

(14) The Indian Copper Corporation (Acquisition of Undertaking) Bill, 1972.

(15) The Former Secretary of State Service Officers (Conditions of Service) Bill, 1972.

14.38 hrs.

BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
SEVENTEENTH REPORT

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMEN-  
TARY AFFAIRS AND SHIPPING  
AND TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJ  
BAHADUR): I beg to present the  
Seventeenth Report of the Business  
Advisory Committee.

STATEMENT RE. DROUGHT SITUA-  
TION IN THE COUNTRY

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND  
AGRICULTURE (SHRI F. A. AHMED):  
I beg to lay on the Table a statement on  
drought situation in the country.

Statement

Hon'ble Members are aware that due to inadequacy of rains and erratic behaviour of the monsoons till the end of July over large parts of the country and in some parts even during August and September, this year's Kharif crop has suffered considerable damage and scarcity conditions have occurred in varying degrees in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Maharashtra, Mysore, Nagaland, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, U.P. and West Bengal. The worst affected States are Maharashtra, Gujrat, Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan. In Bihar, U.P., Mysore, West Bengal, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh, where the prospects of the Kharif crops appeared bleak at one time, the position has improv-

ed considerably as a result of rains received later in the season.

2. In order to relieve the distress caused by the drought, adequate relief measures have been organised. All-out effort has been made in starting relief works, providing gratuitous relief and making arrangements for the supply of drinking water, fodder and for preventing the outbreak of epidemics in the affected areas. At present 69,594 relief works employing 35.38 lakh persons are in operation in various parts in the country. The relief works started are such as would result in the creation of durable assets and mainly consist of soil conservation, afforestation, minor and medium irrigation, deepening and construction of wells, tanks and other similar projects. Besides, full advantage has been taken of the approved Plan and non-Plan schemes for creating employment opportunities in the affected areas.

3. Although the main emphasis has been on starting the relief works to provide necessary purchasing power to the affected population, yet to provide relief to the old, the infirm and those who are unable to work for some reason or the other, gratuitous relief has been provided. At present, nearly 17 lakh persons are in receipt of gratuitous relief in various parts of the country. Besides, over 30 lakh persons, including children and nursing mothers are benefitted by the free-feeding and milk distribution programmes.

4. In accordance with the prescribed procedure for giving central assistance, central teams have by now visited almost all the drought-affected States. The total ceiling of expenditure for 1972-73 fixed by Government on the recommendations of the Central Teams for the States visited so far aggregates to about Rs. 102 crores. Besides, *ad-hoc* assistance of about Rs. 30 crores has also been released according to the requirements of the State Governments concerned.

5. Special mention may be made of the Emergency Production Programme initiated by my Ministry to retrieve the loss in Kharif production and increase the produc-

tion of Rabi and summer crops. This programme is being vigorously pursued and implemented in consultation with and the co-operation of the State Governments.

6. With a large part of the country, covering 14 States, under the grip of drought, the demand for the supply of foodgrains from the drought affected States has registered a sharp increase in the recent months. However, with stocks of foodgrains which were built up by Government of India in pursuance of its policy of having buffer stocks not only all reasonable demands of foodgrains of drought-affected States have been fully met, but as the Hon'ble Members know we have also been able to supply sizeable quantities of foodgrains to Bangla Desh.

7. Steps have also been taken to strengthen and augment the public distribution system, especially with a view to ensuring equitable supply of foodgrains to the vulnerable sections of the society at reasonably stable prices. The number of fair price shops which was over 1,25,000 in August this year has increased to about 1,58,000 by the end of October. All foodgrains available with the Government agencies are being channelised through the fair price shops. The issue of foodgrains through the public distribution system has been substantially stepped up from 8.5 lakh tonnes in July to 11.80 lakh tonnes in September as compared to 6.4 lakh tonnes and 7.5 lakh tonnes in the corresponding months last year. Various loopholes in the public distribution system are being progressively eliminated.

8. A massive movement programme has been undertaken to meet the requirements of foodgrains of the drought affected and the deficit areas; the stocks moved in July, August, September and October being 3.2 lakh tonnes, 6.5 lakh tonnes, 7.5 lakh tonnes and 8.9 lakh tonnes respectively. The movement of these stocks has not only ensured adequate supply of foodgrains in these areas, but has also helped in restraining to some extent the speculative rise in the prices of foodgrains arising out of hoarding by the anti-social elements.

9. To replenish and build up the buffer stock to the desired level a target of procuring 4.6 million tonnes of kharif cereals has been fixed in consultation with the State Governments. Determined efforts to achieve this target are being made and the State Governments have been requested to streamline their procurement machineries and take all other measures as may be necessary in this behalf.

10. The Hon'ble Members will appreciate that adequate steps to deal with the situation have been and are being taken both by the Central and the State Governments. We are constantly watching the situation and keeping ourselves in close touch with the State Governments and will take all measures as may become necessary from time to time to deal with it.

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#### STATEMENT RE. AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION PROGRAMME

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (SHRI F. A. AHMED):  
I beg to lay on the Table a statement on Agricultural Production Programme.

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#### Statement

Hon'ble Members are well aware that the monsoon in the current year has not only been deficient but also erratic in several parts of the country. After a prolonged dry spell in July, 1972, the total loss of kharif foodgrains was estimated at about 15.0 million tonnes. Fortunately, rains received in a number of States from the beginning of August proved useful in saving the crops which had not withered away and also facilitated re-sowing in some areas where the earlier crop had been lost. September and October rains, which have been widespread in most parts of the country, have further improved the prospects of kharif crops and, consequently, the losses are expected to be lower than reported earlier by the States. These rains have also facilitated prepara-