

therefore, does not arise out of the main question ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI PIYUS TIRAKY: It is the same question. That is why I am asking this question. The problem relates to Gorkhaland ... (*Interruptions*)**

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing doing. Not allowed. The hon. Member must realise that it is a separate issue.

Suicide by Farmers due to Loss on Cotton Crop by Pests

*164. SHRI V. SOBHANADREESWARA RAO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of cases of suicide by some farmers due to heavy loss incurred on cotton crop as a result of American bollworm and other pests;

(b) whether Government propose to have an indepth study made through research organisations into the failure of the available pesticides to contain this pest; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken to improve the quality and yield per hectare and to provide adequate plant protection for cotton crop?

[*Translation*]

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI BHAJAN LAL): (a) to (c). A Statement is given below.

STATEMENT

(a) There have been reports of death by suicide by some cotton grower in Prakasam district of Andhra Pradesh. Investigations

into the causes of these deaths are being conducted by the Government of Andhra Pradesh.

(b) The Scientific Panel of Entomology of ICAR has adopted short-term and long-term recommendations to overcome the problems encountered in Andhra Pradesh. At the instance of ICAR, a two day Workshop on Heliothis Management was organised by the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University at Coimbatore on 18-19 February, 1988. The Central Institute for Cotton Research at Nagpur is holding a group discussion on Bollworm Resistance in Cotton on 8-9 March, 1988.

(c) Steps taken to improve the quality and of yield per hectare include development of high yielding and early maturing disease and pest tolerant long staple, medium staple and desi varieties and hybrids of cotton under proper fertilisers, pest management and appropriate production technology. Integrated pest management, balancing application of pesticides with non-chemical means, for containing pests is being emphasised.

[*English*]

SHRI V. SOBHANADREESWARA RAO: Sir, I will not go into it in detail, because we will have an opportunity to do so in the discussion on calling attention motion.

I would like to know whether the Regional Agricultural Research Station of the Andhra Pradesh Agricultural University has submitted a proposal for management of heliothis which is mainly responsible for this catastrophe to evolve heliothis resistant cotton varieties and for setting up a biological laboratory to help the farmers in a big way for the natural control of some of these pests which are causing this danger.

While the manufacture of pesticides is controlled by the Union Government, its distribution etc. is done by the States. However, the State Government are not in a position to have an effective control on this. Will the Government issue a control order for pesticides under Section 3 of the Essential Commodities Act immediately so that the pesticides can be seized, cases can be tried under Section 6A of the Essential Commodities Act by the District Collector and stocks confiscated which will help to improve substantially the quality of pesticides? Further, will the Government bring amendments to the Pesticides Act to impose higher penalty and six months imprisonment to the retailer as well as the manufacturer to prevent adulteration of the pesticides.

[*Translation*]

SHRI BHAJAN LAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is true that the cotton crop in Andhra Pradesh has been affected by a severe disease which is causing heavy damage to the crop. Specialists from agricultural universities of Andhra Pradesh and neighbouring States have been sent there to investigate. They held a meeting and decided to make an indepth study of the problem and find ways to eradicate this disease. Every effort will be made to find a cure to this disease, and preventive measures would be taken to check it in future. So far as pesticides are concerned, it is not true that the Central Government is entirely responsible for it. The State Governments have full powers to take samples. The Andhra Pradesh Government has established four testing laboratories in the State to check the samples. In case the tests are not satisfactory or inadequate quantity of medicinal ingredients are found in the samples strict action should be taken against the guilty. In this respect, a law already exists where in a provision has been made for fines upto Rs. 2000/- and imprisonment upto 6 months. This has been done so that people are not

supplied spurious pesticides and the farmers get quality pesticides. The Central Government will ensure that injustice is not done to the farming community. Besides, efforts would be made to provide quality seeds and fertilizers to the farmers and timely spraying of pesticides on the standing crop would also be done. Mr. Speaker, Sir, you may be aware that spraying of pesticides is a must in the cotton-growing area. This disease persists so long as the entire cotton crop is not sprayed with pesticides. The Central Government sanctions 50% subsidy to the State Governments for providing spray facilities. This has been done so that the cotton crop in the entire State is sprayed. This would not only check the disease but also increase they yield.

MR. SPEAKER: Were samples of pesticides taken and tests performed on them in this case?

SHRI BHAJAN LAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, samples were taken. I would like to tell you that 7164 samples were taken in 1984-85 and 366 of them were found to be sub-standard. Similarly, 6779 samples were taken in 1985-86 and out of those, 288 were substandard. In 1986-87, the number of samples taken were 6483 out of which 265 were sub-standard.

[*English*]

SHRI V. SOBHANADREESWARA RAO: Sir, you have rightly enquired about it because several instances are there but due to inadequate efforts they are just going on. To avoid this, Government should issue a Control Order. Our Government is sending one such order and I request you to approve it.

My second supplementary is, Cotton is a very important commercial crop and in fact we require steady supply of cotton to fulfil our garment export requirements. It is a capital

incentive crop which needs higher investment. The cotton crop is also susceptible to adverse seasonal conditions like drought and cyclone and also to several pests. So, in view of the bitter experience that we has this year, will the Government kindly consider and include the cotton crop under the Comprehensive Crop Insurance Scheme so as to safeguard the interest of the cotton growers throughout the country? They cannot be put to gamble and they should not be thrown to the mercy of some financial institutions or money lenders. So, I seek a categorical answer from the Government whether the Government will include cotton under the comprehensive Crop Insurance Scheme.

SHRI BHAJAN LAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member has expressed certain apprehensions. I would like to inform him that some days back, the Hon. Prime Minister himself visited Andhra Pradesh and announced as many concessions to farmers as were possible. Just now, the hon. Member mentioned that because there was a failure of the cotton crop, it should be brought under the Crop Insurance Scheme. This scheme already exists in a few States. But as far as we know, it has not been a success. The Government will reconsider the merits of the Scheme. According to the Scheme, if loss in a block or a taluka ... (*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

SHRI V. SOBHANADREESWAR RAO: Sir, such particular are not there in the comprehensive Crop Insurance Scheme.

[*Translation*]

SHRI BHAJAN LAL: I am coming to that. The Scheme has been extend to Block, Taluka and Mandal level. It does not cover cotton crop. Presently, the Scheme is confined to the Rabi crop only and does not cover the kharif crop. Cotton is a cash crop. The Government wants that the Crop Insur-

ance Scheme should cover cotton and paddy also. The whole Scheme is being reviewed to find ways and means by which farmers can fully benefited.

[*English*]

SHRI V. SOBHANADREESWAR RAO: That is there already. Cotton is not there. We want a specific answer from the Minister.

SHRI A.J.V.B. MAHESWARA RAO: You include cotton also.

SHRI K.S. RAO: If it is an industry and if the cost of production is going up, the Government will consider whenever there is a representation from the Industry and then review the prices by increasing it. If there is a fire in the godown or to a property in an industry or trade we are compensating them totally. How long will the Government leave the farmers to the mercy of nature without making some genuine provisions such as insurance or fixing up remunerative prices and all that? The Prime Minister had given them an assurance when he came to Hyderabad that he will postpone the repayment of loans and write-off interests and also give compensation to the people who have committed suicide and all that. I wish to know from the hon. Minister whether the orders have been passed and sent to the State Government, whether any compensation has been paid to them and whether the loans which have been paid to those who have committed suicide have been written off or not?

MR. SPEAKER: The question is regarding the other thing.

[*Translation*]

SHRI BHAJAN LAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the question of granting of compensation under the Crop Insurance Scheme was

taken into consideration by the Government keeping in view the loss suffered by a farmer due to hailstorm, dust-storm or inclement weather. The announcement made by the Hon. Prime Minister in Andhra Pradesh is more or less meant for all States. The Centre has instructed the States in this regard and thereby discharged its duty. Now only one point remains to be clarified. The Hon. Prime Minister had given an assurance there that compensation would be given from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund. To the next of kin of those who have committed suicide. We are making further investigations on the reports that we have received from there. Action will be taken as soon as the rest of the work is complete.

[English]

PROF. N.G. RANGA: I have a short supplementary. I am glad that the hon. Minister has said that they are considering the advisability of extending crop insurance to cotton growers also. But then it should be extended to the village level not to taluk level or mandal level.

Secondly, with regard to compensation to those people who have committed suicide—they have lost everything—what special facilities or advantages Government are going to provide for those people?

[Translation]

SHRI BHAJAN LAL: As I said earlier, farmers have not fully benefited from the Crop Insurance Scheme. This is because block, taluka and mandal are considered as a single unit. The whole block consists of 100 villages. They would get benefit only if 80% of the crops are damaged. That is why the Government is rethinking on the issue. Another difficulty with the scheme is that loans taken from banks or other Government financial institutions are insured but loans from private parties are not insured.

The Government would like from private parties also to be insured and insurance premium on that amount to be collected from the farmers.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: There is a Calling Attention on the same.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI VIDYAVATI CHATURVEDI: Village should be considered as a unit.

SHRIBHAJAN LAL: That is what I mean to say. We are reconsidering the whole thing.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Shri V. Sobhanadreeswara Rao—absent; Shri Ram Swarup Ram—not here; Dr. M.K. Patel—not present; Shri Prakash Chandra—absent; Shri Dharam Pal Singh Malik—he is also not here; Shrimati Basavarajeswari—she is also absent; Shri S.M. Guraddi—absent.

Survey regarding quality of food served on Indian Airlines Flights

*169. PROF. SAIF-UD-DIN SOZ: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether any survey has been conducted regarding the quality and quantity of food/refreshments served on Indian Airlines flights;

(b) if so, the results thereof; and

(c) if not, whether Government propose to undertake the survey?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND