

अध्यक्ष महोदय : मन का पता तब लगेगा जब सारी रिपोर्ट आयेगी। आप ऐसी बात तो नहीं कर रहे हैं कि वह नवंबरमसत न रहे ?

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी : क्या यह सच है कि जो इंटेरिम रिपोर्ट आई है वह यूनिमित्त नहीं है ?

श्री बी० पी० शौर्य : माननीय सदस्य श्री वाजपेयी का पहले से ऐसा सोचना कि कमीशन का गठन इस विचार को देखते हुए किया गया था कि ऐसी रिपोर्ट आये जिस में आपस में मतभेद हो, मध्य में कोई सम्बन्ध नहीं रहता। दुर्भाग्य यह रहा कि कमीशन के जो पहले नेचरमैन थे उनका देहांत हो गया और इसलिए रिपोर्ट के आने में देरी हुई। जहां तक मेरा विचार है ऐसी कोई धारणा नहीं रहता।

### Import of foodgrains

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\*65. PROF MADHU DANDAVATE :  
SHRI C. JANARDHANAN :

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to import wheat from abroad during December, 1973 to February, 1974;

(b) if so, the total quantity Government propose to import from abroad; and

(c) how much foreign exchange Government have to spend for it?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE) : (a) to (c). No formal decision has been taken about the total volume of imports. Government of India continues to review the position regarding imports from time to time. Within the overall quantity authorised for import, purchases are being made from abroad to the extent considered necessary, to maintain the public distribution system. The total foreign exchange to be spent on import of wheat would depend upon actual quantities purchased and the prices paid therefor.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Before I put a supplementary, I want to bring it to your notice that not even one aspect of the question has been replied by the hon. Minister. There has been no reference to the quantity at all. You should be surprised to know—I have got the reply here—he says, “Within the overall quantity authorised for import, purchases are being made from abroad to the extent considered necessary, to maintain the public distribution system”. Firstly, ‘Within the overall quantity authorised... what is the quantity authorised? Even that reference is not there. I want to protest against such vague replies given. I do not know whether you can persuade the hon Minister to give some reply so that I can ask a supplementary. Otherwise, independent of the reply, it is difficult to ask any supplementary.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE : My difficulty is this and I hope the hon. Member and the hon. House will appreciate this. This year the volume of imports may be determined on the basis of two factors—the *kharij* production and the *rabi* production. With regard to *kharij* production, the Government of India is now in a position to have some rough assessment as to what is likely to be the volume.

As far as the *rabi* production is concerned, the crop is still there in the field. There have been some favourable and some adverse factors. So, it is very difficult at this stage to say as to what would be the volume of *rabi* production. Also the imports will depend upon another factor, *viz.*, as to what will be the volume of procurement. Therefore, the Government has not taken any final decision about the total volume of imports nor is it possible for us to indicate this. There has been an honest effort to reply on the basis of realistic assessments and on the basis of what I know. Therefore, there has been no evading the question. I am prepared to answer any query made by the hon. Member.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: India's Supply Missions in the various producing countries are reported to have informed

the Government that the increase in prices will be 60 per cent over what was the peak international market price and it would be between 200—210 dollars per tonne which is the likely international market price. In view of this, it is further reported—it has appeared in the Press—that both the Planning Commission as well as the Finance Ministry are reported to have advised the Government that virtually there will be no foreign exchange left in the coffers because about 80 per cent of whatever will be available from exports will be utilised for oil imports. In view of this, are we going to give up our dependence on imports and devise some other machinery by which the public distribution system can be fed?

**SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE:** There are many assumptions which the hon. Member is making which are not true. For instance, he has referred to some views expressed by the Planning Commission and the Finance Ministry. They are not consistent with the facts. I can only say that it is true that the international level of prices of foodgrains is very high. For instance, about 18 months back, the wheat prices were somewhere between 70 to 80 dollars a tonne. Now the prices range between 215 to 220 dollars per tonne. So, the prices have gone up two to three times higher than what it was 14—18 months earlier. But if the Government come to the conclusion that there is need to import in the national interests and to feed the public distribution system and to fill the gap between the production and the requirements, the Government will surely take measures to import the required quantity and there is no question of bargaining or taking up a position which would compromise our sovereignty.

**PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE:** In *Statesman* Calcutta, on the 14th February, a news report has come from the Washington Correspondent. I will just seek clarification from you regarding that particular report, That deals with the policy of the Government regarding this question. I quote:

"The USA estimates that India will be wanting to import 4 mil. more tonnes of wheat this year in addition to the 2 mil. tonnes already promised by the Soviet Union. New Delhi now is contemplating asking the USA for this on concessional rates."

I am putting this question because in reply to one of my Call Attention Motions Mr. Fakruddin Ali Ahmed categorically said that Govt. was opposed to the policy of purchasing wheat from the USA at concessional rate. The report says that the Government is thinking. Of course, I have never understood, but this report says that the Government is thinking in terms of purchasing wheat from USA at concessional rate. I would like to know whether the news report appearing in *Statesman* from its Washington Correspondent is correct and if it is not, will he kindly tell the position in this regard to the honourable House?

**SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE:** With regard to the specific point which the hon. Member raised I can say that the report is not correct. I would like to submit that the Government of India would continue to make assessment regarding the current requirements. Now the position is changed and it is not the same position as of good old days. There is sellers' market. There is greater demand in the world than supply. Therefore there is no question of resorting to the old type of arrangement. When the Government comes to a positive decision regarding imports naturally the various possibilities are explored.

**PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE:** Has your policy regarding concessional wheat purchase changed?

**SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE:** Government of India's policy is known to the House and we have made the statements from time to time. There is no question of going back to the old PL 480 arrangements. So far as this matter is concerned we have to go by the national interest and we can possibly negotiate with

various countries including USSR which can supply wheat to us.

**SHRI CHAPALENDU BHATTACHARYYA:** As between the fertilizer gap and the gap in food requirements what priority is being given to either the one or the other?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The main question is about the import of wheat.

**SHRI CHAPALENDU BHATTACHARYYA:** My question is this. Is he going to bridge the fertilizer gap in order to meet the food gap? What priority is he going to give?

**MR. SPEAKER:** This question has no relevance to the main question. I am sorry; I wish it could be connected with the main question somehow or other, but it could not be connected.

**SHRI SHANKERRAO SAVANT:** Have any purchases of wheat been made during the period mentioned in the question?

**SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE:** We decided to import total quantity of about 6.5 million tonnes during the last 18 months. There are countries like Canada, USA and Argentine. The actual purchase was 4.1 million tonnes. Out of that a few lakhs tonnes had come during the month of December, January and some other quantities we are receiving out of the 2 million tonnes offer by the Soviet Union. Some of the quantities are received in the months of January-February.

श्री जगन्नाथ राव जोशी यह मवाल एक निश्चित अवधि के भीतर यानी दिसम्बर, 1973 से फरवरी 1974 के बीच गेहू के आयात के बारे में था। पिछले महीने तथा इस महीने आयातों की कमी के कारण गुजरात और महाराष्ट्र में दूधे हुए और अभी भी चालू हैं। इस को ध्यान में रखते हुए अभी देश में फसल जब अच्छी सारी है आपका क्या अनुमान है कि पब्लिक डिस्ट्रीब्यूशन सिस्टम के मामले आपको कितना मिल सकेगा और इस आधार पर आपका क्या

अनुमान है कि आपको कितना आयात करना पड़ेगा? क्या इसको आपने तय कर दिया है और नहीं किया है तो कब आप इसको तय करेंगे, क्या और दूधे होने के बाद तय करेंगे?

**SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE:** As far as the first part of his question is concerned, the normal level of import is between five and six lakhs tonnes every month. That is the case in the months of January, December etc. As far as the gap is concerned, I do not know whether the hon. Member was here when I answered the first supplementary. The total requirements of import will depend upon what would be the volume of our *rabi* production. When the crop is in the field, it is not easy—the hon. Member will appreciate it—to make any precise estimates of production. The Government of India will come to the appropriate conclusion after that only.

**SHRI C. K. CHANDRAPPAN:** In answer to the main question, the Minister had stated that the quantum of purchases made from abroad is determined on the basis of the success of the procurement. There are reports that the procurement has failed.

So, I would like to know what was the target fixed and what was the quantity procured during this period, statewise, if possible.

**SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE:** I can reply that. There should be a very specific question on procurement.

**MR. SPEAKER:** You are very much correct. When you ask for the figures, you should give a separate notice. There is enough time for that.

**SHRI C. K. CHANDRAPPAN:** If I were to give a separate notice, after twenty days. ....

**MR. SPEAKER:** But, this question does not relate to procurement. This is a question about the import.

**SHRI DHAMANKAR:** May I know from the hon. Minister whether, when you import wheat from the U.S.S.R., Government will issue instructions to our Purchase Mission to see that they are careful that the wheat does not contain any foreign matter.

**MR. SPEAKER:** You can otherwise suggest this in the budget discussion. Here the question is about the import.

**SHRI DHAMANKAR:** Last time it happened.

**Export of Shrimps and Lobsters at prices below international price**

\*68. **SHRI A. K. M. ISHAQUE:** Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Union Carbide has been exporting shrimps and lobsters from India on prices much below the ruling international prices; and

(b) if so, the reasons for allowing export at low prices?

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE):** (a) and (b). It has been reported that, in the case of export of shrimps to Japan by M/s. Union Carbide India Ltd. through Visakhapatnam Customs House the export price for certain grades of shrimps was suspected to be lower than the prices prevailing at Bombay. Pending investigations in this case, the shipment was permitted on execution of a bond. The matter is under investigation. No case of under-invoicing of export of lobsters by the firm has been reported by the Customs Houses.

**SHRI A. K. M. ISHAQUE:** There is a difference between the local market price and the price at which it was to be exported. But, the hon. Minister did not tell us as to what is the difference between the international market price and at the price at which it was to be exported?

My second supplementary is : How many of the local people are engaged in fishing trade?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The question relates to export of shrimps and lobsters from India on prices much below the ruling international prices and the reasons for allowing export at low prices. Your question is: how many of the local people are engaged in fish trade.

**SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE:** Of course, I have addressed you a letter about my difficulty. My colleague, Shri K. R. Ganesh is here. This question, according to my understanding, should have been addressed to the Ministry of Finance or Ministry of Commerce. But, the only limited question which the hon. Member has put in is this.

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI K. R. GANESH):** As regards the shipments which have been made from the Visakhapatnam port, the difference in prices has been between 2 cents and 88 cents per kg.

**SHRI A. K. M. ISHAQUE:** There is a world of difference between these two prices.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Let him ask his question. The hon. Minister has given the information.

**SHRI A. K. M. ISHAQUE:** It is a very uncertain information. One can understand a difference of 2 cents per kg. but one does not understand a difference ranging between 2 cents and 88 cents per kg.

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is very clear. sometimes, it is 2 cents. and sometimes it is 88 cents.

**SHRI A. K. M. ISHAQUE:** Will the hon. Minister tell us who the owners of the Union Carbide are and for how long this company has been engaged in this trade?