

MR. SPEAKER : The same question is coming.

National Gene Bank

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*553. SHRI H. N. NANJE GOWDA :
SHRI S. M. GURADDI :

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have set up a National Gene Bank at the National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources, New Delhi;

(b) whether a national symposium on plant genetic resources organised by the NBPGR was held on March 3, 1987;

(c) if so, the major recommendations made therein and whether Government have considered them; and

(d) if so, the action taken to implement the recommendations ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI JOGENDRA MAKWANA) : (a) and (b). Yes, Sir.

(c) The symposium made some major recommendations which include strengthening of germplasm collection of priority crops and areas, quarantine facilities, documentation and retrieval systems, establishment of tissue bank and cryopreservation of germplasm. Establishment of duplicate repository to hold genetic resources has also been suggested to avoid risk of loss of germplasm due to unforeseen circumstances.

(d) Follow up action is being initiated.

SHRI H. N. NANJE GOWDA : Sir, I would like to know when actually was this gene bank established and how many explorations were undertaken either by the gene bank or by the Bureau of plant Genetic Resources and how many accessions of agriculture and horticulture crops have hitherto been collected. The genetic wealth in different parts of the country is having its

own rarity in major part of our country. So, I would also like to know whether to preserve that native genetic wealth, the Government is proposing to establish gene sanctuaries and if so, at how many centres and what are the places proposed.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : Sir, this was established only because of preserving the original germplasm in the country and it was established in 1944. So far 106 explorations have been undertaken and 48,326 samples have been collected.

SHRI H. N. NANJE GOWDA : Sir, my second point has not been answered, that is, whether the Government is proposing to establish gene sanctuaries.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : Yes, Sir.

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (DR. G. S. DHILLON) : Sir, there have been small centres in the beginning but a bigger one was established by ICAR in 1976.

SHRI H. N. NANJE GOWDA : Sir, of late, may be because of import of foodgrains for some years, we are now seeing various diseases and pests which were not prevalent in our country. It is going to prove to be a very dangerous thing for the agricultural economy of our country. So, I would like to know whether Government have analysed the reasons for these new diseases and pests which were not prevalent and whether Government have contemplated taking effective action and also whether Government is negotiating for a project on Plant Genetic Resources under the Indo-US Sub-Commission on Agriculture, and if so, whether the negotiations have been completed and when is the project going to be implemented.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : Sir, the research for the number of diseases and pests which are there in the country is being done by the scientists and they evolve new varieties which are disease free. So far as the steps taken to prevent it are concerned, there is a quarantine system and every seed which is received from outside is being quarantined.

As regards the particular project mentioned by the Hon. Member, with 70 countries we are exchanging our germplasm and there are number of organisations throughout the world where we are exchanging our germplasm. We send to them and we receive from them also and it is only on free basis.

SHRI VIJAY N. PATIL : Sir, with the establishment of so many agricultural universities in different States, there is lot of duplication of research. In the case of this gene bank also, I would like to know what type of coordination is there between the agricultural universities and the authorities of the gene bank.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : Sir, there is well-knit coordination between all these research organisations, including the State universities and ICAR at the Centre. So, there is no question of duplication. But duplication may be in some areas where some universities also may be doing some research on some aspects. That cannot be avoided.

SHRI M. RAGHUMA REDDY : Sir, there is ICRISAT at Hyderabad. They are developing many germplasms specially on dryland and agricultural crops. I would like to know whether the ICRISAT people are exporting germplasm to outside countries, or whether they are supplying germplasm for the Indian crops and Indian Universities. The other thing is, I want to know whether the Universities have developed germplasm for wild grasses. If not, are you going to develop that ?

(Interruptions)

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : That is called Congress grass in Maharashtra !

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : Sir, ICRISAT also has a collection of germplasm and they share it with us as we share it with other countries also. It is a free exchange of germplasm between country to country, that is, in order to evolve new varieties which are disease free. That is one thing. So far as the grass is concerned, we have germplasm of grasses also but congress

grass is wild, unused, least used varieties of grass.

(Interruptions)

SHRI M. RAGHUMA REDDY : Regarding CRISAT I want a categorical reply, not an evading type of reply.

DR. G. S. DHILLON : May I inform the Hon. Members, Sir, that in the ICRISAT we have the collection of sorghum, bajra, arhar and as you mentioned, gram groundnut and small millets.

SHRI M. RAGHUMA REDDY : But they are not supplying to us.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : Sir, I have already replied to the question of the Hon. Member. He asked us a specific question as to whether the germplasm of ICRISAT is sent outside. Is it not ? If this is the question, then I said that there is a free exchange of germplasm between country to country because we want to develop new varieties. That is the reason.

[Translation]

SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, several Hon. Members are not satisfied by the Hon. Minister's reply. Sir, in our agricultural conferences, several things are discussed and so far as I remember, you had inaugurated an oil-seeds conference two or three days back and you had expressed your doubts that if oil is imported in this country to check the rising prices, then the farmers engaged in oil seeds production will be discouraged. Therefore, why don't we do something by which neither have we to import oilseeds nor are our farmers discouraged. In this connection, I want to draw the attention of the Hon. Minister of Agriculture to inform him that earlier groundnut was grown in 5 lakh hectares of land which has now been reduced to one lakh hectares of land and because of the smaller area, experiments are being made to grow more in the same area as a result of which 3 kinds of diseases are mainly afflicting the groundnut plants. One, the roots of the plants decay; second, groundnuts do not form in the roots and third, the leaves wither which leads to a

loss in production. The farmers are very disheartened on account of it. Has the Government directed the agricultural scientists and I.C.A.R. to hold some sort of research by which the area under groundnut production may be increased and the farmers are benefited. Will the Hon. Minister take steps to import genetic material of improve the quality of seeds and also to increase the area under oilseeds production ?

[English]

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : Sir, this question relates to the rapidly vanishing indigenous plant genetic wealth. For that we have taken sufficient measures.

So far as the question of the Hon. Member is concerned, regarding groundnut we are working on it and we want to develop a variety which can give more yield and it will also be disease free. Our scientists are working and for that matter if it is necessary to bring some germplasm from outside, we are prepared for that also. Recently we have brought germplasm of sunflower and we have cultivated it in various parts of the country. After it is harvested, we can decide about the import of the germplasm in large quantity.

HUDCO loan to Cooperative Societies

*554. SHRI RANJIT SINGH GAEKWAD : Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that many Cooperative Housing Societies have come up with the loan assistance from HUDCO in the urban centres whereas no such benefit is available in the rural areas;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to evolve any scheme for housing in the semi-urban and rural areas by providing loan assistance to individual members;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI DALBIR SINGH) : (a) HUDCO has so far sanctioned 71 schemes for construction of 1,30,428 houses in rural areas through cooperative housing societies, as against 69 schemes for construction of 15,101 houses in urban areas through cooperative housing societies. It is, therefore, not correct to say that HUDCO gives loan assistance to cooperative housing societies only in urban areas.

(b) to (d). Do not arise.

SHRI RANJIT SINGH GAEKWAD : Sir, looking to the number of houses, there is definitely a vast difference in the rural and urban areas. But looking towards the number of societies that have come up, it is almost negligible. Hence, this itself proves that more work is done in the urban areas than in the rural areas.

Secondly, before I ask my question, I would like to draw your attention to the answer given by the Government "That it is, therefore, not correct to say..." I am not saying this. I am simply asking a question from the Government whether it has been brought to the notice that more work in HUDCO is done in the urban areas against the rural areas. So that clause should be deleted. I am not making any contradictory statement. I am simply asking the question. I would like to know how many applications have been received by the Government so far in the last year and how many are awaiting.

[Translation]

SHRI DALBIR SINGH : The Hon. Member is of the view that more work by HUDCO is done in the urban areas as against the rural areas. It is not so. Sir, the requirements of our Group Housing Societies and other Societies come to us. We do not give loan to any individual. HUDCO sanctions loans only through societies and Housing Boards. Therefore, it will be wrong to say that we are ignoring the rural areas. We are looking after our rural areas also. We receive applications from States like Tamilnadu and Rajasthan and we are giving them loans regularly.