

LOK SABHA DEBATES

I

2

LOK SABHA

Monday, December 5, 1977/Agrahayana
14, 1899 (Saka).

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the
Clock

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair.]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

News Item Captioned "Sugar Crisis Artificial"

*265. SHRI K. A. RAJAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item appearing in "Business Standard" of 6th November, 1977 captioned "Sugar Crisis Artificial";

(b) if so, whether a thorough investigation has been made into the allegations; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and action being taken against the mills involved?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION (SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH): (a) to (c). A statement is placed on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). The free-sale quota released for October, 1977, was 1.30 lakh tonnes. With a view to further improve the supplies of sugar in that month, the validity period of additional 20,000 tonnes of free-sale quota released on 14-9-1977 was extended beyond 30-9-1977 upto 15-10-1977 and the validity period of November 1977 free-sale quota was also commenced from 23rd October, 1977. The total off-take of free-sale sugar from the factories against the aforesaid three quotas during October 1977 is estimated at about 1.36 lakh tonnes which represented the highest off-take during the last 12 months from October, 1976 to September, 1977 (sugar year 1976-77). As regards the levy sugar, the despatches made in October 1977 at 2.39 lakh tonnes were the highest in the preceding 12 months and slightly higher than the releases at 2.37 lakh tonnes, accounted for by end-of-the-month figures and adjustments. The lapses reported by the factories on free-sale are as under:—

(Quantity in tonnes)

Particulars of quota	Total lapses	Lapses reported by factories in U. P. and Bihar against 1976-77 season releases (included in total lapses given under Col. 2)						
(1)	(2)	(3)						
1. Against 20,000 tonnes additional release given on 14-9-1977 and valid upto 15-10-1977	105.4	<table style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"> <tr> <td style="font-size: 2em; vertical-align: middle;">}</td> <td>U. P.</td> <td style="text-align: right;">82.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Bihar</td> <td style="text-align: right;">23.4</td> </tr> </table>	}	U. P.	82.0		Bihar	23.4
}	U. P.	82.0						
	Bihar	23.4						
2. Against 1.30 lakh tonnes free-sale quota released on 24-9-77 (valid from 1-10-77 to 31-10-77)	5,763.5	<table style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"> <tr> <td style="font-size: 2em; vertical-align: middle;">}</td> <td>U. P.</td> <td style="text-align: right;">3,357.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Bihar</td> <td style="text-align: right;">542.5</td> </tr> </table>	}	U. P.	3,357.1		Bihar	542.5
}	U. P.	3,357.1						
	Bihar	542.5						

(Information pertains to 244 factories out of 247 factories to which releases were made—information from 2 factories in Maharashtra and one factory in Bihar is still awaited).

2. The reason generally mentioned by the factories for the above lapses is that on account of slump in the market buyers were not forthcoming to purchase sugar. In view of complaints regarding slackness on the part of sugar dealers to lift free-sale sugar from the factories, a circular letter was issued to all the State Governments on 13-10-77 impressing on them the need to ensure adequate lifting of stocks by the dealers who have been licensed by them under the Wholesale Sugar Dealers Licensing Order. A strict watch is being maintained to ensure regular despatches by the factories against the monthly free-sale quota released to them and whenever wilful violations are observed, necessary corrective action, including warning the defaulting factories, is taken.

3. As regards 25,000 tonnes of additional levy sugar released as festival quota for each of the months of October and November, 1977, the State Governments were advised to make suitable arrangements for distribution through fair price shops. Besides, the levy sugar allotments to the States has been stepped up substantially from the usual 2.05 lakh tonnes to 2.71 lakh tonnes from December, 77.

4. As a result of these steps the wholesale prices in the principal markets in the country at the end of November, 1977 were lower by Rs. 75 to Rs. 100 per quintal as compared to the prices prevailing a year ago and at the retail level, they are lower by about Rs. 0.80 to Rs. 1.20 per kilogram.

SHRI K. A. RAJAN: The newspaper report says that several mills in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh have allowed their October release quota for free-sale sugar to lapse, creating an

artificial shortage and that the mills also refused to sell sugar when prices started falling in anticipation of sugar decontrol. But the statement does not mention what action really has been taken against those who have created artificial scarcity especially in a season when people are demanding sugar. May I have a categorical answer?

SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH: No action has been taken beyond warning these factories, but I may also give this additional information that most of the lapses were on the part of the public sector sugar factories. That is one of the reasons why we are hesitating to take action. The crisis which is referred to in the newspaper report was really no crisis at all and the lapses were insignificant compared to the total releases. In fact, the releases in October/November, 1977, have been the highest during the last five years. In spite of the lapses, the sugar that was put on the market in October was the highest during the last 12 months.

SHRI K. A. RAJAN: I am surprised to hear the first part of the answer. If it is a lapse whether it is by the private sector or public sector, lapse is a lapse. Moreover, the lapse is in the cooperative sector. Why are you hesitant to take necessary steps against those who are doing such criminal acts?

SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH: These factories of Uttar Pradesh are not cooperative factories but are being run by the Sugar Corporation, a State enterprise. We have written to the State Government to warn these factories that they should behave better in future. The percentage of lapses by the public sector has been very high. In fact in UP out of total lapse of 3357 tonnes, the lapse by the public sector factories was 1852 tonnes i.e. more than half. Similarly, the lapse in Bihar is also mostly by the public sector sugar factories.

SHRI DHIRENDRANATH BASU:
Whether the Minister is aware that sugar is being sold in open market at Rs. 425 a quintal and if so, what steps he proposes to take to stop this and fix the prices?

SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH: I have got today's newspaper before me. It says 'Sugar bearish' and the price quoted here is decline from Rs. 400 to Rs. 420 to Rs. 390 to 400. I have got another newspaper which also confirms the same. So, there has been a tendency of decline in prices.

श्री ओम प्रकाश त्यागी: यह प्रश्न बहुत ही महत्वपूर्ण है। सरकार ने बड़ी उदारता के साथ बहुत सारी चीनी फ्री मार्केट में निकाली है तो क्या सरकार के ध्यान में यह चीज है कि भारतवर्ष में इस प्रकार के शूगर मेगनेट्स और शूगर के बड़े व्यापारी हैं जो फ्री सेल शूगर को खरीद कर उस का थोक व्यापार करते हैं और देश में आर्टी-फिशियल स्केयरसिटी पैदा करते हैं? इस प्रकार के जो शूगर मेगनेट्स हैं वे तमाम चीनी को खरीद करके अपने यहां रख लेते हैं और बाजार में स्केयरसिटी पैदा कर के मनमाने ढंग से प्राइस चार्ज करते हैं। क्या सरकार उन को कंट्रोल करने के बारे में कुछ सोच रही है ?

श्री भानु प्रताप सिंह : श्रीमान् ऐसी कोई सूचना नहीं है। वास्तव में प्राइसेज गिर रही हैं। अगर इस प्रकार के कुछ शूगर मेगनेट्स हैं भी तो वे ऐसी परिस्थिति में जो आज देश में हैं चीनी को खरीद कर होड नहीं करेंगे।

श्री रामधारी शास्त्री : जब सरकार यह बात स्वीकार करती है कि इस देश में चीनी का भंडार बहुत अधिक पड़ा हुआ है और दूसरी बात वह यह भी स्वीकार करती है कि चीनी का अपने देश में कन्जम्पशन बढ़ना चाहिए तो क्या मंत्री जी से मैं यह जान सकता हूं कि चीनी का डी-कंट्रोल करने में उन को क्या कठिनाई है ताकि ज्यादा से ज्यादा लोग चीनी खरीद सकें ?

श्री भानु प्रताप सिंह : दो कठिनाइयाँ हैं। पहली तो यह है कि इस देश में काफी बड़ी संख्या में लोग इस बात के आदी हो चुके हैं कि उन को 2 रु० 15 पैसे प्रति किलोग्राम पर लेवी शूगर मिलती रहे अगर चीनी को को कर दिया जाएगा तो करीब 3 रुपये प्रति किलोग्राम वह मिलेगी यानी 85 पैसे प्रति किलोग्राम ज्यादा देना पड़ेगा। इससे उपभोक्ताओं के एक बड़े वर्ग में असंतोष होता है। दूसरे अगर कीमतें तीन रुपये के लगभग तक गिर जाने दी गयीं तो इससे जाण्डसारी उद्योग को धक्का लगेगा। इससे इस उद्योग को इसे कुटोर उद्योग कहिये या कुछ और कहिये—काफी हानि होगी और वह कामन हीं कर सकेगा। (व्यवधान)

Success of Food for Work Programme

*266. **SHRI CHITTA BASU:** Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION be pleased to state:

(a) the success of the 'Food for Work Programme' in different States during the current year; and

(b) whether Government consider it necessary in the light of the experience gained so far to recast the programme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION (SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH): (a) Though the