

17.57 hrs.

DEMANDS FOR GRANTS—*contd.*

Ministry of Food, Agriculture, Community Development and Co-operation
contd.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Shri Shinde may continue his speech.

Shri Shinde: Sir, it is really a matter of pride for all of us that once we were an importing country—for instance, during the first Plan we imported sugar for 4 years—but now instead of being an importing country, we have become a regular exporter. Hon. members will be happy to know that during the last 5 years we have earned foreign exchange to the tune of about Rs. 90 crores, which is badly needed for the development of our country. All of us should be proud of this.

Shri R. S. Pandey: We have earned this foreign exchange at the cost of how much loss?

Shri Shinde: The loss has been there to the extent of about Rs. 40 to 45 crores. The foreign exchange we have earned is about Rs. 90 crores.

The scheme for export of sugar cannot be based on an 'off and on' basis according to our convenience, dependent upon the surplus available for export and when the international prices are high. The importing countries are highly developed and prefer to import from such countries which are regular and dependable suppliers. Further, sales for export can be made only at international prices in competition with the other countries. This question was also examined by the Sen Commission. This is what they have said about our export policy:

"If there was a choice for the country whether to produce sugarcane or rice from the same acre of land, unbalanced, it would be advantageous to grow sugarcane and export sugar manufactured from there and use the

foreign exchange earned to import rice. The foreign exchange receipts from such export of sugar, even at current low prices in the international market, would be higher than the import cost of equivalent quantity of rice as could be produced within the country from the same acre of land."

This shows, Sir, even taking into consideration the wider interests of our national economy, the sugar exports are very important from the point of view of national interest.

18 hrs.

Hon. Members have raised the issues about arrears of sugar cane prices, accumulation of stocks in the factories and the financial problems of sugar factories. This matter was taken up by this Ministry with the Ministry of Finance as well as with the Reserve Bank. The Reserve Bank has recently issued a circular to all the Scheduled Banks stating that as far as possible the requirements of sugar factories may be looked after and they may be accommodated to the extent possible.

It is true that this year the arrears of sugarcane prices have piled up very much. For example, if we compare the figures with that of the previous years, we find that the position this year is worse. Arrears of sugarcane prices have gone up to Rs. 23.4 crores. During 1963-64, on 15th March, 1964 the arrears were Rs. 12.9 crores and in 1964-65 on the same day the arrears were Rs. 18.7 crores. As I have already submitted, as a result of the instructions issued by the Reserve Bank the position might ease to a great extent. But I might say at this stage that there are certain sugar factory owners in the country who are in the habit of delaying payment to the sugarcane growers. I might request them in their own interest that they should not avoid regular payments to sugarcane growers because ultimately the prosperity of the sugar industry depends on the development of sugar-

[Shri Shinde]

cane and the efforts of the cane growers.

I might refer briefly to the Kanpur sugar institute which is doing very good work for training our engineers and chemists. In fact, there is no dearth of talent in our country as such. If our engineers and chemists get proper opportunities they can prove their talent and merit. For instance, I can say from my own personal experience, when the question of undertaking the manufacture of raw sugar came up doubts were expressed that we may not be in a position to manufacture raw sugar according to international standards and specifications. But the year we undertook the manufacture of raw sugar we found that the quality of our sugar was quite in keeping with international standards. I wish to pay my tribute to the engineers and chemists who are working in the sugar industry. Attempts are being made to introduce diffusion process in the sugar industry in India. It may help in improving the efficiency of our sugar industry. I wish all success to our engineers and chemists in India and I hope they would succeed in introducing diffusion process as early as possible.

Sir, I have no time to give a long speech on community development, but I wish to make a few observations. There is a feeling in the House as well as outside that everything is not well with the community development movement, with the community development blocks. I share the concern of the House and I would like to say that we are trying to locate the mistakes, we are trying to find out the weaknesses and we shall try to rectify the position to the extent possible.

As far *panchayati raj* is concerned, I might say that a very good development has taken place.

Shri D. C. Sharma: Sir, it is past 6.00. This is a very important subject and the whole House should hear the important points that the

Minister is making. He may continue tomorrow.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: He is going out today. Let him conclude.

Shri Shinde: As far as *panchayati raj* is concerned, when the Third Plan started we had introduced the *panchayati raj* system in a very few States. At that time it was visualized that *Panchayati Raj* may be extended to other States. Now, except the States of Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Nagaland, all the States are covered by *Panchayati Raj* and in some of the States it is doing very well. I might cite the example of Gujarat, Maharashtra or Madras.

I have no time to deal with some other matters. But I wish to say a few words about the work done by Community Development. It may be noted that the increased consumption of improved seeds, fertilizers and pesticides and the like are not a little due to the efforts of the Extension Agency. The promotional role of Community Development has secured notable results in other areas of development also; for instance, about 1 lakh drinking water wells have been constructed in rural areas with sizable public contribution since the inception of the programme. Some 3 lakhs kilometres of approach roads have been laid. The establishment of 4,000 primary health centres has effectively helped in extending medical facilities to the rural areas. Special emphasis has also been paid to adult education and adult literacy.

With a view to ensure adequate representation of tribals in the extension staff in Tribal Development Blocks, the Centre has decided that 75 per cent of posts of village-level workers and a substantial portion of the posts of block development officers in the Tribal Development Blocks should be from the tribal community itself. Though the Tribal Development Blocks are the operative responsibility of the Ministry of Social Security, as far as the functioning of

the blocks is concerned, we come into the picture to a certain extent.

I may say for the information of the House that the Tribal Development Block Programmes are sought to be made more intensified in character than undertaken in our normal Community Development blocks. The intensification is brought about in two stages. Firstly, the extra provision of Rs. 10 lakhs in the Stage I phase and Rs. 5 lakhs in Stage II phase is made out of the special provision for backward classes, operated by the Department of Social Welfare, besides the normal schematic provision of Rs. 12 lakhs and Rs. 5 lakhs respectively for the two stages. Secondly, the average population coverage in Tribal Development Blocks is 25,000 only as against 68,000 in Community Development blocks. As recommended by the last Annual Conference of Community Development Ministers, State Governments were requested to ensure that at least 75 per cent of the funds available under the head "Economic Development" in the Tribal Development Blocks be earmarked for schemes for exclusive benefits of the Tribals. This recommendation is in the process of implementation by the States.

Then I might refer to a small but very important item of Community Development. As a part of Community

Development we have installed about 2 lakhs community listening sets in villages. During the Indo-Pakistan conflict it was found that hundreds of villagers used to throng these community listening sets and they have become so popular. As far as mass education is concerned, they have proved their utility.

Then, there are two other important programmes which are undertaken by the Community Development Department, namely, Rural Manpower Programme and the Local Development Works Programme. In these programmes also we are trying to extend help to the various States and the experience so far tells us that the response is good. We are getting more and more demands from various State Governments to see that the programme is extended to other areas. This shows that this programme has become more and more popular.

In the end I would like to say that I hope with the co-operation of the hon. Members and the hon. House it may be possible to implement the various programmes of the Ministry of Community Development.

18.08 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Wednesday, April 20, 1966/Chaitra 30, 1888 (Saka).
