

rotted in the markets, and the prices crashed to a level—after which the farmers could not think of sowing potatoes any longer. But because of their faith in the present Government, the prices of potato are being maintained in the market; and we will see that those conditions do not recur.

SHRI MAGANBHAI BAROT: The Minister has admitted the fact that there was increase in production. Is it true that the producers got less, and the consumers paid more and the margin went to hoarders and black-marketeers during that period?

SHRI BIRENDRA SINGH RAO: Yes; that is true. We will see that the middle-men do not get undue benefits, and that the farmer gets fair and remunerative prices for his produce without being fleeced in the market.

Damage to crops due to drought

*5. **SHRI CHITTA BASU:** Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to lay a statement showing:

(a) whether Government are aware of the large scale damages of crops

due to long spell of drought in different parts of the country in the recent past;

(b) if so, the extent of damages (State-wise);

(c) the assistance provided for by the Centre to the States to meet the situation (State-wise); and

(d) what short-term and long-term programme the Government propose to take for drought prone areas?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE & RURAL RECONSTRUCTION (SHRI BIRENDRA SINGH RAO): (a) to (d). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) Yes, Sir. During the last kharif season, 11 States were affected by long spell of drought.

(b and (c).

State	(b)		(c)	
	Population affected (lakhs)	Cropped area affected (lakh ha.)	Total foodgrains allocated under Food for Work & Spl. Food for Works Programme (including balance last year's balance Lakh Mt.	Ceiling of additional expenditure approved by Govt. of India for purposes of Central assistance (Rs. in crores)
Andhra Pradesh	125.00	40.00	2.33	22.05
Bihar	473.00	30.00	3.36	11.82
Haryana	30.00	17.00	0.64	4.50
Himachal Pradesh	27.00	4.90	0.20	3.70
Madhya Pradesh	279.00	88.00	3.01	22.80
Maharashtra	53.14	10.23	1.41	8.54

		(b)		(c)
Orissa	115.00	43.18	2.31	14.05
Rajasthan	240.00	30.00	2.80	18.75
Jammu & Kashmir	2.69	2.13	0.45	2.79
Uttar Pradesh	773.00	105.00	4.93	34.91
West Bengal	87.00	15.55	2.50	13.04
TOTAL	2204.83	385.99	23.94	156.95

The actual Central assistance to be released in the form of advance Plan assistance will depend on the amount of expenditure incurred by the State upto the ceiling over and above margin money available with the State.

(d) In order to enable farmers to recouperate part of the loss sustained during the kharif and pre-kharif season the Government of India have been helping the State Governments to embark upon an ambitious Rabi production programme. Short-term loan during Rabi season amounting to Rs. 80 crores has been made available to the drought affected States as against the original budget provision of Rs. 49 crores. Additional allocation of diesel was made during October, November and December, 1979. Subsidy for agricultural inputs including nitrogenous fertilizers, seeds and pesticides is being made available to small and marginal farmers where crop loss has been more than 50 per cent. Interest liability of small and marginal farmers in areas where crop loss is more than 50 per cent is to be waived provided repayment of principal is made by the rescheduled dates. A Food for Nutrition Programme has been launched to cover vulnerable sections of the population such as expectant and nursing mothers and pre-school children. Apart from the on-going Food for Work Programme, A Special Food for Work Programme has been initiated to provide gainful employment to able-bodied persons in rural areas. Steps have been taken on a war footing to mobilise all available rigs in the country and train up personnel for

tapping ground water resources especially in hard rock areas. The financial provision for plant protection measures including aerial spraying has been enhanced. Further experts of cattle feed have been banned and the export of expeller cakes of oilseeds and deoiled rice bran as well as of compounded cattle and poultry feed has been stopped. The foodgrains unfit for human consumption are being made available to the State Governments for cattle feed by the Food Corporation of India. An Inter-Departmental Task Force has been functioning in the Ministry of Agriculture for monitoring and stream lining the relief operations.

Apart from these short-term measures, the Government of India has been operating a long-term programme known as the 'Drought Prone Areas. Programme' in 74 districts in 13 States proper sociological balance in these areas, reducing the severity of the impact of drought and stabilising the income of the people, particularly the weaker sections of the society. During the four years of the Fifth Five Year Plan, an expenditure of Rs. 188.98 crores was incurred of which Rs. 108.41 crores represented Central share. During 1978-79 i.e. the first year of the Sixth Plan, about Rs. 80.17 crores was expended out of which Rs. 51.18 crores represented the Central share. During 1974-79, this programme has implemented soil and moisture conservation works on about 13 lakh hectares, created irrigation potential of about 2.8 lakh hectares, developed 3.4 lakh hectares forest and pasture

land and benefited about 43.8 lakh persons mostly belonging to the weaker sections. Since 1977-78, a Desert Development Programme has also been taken up in 11 districts of Rajasthan, 4 districts of Haryana, 3 districts of Gujarat and the cold arid areas of Ladakh in Jammu and Kashmir, and Spiti Sub-division in Himachal Pradesh. The main activities under this programme include afforestation, grassland development, sand-dune stabilisation, ground water development, rural electrification, development of agriculture, horticulture and Animal Husbandry.

A nation-wide programme of exploiting surface and groundwater resources in the country through major, medium and minor irrigation schemes in the public and private sectors with assistance to farmers with holdings upto 4 ha. has been launched. It is proposed to add an irrigation potential of 15 million hectares (to the potential of 52 million hectares created upto 1-4-1978) during 1978-83 with an estimated outlay of about Rs. 3600 crores on minor and about Rs. 6700 crores on major and medium irrigation schemes.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: The statement shows the ceiling of additional expenditure approved by the Government of India for purposes of Central assistance (Rs. in crores). May I know from the hon. Minister whether Government would make up the deficit or the gap between the ceiling so far fixed by the Central Government for the State Governments for the expenditure for drought relief and the actual expenditure incurred by the State Governments in this direction? Whether the Government will make up the gap between the two? Two means: one is the actual expenditure incurred by the State Governments and second one is the additional ceiling fixed by the Government of India on this score.

SHRI BIRENDRA SINGH RAO: The additional ceiling is fixed by the Gov-

ernment of India after fully assessing the damage due to natural calamities in any particular State. The Central team also visits the areas before coming to a decision. A high level committee also considers the recommendations of the State Governments. But after the ceiling has been fixed by the Central Govt., if a particular State incurs expenditure beyond that, the Central Government cannot take the liability for that.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: In the statement it has been stated that the actual Central assistance will be released in the form of advance Plan assistance. Now this very system impedes the very developmental tempo of the states. Taking these things in view, may I know from the hon. Minister whether it is the policy of the new Government to see that these advance Plan assistances should be converted into assistances outside the Plan so as to accelerate the tempo of development of the States because the States have not got adequate funds to continue the developmental tempo in their States.

SHRI BIRENDRA SINGH RAO: The Government is very keen to increase tempo of development all over the country; but the Government has to work under certain constraints. So far as finances are concerned, the suggestion of the hon. Member will be taken into account while taking a decision.

SHRI NIREN GHOSH: In view of the fact that our country is facing a cycle of droughts, what immediate steps you can take or have you taken any step to stop it? Secondly, I would like to know whether the Central Government study team has made any assessment of the different States about this and the damage suffered. Has the Government met to the full extent the assistance they are to give to the State Governments? Has any State Government lodged any complaint on this score to the Central Government, if so, did you meet their demand, did you remove their complaint?

SHRI BIRENDRA SINGH RAO: We have looked into all the demands made by the States and all the drought affected States were visited by a Central team. Natural calamities do not come after a warning, and as and when there is a calamity, government takes appropriate steps. We are also thinking of devising an effective machinery at the national level to have a better preparedness in case of natural calamities and will announce those decisions later.

MR. SPEAKER: For the information of the hon. Members, there is a Calling Attention on this very subject and I think it will be thrashed out at that time. Now we pass on to the next question.

Memorandum from Central Fisheries Corporation Ltd. Employees' Association

*6. **SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE:** Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any memorandum from the Central Fisheries Corpn. Ltd. Employees' Association, Howrah regarding absorption of the staff declared surplus;

(b) if so, what steps have been taken by the Government to absorb them in public sector undertakings; and

(c) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE & RURAL RECONSTRUCTION (SHRI BIRENDRA SINGH RAO): (a) to (c). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) Yes Sir.

(b) The Public Sector Undertakings under this Ministry and other Ministries as also the Director General of Employment under the Ministry of Labour were requested to absorb the surplus employees of the Central

Fisheries Corporation. The Govt. of West Bengal was also requested to take over some employees along with the sales-stalls, for the State Fisheries Development Corporation but they pleaded their inability to do so. Applications of employees desirous of seeking employment elsewhere are also being forwarded with liberal recommendations.

(c) So far employment has been found for 71 employees who have been actually absorbed in the following undertakings:

(i) The Food Corporation of India	45
(ii) The Central Warehousing Corporation	21
(iii) The Indian Dairy Corporation	4
(iv) The National Seeds Corporation	1
	<hr/>
	71
	<hr/>

In addition 14 employees have been promised absorption by the Food Corporation of India and two by the Central Warehousing Corporation.

SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE: The question is regarding the absorption of the Central Fisheries Corpn. staff. The Central Fisheries of Howrah is being wound up.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: You see PUC Report.

SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE: Their total staff is: 386, permanent 236 and casual 150. Regarding the Central Fisheries Corporation, there is a report of the Committee on Public Undertakings submitted on 26 April 1979. The Committee had recommended that the Central Fisheries Corporation could be revived or be made viable again by changing its organisation framework, system, policy and business and by efficient management. Has the Minister given any consideration to this recommendation? Is the