

श्री हुकम चन्द कछवाय: अध्यक्ष महोदय ये हर प्रश्न को टालने का प्रयास कर रहे हैं। इन लोगों ने बीस करोड़ रुपया मिल मालिकों से खाया है। हर सवाल को टालते जा रहे हैं।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : देहाती सभा इसको मत बनाओ।

PROF. SHER SINGH: The hon. member's allegation is absolutely wrong.

श्री हुकम चन्द कछवाय : बीस करोड़ नहीं तो क्या अस्सी करोड़ खाया है जो जान-बूझकर हर सवाल को आप टालना चाहते हैं ?

Import of Wheat from Canada

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*83. SHRI SHRIKISHAN MODI:

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government have decided to buy about 15 million bushels of wheat from Canada;

(b) if so, what will be the expenditure involved; and

(c) what will be the time by which the food supplies will reach India from Canada?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE): (a) A quantity of 17 m. bushels (4.68 lakh metric tons) has been purchased from Canada.

(b) The total expenditure likely to be incurred is Rs. 37.69 crores on cost and freight basis.

(c) The entire quantity is expected to arrive at Indian ports by June 1973.

श्री श्रीकिशन मोदी : कनाडा से गेहूं खरीदने की जरूरत इसलिये पड़ी कि भारत में अकाल की भयंकर स्थिति थी लेकिन यह गेहूं जून के अन्त तक आएगा। हमारी स्थानीय फसल अप्रैल तक आ जाएगी। यह गेहूं मार्च तक क्यों नहीं लाया गया, इसमें किस की गलती है कि आर्डर देर से दिया गया ? क्यों आप इसे पहले से एस्टीमेट नहीं कर सके कि स्थिति भयंकर होने वाली है ?

मैं यह भी जानना चाहता हूँ कि पहली खेप कब तक आ रही है, दूसरी कब तक और आखिरी कब तक ?

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: Perhaps what I said was not clear enough to the hon. Member. What I said was that the total quantity would be arriving by June end. It does not mean that arrival will start only in June. In fact, by 20th February about two lakhs tonnes of wheat and milo have arrived at Indian ports. Arrangements for 71 vessels have already been made to ship wheat from the countries from which they have been purchased and the last shipment would naturally be spread over up to June.

श्री श्रीकिशन मोदी : जो गेहूं कनाडा से खरीदा गया है वह दूसरे देशों के मुकाबले में महंगा खरीदा गया है या सस्ता खरीदा गया है और कितना महंगा या सस्ता करीदा गया है।

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: Wheat has been purchased from Canada, Argentina and USA. The price range for Canadian wheat was 90.57 dollars to 97.136 dollars per tonne FOB. For Argentina wheat the price has been 96.35 dollars FOB. For USA wheat the price range has been 99 to 106.25 dollars. Since these purchases have been made at different periods, the price range has been taken.

श्री श्रीकिशन मोदी : मंत्री जी ने प्राइसिस बता दी हैं। यह नहीं बताया है कि यह गेहूं सस्ता पड़ रहा है या महंगा पड़ रहा है।

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: These are commercial purchases. Naturally, the purchase price will depend upon the prevailing international market prices.

SHRI S. B. PATIL: Just now the hon. Minister said what the FOB

price will be. What will be the selling price to the consumer?

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: Since the sale price of wheat to the consumer is subsidized, it would not make any difference to the consumer whether the wheat is purchased abroad or procured internally. The uniform selling price is Rs. 78 per quintal. I have already mentioned the FOB price and the freight will be 15 dollars a tonne approximately. The cost of subsidy will have to be worked out. As soon as the final accounts are available after some time, we would be able to work out the figures.

SHRI FATESINGHRAO GAEKWAD: Does the government accept it as a fact that if this wheat import had been made earlier, we would have paid a lesser price and that we had been late in placing our order?

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: I know that this question has been agitating the mind of the hon. Members and I am thankful to the hon. Member for raising this question. But I would submit that we could not have purchased in August or September when we had very large stocks with us. In fact, if there had been no drought in Maharashtra, Gujarat and Mysore during September-October, there would have been no need for import at all. So, it would not be correct to say that we were late in taking this decision for the import of wheat. Other countries decided about purchases earlier because their cropping and harvesting seasons are different. Since their harvesting season was June to August, they could take a decision earlier. The result was that the prices went up. I may assure the House that the Government gave very careful consideration to the question, keeping the national interest in mind.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA: The hon. Minister said that wheat has been purchased from Canada at the inter-

national price. While deciding whether the international price fixed by Canada is correct, did they make any comparison with the price paid by China and Russia to Canada?

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: No government officially discloses the price at which it purchases or sells. We have supplied those figures because we have got a democratic system and we want to respect the wishes of this House. Normally, it is not the practice to disclose the price. So, we are not in a position to know the price at which other countries have purchased. Moreover, the prices have been going up from August-September-October. Depending upon the month in which purchases have been made, those countries must have also paid those prices. If they were earlier purchases, they would be cheaper and, if they were later purchases, they would be costlier.

Cost of Old Age Pension

*84. **SHRI B. V. NAIK:** Will the Minister of EDUCATION, SOCIAL WELFARE AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any costs of old age pension in India, within permissible limits of fiscal capacities of the Centre and States, have been worked out; and

(b) if so, the outcome thereof?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WELFARE AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) and (b). Old age pensions are being given by some State Governments from their non-plan budgets. About Rupees three crores per year are being spent to cover about 1,50,000 persons. Any significant expansion of this programme is not likely to be within the fiscal capacity of the State Governments. The Government would like