

LOK SABHA DEBATES

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LOK SABHA

Monday, February 26, 1979/Phalgun
7, 1900 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the
Clock.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: Q. No. 81 Shri Arivind Bala Pajnor. He is not here.

श्री अरविंद बलपंजोर सिंह : आपको जो पावर्ज मिली हुई हैं उनके मुताबिक आप इस सवाल को एलाउ करें। जो आपके अखत्यार हैं उनके मुताबिक आप इस सवाल को एलाउ करें। श्रृंगर केन का लाखों करोड़ों रुपया लोगों का बकाया आज भी है जो उनको भदा नहीं हो रहा है।

MR. SPEAKER: Q. No. 82 Shri Durga Chand. He is not here. Shri Chaudhary Ram Gopal Singh. He is not here. Then Q. No. 83 Shri Sachindra Lal Singha. He is also not here. Then Q. No. 84 Shri Pius Tirkey. He is also not here. Then Q. No. 85.

Agrarian Reforms and Rural Development

*85. SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION be pleased to state the steps taken by Government to give a fillip to agrarian reforms and programmes of rural development in the country?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION (SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA): In agrarian re-
4175 LS-1.

form, Government have been trying to accelerate implementation of ceiling Laws and ensure adequate relief for cultivating tenants. Greater attention has also been paid to the programme of consolidation of holdings. They have formulated a comprehensive Integrated Rural Development Plan with a view to promoting fuller employment and raising the income level in rural areas. In addition, a 'food for work' programme has been launched with a view to generating additional employment and creating durable community assets.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: Mr. Speaker, Sir, he has admitted and the Government have admitted that there were 68.60 lakh acres of estimated surplus land in the country out of which 44.71 acres of land have been declared as surplus, but the area taken possession is only about 26 lakh acres and that distributed only 15 lakh acres. Now the area distributed so far is less than 25 per cent of the total area estimated as surplus; and this was also the position about a year ago. No improvement has been made. It is a very serious position. It is no good saying that steps have been taken. In this very serious situation, now what immediate, effective and specific steps have been taken by the Government?

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA: It is not correct to say that no action is being taken and no land is being distributed. I will give figures for 1977-78 and upto December 1978. In 1977-78, the area distributed was 37626 acres of Land.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Out of how much?

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA: This was the area given possession of; and area distributed this year is 192831 acres. A lot of effort is being made to distribute area that is becoming available. Regarding the other area, litigation is pending in the court. That is why in most of the cases, it has not been possible to distribute that area. We are taking up the matter with the State Government to expedite the matter.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: The figures as mentioned were on the basis of the letter written by the Prime Minister. The figures have been given as per the report of the letter written by the Prime Minister to Chief Ministers and its contents were reported on 16th February in several newspapers including the *Times of India*. So, we do not know which are actually the figures they are mentioning. The main reason which has been attributed for this very lack of implementation of land reforms is lack of political will. Now the leaders of the Government at present, have specifically characterised the land reforms legislation as populist measure of the previous Government, that is the word that has been used.

MR. SPEAKER: Kindly come to the question.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: In the various States—in the note of the Prime Minister himself...—nothing has been distributed as per a report in the *'Statesman'* in January. Gujarat is the only State which has not distributed a single acre of land under its Ceiling Act; and as far as the Minister is concerned, Punjab Government is one of the champions of the vested interests of the landlords.

MR. SPEAKER: Are you converting it into a speech?

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: The question is this. The statement was issued by the Prime Minister of course, on behalf of the Government that these policies were populist measures of the

previous Government. Does Government maintain this position that land reforms are populist measures?

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA: There is no question of being a populist measure. Land reforms are land reforms and are meant for improving the condition of land and we have been taking measures in this regard. It is wrong to say that we have not been taking measures for land reforms or Janata Party is not inclined to want land reforms. Prime Minister has been writing letters. It means he has been asking to expedite the land reforms and expedite distribution of land wherever land is available.

SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOO-WALIA: The hon. member has made a baseless attack....

MR. SPEAKER: No, no, it is not a debate. It is the difficulty with all the questioners....

SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOO-WALIA: About Punjab, I will humbly request the hon. Minister, will he be kind enough to explain to the House—the steps being taken by the Punjab Government in regard to the land reforms.

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA: So far as Punjab is concerned these measures were adopted in 1953 when the first Land Reforms Act was brought in. Since then land has been acquired and distributed. Whenever land was available it was being distributed. After this new legislation in 1972, very little land was available as surplus. So, there has not been much distribution. But still some lands that were available have been distributed. I may mention that 297 acres of land were distributed last year.

SHRI HITENDRA DESAI: Will the Government ensure that the States strictly adhere to the objectives of land reforms? We find, even in Gujarat not

a single acre has been distributed. Some States want to thwart the objectives of land reforms.

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA: In Gujarat 50,000 acres were declared surplus. Out of that 4,095 acres were taken possession of. But they have set up a Commission to go into the whole system of land reforms because they had earlier passed legislation in which all the tenants were given all the rights of the land. Gujarat was one of the first States where it was done on large scale. They are examining it. We have taken it up with the State Government. As soon as their report is available, further action will be taken.

SHRI HITENDRA DESAI: Will they adhere to the national objective?

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA: They are adhering to the national objective.

SHRI SHAMBHU NATH CHATURVEDI: Are the ceiling limits uniform all over the country or do they vary from State to State?

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA: Guidelines were issued by the Government of India in 1973. These were sent to the State Governments. The State Governments have passed legislation and the legislation in various States differs in so far as the ceiling of the land is concerned.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: I would like the hon. Minister to tell us:

(a) When the Janata Party came in power, what was the total surplus land available in the country?

(b) How much land was distributed?

(c) How many tenants got actual possession of the so-called distributed land?

Otherwise you tell us that land has been distributed. Actual possession has not been got by the tenants. Is there any mechanism for the Govern-

ment to find out whether the land distributed is taken possession of by the tenants and can you give figures of that?

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA: We collect figures from the State Governments. Whenever there is a question, we write to the State Governments and we receive figures from them. The area taken possession of by the various governments up till now is 23,47,407 acres, and the total area distributed is 16,07,136 acres and the performance of the Janata Government....

(Interruptions)

SHRI VASANT SATHE: My question is out of 16 lakhs acres distributed, how much is in possession of the tenants to whom it has been distributed?

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA: For that, Sir, probably a specific question is needed so that I can find out from each of the States which tenant or landless person is in possession. So far as the performance of the Janata Government is concerned, I have mentioned that in 1977-78, 3,07,626 acres of land were distributed amongst 2,06,378 beneficiaries. Again, from March to December 1978, 1,92,831 acres were distributed amongst 96,550 beneficiaries.

MR. SPEAKER: Question No. 86.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: He has not answered my question. Kindly give me protection.

MR. SPEAKER: What is the protection?

SHRI VASANT SATHE: I had first asked about the 16 lakh acres distributed. Three lakhs during the year, one lakh more..... (Interruptions). Out of the 16 lakhs acres, how much has gone into the possession of the tenants?

MR. SPEAKER: He says he wants notice. (Interruptions). He has not got the figure, he said. Now, question No. 86.