

equipments raise some important issues concerning salvage of ships that may run aground or sink in the deep sea off the Indian coasts or at the navigational channels of our major ports."

In view of the fact that these comments have been made by a responsible office-bearer of the All India Port and Dock Workers' Federation, has the Government taken note of this, and if so, what concrete steps are being taken to see that such a damage is prevented?

SHRI C SUBRAMANIAM: I would like to know whether the responsible Member has put a relevant question.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: You might not be able to answer it relevantly. But the question is very relevant.

MR. SPEAKER: If you are going to pronounce the judgment yourself, then I would not come in.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Please look at the question, Sir. It relates to imported wheat and the damage caused due to rains. Nothing is irrelevant. I have asked the Minister.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the authority of the Food Corporation of India extend to that tanker? The question is about the Food Corporation of India.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: In relation to your question, all that I have to say is this. In the main question there are three entities; the Food Corporation of India, imported wheat and rains. I have picked out the two entities, namely, imported wheat and rains. Therefore, my question is relevant.

MR. SPEAKER: You should address this question to the God Who sent the rains.

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: He has jumped two-thirds of the well.

Import of 2 million tons of Soviet wheat

*212. **SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA:** Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the 2 million tons of Soviet wheat loaned to India has been received; and

(b) whether despite this, internal procurement is proving inadequate to maintain the public distribution system at even last year's level?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND AGRICULTURE (SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM): (a) and (b). The new policy aims at improving the open market availability of wheat in the deficit States. The public distribution system is being maintained with stocks procured locally and purchased from abroad. Two million tonnes of wheat loan from the U.S.S.R. have already been received.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Last year, in spite of the import of two million tonnes of wheat from the USSR, Government was able to procure internally only about 40 lakh tonnes of wheat, although at that time Government had taken over the wholesale trade in wheat. I want to know, this year, after the change in their food policy, whether it is not a fact that procurement is running much lower than what it was last year; the internal procurement is probably not more than about 20 lakh tonnes so far or even less than that. I would like to know how they propose this year, on the basis of this lower procurement and with some amount of imported wheat perhaps which they have not yet disclosed to this House and to the country, to maintain the public distribution system.

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: Last year, as the hon. Member mentioned,

the procurement was at the level of nearly four million tonnes internally..

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: How much was the target last year?

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: If I remember right—because I cannot say offhand—it was about eight million tonnes.

This year, as the hon. Member mentioned, the procurement of wheat is only at the level of 17 or 18 lakh tonnes. In spite of that, with the imported wheat and the rice available, we are maintaining the public distribution system and we hope to maintain this system throughout this year in spite of the difficulties. Evidently, the hon. Member wants to know why this change was made when it has dropped like this, whether this was not a failure. We have to take the total view of the situation. It is not merely the population covered by the public distribution system which is important but outside the public distribution system, even when you distribute 10 million tonnes, another 40 crores of people are outside the public distribution system. They should also be enabled to get wheat at a reasonable price. Last year, while we were able to maintain a certain level of public distribution system, outside the public distribution system, the prices soared very high, particularly in deficit areas like Bombay, Maharashtra, Gujarat and other places. That is why an analysis was made and we thought that if we allowed wheat movement to these deficit areas in addition to the public distribution system freely, perhaps the situation might improve. That has been substantiated to a certain extent that in the open market of Bombay and other places, compared to last year, the prices are lower. But I would not make the judgment because the lean period is yet to come. How it is going to behave during that period, really I will not be able to forecast now. That can be only..

MR. SPEAKER: The question-hour is almost over now.

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: We have to see that we have enough stocks for the public distribution system at least to the level we had last year and if there are any emergencies, we are also trying to find out how to meet those emergencies and I hope I would be able to discuss with the Members and the Leaders of the Opposition also sometime with regard to the present situation and what steps will have to be taken for the purpose of improving the situation.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Please allow me to put my second question.

MR. SPEAKER: I am sorry. Question-Hour is already over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Expansion work on National Highway No. 28

*202 **SHRI R K SINHA:** Will the Minister of SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) The extent to which the expansion work on National Highway No. 28 between Lucknow-Barabanki and Barabanki-Faizabad has been done upto the 31st July 1974; and

(b) when the expansion work is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT (SHRI KAMLAPATI TRIPATHI): (a) and (b). A statement giving the requisite information is laid on the table of the Sabha.

Statement

(a) (i) The National Highway No. 28 between Lucknow and Barabanki, length 22.45 Kms., is already two-lane wide. Between Barabanki and Faizabad, length 92.972 Kms. the road had single lane width in a length 92.722 Kms. at the beginning of the Fourth Five Year Plan and two-lane width