

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

public distribution system for the last 5 years. It is proposed this year to supplement this effort by marketing limited quantities of imported edible oils in small consumer packs on an experimental basis. The sale is being organised by M/s. Ganesh Flour Mills Co. Ltd., a company, under Government of India management through Super Bazars and Co-operative Societies. This is expected to improve availability of edible oils packed in tins to the consumers at reasonable prices.

Programmes of Preserving and Replanting of Trees

*120. SHRI CAITTA MAHATA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the programme of preserving and replanting of trees is being implemented by all the States in the country ;

(b) if so, the details thereof ; and

(c) if not, the name of those States which are not implementing this programme and what steps Government propose to take to ensure that the programme is implemented properly ?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (RAO BIRENDRA SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) For preserving the trees in the forests, the States/ UTs have provided an amount of Rs. 1981.23 lakhs during the Sixth Five Year Plan for employing protective staff and for providing them with vehicles and equipment like arms, walky-talkies etc. Mobile squads are also set up for this purpose. Protection of forests is the normal duty of the Forest Departments and is carried out as a non-plan activity also.

As regards replanting programme, plantations over 21.28 lakh ha. have been raised upto the year 1979-80 in the forest areas in the country. A further area of 6.24 lakh ha. is proposed to be planted during the Sixth Plan with an outlay of Rs. 100.31 crores. In addition, under the Social Forestry programme an area of 14.29 lakh ha. has been planted upto 1979-80 and it is proposed to plant 15.23 lakhs ha. during the Sixth Plan with an outlay of Rs. 351.88 crores.

(c) Question does not arise.

Amendment to Land Ceiling Act

*121. SHRI D.M. PUTTE GOWDA :

SHRI M. V. CHANDRASHEKARA MURTHY ;

Will the Minister of WORKS AND HOUSING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a proposal to amend the Urban Land (Ceiling and Regulation) Act, 1976;

(b) if so, details thereof ;

(c) what are the changes likely to be made ; and

(d) how it is proposed to arrest the unwarranted increase in and prices ?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND WORKS AND HOUSING (SHRI BHISHMA NARAIN SINGH) : (a) to (c). The Government of India is actively considering the question of amendments to the Urban Land (Ceiling and Regulation) Act, 1976. It is not in public interest to discuss the details at this stage,