

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-

tory tillage operations for the rabi season. The over-all position is, therefore, better than anticipated earlier, except in Maharashtra, Gujarat and Rajasthan, where rainfall has continued to be deficient.

To cope with the situation, Government have undertaken a drive for cultivation of short-duration intermediate crops like pulses, and a massive programme for increasing the production during the rabi and summer seasons. The strategy adopted aims at yielding an additional production of about 15 million tonnes of rabi and summer crops.

Special allocations of financial assistance have been made to State Governments to enable them to take up quick-maturing minor-irrigation programmes which could be completed by the 31st March, 1973, so as to irrigate the rabi and summer crops. Approval for a total loan assistance of over Rs. 140.0 crores to the States for special minor irrigation programmes has been accorded. Apart from the benefits to the rabi and summer crops expected to accrue in the current year, the entire investment on these programmes is towards the creation of permanent assets which would help to reduce dependence on monsoon.

To meet the increased demands of inputs for the intensive production drive planned during the rabi and summer seasons, and also considering that the purchasing capacity of farmers has been impaired by the unseasonal monsoon during the kharif season, arrangements have been made to provide short-term credit on a larger scale than hitherto. So far, a total amount of Rs. 74.50 crores has been released to the State Governments as short-term loans.

Necessary arrangements have been made by the Central and State Governments to meet fully the requirement of seeds of high yielding varieties of wheat and of pesticides, for the special production drives."

As regards fertilizers, the House is aware that while their demand in the current year has increased substantially on account of massive programmes for rabi and summer, there are constraints on availability. We are trying to supplement the internal supplies by imports to the extent possible. The total supply of fertilizers for the rabi crops is now anticipated to be 22 per cent more than the actual consumption in the last rabi season. The I.C.A.R. has formulated a number of technical guidelines for maximisation of output with reduced dosages of fertilizers. These include deeper tillages soil amendment, balanced fertilisation, optimum pest and weed control, scientific water management, etc., The guidelines have already been brought to the notice of the State Governments who have taken steps to disseminate them widely among the farmers through the organisation of a large number of training camps as well as through other communication media like radio etc.

Senior Officers of the Ministry of Agriculture, designated as 'Area Officers' are keeping themselves in the closest touch with the respective State Governments to ensure coordination and close supervision over implementation of the programmes at the field level. The State Governments, too, have geared up their implementation machinery at different levels to ensure timely completion of various programmes. Coordination Committees have been set up at different levels in the State to mobilise and coordinate the resources and efforts of the various development departments and agencies involved in implementation of the special production programmes.

We hope that the programmes for the rabi season would yield substantial additional production. As the House is aware, wheat production now is less subject to vagaries of weather. In recent years, wheat production has gone up by nearly 3 million tonnes a year. A number of wheat-producing States Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal and Central & East U.P. have recently received widespread rains which would facilitate the

sowing of wheat crop. This coupled with the expansion of irrigation facilities as a result of the implementation of the special minor irrigation and large-scale extension of area under high-yielding varieties, is expected to improve appreciably the prospects of the wheat crop. In several States, sowings are already reported to be in full swing. These factors strengthen our hope and confidence that given necessary support our Kisans can rise to the occasion and help the country in retrieving at least some of the losses of production which have occurred due to failure of timely rains.

**SUPPLEMENTARY DEMANDS FOR GRANTS (GENERAL), 1972-73**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI K. R. GANESH): I beg to present a statement showing Supplementary Demands for Grants in respect of the Budget (General) for 1972-73.

MR. SPEAKER: Now, we are to take up the discussion on the price situation. Should we adjourn for lunch now or should we take up the discussion right now?

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Let us adjourn for lunch.

14.39 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha adjourned for Lunch till Thirty Minutes Past Fifteen of the Clock*

15.34 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha reassembled after Lunch at Thirty-three Minutes Past Fifteen of the Clock*

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER at the Chair]

श्री शशि भूषण (दक्षिण दिल्ली) : उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, यू० एन० आई० के कर्मचारी भूख हड़ताल पर हैं और सत्याग्रह कर रहे हैं। उनके साथ बहुत अन्याय हो रहा

है। उनके सही वेतन नहीं मिल रहा है। जितना फ़ैसला आबोध में किया है उसके अनुसार उनको पूरा वेतन मिला नहीं है। मैं आपके जरिये सरकार से प्रार्थना करना चाहता हूँ कि वह इस मामले को अपने हाथ में ले।

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी (ग्वालियर): उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, आपने श्री शशि भूषण की प्रार्थना सुन ली। उनकी प्रार्थना में मैं भी अपनी प्रार्थना जोड़ता हूँ। यू० एन० आई० के कर्मचारियों की मांगें उचित हैं। केवल वेतन में वृद्धि का सवाल नहीं है। वहाँ पर मामूली सुविधायें भी प्राप्त नहीं हैं। पीने का पानी नहीं है। और भी अनेक सुविधाओं से वहाँ के कर्मचारी वंचित हैं। भाल इंडिया रेडियो, यू० एन० आई० को 8 लाख रुपये दे रहा है। कोई कारण नहीं है कि यू० एन० आई० जिस स्तर की एजेंसी है उसके अनुरूप वहाँ के कर्मचारियों के साथ व्यवहार न हो। आप श्रम मंत्री से कहें कि वह इस बात पर एक वक्तव्य दें।

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE (Kanpur): Sir, I am President of that union, and the hunger-strike is going on. I request the Labour Minister, through you, that he should intervene in the matter, and see that interim relief is paid pending a final decision about the wage structure and certain amenities to be granted. This is my request, through you, to the Labour Minister.

श्री रामाबतार झास्त्री (पटना) : उपाध्यक्ष महोदय मैं भी कहना चाहता हूँ कि सरकार को इस मामले में जल्दी करना चाहिए।