

LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Monday, April 22, 1974/Vaisakha 2,
1896 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the
Clock

[Mr. SPEAKER in the Chair]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Rotting of sugar and rice bags in
F.C.I. Godowns, Cossipur

*770. SHRI DEBENDRA NATH MAHA-
TATA: Will the Minister of AGRICUL-
TURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether recently a large num-
ber of sugar and rice bags got wasted
due to rotting in the Food Corporation
of India godowns at Cossipur, Cal-
cutta ;

(b) if so, facts thereof and the steps
taken by Government in the matter;
and

(c) the number of cases of waste of
stocks in Food Corporation of India
godowns reported from various parts
of the country during the last one
year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN
THE MINISTRY OF AGRICUL-
TURE (SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHIN-
DE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) A total quantity of 407 tonnes
rice and 630 kilogrammes of sugar
got damaged in the various godowns
of the Food Corporation of India dur-
ing 1972-73. The damage occurred
because of leakage of rain water or
seepage of ground water due to sudden
heavy rains and floods in the area.

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SHRI DEBENDRA NATH MAHA-
TATA: I do not understand why the
Hon. Minister says in the first part of
the question that it does not arise. I
want to know whether it is in the
knowledge of the hon. Minister that
the hon. Food Minister of West Ben-
gal, Mr. P. K. Ghosh, has stated some-
thing on this matter and it was repor-
ted in the papers; I read the report:

"Hindustan Standard, Calcutta—
23rd Nov., 1973.

"Mr. Ghosh wondered why rice
stored as early as 1970 had not been
distributed so long. He held that the
F.C.I. had not been maintaining the
godowns according to the schedule.
But when he admitted that despite
repeated reminders the P.W.D. had
not made the necessary repairs."

The Chief Minister of West Bengal,
Mr. Ray, has described it as 'criminal
negligence'. I do not understand why
the Hon. Minister has evaded reply-
ing to the first part of the question.
Is it within the knowledge of the
hon. Minister or not that the Food
Minister of West Bengal had formed
a Committee of four men to investi-
gate into the matter? He has also said
that sugar is coming as a soupy sub-
stance. I do not understand why was
that stored for long period, since 1970.
The godown was not maintained, food
stuff got wasted when the people in
the area were starving. Why is he
giving an evasive reply?

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE:
Sir, there is no question of evasion.
As the hon. House will appreciate, I
always place all facts. As far as this
particular godown is concerned, it
will be interesting for the hon. Mem-
ber to know this. This question rela-
ted to Cossipur In Cossipur, out of

71,000 tonnes storage capacity, 62,000 tonnes capacity belong to the State Government, owned by the State Government. Maintenance and repairs is the responsibility of the State Government. Food Corporation of India is only holding the godowns on hire charges. Whatever damage etc. has occurred elsewhere, I have mentioned this in my reply. There is no question of evasion at all.

SHRI DEBENDRA NATH MAHATA: Who were in charge? I would like to know whether Food Corporation of India authorities have got any authority to look after the godowns. Who were in-charge of the godowns? When it was brought to the notice of the authorities? Why should the Chief Minister and Food Minister of West Bengal blame the Food Corporation of India? That is the point.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: Sir, as the hon. Member has referred to certain statements made by the hon. Chief Minister and Food Minister of West Bengal, we will get in touch with them and find out what exactly they want us to do. But the point I would like to submit is, unfortunately many of these godowns in West Bengal were constructed before the Second World War. They are very old godowns, damaged godowns and the State Government, due to financial difficulties, is not in a position to modify them or transfer them completely to us. So, that has been the difficulty.

SHRI DEBENDRA NATH MAHATA: I would like to know whether the hon. Minister has got any information regarding any other godowns where such food articles and foodstuffs are rotting and have become unfit for human consumption.

MR. SPEAKER: He has very clearly stated that they are very old godowns.

SHRIMATI M. GODFREY: I would like to know whether the hon. Minister is aware that besides rotting of

foodgrains in the godowns, rodents like rats and other creatures are eating away the bags and other foodgrains, making them inedible substances. Is the Minister aware of that?

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: There are two categories of storage facilities available with the State Governments. Out of the total storage capacity of 8 million tonnes, 5 million tonnes of storage capacity have been constructed by the Food Corporation of India. They are modern, rodent-proof, damage-proof and rain-proof. Some of the godowns which were taken over either from the private parties or the State Government, unfortunately, were not up to the standards and so some damage did occur. As far as Food Corporation of India's storage facilities are concerned, they are absolutely modern and damage is also minimum there.

श्री इतहाक सम्मेली क्या सरकार को यह मालूम है कि किननी जगह के बारे में सरकार को यह शिकायत मिली है, और एक जगह के बारे में तो मैं धर्ज कर सकता हूँ जिस की मैंने मिनिस्टर साहब में भी शिकायत की और जाच के लिए आपका कोई अधिकारी भी मसौली, जिला मुरादाबाद गया था, वहाँ पर स्वीकर साहब सरकारी ब्याज के मुताबिक 20,000 क्विंटल गेहूँ सड़ कर के बर्बाद हो गया और प्रालम यह भले ही एफ० सी० डार्ड० इनकार करें, लेकिन हुआ यह कि पुष्पा गोडाउन मौजूद था वहाँ न रख कर के नीची जगह में खेत में, जिस को प्रोपिन गोडाउन का नाम दिया गया वहाँ पर रखा गया और बारिश के मौके पर पानी भर आ और यह लगभग 20,000 क्विंटल गेहूँ बरबाद हो गया। मैं सरकार से जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या इस तरह की शिकायत सरकार को मिली है कि पुष्पा गोडाउन होते हुए भी उनकी छोड़ कर के प्रोपिन एयर गोडाउन में सामान रखा गया? और दूसरे यह कि सरकार की तबज्जह

इस तरह दिलाई गई कि मझोली में इस तरह की बातें हुई तो उस के लिये क्या किसी को जिम्मेवार करार दिया गया गल्ले की बरबादी के लिये ?

अध्यक्ष महोदय : भीलाना साहब, आप का सवाल तो अच्छा है लेकिन यह तो खास सम्बन्ध है कासीपुर के लिये।

श्री इसहाक सम्मली : यह हुजूर, बिल्कुल नजदीक है कासीपुर के।

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: As far as the current year is concerned, my information is that 10 tonnes is the reported loss from UP. We will go into the specific case mentioned by the hon. Member. Normally, the damage is the minimum when the foodgrains are stored in the godowns of the Food Corporation of India. When there is transit from mandi or the railway station and if there is rain, naturally some damage occurs. We do not know the facts about this particular case. If there is anybody at fault, we will not hesitate to take strong action against him.

श्री नाथूराम अहिरवार : अध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं माननीय मन्त्री महोदय से जानना चाहता हूँ कि आप ने इस प्रश्न के उत्तर में बताया है कि फड कार्पोरेशन आफ इण्डिया के गोडाउन्स बहुत अच्छे हैं और वे वाटर-प्रूफ हैं और सब तरह से प्रूफ हैं ? मैं बताना चाहता हूँ कि जब किसानों से गल्ला खरीदा जाता है, तो तीन-तीन छलनिया लगा कर साफ कर के गोडाउन्स में रखा जाता है लेकिन फेयर-प्राइम ग्राप्स में जब वह आता है, तो उस में बजरी होनी है। तो जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या सैड प्रूफ का भी कोई इन्तजाम है ?

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: Normally, there is a procedure for issuing foodgrains. If it is not up to the standard, the fair price shop-keeper has the freedom to ask for

change by better quality foodgrains. The sample of the foodgrains issued is also sealed and given to the shop-keeper for showing in the shops. It is also maintained with the godown keeper and sample is maintained with the headquarters. So, there are well laid down procedures. But I cannot guarantee that there are no human failures.

SHRI A. K. M. ISHAQUE: It is admitted by the hon. Minister that some quantity foodgrains has been damaged, whatever might have been the quantum. May I know whether it is not one of the responsibilities of the Food Corporation of India to set up godowns in every State? Is there any godown belonging to the FCI in West Bengal? What steps have been taken to fix responsibility on those who were responsible for damage of foodgrains and what penal measures have been taken against those officials? How is it that the FCI did not ensure that the godowns were fit enough for storing foodgrains?

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: The hon. Member has raised two or three points. The storage capacity of the FCI is located at various points, strategic points. An expert committee of the Planning Commission went into this problem four years ago and its report was accepted by the Government of India. Storage construction is taking place according to that report in strategic places, in deficit and surplus areas, taking transport and other facilities into consideration. Bengal has some storage capacity, though the figure is not readily available with me. Further, a large construction activity has been taken up in West Bengal. So far as specific cases of damage are concerned, there is a well laid down rule that if there is any damage due to the fault of any individual, responsibility should be fixed and action taken against him.

SHRI TRIDIB CHAUDHURI: May I know whether the charges against the Food Corporation, Cossipore, and other godowns in West Bengal have

anything to do with the refusal of the Food Corporation of India to procure food in West Bengal?

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: This question is only about procurement.

SHRI R. R. SINGH DEO: It is a fact that a four-man committee has been constituted by the West Bengal Food Minister to look into the matter? Has any report been submitted to that effect and, if so, what action has been taken in this connection?

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: Some committee was appointed by the West Bengal Legislature to go into the problem of foodgrains issued by the FCI. That report is a printed document. The West Bengal Government was good enough to send us a copy of that report.

श्री राम रतन शर्मा : अध्यक्ष जी, माननीय मन्त्री जी ने प्रश्न का उत्तर देते हुए अभी यह स्वीकार किया है कि उत्तर प्रदेश में फूड कारपोरेशन ऑफ इण्डिया के गोडाउन्स में बूटों का काफी नुकसान हुआ है। मैं माननीय मन्त्री जी से यह जानना चाहूंगा कि उत्तर प्रदेश में कितने गल्ले का नुकसान हुआ है और जिन अधिकारियों के द्वारा यह नुकसान हुआ है, उन के खिलाफ क्या कार्यवाही की गई है ?

अध्यक्ष महोदय: मेरे बस के बाहर है। आपने उत्तर प्रदेश के बारे में जवाब दिया है, आगे भी दीजिए।

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: I have already replied to the query. According to the information available with me, about 10 tonnes were lost due to leakage of water and damage. The other figures are not available with me.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA: It is seen from the reply of the hon. Minister that almost all the godowns of the Food Corporation in West Bengal are out-moded. What steps are taken by the Government of India or the Food Corporation to see that stocks are not stored in these out-moded godowns in West Bengal?

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: When there are better godowns the first preference is always given to the better godowns. But if there is no storage facility at a particular point, then even second category godown facility has to be utilized.

Amount spent on research activities by Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Pilani

*771 **SHRI SHIV NATH SINGH:** Will the Minister of EDUCATION, SOCIAL WELFARE AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) what amount and in what shape the Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Pilani has spent on research activity during the last three financial years and from what source the money was received; and

(b) whether the whole amount received for research work during these years has been spent and if not, what has happened to the balance?

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION SOCIAL WELFARE AND CULTURE (PROF. S. NURUL HASAN): (a) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

(b) The balance of amount each year is being kept in the Scheduled Banks as fixed deposits.