

Soil Erosion

*334A. SHRI C. K. CHANDRAPAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the soil erosion in our country has become a menacing problem;

(b) whether the attention of Government has been drawn to the recent study made by the Soil Conservation Research Demonstration and Training, Centre, Dehra Dun;

(c) the import suggestions they made to face this menace; and

(d) the steps taken to fight soil erosion more effectively?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI B. P. MAURYA): (a) It has been recognised that the soil erosion in the country is widespread. It is estimated that 135 million hectares of land suffer from soil erosion problems.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The Dehra Dun Centre of Soil and Water Conservation has recently made studies on the control and stabilisation of land slides through mechanical and biological measures. Central and State Governments will utilise these results in implementation of soil and water conservation programme in the Fifth Plan specially in the hill areas.

(d) Countrywide programme of soil and water conservation was started in organised and scientific manner in the First Plan period by creation of a Central Soil Conservation Board and setting up of 10 Soil Conservation Research, Demonstration and Training Centres. The soil conservation programme in the country is executed by the State Governments both in respect of Central and State Sector Schemes. These mainly consist of soil and water conservation on agricultural and forest lands, and protection of the

catchments of major river valley projects, reclamation and stabilisation of ravines and reclamation and development of saline, alkali and waterlogged lands and other waterlands. An area of about 17 million hectares of land would have been treated out of a total problem area of 135 million hectares with a total investment of Rs. 346.97 crores by the end of Fourth Plan. During the Fifth Five Year Plan, the programme is to be intensified and it is proposed to treat an additional area of about 8 million hectares for which a provision of about Rs. 292.53 crores has been made in the Draft Plan.

Request from Rajasthan, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu to have full control over F.C.I.

*335A. SHRI P. M. MEHTA:
SHRI B. S. BHAURA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of Government has been drawn to the press report wherein it is stated that Rajasthan Chief Minister sought full State control over F.C.I.;

(b) if so, how far this is correct and what is the reason;

(c) whether the permission has been given; and

(d) whether other States like Gujarat and Tamil Nadu have also asked similar permission?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ANNASAHAB P. SHINDE): (a) to (d). Government have seen the Press report. However, no request has been received from the Governments of Rajasthan, Gujarat or Tamil Nadu for taking over the functions of the Food Corporation of India in the State.