

taken into account. The environmental pollution is not only from industrial sources but from other sources also. Has this problem also been identified as one of the areas for technical assistance?

[Translation]

SHRI T. ANJAI AH : You have asked about the environmental pollution. We are conducting a survey in this regard.

[English]

SHRIMATI BIBHA GHOSH GOSWAMI : All the big cities are being surveyed. I think, that is what he says.

MR. SPEAKER : Yes.

SHRI SURESH KURUP : I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the dilapidated condition of the Amonia Plant of FACT at Alwayas has come to the notice of the hon. Minister. It is causing serious threat to the labourers and the people at Cochin.

[Translation]

SHRI T. ANJAI AH : It is under the purview of the State Government.

[English]

Losses to Potato Growers

*64. SHRI ANIL BASU† :

SHRI SATYAGOPAL MISRA : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware of the distress sale of potatoes in different parts of the country due to which the potato growers are facing huge losses;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) steps taken by Government to save the potato growers?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI BUTA SINGH) : (a) to (c) In consultation with the State Governments of Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh, which had reported fall in prices of potatoes,

market intervention operations were authorised by the Government at Rs. 50/- per quintal for fair average quality and the losses are to be shared equally by the Central and the State Governments. Later, at the specific request of the West Bengal Government, market intervention for potatoes in West Bengal was also authorised on the condition that Government of India will share losses equally with the West Bengal Government on the basis of a support price of Rs. 50/- per quintal as in other States. All the State Governments have been advised that they should avail themselves of the scheme of market intervention to help the farmers. These operations have had a salutary effect. The progress is closely monitored to protect the interest of farmers.

SHRI ANIL BASU : Mr. Speaker, Sir. I would like to know from the hon. Minister how much quantity of potatoes has been purchased so far State-wise and how much fund has been given to the State Governments by your Ministry.

The second part of my first question is, what is the result of the assurance given by you about the crash programme of exporting potatoes this year.

SHRI BUTA SINGH : Sir, the scheme is operating through National and State Cooperative Marketing Federations and primary cooperative marketing societies in States where the farmers are growing potatoes. In Uttar Pradesh, it started on the 19th of January, 1985. In Punjab, it started on the 18th of January, 1985. In Himachal Pradesh, it started on the 7th of February and in West Bengal, it was authorised for the implementation on the 12th of March.

As far as the quantity purchased is concerned, in Uttar Pradesh, 83,690 quintals have been bought through the State Cooperative Marketing Federation and the primary cooperative societies. PCF is operating in 11 districts. These are : Farrukhabad, Ghaziabad, Etawah, Allahabad, Agra, Mainpuri, Muzaffarnagar, Deoria, Jaunpur, Kanpur and Varanasi. 39 Purchase centres have been established in these districts. In addition NAFED is operating in the districts

of Bulandshahr, Rampur, Bareilly, Badaun and Aligarh through twenty centres.

Five districts, namely, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Hoshiarpur, Phagwara and Kapurthala are covered in Punjab. The NAFED is operating in the State through State MARKFED and the primary marketing societies. In Punjab, the quantity contracted by the cooperatives with farmers is 86,200 quintals and we have been able to pick up 38,924 quintals.

In Himachal Pradesh, the quantity picked up through the State Marketing Federation is 9,341 quintals.

In West Bengal, the quantity purchased is reported to be 8,000 quintals.

In total, the quantity purchased/contracted by the cooperatives in the aforesaid States exceeds 1.87 lakh quintals.

SHRI ANIL BASU : What is the result of an assurance given by you regarding crash programme of exporting potato this year ?

SHRI BUTA SINGH : At the moment, we are trying to help the farmers from making a distress sale. The crop is yet to come in full. It was in the initial stages that the prices started falling down. So, the question of export at this stage is not relevant to this question.

AN HON. MEMBER : Why did you give an assurance ?

SHRI BUTA SINGH : We will continue to help the farmers. If we are able to export, we will do it.

SHRI ANIL BASU : What should be the remunerative price of potato per quintal ? How do you arrive at a price of Rs. 50 per quintal this year ?

SHRI BUTA SINGH : As you are aware the Agricultural Prices Commission do not fix prices in respect of commodities which are highly perishable. They fix the prices for major crops. Even then, in consultation with the State Governments, the Government of India have worked out and arrived at a price in respect of commodities, like, potato, onion and other perishable commodities. It is not under the purview

of the Agricultural Prices Commission to fix the prices of these commodities. This is not truly speaking a remunerative price. It was only to help the farmers from making a distress sale.

SHRI SATYAGOPAL MISRA : Thanks to the potato growers of our country who have given us a very good crop this year. But the unfortunate part of it is that in the countryside they are not getting remunerative prices for their produce.

Another unfortunate part is that the Government has fixed the price for potato at a very low rate of Rs. 50 per quintal. I do not know how the Government has come to the conclusion that the price of potato should be Rs. 50 per quintal and they will purchase potato at a price of Rs. 50 per quintal which is far below the cost of production even.

Another thing is that the farmers cannot preserve potato for a long time because it is a perishable commodity. If they can preserve potato in cold storage, then they can get a higher price. I wish to know from the hon. Minister what steps have been taken by the Government so far to build cold storages or what are the proposals of the Government to build cold storages in the countryside to help the potato growers of our country to get a higher price.

SHRI BUTA SINGH : As I answer to the hon. Member's query earlier, in regard to the support price for the perishable commodities, like, potato and onion, there is no specific recommendation of the Agricultural Prices Commission.

During the last few years, the Government of India, Department of Agriculture & Cooperation have, at the request of the State Governments, agreed to market intervention for onions and potatoes. In these cases also, NAFED has been designated as the implementing agency.

As I have already said this system is evolved in full consultation with the State Governments and the losses incurred on these operations by the cooperatives are to be shared equally between the Centre and

the States. The approach is that there should be a standing arrangement in the market for providing support to the farmers.

The hon. Member wanted to know the rationale behind it. The hon. House will bear with me that at the time of arrival of potato in the mandi, the prices went down to the extent that in Uttar Pradesh it was Rs. 30/- per quintal, in Punjab it was Rs. 30-35/- a quintal and in Himachal Pradesh specially where the potato is seed potato, the price fell down to Rs. 35/. That is why, the Ministry of Agriculture in consultation with the respective states arrived at a figure which in true sense is not remunerative but, it will not I am sure let the farmer get into distress.

So, the figure arrived at was Rs. 50/- per quintal which has been applied to by the States including west Bengal.

About cold storage, I agree with the hon. Member that to promote cooperative marketing of potato in the country, cold storages have to be set up. There are 145 cooperative cold storages with a capacity of nearly 3 lakh tonnes. Under the World Bank Programme, NCDC is assisting setting up of 100 cold storages in the potato growing States of Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, West Bengal and Bihar. Under this Scheme, 12 cold storages with a capacity of 4,000 tonnes each, have already been set up and another 88 are under various stages of construction. I have issued instructions to see that these 88 cold storages are expedited so that the farmers are not made to suffer these losses for want of storage.

MR. SPEAKER : I would like to observe that you are thinking far ahead. Why don't we get something done about remunerative prices for these commodities as well because they are as agricultural commodities as any other commodities. Certainly there should be one thing more. We should be prepared fully before the crop comes on. Everything should be geared up to meet the exigencies and nothing should be left undone. You will take these steps in future.

SHRI BUTA SINGH : I would also like to have your appreciation that for the first time the Government has given standing

instructions to all the State Governments that in future they need not wait for directions from the Centre. They should automatically come into play in the mandis, if a particular crop is falling down. We have already issued this instruction. We need not have revision every year. The Governments are now authorised to come and enter the markets to support farmers in case the commodity is falling down in price. That is the suggestion given by us.

(Interruptions)

SHRI D. B. PATIL : I would like to ask the hon. Minister how many Centres have been started State-wise. Is it a fact that the number of Centres started is quite insufficient ?

SHRI BUTA SINGH : I have already given the details about the districts and the Centres opened in all the major potato growing States. If the hon. Member wants, I have a detailed information with me. It will take long time to read all this.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DAS MUNSHI : In West Bengal, all the cold storages are closed for the last eight months because of the strike launched by political parties in the State resulting in the price falling down and the farmers suffering.

Will the hon. Minister advise the State Government to adequately compensate the farmers ?

(Interruptions)

PROF. K. K. TEWARY : It is anti-people Government.

SHRI P. KOLANDAIVELU : He cannot make an allegation against the State Government.

(Interruptions)

SHRI P. KOLANDAIVELU : He cannot answer for them. He is making an allegation against the State Government.

MR. SPEAKER : What was the question ? Let me decide it. I will see what is the question ? What was your question, Mr. Priya Ranjan Dass Munshi ?

SHRI PRIYA RAJAN DAS MUNSHI : My question was this that the potatoes have to be preserved in cold storage, and if the cold storage remains closed for eight months because of strike with the patronage of the State Government and the Party, then the farmers suffer. I want to know whether the Minister will inquire into the matter and advise the State Government to compensate the farmers suitably.

MR. SPEAKER : The only question that the Minister can answer is whether the farmers can be compensated or not. He cannot conduct an inquiry.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : I suggest that 'the State Government' be expunged. That will solve the problem.

SHRI BUTA SINGH : That is for you, Sir, to decide whether you expunge it or put it in the cold storage. I cannot help it. About that part that farmers are suffering, we have already extended purchase of potato if it falls below the floor price. But the information given by the hon. Member will have to be checked. I will check up the information and we will take appropriate action.

MR. SPEAKER : Next Question. Dr. Kalpana Devi.

DR T. KALPANA DEVI : Question No. 65.

SHRI NISSANKARA RAO VENKATARATNAM : Sir, I suggest that Question No. 79 may also be clubbed with Question No. 65.

MR. SPEAKER : The hon. Member wants Qn. No. 79 to be clubbed with Qn.

No. 65. Has the Minister any objection to this ?

THE MINISTER OF WORKS AND HOUSING (SHRI ABDUL GHAFOOR) : No.

MR. SPEAKER : Qns. 65 and 79 will be taken up together. We have put them on the same bogey. The Minister will read the replies to both of them.

Supply of Water to Problem Villages

***65. DR. T KALPANA DEVI :** Will the Minister of WORKS AND HO' SING be pleased to state :

(a) whether water and sanitation problems are an uphill task due to limited resources, as reflected in a UNDP-assisted survey conducted in the country; and

(b) if so, the present position and plans concerning supply of water to problem villages and conversion of dry latrines into water-seal laterines with particular reference to Andhra Pradesh vis-a-vis other States ?

THE MINISTER OF WORKS AND HOUSING (SHRI ABDUL GHAFOOR) : (a) The solution of water and sanitation problem at reasonable level of satisfaction would require mustering of resources and efforts of a colossal magnitude. While determining outlays and fixing targets for this sector, the time frame and objectives of International Water Supply and Sanitation Decade (1981-1990) are being kept in view.

(b) The present position and plans regarding water supply, sanitation and supply of water to problem villages are contained in the statements A and B placed on the Table of the House.

Statement 'A'

Statement showing the population-wise coverage in water supply and sanitation sector as on 31.3.81, the coverage expected by 31.3.85 and the targets for the Decade for the country as a whole and Andhra Pradesh

Sub-sector	Covered as on 31-3-81	Expected to be covered by 31-3-1985	To be covered by 1991
Rural water supply	31.0%	53.9%	100%
Urban Water supply	77.0%	81.1%	100%
Rural sanitation	0.5%	0.95%	25%
Urban sanitation	27.0%	33.0%	80%