

prepared to give a positive answer, at least let him consider.

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY : I share the concern of the Hon. Member for the brothers and sisters who are working abroad and who are bringing foreign exchange to us. Regarding the difficulties and harassment, when complaints come we take action. So far as your suggestions is concerned, definitely a positive answer will be given we are looking into it.

Failure to supply ration in time to Fair Price Shops by Food Corporation of India

*566. **SHRI RAMASHRAY PRASAD SINGH :** Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Food Corporation of India quite often fails to make a timely supply to fair price shops even if fair price shop owners deposit money well in advance resulting in harassment to ration card holders; and

(b) if so, the steps Government propose to take to ensure regular supply from the Food Corporation of India to fair price shops and consequent timely availability of ration to consumers at fair price shops ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI A.K. PANJA) : (a) and (b) A statement is given below.

Statement

Of the seven commodities viz. rice, wheat, sugar, imported edible oils, kerosene, controlled cloth and soft coke being supplied under the Public Distribution System, responsibility of the Food Corporation of India is confined to supply of wheat, rice and sugar. Food Corporation of India does not undertake supply of wheat and rice to Fair Price Shops directly in any State except in Kerala and West Bengal. In respect of other States, retail distribution of these commodities is the

responsibility of the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations themselves. Food Corporations of India also works as wholesaler for supply of sugar in 13 States and Union Territory Administrations. However, in the State of Bihar, Food Corporation of India, on the basis of release orders given by the concerned State Government authorities, directly supplies sugar to individual fair price shops. Food Corporation of India has informed that necessary remedial action is taken in the case of local shortages whenever reported by positioning the stocks in their depots.

[Translation]

SHRI RAMASHRAY PRASAD SINGH : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the reply given by the hon. Minister does not make the position clear. My question was that though the wholesalers deposited money in time with the Food Corporation, yet they were not supplied with commodities in time and they were made to take rounds of their offices. As a result of it, the wholesaler has to bear the extra expenditure which ultimately has to be borne by the card-holders. The card-holders too do not get rationed items in time. They are made to take rounds of the Fair Price Shops and they do not get foodgrains at the prescribed time. I want that the hon. Minister should reply to it.

[English]

SHRI A.K. PANJA : As the hon. Member knows so far as Food Corporation of India is concerned the responsibility of distribution is in case of rice and wheat only. So far as retail distribution is concerned it is the duty of the States concerned and the Union territories excepting the present system that is going on in Kerala and West Bengal. So far as sugar is concerned there are 13 States where Food Corporation of India takes the responsibility of supplying it to the retailers also. If any shortage is reported by the State Government immediately the zonal office is alerted and it is taken care of.

[Translation]

SHRI RAMASHRAY PRASAD SINGH : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, he

has already read out this reply. When the wholesalers appointed by the Bihar Government deposit money with the F.C.I. to lift the stocks of wheat and sugar, they are made to take rounds of the offices of F.C.I. which ultimately affects the card holders. Such a thing is quite common in Gaya district of Bihar. I want to know as to why they do not supply commodities to the owners of Fair Price Shops in time ?

[English]

SHRI A.K. PANJA : Sir, I do not know which State, district or particular area the hon. Member is mentioning...

[Translation]

SHRI RAMASHRAY PRASAD SINGH : I am talking about Bihar.

[English]

SHRI A.K. PANJA : Sir, wholesaler or a retailer in a particular State the hon. Member may let me know the persons concerned certainly we will take steps but at present the total number of retail shops is 3,25,080 throughout the country. If there is a particular district or area.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI RAMASHRAY PRASAD SINGH : I am taking about Bihar State.

[English]

SHRI A.K. PANJA : If there is any complaint against any wholesaler in a particular State then bring it to my notice and action will be taken.

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD : May I know which one is true ? Is it as a result of the hike in price of wheat and only two items I am mentioning in FPS-and as a result of rice the 15 to 10 per cent increase by State Government as distribution charges the wheat and rice available in the open market are cheaper than in the ration shops ? Is that why, most often, shop owners do not come to list or is it that they deposit the money and do not get the grains ? Which one is true ?

SHRI A. K. PANJA : Sir, this does not arise out of the present question but upto now whatever offtake is there we are finding, that is going in a particular pattern not showing...

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD : Which one is true whether the shop owner do not deposit the money or they deposit the money and do not get grains ?

SHRI A. K. PANJA : As I said if the shop owner anywhere deposits the money and does not get grains then it is the responsibility of the States except Kerala and West Bengal. So far as sugar is concerned besides Bihar there are 12 other States. Sy far as wheat and rice are concerned, if any retailer is depositing the money and still not getting the grains, if any particular area is mentioned I can make an inquiry.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DAS MUNSI : Sir, to ensure supply of foodgrains to the consumer in the ration shop there are three stages. One, there must be a ration card; Second ensure supply in the ration shop and then the shops are divided into SR area and MR area. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he is aware of the fact that in every state especially where statutory rationing area is concerned in the metropolitan cities...the number of people who are eligible to get the ration do not get it for not having received the ration cards at the appropriate time because of bureaucratic bungles. It becomes always the duty of the MPs and MLAs in the respective areas to meet the grievances. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he will, in consultation with the State Government, ensure a policy that the recommendation of the MPs and the MLAs is accepted for issue of the ration card temporarily subject to the examination and thereafter permanent ration card so that one sort of the grievance is sorted out.

SHRI A. K. PANJA : This is a suggestion worth considering. I will look into it.

SHRI V. S. KRISHNA IYER : Sir, not only that we should ensure supply

of ration to the people, but we should also ensure supply of quality grains to the people. I thought that in the States the quality of grains was not good but even in Delhi, it is so; my experience is that in the past some weeks the quality of rice given in the ration shops varies. Will the Government ensure good quality of wheat and rice for the consumers?

SHRI A. K. PANJA : It is true we have received some complaints regarding bad quality given to the consumers through the retailers. That is why wherever we have received such complaints, it is for the State Government, after taking it from the FCI godowns to take action.

(*Interruption*) In Delhi also, same is the case. The Delhi Administration takes it from the ECI and gives it to the retailers. So far as the Government is concerned and FCI is concerned, we have told the States that let there be a joint inspection at the time of taking delivery from the FCI godowns and thereafter it is the duty of the State Government or the local administration to see that that quality which has been approved and taken delivery of actually reaches the consumers, that is, the end users. That is the responsibility of the Administration. But we are not keeping ourselves aloof from it. We are repeatedly issuing instructions that (a) there must be joint inspection, (b) there must be surprise checks by the State Government Authorities and (c) the entire machinery for taking action against any defaulting party is with the State Government. Wherever anything is coming to our notice we are immediately sending our own team to have inspection of the fact reported either in the newspapers; or by the hon. Member and thereafter taking steps accordingly.

SHRI ANOOPCHAND SHAH : I would like to know from the hon. Minister as F C.I. is supplying wheat and rice to the various States as per the allotment the Central Government and there are two systems at present existing in this country, one is through the State agency and the other is the one which is existing in Kerala and West Bengal—which system is better and why we are not implementing only one system

throughout the country.

SHRI A. K. PANJA : Sir, our idea is to enforce one system and that is why besides West Bengal and Kerala, one system is being followed. The infrastructure required, the law enforcement machinery and also the powers are with the State Governments by giving conscious delegated power. But so far as West Bengal is concerned, we wrote several times to the Government of West Bengal to take up the distribution to the retailers. We have not yet received any favourable reply.

Closure of jute mills

*567. **SHRI ANANTA PRASAD SETHI :**

SHRI KUNWAR RAM :

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the hardship of jute farmers in certain State following a steep fall in jute prices and the closure of several jute mills, rendering thousands of workers jobless;

(b) if so, whether any representations have been received by Government in this regards;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the reaction of Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN) : (a) to (d) A Statement is given below.

Statement

(a) It is true that raw jute prices have touched minimum support level during the current jute season 1985-86 mainly due to harvesting of a bumper jute crop but this has not resulted in closure of jute mills. On the other hand, with raw material prices coming down substantially, a number of those jute mills, which remained under closure during the first half of 1985 due to tight supply position and high