any foundation. We find that due to

damage the foodgrains have become unfit for human consumption. Half of them have germinated, have become rotten, have been stinking and unfit for human consumption. This situation is further aggravated by the go-slow tactics of the Bombay dock-men in the Bombay port.

सरकार के दरिद्रों में डालें

This is how things are happening, Sir.

Sir, the Government cannot abdicate their responsibility and say that there has been no wastage of foodgrains even though they admit that 1,400 tonnes of foodgrains have been wasted. These foodgrains could have been utilised to save the lives of so many deaths due to starvation.

Now, coming with the plea that these expensive foodgrains would be utilised for the cattle or as poultry feed is adding insult to injury. I would like to know what is the total loss of foodgrains in this regard and what is the percentage of it—I am not satisfied with the reply of the hon. Minister—and how far it compares with such wastages in the case of indigenously procured foodgrains? As you know, the imported foodgrains are being got at prohibitive prices. It works out to 200 dollars per tonne C.F. which works out to Rs. 135 to 150 per quintal. In this country, the procurement price from the Indian farmers comes to Rs. 76 as it is. Under these circumstances, I request the Minister to kindly consider whether, in this country, would it not improve the food position better if a better procurement price had been offered to the local farmers. As you know, many of the V.I.P.s from U.P. belong to the Congress Benches who have refused to submit their returns regarding the procurement. (*Interruptions*). Anyway, taking into consideration all these factors, I would like to know whether the Government will consider the question of raising the procurement price of wheat in this country and, at the same time, fix the basic procurement price.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Deo, this is not a relevant question.

*Wheat*

(CA)

SHRI P. K. DEO: My concern is that the import should be minimised as much as possible. For that purpose, I am suggesting some steps. A higher procurement price is a must to our agriculturists.

MR. SPEAKER: The question is about Bombay port.

SHRI P. K. DEO: I am suggesting a solution for this. At the same time by fixing a basic price for the wheat procurement, they could have avoided the import. They should have as well fixed a better price for the wheat produced by lift irrigation and, at the same time, they could reduce the price of fertilisers whose price is prohibitive in this country. My last question is this. On whose shoulder will the responsibility lie—whether on Shri Ahmed's or on Shri Raj Bahadur's—for this wastage of the precious foodgrains? Is this not due to the negligence of either the India Supply Mission or the transit charge of the Transport Ministry?

SHRI F. A. AHMED: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member is not only under a misconception but has also raised matters which are not relevant so far as this Calling Attention is concerned. I would only like to point out that this Calling Attention is with regard to the wastage of foodgrains on account of the shortages of storage capacities. Therefore, I do not know how the other questions could have been raised. He expects that I should reply to all these questions. Anyhow, since the matter has been raised, I would like to point out that so far as the storage capacity in Bombay is concerned, we have adequate storage capacity and it is not because of the lack of storage capacity that any foodgrain has been wasted either in Bombay or in the Bombay port. So far as transit camp is concerned, there is also arrangement for making provision for about 5,000 tonnes in every transit camp for the purpose in Bombay port and so there is no dearth of capacity.

The hon. Member now was referring to what he saw in the newspaper, the *Indian Express*, with regard to the wastage of foodgrains, which was published on 17th

August. May I point out to him that this was not because of storage capacity or because the foodgrains were exposed to rain, but because they were damaged foodgrains which were brought from the ship on the 14th August. And, as the hon. Member is aware, whenever damaged foodgrain is brought to our notice, it is kept there for the purpose of surveying and after it has been surveyed and after the damage has been claimed, then it is taken by the Government authorities for disposal according to the requirements of the poultry, cattle and so on and so forth. Therefore, the picture which he saw in the newspaper has no reference whatsoever to the foodgrains which were damaged by rains because of lack of storage capacity.

The hon. Member has raised the question that we have not been very careful so far as making arrangements with regard to shipping is concerned. May I say that all necessary steps and precautions are taken before the ships are engaged for the purpose of bringing foodgrains to our country?

I would like to point out to him that this is not a solitary instance where damage has taken place. This is sometimes beyond the control of the shippers; some damage takes place over the sea, and they pay us damages for the damaged foodgrains which they bring into our country. If we compare the figures of the last two years, namely 1971 and 1972, we shall find that the damage on account this was 0.3 per cent while during this year it is only 0.2 per cent. It is not that the damage this year has taken place on that particular ship, but it is from the beginning of the year till the end of July. The damage of 1400 tonnes out of 6 lakhs tonnes is in the normal course of business, and for this, we claim damage from the shipping companies, and these damages are paid to us.

SHRI P. K. DEO: My Question has not been answered. I wanted a definite answer to my question.

MR. SPEAKER: He has replied to it already.

SHRI P. K. DEO: He has not replied. . . .

MR. SPEAKER: He has said that the other part was not connected with this call-attention.

SHRI P. K. DEO: When the matter is under investigation by the surveyor, how can the hon. Minister say that the damage caused was beyond the control of the shippers? When we have put forward our claim against the shippers for bad shipment, how can he hold the brief for the shippers? How can he pass judgment unless he has got some interest?

DR. H. P. SHARMA (Alwar): The damage done to the imported foodgrains appears to occur in two stages. The first stage is during transit in the ship, and the other is when they are taken off from the ship and they are lying at the port. I wish I could agree with Government that it does not have any responsibility on port account. But I do feel that Government does have a responsibility on port account.

As regards damage during transit, the hon. Minister's reply says that sometimes on the high seas, the foodgrains on the ships get damaged due to causes beyond the control of the shippers. The newspapers reports say that because there is a paucity of shipping space, therefore, we have been forced to employ sub-standard ships. There is a Mission in Washington from where we got most of our stocks, and which is supposed to look into the ships and certify their cargo-worthiness. What is the function of the Mission if it does not certify its cargo-worthiness? If it has done so, then is it that Government have acted against the advice of the Mission? In case they have said that these ships are too old and perhaps they are damaged, I would like to know whether Government chartered those ships against the advice of the Mission?

Government have also given the impression that the losses are only nominal. The other day, Shri Shinde in the course of a statement here said that the imported foodgrains would cost somewhere around

\$200 per tonne. We all know that it is a sellers' market, and there is more than one country bidding for the scarce items in the United States. I would like to know whether the compensation that we would be getting from the shipping companies would be at the older rates at which we bought the foodgrains, which were substantially lower than the present rates of \$200 per tonne? I suppose the compensation would be based on our original purchase price and the original freight rates.

So, what is the quantum of loss in money terms we would be suffering by this?

The third question is: what part of the damage was done in transit and what at the port? We can well understand that due to scarcity of shipping space we had to charter vessels which were not totally up to the mark, but for that part of the damage which has been done after being unloaded at the port certainly the responsibility lies squarely on the shoulders of Government.

It has been said that FCI has developed a special expertise in the total food imports. It has been handling the job since the first of April 1969. In evidence before the PU Committee it was stated that the FCI had developed a special expertise in handling this kind of job. But if after five years of doing the job this is the record, I certainly think there is room for examination on that account.

This is nothing new happening; this has happened at Bombay. We all know that July-August are monsoon months and there is substantial rain in Bombay. If it had been Jaisalmer or Barmar in my State where rains do not fall, it is another thing; but here rain falls every day. Have Government been taken by surprise on this score? They have been handling this job every year; they know that these are monsoon months. What precautionary steps did Government fail to take resulting in this damage?

Another thing. The Government have appointed so many special and high power committees. They did not exactly deal

[Dr. H. P. Sharma]

with this problem of damages as such. But there was an Expert Committee consisting of the Planning Commission, Agriculture and Finance Ministries, the Railway Board and the FCI—at that high level. There was the Dave Committee which went into the question of damage to foodgrains by rain. The Committee had said:

“Any avoidable damage to foodgrains is certainly a matter for concern irrespective of the quantities involved”.

This assumes significance in the context of the Minister's statement that the quantity involved in this case is small, that the percentage is only 0.2. But the Committee has been constrained to say that irrespective of quantity involved, it is a matter of concern.

Then there has been the Central Storage Committee, consisting of the Joint Secretary, Ministry of Food, Managing Director etc. I could quote from its report. But the point I want to make is that there have been high power committees, at the highest levels, which have gone into the question of storage and loss against rain etc. If after all this, we have still to accept losses of this order, that is certainly something for Government to reconsider.

I would read a portion from the 12th Report of the PU Committee (Fifth Lok Sabha). This refers to the plea of nominal loss.

“The Committee are not impressed with the plea that viewed against the total turnover these losses were not large. By themselves, the storage losses are substantial and they call for urgent and effective steps to minimise such losses”.

So the plea that we have incurred only a small loss is criticised even by the PU Committee.

Again, the FCI report says that they have developed new techniques to salvage the damaged wheat and grain. What are these techniques? Have they been em-

ploying them at Bombay? Has that substantially reduced the losses?

One other point. There is a news item which says that the shoremen and their unions did not do their job. With regret, I have to say that irrespective of the political affiliations of the unions, whether they are backed by the Congress, the Communists or the Socialists, it does not really cover them with glory when in these conditions foodgrains got damaged in the port due to something which they could have done but did not do.

SHRI F. A. AHMED: As I pointed out earlier, the foodgrains reported to have been damaged are not foodgrains which were damaged on account of lack of storage capacity and on account of rains in Bombay. This was the quantity of grain or wheat which was damaged when certain quantities were unloaded sometime in August. These were lying there for the purpose of survey and determining the quantity so that we might put in our claims against the shippers. I may point out that this is normal. Whenever we make arrangements for shipments, only such ships are taken which are seaworthy and which could bring grains from other ports to our ports without causing damage to the grains or other commodities transported. Therefore, under the terms of the contract whenever damage takes place on the high seas for that purpose, compensation is paid by the shippers. Therefore, as soon as the damaged foodgrain is brought out we have it surveyed and place our claim against the shippers and this is immediately realised. The hon. Member was making a reference to certain recommendations of certain committees; it has nothing to do with the damage in question.

The hon. Member is under the impression that something was done by the Ministry here against the advice of our mission in United States or elsewhere. All these arrangements are in fact made by the mission; they make the best possible arrangement. So far as my information goes, more than three-fourths of the ships which had been engaged for the purpose of bringing in food-grains to our country

are ships which are less than 15 years old; even ships which are older are examined properly and when they are found to be completely sea-worthy, only then our grains are allowed to be brought in by those ships. So far as the present consignment is concerned, it was brought in by a ship called DOLAMITE and this was not the first occasion that foodgrains were brought to our country by this particular ship. Damage happened for causes beyond his control and therefore whatever damage has taken place will be claimed. It does not mean any loss to our country.

DR. H. P. SHARMA: Is it our policy to leave the stocks exposed to elements while the survey was going on?

SHRI F. A. AHMED: As I have already pointed out, no instance has been brought to my notice where any stock which has been brought from outside has been exposed to rain and damaged. May I tell him that so far as our present position is concerned, no stock is allowed to remain there for more than a few hours; as soon as delivery is taken it is sent to Bombay city or some other place as early as possible. No stock is allowed to remain there for a long time.

MR. SPEAKER: Now papers to be laid on the Table.

श्री मधु लिमये (वांका) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, बम्बई में डाक्टरों की हड़ताल बड़े पैमाने पर फैल गई है जिससे जनता के स्वास्थ्य के लिए खतरा पैदा हो गया है ।

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU (Diamond Harbour): Essential services have been completely paralysed.

MR. SPEAKER: It concerns the Bombay State. It is not a question for the Centre.

श्री मधु लिमये : मन्त्री महोदय से जानना चाहता हूँ कि वह क्या कर रहे हैं ? हेल्थ मिनिस्टर हैं काहे के लिये ? जनता के स्वास्थ्य को खतरा पैदा हो गया है तो स्वास्थ्य मन्त्री कैसे चुप बैठ सकते हैं । आप इस उठाने की अनुमति नहीं दे रहे हैं ।

1579 L.S.—8.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: The Minister should make a statement.

MR. SPEAKER: If you can convince me that it is within the cognisance of the Centre, I will consider it.

श्री मधु लिमये : अगर स्वास्थ्य मन्त्रालय को कोई काम नहीं है तो हेल्थ मिनिस्टर को डिसमिस कीजिये ।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : सभी को डिसमिस कर दो ।

12.31 hrs.

#### PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

THIRTEENTH REPORT OF COMMISSIONER FOR LINGUISTIC MINORITIES, STATEMENT SHOWING DECISIONS TAKEN ETC. ON REPORTS OF ARC AND INDIAN FOREST SERVICE (FIXATION OF CADRE STRENGTH) AUDIT REGULATIONS, 1973

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIR-DHA): I beg to lay on the Table—

- (1) (i) A copy of the Thirteenth Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Commissioner for Linguistic Minorities for the period 1st July, 1970 to 30th June, 1971, under clause (2) of article 350B of the Constitution.
- (ii) A statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the above Report. [Placed in Library. See No. LT-5446/73].
- (2) A statement (as on 30-6-1973) (Hindi and English versions) on the decisions taken on various Reports of the Administrative Reforms Commission and the implementation of these decisions. [Placed in Library. See No. LT-5447/73].
- (3) A copy of Indian Forest Service (Fixation of Cadre Strength) Third Amendment Regulations,