

aircraft and if we need, we will go in for further purchase of the aircraft because our credit rating in the international market is one of the best anywhere in the world.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Commercial Fishing of Krill Fish in Antarctica

*131. PROF. K. V. THOMAS : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have made any study for the commercial fishing of krill fish in Antarctica; and

(b) which are the other nations that are engaged in the krill fishing in this area ?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (DR. G. S. DHILLON) : (a) As a part of Antarctic research programme, scientific investigations on the locations of living organisms including krill are carried out in Antarctica by Department of Ocean Development.

(b) Nations engaged in krill fishing in Antarctica are Chile, France, German Democratic Republic, Japan, Republic of Korea, Poland and the USSR.

Import of Milk Products

*132. SHRI MOHANBHAI PATEL : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that there is an acute shortage of milk in cities and rural areas due to starvation deaths of cattle owing to drought;

(b) if so, whether in view of above, Government propose to import milk-powder and butter-oil to meet the demand; and

(c) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (DR. G. S. DHILLON) : (a) There has been fall in the availability of milk and milk products during the last few months due to wide-spread drought conditions. However, there are indications that the situation is improving now.

(b) and (c) In order to ease the situation, some quantities of skim milk powder and butter oil are being imported as under :

(i) EEC has agreed to supply 12,000 MT of skim milk powder and 4,000 MT of butter oil under Food Aid Programme 1987 for Operation Flood.

(ii) Commercial import of some quantity of skim milk powder and butter oil has been arranged.

Central Funds to Bihar for Slum Clearance

*133. SHRI RAMSWAROOP RAM : Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) how much Central funds have been allocated to Bihar State for clearing the slum areas; and

(b) how many district towns have been chosen for the purpose ?

THE MINISTER OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI) : (a) and (b) The present policy of the Government lays emphasis on environmental improvement of urban slums in situ rather than their massive clearance or relocation. The Scheme of Environmental Improvement of Urban Slums (EIUS) is in the State sector and appropriate projects are formulated and implemented by the State Governments, in accordance with their needs and priorities, out of their State Plan provisions. There is a provision of Rs. 5 crores for slum improvement in the Seventh Five Year Plan of Bihar State.

'Agro Climatic Zones'

*135. SHRI S. M. GURADDI :
SHRI G. S. BASAVARAJU :

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be Pleased to state :

(a) whether Union Government propose to divide the country into different agro-climatic zones for proper and efficient crop planning;

(b) if so, the modalities of the scheme; and

(c) to what extent it would be helpful to farmers to plan their crop strategies ?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (DR. G. S. DHILLON) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). The details of the scheme for development of above zones are being worked out by the Planning Commission.

Reduction in Rice Production

*136. SHRI H. N. NANJE GOWDA : SHRI SHANTI DHARIWAL :

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether a global shortfall in rice production this year has been predicted; and

(b) if so, the details of steps being formulated to check the shortfall in rice production ?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (DR. G. S. DHILLON) : (a) The October 1987 issue of "Food Outlook" brought out by the Food and Agriculture Organisation forecasts a decline in global output of rice production during this year.

(b) In India, due to widespread drought conditions prevailing in many States and floods in some States, in the Eastern region during the Kharif season, production of rice during the crop year 1987-88 is likely to be affected.

In order to make up the shortfall in kharif production, a vigorous rabi production strategy is being implemented, which includes increased coverage of area under location specific high yielding varieties and efficient use of agricultural inputs. A Central Sector Minikit Programme of rice and propagation of a new technology is under implementation. Training programmes in improved rice production technology are organised for Extension Workers. The Centrally sponsored Special Rice Production Programme is being continued in the Eastern States to increase the production and productivity of rice in the region. The States are also advised to plan the coverage under rice during the rabi season, depending on availability of irrigation water together with optimal input use efficiency, to get higher production.

Extension of E.P.F. Benefits to the Employees of Shops and Establishments in Karnataka

*137. SHRI V. S. KRISHNA IYER : SHRI H. B. PATIL :

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Karnataka State Provident Fund Regional Panel has recommended to Union Government to bring the employees of shops and establishments under the purview of the Provident Fund Act;

(b) the number of employees working in shops and establishments in Karnataka State; and

(c) whether Union Government have agreed to cover shops and establishments which employ five or more persons against the present ceiling of 20 or more employees ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA) : (a) No, Sir. No such proposal has been received by the Union Government as yet.

(b) The information regarding number of employees working in shops and establishments etc. neither available nor maintained by the EPF Organisation.

(c) There is at present no proposal to extend the provisions of the E.P.F. Act to shops and establishments employing less than 20 persons.

Effects of Chemicals Fertilizers and Multi-Cropping on foodgrains Production

*138. SHRI YASHWANTRAO GADAKH PATIL : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether intensive use of chemical fertilizers and multicropping has caused deficiency of micronutrients in soil and adversely affected the production of foodgrains in certain parts of the country;

(b) if so, whether a survey in this regard has been carried out;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and