

14.15 hrs.

STATEMENT RE. WHEAT SUPPLIES
FROM U.S.A. UNDER PL 480

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri C. Subramaniam): During my visit to Rome during November, 1965. I had discussions with Mr. Orville Freeman, Secretary of the Department of Agriculture of U.S.A. in regard to the present serious food situation, and our programmes for agricultural development. The US Administration and President have appreciated the difficult food situation facing India.

I am happy to announce that the Government of the United States have informed the Government of India that preliminary to the finalisation of further arrangements to meet the current food situation, 1.5 million tonnes of wheat will be made immediately available and that funds for this purpose are being provided under PL-480 Agreement. The United States Administration has also announced a loan of \$50 million for the purchase of fertilisers and an Agreement in respect of this loan will be shortly concluded. I would like to express on behalf of the Government of India appreciation of this generous gesture of the United States Administration. I would like to specially express my thanks on behalf of the Government of India to President Johnson for the personal interest taken by him towards meeting the immediate as well as the long-range food requirements of the country and assisting in our efforts to attain self-sufficiency.

Shri S. M. Banerjee (Kanpur): We have tabled Calling Attention Notices on this subject; we may be permitted to put questions.

Shri Indrajit Gupta (Calcutta South West): May we ask some questions, Sir? We have tabled Calling Attention Notices also.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: One question each. Shri Indrajit Gupta.

Shri Indrajit Gupta: In the concluding part of the statement just now made by the hon. Minister, he gives thanks for both the short-term and the long-term assurances or promises that we have received. In the beginning of the statement he said that the arrangement which has just been made is a preliminary thing to some long-term agreement. These two things seem to be contradictory to each other. I would like to know, up to date, what long-term agreement have they entered into, that is, after the hostilities; and secondly, in the talks with Mr. Freeman at Rome, did he elucidate anything about the reported statement that for future long-term supplies we will have to pay in dollars for at least a part of the PL-480 supplies?

Shri C. Subramaniam: This was not mentioned at all—about the dollar payment, and this arrangement also does not contemplate any dollar payment. I already stated that these 1.5 million tonnes are preliminary to the finalisation of further arrangements to meet the current food situation. I have stated that this is only a preliminary allotment prior to further long-term arrangements which I hope will be entered into in course of time.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: May I know whether it has been brought to the notice of the hon. Minister that Shri Kamraj, the President of the Congress, in his statement has said that he prefers starvation in the country than to get wheat from America? That is their policy—wheat to India and arms to Pakistan. I want to know whether it has been brought to the notice of the hon. Minister and, if so, whether the ruling party feels that the statement issued by Shri Kamraj is wrong or that their policy is wrong?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Shri Nath Pai.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: Sir, I want to know whether it has been brought to his notice. Let him reply. Shri Kamraj is the Congress President.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The Minister has made a statement.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: He must reply to the first portion of my question.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Shri Nath Pai.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: Under what rule do you disallow it, Sir?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: It does not arise out of this.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: Let him reply to my first question. We are concerned with national humiliation. Even the Congress Benches feel the national humiliation. He is prepared to reply, Sir.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Shri Nath Pai.

Shri Nath Pai (Rajapur): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, the Minister must be surely aware of the annoying uncertainty of the exact shortfall and deficit of foodgrains. Whereas he has been telling the House his own estimates, there is another Ministry, equally competent to speak about the subject and perhaps the final authority, which has been, systematically, daily, regularly, through leakages, through briefs, estimating that the shortfall in the country—or in my own State,—the shortfall this year may be anything between 60 to 80 per cent as in your State—we know. Is he in a position today to state the estimated real deficit, and does he realise the danger to the country, as he claims that the shortfall is dangerous, and there is also another Ministry which, for reasons unknown to us, claims that the shortfall is an exaggerated one? Where do we stand in the matter and how are we going to meet the situation in the matter of the supply of foodgrains?

Shri C. Subramaniam: If the hon. Member is referring to the Finance

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Minister's statement, I might point out that he has only said that we had a record crop last year and therefore it is likely that some stocks may be lying; I also agree there, and that is how we are getting on now. Otherwise, the situation would have become difficult. But this would carry us only up to January—February. Therefore, I anticipate a critical situation would arise after February. So, there is absolutely no contradiction between the two. The Finance Minister emphasised the aspect that in 1964-65, the production was a bumper one and therefore there would be a carry-over stock. That is agreed, and that is why we have not still entered a critical situation. Otherwise, we would have already entered a critical situation.

Shri Nath Pai: Sir, this is a serious situation. I do not deny, and he knows it and he may have his own reasons not to wash dirty linen in the House, as between one Ministry and another. I know his predicament and difficulty. But another Ministry does go on saying—and it is on record, Mr. Deputy-Speaker, please hear me—that the claim of a shortfall is an exaggerated claim, a vastly exaggerated claim: that the State Chief Ministers and the State Governments are exaggerating the quantum of deficit and the shortfall.

Is he in a position to tell us what really is the shortfall this year?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The hon. member was not here when he made the statement.

Shri Nath Pai: I was not in my seat, but I was listening very carefully. You are a fellow-sufferer like me. Your State is a deficit State this year.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: He has said, they are negotiating a long-term arrangement.

श्री नथ् पियवे : क्या मंत्री महोदय बतला सकते हैं कि यह जो दीर्घकालीन

[श्री मधु लिमये]

समझौता होगा उसके पहले यह जो अनाज दिया जा रहा है इसका दाम कितना रुपये में चुकाना पड़ेगा और कितना विदेशी मुद्रा में या डालर में चुकाना पड़ेगा ? (व्यवधान)
... इसका जवाब नहीं आया ।

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: They are going to enter into a long-term agreement. It is a matter for negotiation.

Shri Bade (Khargone): We are happy to learn that America is going to give 1.5 million tonnes of wheat to India and it is part and parcel of a long-term agreement. Has America attached any string to the agreement that these 1.5 million tonnes are given to India simply because of the Tashkent talks between India and Pakistan? Is it because of that that they have hurried to supply this or have they given it without any condition or string?

Shri C. Subramaniam: There is absolutely no condition attached to this.

Shri Sivamurthi Swamy (Koppal): After the arrival of these foodgrains, will the Central Government be in a position to supply Mysore the target demand of 9 lakh tonnes made by the Chief Minister?

Shri C. Subramaniam: We will try to meet the demands of all the State Governments taking into account the availability.

Shri K. N. Tiwary (Bagaha): We find from the reports in the Press that the minister would be going to America for discussion about fertilisers and other things. Keeping in view the long-term needs of our country, is he going to negotiate about the fertiliser plants also that are to be established?

Shri C. Subramaniam: I have also seen the Press report. But officially, I have not heard anything about my visit.

14.23 hrs.

DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 193 RE.
CLOSURE OF TEXTILE MILLS
ETC.—contd.

Shri Sonavane (Pandharpur): Sir, I am very sorry to say that in Maharashtra 7 mills are being closed. In my district of Sholapur two mills closed. One of them is Rajen Textiles Mills (B) Ltd. Barsi and another is Sholapur Spinning and Weaving Mills Co., Ltd., Sholapur. This mill has thrown out of employment 3643 workers and the closure is on account of financial difficulties. There is an asterisk saying that this mill is to be scrapped. Since 1964 no effort was being made to restart the mills. Several committees were appointed and they had gone into the working of these mills. The debts were increasing against the owner Shri Gokuldas Morarka. But government was sitting with both hands folded. Their inaction was complete. There are hunger-strikes to restart the mill.

The ministry says that "out of 22 mills, 10 mills involving 2.65 lakh spindles and 3373 looms have been recommended to be scrapped. Thus, the problem is mostly confined to 12 mills." They simply say they are to be scrapped and they do not suggest any solution. The labourers of these mills are out of employment. They have gone on hunger-strikes till death. Even now the strikers are sitting there. Therefore, it is a case of inaction of the government in not taking over the mills under section 16 or 18. They have not done anything. They have allowed the government debt to increase. I do not know how they are going to recover that amount from Shri Gokuldas Morarka, who is heavily indebted to the government. No action has been taken. This is the way how our Industry Ministry is working. They allow the workers to suffer and the cloth production to go down. They simply say, this is a problem confined mostly to 12 mills. The Maharashtra Government has done some work. But the Centre should have been more