

May I know whether the Ministry is going to consider taking steps to find out whether the vicious food racketeers are behind this sort of damaging foodstuffs in the ships, whether it is an act of sabotage. I would request the Minister to appoint a Committee, a Committee with experts on port conditions, so that they can go out and investigate whether it is an act of sabotage.

**SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE:** According to the legal position, if the shipowners or the officers in charge are at fault, then the responsibility will be theirs. Therefore, it is strictly a legal question whether an expert committee is required or not. Perhaps the Ministry of Shipping and Transport will look into this. I will pass on the suggestion to the Ministry of Shipping and Transport.

#### Death of Honey-Bees

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\*390. **SHRI P. GANGADEB:**  
**SHRI D. D. DESAI:**

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware about the death of honey-bees in great number due to certain diseases;

(b) if so, whether Government have taken any steps to counter these diseases;

(c) whether this epidemic was caused by introduction of exotic species of bees from abroad; and

(d) if so, facts thereof?

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE):** (a) to (c). Yes Sir.

(d) A statement is placed on the Table of the House.

#### Statement

Indian bee-keeping has recently been faced with the problem of larval and

adult bee diseases which are believed to have been introduced into India probably through unauthorised import of *Apis mellifera* bees. There are two important diseases of the honeybees viz; (i) European foul-brood disease and (ii) the acarine disease.

It was noted that the European foul-brood disease spread around Mahabaleshwar and caused a setback to bee-keeping industry. Studies on the pathogen at C.B.R.I., Poona revealed its identity with *streptococcus pluton* which however, seemed to belong to a different strain from that infecting *A. mellifera* bees. Methods of detection of the disease, control measures including suitable management and selective breeding have been undertaken. Among the different antibiotics tried to check the disease, Terramycin was found to be most effective in the sensitivity tests conducted at the laboratory. Achromycin and sulphatrid ranked next. Under the technical guidance of I.B.R.S. a Research scheme was undertaken at Apicultural Institute at Mahabaleshwar. Extension and Technical bulletins on this disease and its control were prepared and distributed to the bee-keepers. Further selection of European foul-brood resistant strains of bees are under the breeding programme where several strains with varying resistance to the disease were undertaken and is in progress.

In North and North-West India "Acarine" disease was found and caused considerable loss during 1960. The species of mites are identified as *Acarapis woodi* Rennie which infests *Apis mellifera*. Detailed survey was undertaken in the affected areas and it was found that acarine disease has spread to Punjab, H.P., U.P. and J. and K.

The Khadi & Village Industries which is in charge of promoting apiculture have taken prompt and emergent steps in collaboration with Apiculturists to minimise the death of honey-

bees and spread of the disease. A comprehensive programme of research on acarine disease was formulated: short term measures like chemical control, suitable bee management etc. and long term measure such as selective breeding of bees for genetic resistance to disease were undertaken. Various acaricides and their combinations were tried to control the disease. It was found that methyl salicylate in combination with folbex or nitrobenzene gave the best results. Appropriate dosage, period of treatment, and method of application were standardised for different areas by the Central Bee Research Institute, Poona. Also, since folbex strips have to be imported, to save foreign exchange, production of these strips indigenously, have been undertaken. Apart from these, breeding, acarine resistant strains, bees have also been undertaken.

Training courses to educate field staff and bee-keepers were conducted (2) Demonstrations on control measures were arranged for the private bee-keepers (3) Random samples of bees were collected from the colonies of bee-keepers in affected areas and technical advice was given to them (4) Publication of technical bulletin on acarine disease and its control in English and Hindi has been done; a bulletin in Urdu version is under issue (5) Distribution of acaricides; free distribution of folbex strip; paper strips impregnated with Chlorobenzelate to the progressive bee-keepers was done (6) Supply of disease resistant stocks; supply queencells, mated queens and colonies headed by disease resistant pedigree queens has been initiated.

**SHRI P. GANGADEB:** In view of the fact that Indian honey-bees are dying in millions in Punjab and Maharashtra due to a widespread foreign disease which has badly affected the production of honey and also the foreign exchange earnings in this country, I would like to know from the hon. Minister what measures are being taken to prevent this disease

from spreading to other honey-producing areas in Jammu and Kashmir...

**श्री सरजू पांडे:** अर्घ्यक्ष महोदय, मेरा व्यवस्था का प्रश्न है। आप ने कहा है कि गौर-जरूरी कामों में सदन का समय बर्बाद न किया जाए। हम देखते हैं कि बहुत इम्पाटेंट सवालों के लिए तो उचित समय नहीं मिलता है, लेकिन मधुमक्खियाँ कैसे मर गई, इस सवाल पर सदन का समय खर्च किया जा रहा है। (व्यवधान)

**MR. SPEAKER:** This is a very important means of earning for people in the hilly areas. I am so sorry if it is so lightly taken by Shri Sarjoo Pandey.

**SHRI P. GANGADEB:** I would like to know from the hon Minister what measures are being taken... (Interruptions)

**MR. SPEAKER:** Order, please. Kindly sit down. Why are you interrupting the proceedings of the House? What is this—everytime you do it, taking the proceedings so lightly?

**SHRI P. GANGADEB:** The hon. Member opposite should not take it so lightly. Apart from the employment potential, it is a foreign exchange earner for the country.

Coming to my question, I would like to know from the hon. Minister what measures are being taken to prevent the disease from spreading to other honey-producing areas in Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and the Hill District areas of U. P., Assam and Orissa?

**SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE:** Some of the measures I have already mentioned in the Statement.

We have a research Institute in Mahabaleshwar. That is looking into this and they have also an extension wing to propagate.

One thing, I would like to dispel the impression on the other side which seems to take it somewhat lightly. Honey-bee-keeping can be a profitable business and it can also give employment to lakhs of people in the country.

**SHRI P. GANGADEB:** May I further ask the Minister as to what are the steps taken for the flawless enforcement of the Indian Quarantine Act of 1955 regarding import of insects so that henceafter the species of foreign bees thus imported to increase the honey are completely free from infection?

**SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE:** In this case it seems that somebody without permission seems to have imported this material. That is why the disease seems to have spread. The law which governs the import of such materials and the quarantine rules is the Insects and Pests Act, 1914. This is an old Act and there is a need to review the entire provisions so that the quarantine rules are made more strict and we are examining this at the moment.

**SHRI D. D. DESAI:** Ayurved has been very clear about the use of honey and its merits. My friends over there seem to be agitated over honey, but honey cannot be produced without bees. Unfortunately, our ability to identify and diagnose the various types of diseases of bees has been forgotten for centuries. Only recently we have come into our own and we have started apiculture. Leave alone the employment potential, the exchange earning potential, the Ayurvedic medicinal potential and the food value potential of honey. I would like to know from the Minister from which country this particular species of bees namely *Apis Mellifera* was imported without the approval of the Ministry and whether this disease was checked or whether any of the maladies affecting this particular genetic type had been diagnosed before arrival or after its arrival was it quarantined?

This is a very vital issue. Honey is more material than many imaginary talks of opposition friends.

As regards the European foul-brood disease and the acarine disease—have they been controlled and if so, what is the method of control and whether it has been well proven and also I want to know whether the disease controlling technique has been well publicised or not.

**SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE:** The diseases have been identified and remedial measures are proving effective. But in future we will have to take care to see in what areas what types of bees are to be introduced.

#### Food Production Plan in Assam

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\*391. **SHRI NIHAR LASKAR:**  
**SHRI TARUN GOGOI:**

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Assam State has prepared a massive programme to increase the food production in the Annual Plan of 1974-75;

(b) whether the Union Government have assured the State Government of its full cooperation in implementing the programme; and

(c) if so, the kind of assistance proposed to be given?

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE):**  
(a) to (c). A statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

#### Statement

(a) No. In the Annual Plan 1974-75 discussions, a target of 25 lakh tonnes of food-grains production was agreed to by the Government of Assam against the assumed base level of 24 lakh tonnes in 1973-74.