

# LOK SABHA DEBATES

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## LOK SABHA

Monday, April 27, 1981/Vaisakha 7,  
1903 (SAKA)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the  
Clock

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER in the Chair]

### ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

#### Vacant Post of Chairman, FCI

\*948. SHRI JANARDHANA  
POOJARY:

SHRI KEYUR BHUSHAN:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the post of Chairman, Food Corporation of India has been lying vacant for more than a year;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) when the post is likely to be filled?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN  
THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE  
AND RURAL RECONSTRUCTION  
(SHRI R. V. SWAMINATHAN):

(a) The office of Chairman, Food Corporation of India has been vacant since 13th June, 1980.

(b) and (c). The matter relating to appointment of Chairman, Food Corporation of India, is under active consideration of the Government.

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY:

Sir, the Food Corporation of India was established to ensure a fair price to the growers and also to make

available foodgrains to the consumers at reasonable prices and it has got another role also to encourage production through inputs. It has also to conduct research to boost production and provide storage facilities. As you know, it has also got a duty to eliminate the middleman. But unfortunately, now-a-days the efficiency of the Food Corporation of India has gone down and the Food Corporation of India is not even entering the market in time and thereby the growers are forced to sell their produce at a lower price. In view of all these things, may I know from the hon. Minister when the Chairman for the Food Corporation of India is going to be appointed and why the delay has been caused? What are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL RECONSTRUCTION AND IRRIGATION AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (RAO BIRENDRA SINGH): Sir, it is not true that the Food Corporation of India's work has suffered on account of the absence of a Chairman for some months. We are taking action to find a suitable person for the chairmanship. It is also not true that the Food Corporation of India could not enter the market in time and the prices, therefore, slumped and this was also attributable to there being no Chairman for the Corporation. The Food Corporation of India does not conduct any research in the field of agriculture, nor has it anything particular to do with the supply of inputs for agriculture (Interruptions). It has to do something with the procurement and distribution on the orders of the Government and that has been taking place.

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY:  
Sir, my question has not been answered. My question is: When is the

Chairman going to be appointed? It has been stated that it is under active consideration. How long will this consideration go on or continue?

**RAO BIRENDRA SINGH:** We shall appoint a Chairman as soon as possible.

**SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY:** It has been criticised by many people that the Food Corporation of India has become.

**MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Why can't you yourself take the responsibility?

**SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY:** It has become a white elephant. It has been criticised as a lethargic agent. The efficiency of the Food Corporation of India has gone down to such an extent that all the people, particularly people from South India.

**MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I belong to the whole of India.

**SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY:** They are not satisfied with the functioning of the Food Corporation of India. It has been alleged that the Food Corporation of India is functioning in league with the middleman. That is an allegation. Is the Government of India going to appoint a Committee to trim the Food Corporation of India to suggest ways and means in such a manner that its efficiency does not come down and the standard of their conduct, not only of their functioning but also the conduct of employees, is maintained?

**RAO BIRENDRA SINGH:** What the hon. Member has expressed is his personal opinion. I do not agree with him. But I have taken note of the suggestions that he has given.

**SHRI R. L. BHATIA:** Huge stocks of paddy have been lying with the Food Corporation of India. They have now become rotten. Even today you would not be able to get more than 50 per cent grain out of them.

Similarly, there is a great shortage of wheat in their stocks. If the Minister appoints an enquiry and goes into the matter, he will find that whatever figures he has stated in the House are not true because there is a great deterioration of stocks and there is great pilferage. It is because of this fact that no responsible man is coming forward to become the Chairman of the Corporation. Will he enlighten us?

**RAO BIRENDRA SINGH:** It is not that nobody is coming forward. We are looking for a suitable person. This is not the first time that the Chairman has not been appointed for a few months. Even earlier, there have been periods of five months and upto seven months when the Chairman could not be appointed and the work had been carried on by the Managing Director. If there are any specific complaints which can be brought by the hon. Member to my notice about deterioration in paddy stocks and the damage, I will certainly hold an enquiry.

**PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE:** Before I put my supplementary, I want to draw your attention to a very dangerous statement made by the hon. Minister. He said that though the post had been lying vacant for one year, the work of the Food Corporation of India had not suffered. If the Ministers go on making such a statement, the post of Chairman of various Departments will become infructuous and there will be no need at all for them. I would, therefore, very much request that such statements should not be made at least on the floor of the House. My submission is that today, there are problems of the growers who do not get remunerative price. There is also faulty public distribution system because adequate stocks are not available. I would like to draw his attention to the fact that industrial relations with the staff of the Food Corporation of India are also not very good. In view of this, is it not the duty of the Head of the organisation like the Chairman of the

Food Corporation of India to give a thrust and dynamism to the organisation to monitor the functioning of the organisation and, therefore, will not the absence of the Chairman for such an organisation create a big lacuna in monitoring and giving thrust to the organisation? In view of that, will he expedite the matter regarding the appointment of a Chairman for the FCI?

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: I agree with the last part of the hon. member's suggestion that we shall try to expedite the decision. I would still reiterate that just because we have not been able to appoint a Chairman for some months, the work has not suffered. It only means that some officers have to do harder work and the Government has to be more vigilant.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: He is not replying to the earlier part of my question. Is it not a fact that there are problems with regard to giving remunerative prices to the growers, that industrial relations in the FCI are bad and, as a result of that, the public distribution system is not able to work as satisfactorily as we want it to work?

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: The fixing of remunerative prices is not the responsibility of the FCI. The Prices are fixed by the Government. The FCI only pays according to the decision taken by the Government. It has nothing to do with that. We have only to arrange for purchases in the market according to the policy of the Government. With regard to industrial relations, there are disputes and problems in all undertakings and even in private organisations. Whenever such problems arise, it is not only the Chairman who is able to settle these problems but the whole Government comes in. The Government looks after all such problems in consultation with other Ministries involved as well as the staff of the Food Corporation of India.

श्री प्रताप चामु शर्मा: पिछले कई वर्षों के अनुभव से यह देखने में आया है कि भारतीय खाद्य निगम की व्यवस्था और संचालन में सन्तोषप्रद ढंग से काम नहीं हो पाया है। मैं मंत्री महोदय से जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या सरकार देश के इस महत्वपूर्ण निगम को भारतीय जीवन बीमा निगम की तरह चार या पाँच इकाइयों में विभक्त करने की योजना पर विचार कर रही है; यदि हाँ, तो इस संदर्भ में क्या प्रगति हुई है?

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: The opinion of the hon. Member with regard to the working of the FCI is his own. I do not agree with it.

AN HON. MEMBER: It is the opinion of the general public.

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: There should be no debate on members' opinions. So far as I know, in this House, questions may be asked for eliciting information. But I would not like to express anything which the hon. Members do not like. He is free to express his opinion and he has done it. I am satisfied and the Government is satisfied with the working of the FCI. But nothing is always perfect. Wherever we find that there is something lacking, we always try to improve and take corrective measures. At present, there is no proposal to split the Food Corporation of India.

SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO: The hon. Minister has said that the functioning of the FCI has not been affected due to the fact that a Chairman has not been appointed for one year. First of all, I would like to know from the hon. Minister, whether by saying that he means that there is no necessity to have a Chairman at all for the FCI. If the functioning of the Corporation has not been affected and if it is going on well, why have a Chairman at all? Is he thinking of not having a Chairman at all or is it because he has not

been able to find a suitable person for one year and is it likely that for two or three years more it will be like that?

Then, he said that it is not the job of the FCI to fix remunerative prices or to purchase foodgrains at remunerative prices and that it is for the Government to do so, etc. I can cite several instances where the FCI has not been purchasing foodgrains in the market and has not always been giving remunerative prices to the farmers. The foodgrains are not purchased by them. It is private person who goes to the market and buys foodgrains from the farmers. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he is going to let this kind of trend continue or he is intending to make the FCI more effective by asking the FCI to go to the market and purchase foodgrains from the farmers rather than leaving it to private persons to do it, and to give remunerative prices to the farmers as fixed by the State Government or the Central Government and also not to harass the farmers by saying that the quality of foodgrains is not good and all that. This has been happening in my State for the last one or two years. I can cite many such instances.

**RAO BIRENDRA SINGH:** Sir, the Hon. Member has not sent me any complaint regarding the Food Corporation of India not paying the correct prices.

As I have said, prices paid are according to the specifications laid down by Government. We decide as to how there should be cut in prices if the coarse grains, rice, wheat or any other foodgrains are not up to the prescribed specifications.

We have liberalised specifications this year. It is only to see that the farmers get better prices and that they are not harassed.

We have also taken care to see that there should be as little rejection as

possible the product of the farmers on account of excessive moisture.

But the Food Corporation of India cannot go beyond the norms laid down by the Government and, therefore, if its officers go beyond that, it amounts to mal-practice.

If the norms and specification prescribed by us are not observed, we shall take very severe action on receipt of complaints from the mandi.

But the Food Corporation of India is not the only agency which is making purchases. For instance, in the matter of wheat, about 80 per cent of wheat in the mandis is being procured by State agencies in Punjab and Haryana and in other States also. The Food Corporation of India purchases only about 20 per cent. Therefore, there might be complaints for which FCI officials may not be responsible and there might be some misunderstanding in the Hon. Member's mind.

**SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV:** I would like to know whether it is a fact that not only the Chairman but the District level officers have also been in an acting capacity for quite a long time and, if so, what steps the Ministry is taking to permanently fill up the vacancies?

This is the position in my district. When I go there, he says "I am an acting District Manager, I cannot take many of the decisions." Is the Minister aware of this position and, if so, what steps are going to be taken? I have written letters also about it.

**RAO BIRENDRA SINGH:** We take immediate action when we find that there is no District Manager. But there might be some instances where delay had taken place in the appointment of District Managers. I do not have relevant information about this district at present.

Whenever we find that there is no District Manager anywhere, we instruct the Food Corporation of India

to see to it that no delay takes place in appointments of these district-level officers.

**SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER:** Sir, during the last one week, the questions tabled by me were the seventh or eighth. But, you have spent 20 minutes on the first question itself. That means, the rest of the people who work hard to prepare the supplementaries do not get any chance. You should not allow 20 minutes for one question.

You should allow only two questions to be put. Only two supplementaries should be allowed.

**श्री पीयूष तिरकी :** मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या यहाँ सच है कि फूड का परेशान के ग्राफिसर्स सरकारी गोदामों के बढ़िया किस्म के माल को बिजनेस करने वाले व्यापारियों से बदल कर बढिया किस्म का माल राजन शापस् से जनसाधारण में वितरण के लिए देने हैं ?

**RAO BIRENDRA SINGH:** Unless there is any specific complaint about a particular place, I cannot reply to a general question like this. This cannot generally happen and if it happens it is very bad and very serious. But I would request the Hon Member to pass on the information to me if he has anything specific.

#### Effect of pollution from Industrial sector on Agricultural production

\*949. **SHRI K. MALLANNA:** Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the pollution caused by the industrial sector adversely affects the agricultural production;

(b) if so, the details in this regard; and

(c) what preventive steps Government have taken or propose to take in the matter?

**THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL RECONSTRUCTION (KUMARI KAMALA KUMARI):** (a) and (b). The pollution caused by the industrial sector is capable of adversely affecting the fertility of the soil as well as standing crops.

(c) Since the harmful effects of pollution caused by industries affect not only the agriculture sector but also environment in general, human health and various other socio-economic activities, the responsibility for desling with preventive steps in this regard is centralised in the Ministry of Works & Housing, who are administering the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974. Under this Act, action is taken to regulate the quality of industrial discharges. This Act is currently in force in all the Union Territories and 15 States. In addition, to combat the problem of air pollution resulting from industries the Ministry of Works & Housing has recently got the Air (Prevention & Control of Pollution) Bill passed by Parliament.

**SHRI K. MALLANNA:** I am very sorry to get this type of answer...

**MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER:** Come to be supplementary. Don't be immersed in sorrow.

**SHRI K. MALLANNA:** Pollution of air and water caused by the industrial sector is very dangerous. But the Minister has not taken it seriously. I put this question:

"What preventive steps Government have taken or propose to take in the matter?"

The hon. Minister has asked this august House to go through the Acts? but what actual preventive steps they have taken, he has not answered; that was the main question, but it has not been answered. My first supplementary is this. How many industrial concerns have violated this