

**Food Crisis in West Bengal**

\*118. SHRI NARAYAN CHOU-BEY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the West Bengal is heading for its worst food crisis in five years;

(b) whether this situation has been brought to the Union Government's attention by the State Government; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and what steps are being taken by the Government to solve the situation?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (RAO BIRENDRA SINGH): (a) to (c). The Government have received reports about loss of production in West Bengal owing to drought conditions in September-October, 1981 and the attack of pests in some districts, followed by cyclones. The State Government have accordingly demanded increase in their monthly allocations of wheat and rice. They have also complained about shortfall in supplies in some of the areas.

Steps taken by the Government of India to meet the situation include:—

- (i) Sanction of a ceiling of expenditure of Rs. 1,817.87 lakhs during 1981-82 and Rs. 757.50 lakhs during 1982-83, for relief and rehabilitation of the people affected and for repair and restoration of public properties damaged by the cyclone, on the basis of a report submitted by a Central Team which visited the State from January 6, to January 8, 1982.

(ii) Of all the States West Bengal is being given the highest allocation of foodgrains from the Central Pool, comprising about 17% of the total allocations made throughout the country. The rice allocation of 1.3 lakh tonnes per month and wheat allocation of 95,000 tonnes per month are the highest of all the States both in respect of rice and wheat. The high allocations made for West Bengal should be able to meet the needs of West Bengal.

(iii) Adequate stocks of foodgrains have been kept in West Bengal. Movement of foodgrains in West Bengal has been stepped up during December, 1981 and January, 1982. Also, difficulties in respect of internal movement in West Bengal have been sorted out, so that supplies are available in the distribution points.

**Marketing and Sale of Imported Edible Oil**

\*119. SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken a decision to market and sell, for the first time, imported edible oils;

(b) whether this is expected to ease the pressure on the Vanaspati Industry; and

(c) if so, whether this is on an experimental basis or on a permanent basis?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (RAO BIRENDRA SINGH): (a) to (c). Imported edible oils are being supplied to the State Government for issue to consumers through the