

SHRIMATI BASAVARAJESWARI: Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister the total quantity of billets and rerollable scrap required for the rerolling mills as on today and what is the shortfall? Also, I would like to know the quantity of the rerollable scrap and the billets imported till now and rate per tonne of billet. What is the concessional rate of customs duty which the hon. Minister has already stated?

SHRIM. L. FOTEDAR: Sir, so far as the Customs duty is concerned, we have brought it down from ninety five per cent to sixty per cent. We are trying to resolve it further. I cannot make any firm commitment as of now but so far as the import of billets is concerned, we have so far imported about 1,800 tonnes of billets during the months of April and May in the current financial year. To overcome the difficulty of the billets, we have considered it appropriate to import more scrap and make the imported scrap available to the consumers because the billets are costly items and we would prefer rather to make the scrap available in the market. As the hon. Member is aware, we will be importing about eight lakh tonnes of heavy melting scrap from the Soviet Union. About 1,27,000 tonnes has already arrived and about 68,000 tonnes is in the pipeline.

SHRIMATI BASAVARAJESWARI: Sir, I have asked about the total requirement by the rerolling mills as on today, but he has not replied to that part of the question. My second supplementary will be that after the expansion of the public and private undertakings, when they come into production, will they be in a position to satisfy the entire demand of the rolling mills.

SHRIM. L. FOTEDAR: Sir, as the hon. Member is aware, there are about 1,200 rerolling mills in the country and these have been either licensed or registered by the State Governments. There are about 200 rolling mills which have the Bureau of Indian Standard Licences. These about 1,000 rolling mills in the country, I may tell the hon. Member, are not producing steel of high quality. I would like to request, through the

hon. Members, the people who are involved in this that they should also modernise their units so that the product from these units becomes qualitatively higher and when it comes in the market, the customer is benefited.

So far as the demand of the billets is concerned, I told the hon. Member that the gap is about 6 lakh tonnes. But it is a very high figure. I would not like to import more billets. that is why we thought that we would import scrap which is less costly. A high value is added to this item in the country. So, we wanted that the people of the country will get the benefits.

Production of Foodgrains in Bihar

*255. **SHRI RAM BHAGAT PASWAN:** Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the production of foodgrains in Bihar during the last five years;

(b) whether the agricultural production in Bihar has gone down due to heavy floods and drought; and

(c) if so, the steps taken or proposed to be taken to increase the production of foodgrains, oilseed, fibre crops and sugar-cane in the State?

[Translation]

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

(a) The production of foodgrains in Bihar during the last five years in as under:—

Year	(In lakh tonnes) Production of Foodgrains
1988-84	98.7
1984-85	103.3
1985-86	109.6
1986-87	109.1
1987-88	90.7

According to information received from the State Government, the total production of foodgrains in Bihar during 1988-89 is expected to be about 133 lakh tonnes.

(b) No, Sir. The production of foodgrains in Bihar was adversely affected in 1987-88 due to aberrant weather condition.

(c) Steps to increase the production of foodgrains, oilseeds and fibre crops include the implementation of various Thrust Programmes like:—

- (i) Special Foodgrains Production Programme (SFPP):—Rice including Special Rice Production Programme (SRPP).
- (ii) National Pulses Development Programme (NPDP).
- (iii) Minikit Programme for Rice, Wheat, Maize and Millets.
- (iv) National Oilseeds Development Project (NODP).
- (v) Oilseeds Production Thrust Project (OPTP).
- (vi) Special Jute Development Programme (SJDG)

For increasing production of sugarcane, State including Bihar are being advised to adopt a strategy that includes (a) distribution of quality seeds of cane; (b) judicious use of fertilisers (c) better management of ration, and (d) larger coverage under plant protection, etc.

SHRI RAM BHAGAT PASWAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has given the figures of the production of foodgrains in Bihar from the year 1984 to 1988. In his reply, he has admitted that due to the unfavourable climatic condition conditions, there was a little decline in the production of foodgrains in Bihar during 1987-88. I would like to know the short fall in the production of foodgrains during these five years against

target fixed by the Government.

Besides, I would also like to know from the hon. Minister about the undertaken for increasing for production of pulses, oilseeds, rice and sugarcane etc. and the percentage of increase in production recorded as a result thereof?

SHRI BHAJAN LAL: Not only in Bihar, but in the entire country there was a decline in the production of foodgrains during the year 1987-88. In order to meet the challenge many thrust programmes have been launched by the Central Government as a result of which the production of foodgrains has increased considerably during the year 1988-89. The hon. Member wants to know about the various programmes. For his information, I would like to tell him that the Government provides mini kits to the small and marginal farmers and a very nominal amount is charged for it. The Government allocated an amount of Rs. 88 lakh for rice, Rs. 77 lakh for wheat and Rs. 109 lakh for maize. Similarly, under the OPTP programme, about Rs. 15 crore for wheat, Rs. 4.25 lakh for pulses and Rs. 5 crore for maize were allocated. The allocations made so far come to about Rs.61 crore. Out of this, about Rs. 9.18 crore have been allocated to Bihar so that the people can be benefited there. This would not only help the people affected by floods but also help in increasing the production of foodgrains. So far as Bihar is concerned, they have achieved their target of production of foodgrains. I have already indicated in my reply that the maximum production in Bihar has been 109 lakh tonnes during 1985-86 but this year production has reached 133 lakh tones while their actual target was of 130 lakh tonnes. They have achieved their target and therefore I congratulate the farmers and the Government of Bihar. But I would like to reiterate that the Central Government has given full assistance.

SHRI RAM BHAGAT PASWAN: I congratulate the hon. Minister for providing financial assistance at the time of crisis. But my question is as to how many schemes

have been formulated to check floods and drought which are causing extensive damage to the foodgrains and how long would it take to implement these schemes?

SHRI BHAJAN LAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, as there is a full fledged discussion on floods after the question hour, I would only like to say that the Government is very much concerned about the flood situation. We want to control them completely but it would take some time because it requires lot of resources. More information would be given while concluding the discussion on floods.

SHRI RAMSWAROOP RAM. Mr. Speaker, Sir, the subject of crop insurance has been raised time and again in this august House. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Crop Insurance Scheme meant to protect the farmers from loss due to damages to their crops caused by floods and drought would be implemented. If the matter does not pertain to the Ministry of Agriculture, alone may I know whether the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Agriculture and making joint efforts form formulating a scheme in this regard

SHRI SPEAKER: This question is irrelevant and moreover, this question has already been raised.

SHRI RAMSWAROOP RAM. Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is a very important issue.

MR. SPEAKER: That does not mean that it should be raised during the course every item of agenda.

[English]

Agreement with Nepal on Trade and Transit Treaty

*256. **SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN:** Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any agreement has been reached with the Government of Nepal on the resumption of negotiations for the revision of the agreements on trade and transit which have lapsed;

(b) the particulars of the ad-hoc interim arrangements made for maintaining transit of foreign good to Nepal and for import of essential articles from India;

(c) whether the Government of Nepal have communicated any desire to negotiate a revision of Indo-Nepal Treaty of 1950; and

(d) whether Government of India have formally conveyed to Government of Nepal any instance of violation by Nepal of the terms of that treaty?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI V. P. NARASIMHA RAO): (a) to (d). A statement is given below.

STATEMENT

(a) On April 19, 1989, we had formally asked His Majesty's Government of Nepal to propose a full agenda and to specify the level and venue and suggest dates for talks. They responded finally on May 25, but with a very restricted agenda. Therefore, in my detailed letter of June 16, 1989, to the Nepalese Minister for Foreign Affairs we had proposed a comprehensive agenda covering all issues of mutual concern. The Nepalese side has suggested certain amendments to this agenda. These are being examined. It is our hope that comprehensive and productive negotiations can begin at an early date.

(b) Even under the present no-Treaty regime Nepal is being provided with adequate transit arrangements for its third country imports well in excess of what is called for under International Law or Convention. These include:

- Two transit points on the Indo-Nepal border—Raxaul and Jogbani—closest to Calcutta port which, before March 1989, used to carry 80-90% of Nepal's transit cargo.
- Separate transit routes to Bangla-