

consulted at all, and they cannot be consulted for the simple reason that they keep on moving from one cantonment to another. You have to give them certain safeguards, and therefore we have got the system of nominating the officers who represent them.

I should like to mention here one thing. Mention was made about the assurance given by my Minister about introducing parity in the cantonments. I should like to say that it would be soon implemented. Instructions have been issued and that parity has been made. Now, there is equal representation between the civilians and the military personnel there.

Thus, as I said, although the primary interest was of the military, we have given them equal representation. But I do not stop at that. All these cantonment areas are subject to the control of this House and no one will controvert this point, not even Shri D. C. Sharma, that this is a fully representative House of the people of India. If the people of India look after these cantonments, I think they enjoy the maximum amount of democracy that you can possibly cope with.

I should, in the end, once again like to thank all the Members of the House for their very kindly giving their wholehearted support for this piece of legislation. I commend the Bill for the acceptance of the House.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I shall put the question to the vote of the House.

The question is:

"That the Bill to provide for the extension to cantonments of laws relating to the control of rent and regulation of house accommodation, as passed by Rajya Sabha, be taken into consideration".

The motion was adopted.

Clauses 2—4

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: There are no amendments to any of the clauses

The question is:

"That clauses 2, 3 and 4 stand part of the Bill".

The motion was adopted.

Clauses 2, 3 and 4 were added to the Bill.

Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Title were added to the Bill.

Sardar Majithia: I beg to move:

"That the Bill be passed".

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The question is:

"That the Bill be passed".

The motion was adopted.

MOTION RE: FOOD SITUATION

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri A. P. Jain): I beg to move:

"That the food situation in the country be taken into consideration".

Sir, I want to avail myself of this opportunity of offering thanks to Shri Asoka Mehta and his colleagues on the Foodgrains Enquiry Committee for the splendid job that they have done. An hon. Member of the Committee, Shri Tyabji, is no more with us, and I believe I am expressing the feelings of the House in offering sympathy to his survivors. This Committee has submitted its report in a record time. It has gone all over the country, collected evidence from all the various interests concerned and I must say that it has made a very comprehensive survey.

No discussion of the food situation in the country today can be considered to be realistic without a reference to the various recommendations made by the Asoka Mehta Committee. So far as my Ministry is concerned, we are carefully examining the recommendations made in that report with the consideration that it deserves. We have not come to any final conclusion.

[Shri A. P. Jain]

I do hope that during the course of the debate, hon. Members will make their observations and their comments on the various recommendations, and I can assure the hon. Members of this House that in coming to the final conclusion, we shall pay due regard to any suggestions that are made in this House. In fact, it is fortunate that this debate has come at a time when we are considering the recommendations made by this Committee.

The House will recollect that a week or so ago, we had a debate on the conditions arising out of the drought in certain parts of the country. Hon. Members will not expect me to cover the same ground which was discussed on that day. Nonetheless, there are certain things which have happened subsequently, and I would like to take the House into confidence with regard to these things.

One very important thing is that since then, we have been carrying on negotiations with certain foreign countries for the import of foodgrains and it will be a matter of comfort to this House that our negotiations have been proceeding very satisfactorily and the hope of importing foodgrains in adequate quantities is there.

On that day, I referred to the team of officers which was visiting the drought-affected districts. The team has returned. The team consisted of the representatives of the Planning Commission, the Ministry of Food and Agriculture and the Ministry of Finance. The idea was that the team should make, as far as possible, a first-hand assessment of the losses. It should further examine the schemes provided under the second Five Year Plan for the year 1957-58 and rephrase the Plan wherever it is necessary with a view to give greater importance to the minor irrigation works and to labour intensive schemes. They were also to find out what additional schemes can be undertaken with benefit

particularly with a view to provide employment in the drought-affected area.

The team has visited four of the States—Bihar, Eastern Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa, and it has submitted its report.

Shri S. M. Banerjee (Kanpur): The Sivaraman Committee, I presume.

Shri A. P. Jain: Yes: I would like to make a reference to the main recommendations contained in the report of this team. In Bihar, the team visited four districts of North Bihar, three districts of South Bihar and two districts of Chhota Nagpur. In Bihar, an area of 11.2 million acres or a little less than 50 per cent of the total cultivated area is under the winter paddy. The team found that the *bhadai* crop which covers 3.6 million acres was by and large fair. But the winter crop, which is the major crop, has suffered heavily. *Rabi* sowing was in progress and when the team visited Bihar, the germination was quite satisfactory. The cultivators have attempted *rabi* sowing in some places after moistening the land with whatever water could be found. The *rabi* yield is likely to be lower, however, the output of the crop would depend upon the rains in December and January. The exact estimates of the losses would be available only in the month of January when crop-cutting has been done. Nonetheless the Committee has studied the past history of the various droughts of 1932, 1935 and 1950 and, roughly speaking, they have come to the conclusion that the losses may perhaps be of a lower order than what has been estimated by the State Government.

Now, Sir, I am glad to inform the House that the team was very much impressed by the earnestness and the will with which both the peasants and the officers of the State Governments were trying to combat the situation—the situation arising out of drought. I would like to read out a paragraph of

the draft report of the Committee. The Committee says—

"The State Government has taken energetic measures to meet the situation resulting from the drought. The rates for canal and tubewell irrigations have been reduced and a successful drive was launched to get the maximum benefit from these. The cultivators have made very great efforts to bale out water from ditches and tanks. Temporary bunds have been constructed in major and minor rivers by the Irrigation & Revenue Department to divert whatever water was available to save the crops. As a result, the area irrigated by Government canals has increased from 7.52 lakh acres in 1956-57 to 9.84 lakh acres. The *kharif* area under tubewells has gone up from 26,000 acres to 70,000 acres. All available pump sets of the Irrigation, Agriculture, Fire Service and Health Departments and Local Authorities were utilised for pumping from rivers and canals—100 pumping sets were purchased and loaned to cultivators. An energetic officer has been appointed as Relief Commissioner to initiate and co-ordinate all relief measures and a Relief Co-ordination Committee with the Chief Secretary, Development and Relief Commissioner, Secretaries and heads of the departments as members reviews the situation every week. Weekly reports are obtained from the districts and relief measures have been started in a few places. Full programmes are being worked out in detail to meet the situation during the peak period of likely distress from February to June 1958. Schemes for giving relief through spinning prepared by the State Khadi & Village Industries Board is under consideration of the State Government and the details have not been fully worked out."

That is the impression of the Committee. In Uttar Pradesh, the Team

visited the four districts of Banaras, Ghazipur, Ballia and Azamgarh. Local enquiries reveal that the early paddy crop was fairly normal but the late crop had suffered considerable damage. The crop had failed completely in some of the high level areas while in the low lying areas the yield was fair. The Local authorities had estimated that the yield of rice in 15 districts in Eastern Uttar Pradesh was likely to be 5.12 lakh tons against the normal production of 10.19 lakh tons. The Committee was of the opinion that the losses had been overestimated and it has estimated standing crops to be 7.77 lakh tons as against 5.12 lakh tons estimated by the State. Now this is subject to the proviso that a more accurate idea of the position will be available when results of the crop-cutting experiments are known in January. The Committee found that in Uttar Pradesh, as a result of the vigorous steps taken by the cultivators to moisten the fields wherever water was available, *rabi* sowing is 90 percent of the normal. The local officials, as also the Team, were of the opinion that if the rainfall in December and January are favourable, the output will be better even than 90 percent.

In Madhya Pradesh, they found that 94 lakh acres under paddy was expected to yield 13.39 lakh tons on the basis of 6 to 7 annas crop, as estimated by the officials of the State Government. Nonetheless, the officials of the State Government also agreed that as a result of the subsequent rains the production would be better in all areas except Rewa and the crop may vary from 8 to 9 annas. The losses of the crop may actually turn out to be one-third less than the previous estimate of the State Government.

As regards *Rabi* sowing, they felt that it had been affected to some extent in Rewa and other areas and there will not be appreciable fall in other areas in view of the October rains.

[Shri A. P. Jain]

The Orissa Government have estimated their loss to be 6 to 10 lakh tons of rice against an average production of 2.14 million tons. The loss, in the opinion of the Committee, appears to have been positively over-estimated. The Team toured over a large area of Orissa. Now, Sir, it would be a comfort to the House to know that 1.5 lakhs of acres have been irrigated for the first time under the Hirakud Canal in the Sambalpur area and this would help in increasing the output of the State. The yield of the irrigated crop appears to be uniformly good. The Team had the occasion to discuss the position with the Chief Engineer of Hirakud who assured them that the irrigation water for more than a lakh of acres in Sambalpur could be released for dalwa crop. They agreed to extend the area under dalwa on nearly a lakh of acres by getting seed from Andhra and Madras. Attempts at growing Ragi and Maize in this area would also be made.

Now before I refer to the suggestions made by the Team to the State Government for meeting the drought situation, I would like to mention one significant fact. It is this, that in a few places the Team got the crop-cutting done in their presence. In one of the places they found that where local officials have estimated an yield of 2 maunds, as a result of crop-cutting experiments they found that the yield was 9 maunds

Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava (Hissar): Good.

Shri A. P. Jain: I do not mean to say that that should be taken as a uniform picture everywhere but at least this is an indication of the fact that in some places, may be due to the over-enthusiasm of the local officials, there are over-estimates of the losses. While it is not possible for us to say what ultimately the magnitude of the loss is going to be, nonetheless we cannot rule out the possibility—in fact, I think, is likely—of

the losses being of a lower order than what were initially worked out. My position is that we should prepare for the worst but hope for the best and it is on those lines that I am trying to work.

Now the suggestions made by the Team are somewhat as follows:

Over 80 per cent of the crop in Bihar is cultivated under rainfed condition and, therefore, suffers as a result of inadequate and maldistribution of rainfall. They have suggested that active measures should be taken to offset this. While major irrigation projects like Gandok and Kosi will ultimately help to protect a large part of the State, every effort should be made to construct small reservoirs like *ahars*, cross bund small streams and exploit the possibilities of using underground water wherever possible through open wells, wells with borings and small tubewells in North and South Bihar. At the same time a mass approach to the problem of lifting water through simple inexpensive contrivances like leather buckets drawn by bullocks and bullock-operated pumps which can directly pump from small tubewells with equipment of a type which can be made by the village artisans should be seriously taken.

They have said that the use of green manures reduces water requirements by as much as 10 per cent and an intensive campaign to introduce green manures and compost which would conserve soil moisture and improve crop yields will be extensively undertaken.

Then they have suggested the very simple device of raising the height of bunds of paddy fields and putting of bunds around *rabi* fields which helps conservation of moisture should be popularised. Then they have recommended that the varieties of paddy grown by the cultivators depend upon the situation of the field in high, medium or low level areas. In higher locations where the soil moisture is

not adequate, some of the cultivators grow late varieties; the need for raising varieties which will flower a week or two earlier than the present late varieties should be brought home to the cultivator.

The Agricultural Departments should make selections with the object of evolving varieties which will flower a week or two earlier than the existing varieties without unduly sacrificing yield or quality. Drought resistant varieties of paddy should be evolved.

The next one is a very very important recommendation. They say that mixed cultivation of short and long duration paddy which has proved successful in some parts of Tanjore should be tried. The practice of growing short and long duration varieties in alternate lines exists in China and Egypt. It has also been tried in experimental stations in Bihar and it has proved to be successful. Then short term alternate crops such as groundnut, maize, yams etc. may be grown from February to June and water for this purpose made available.

These recommendations generally hold good for other States which have suffered from drought and where almost similar conditions exist.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh (Sasaram): All these things are already observed.

Shri A. P. Jain: Then so much the better. It will be further extended.

For Chhota Nagpur the Team has recommended a special programme of research for breeding of drought-resistant and of late and early varieties of paddy in the same field; evolving higher yielding types of early paddy and substituting paddy with other suitable crops such as monsoon paddy and change in the pattern of crop.

In Bihar the rephasing of the Plan is going on. The Government have not only maintained the existing allo-

cations for schemes directed to increase agricultural production but have made additional allotment where possible. They have also given priorities to schemes which are labour intensive, particularly providing employment to agricultural labour. The Bihar Government have requested for an allocation of about Rs. 1.5 crores for undertaking additional minor irrigation schemes, acceleration of work on major irrigation schemes in progress and roads and schemes of various types such as soil conservation, fishery development etc. Arrangements have been made that the Bihar Government may take up these additional works and these schemes are being examined at the Centre.

The schemes from other State Governments are awaited. In eastern UP an amount of Rs. 40 lakhs has been sanctioned for undertaking different schemes. That is what I have to say with regard to the drought situation.

Since this House debated the food situation last, we have been taking certain measures in order to improve the food administration. I will now briefly refer to them.

The first such measure is credit squeeze. On the 7th of June an order was issued for raising the margin to 40 per cent the rate of aggregate level of advance against foodgrains so that by the 12th July, 1957, and in every week thereafter, the level in respect of rice and paddy should not be more than 66 $\frac{2}{3}$ per cent and in regard to other foodgrains not more than 75 per cent of the level obtaining in the corresponding period in the year 1956; and limiting the advance against rice and paddy to Rs. 50,000/- and against other foodgrains to Rs. 50,000/-. As a result of these measures, the bank advances have considerably gone down.

As against a stock of 2,01,87,000 maunds pledged with the bank on 7th June 1957, the stock pledged with the bank on the 6th November 1957 was 24,32,000 maunds, that is, it has been reduced to about 11 to 12 per

[Shri A. P. Jain]

cent. As compared to last year, while on the 2nd November 1956 the stock pledged with the bank was 54,63,000, on the 1st November 1957 it was 24,32,000, that is, about less than half.

With regard to other foodgrains, the quantity pledged with the banks on the 7th June was 2,18,30,000. As against that, the quantity pledged with the bank on 1st November 1957 was 48,52,000, that is, about 22 or 23 per cent. Similar figures for 2nd November 1956 are 1,12,67,000. That is to say, the quantity pledged with the bank this year is less than half of what it was last year.

Nonetheless, this credit squeeze has, after all, limited effectiveness. The Mehta Committee has itself admitted the limitations and its effectiveness. It says at page 79:

"If the magnitudes of deficit-financing, together with development expenditure offset partly by foreign aid impose a measure of strain on the economy that makes a certain rise in prices inevitable, then any other measures that may be taken can only modify to some extent the impact of that rise in prices but cannot completely obviate it."

On the next page, the Mehta Committee has recommended:

"Selective credit control has, therefore, to be continued to be used as a flexible instrument of some proved efficacy to curb any undue speculative tendencies."

Every action that has to be taken are being taken. As the House is well aware, one such action is the creation of zones. Two wheat zones and one rice zone has been created. The idea in creating zones is to connect the deficit areas with the surplus areas so that the area, taken as a whole, is either self-sufficient or near self-sufficient. The two wheat zones are: Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu

and Kashmir, and Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Bombay. The rice zone consists of Madras, Andhra, Mysore and Kerala.

The result of the creation of these zones has been fairly satisfactory.

Prices both in Punjab and in the western zone have been fairly steady and they have not risen.

17 hrs.

So far as the Southern rice zone is concerned, the prices in Madras, Mysore and Kerala, in most of the places this year, are lower than those of last year. Unfortunately the same does not hold good of Andhra where the price have been ruling somewhat high. But recent trends have shown that the resistance of the Andhra dealers is now breaking down.

Besides this, some States have been cordoned off for various reasons. So far as rice is concerned Tripura, Manipur and Assam have been cordoned off—Tripura and Assam on account of physical and geographical and political reasons. Tripura is almost an isolated island bound of three sides by Pakistan; Assam is also cut off from the rest of India except through the rail link. Manipur has been cordoned off on account of its peculiar features, its primitive conditions. Orissa has also been cordoned off.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Is the hon Minister likely to take some more time?

Shri A. P. Jain: Yes, Sir.

Shri B. S. Murthy (Kakinada—Reserved—Sch. Castes): Why was not Orissa included in the rice area?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: That we will see the next day. The House now stands adjourned till 11 A.M. tomorrow

17.03 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Tuesday, the 3rd December, 1957.