

Centre...(Interruptions) I am glad you say that previously we were generous.

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ : Do not put words into my mouth I referred to the allotment of Rs. 6 crores to Himachal Pradesh.... (Interruptions)

श्री पी० नामग्याल : अध्यक्ष जी, यही सवाल 1982 के शुरू से मैं पूछ रहा हू कि उम साल मे लद्दाख रीजन में हैवी स्नो फाल की वजह से 85,000 शीप, गोट और दूसरे कैंटिल मर गए थे और जवाब मिला था कि 130 लाख रु० स्टेट गवर्नमेंट के डिम्पोजन् पर है। अब पता लगा कि वहा से अकाउन्ट अभी तक नहीं आ रहा है...*

और मुझे यकीन है कि वहां मे आपको कभी एकाउन्ट नहीं आयेगा। इन हालात मे मैं एग््री-कल्चर मिनिस्टर माध्यम से जानना चाहता हूँ कि 1981-82 में जो लद्दाख के लोगो को नुकसान हुआ है, वह बहुत ज्यादा रकम नहीं है, नकरीवन 23 लाख के करीब है, वरना पैसा बीच में ही था गए है, तो उन लोगो को बचाने के लिए सेंट्रल गवर्नमेंट किसी एजेंसी के थ्रू कोई स्टेप उठाने का प्रयत्न करेगी ? नहीं, तो क्या करना चाहती है और इन लोगो का बचाव कैसे करेगे ?

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RAO BIRENDRA SINGH : Fortunately or unfortunately, the Central Government cannot directly involve itself in relief operations in a State. If Ladakh was to be looked after, it was primarily the duty of

the State Government of Jammu and Kashmir. And we did not receive any memorandum for any special assistance to Ladakh. But, as I have said, we found that Rs. 1.35 crores was still available with the Jammu and Kashmir Government ; and out of that they could have looked after the calamity in Ladakh.

श्री नामग्याल : उन्होंने पैसा इन्वेकशन में इस्तेमाल कर दिया है तो अब कहा से हिमाचल मिलेगा ?

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Food Stock vis-a-vis Imports

*23. SHRI HARIKESH BAHADUR : Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that foodgrains stocks are to touch all time high of 21 million tonnes by mid-'84, which is likely to increase the storage handling losses also to all time high as reported in Economic Times dated 1-2-84 ;

(b) how far it has been prudent and in national interest to have imported foodgrains despite all time high production in the country ; and

(c) whether such heavy imports were mandatory under any International loan or aid programme and if so, the details thereof ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRONICS AND IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (DR. M. S. SANJEEVI RAO) : (a) The level of stocks of foodgrains that would be available with the public agencies towards mid-1984 will depend on various factors such as the volume of procurement from the current Kharif crop and the coming rabi crop, the offtake under the public distribution system and Rural Employment Programmes, and quantities of actual imports under the contracts in hand. Most of the factors being uncertain, it is not possible at this stage to make a forecast about the level of stocks likely to be reached. However, all steps are being taken to minimise the storage and handling losses in Food Corporation of India.

(b) The requirement of foodgrains for the public distribution system is met out of stocks available with the public agencies, which are built by procurement from indigenous production as well as by imports from abroad, where necessary. Import of foodgrains was considered necessary to augment the buffer stocks in the wake of heavy pressure on the public distribution system because of drought conditions in the country in 1982-83.

(c) No, Sir.

SHRI HARIKESH BAHADUR Sir, I would like to know whether Government has appointed any committee to study the reasons of losses and also to suggest measures to minimise the losses. I would also like to know whether it is a fact that a Committee has said that there had been a loss of six lakhs sixty thousand tonnes of foodgrains worth Rs 118 crores in the year 1981-82, and six lakhs fiftyeight thousand tonnes of foodgrains worth Rs 104 crores in the previous year? And also, Sir, as the Hon Minister has replied to my question "However, all steps are being taken to minimise the storage and handling losses in Food Corporation of India", I would like to know what are the steps being taken to minimise these losses?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD) The steps that are being taken to minimise the loss are—First, strictly enforcing the quality control at the purchase points. Sir, we face a lot of difficulties about the quality and also about the weighments at the purchase points. Therefore, we have now taken strong action to strictly enforce the quality control at the purchase points. We are having effective supervision at the loading and unloading points. They are the problems. At the loading and unloading points we have difficulty and therefore, we are taking strict action at this point so that the loss can be minimised. We are insisting on the weighment and counting of bags at the time of transportation and the shift. Sometimes what happened is that in the markets of Punjab and Haryana and other States from where we purchase the foodgrains, they came in large number and therefore, sometimes this weighment was not being strictly enforced.

They used to say, 'Count the bags each contains one quintal and take it.' We have seen from experience that sometimes they do not contain the full one quintal. That is why, now we are insisting strictly about weighment at the purchase point.

We are trying to tighten up the security arrangements—that is natural—at the loading and unloading points, and due to large handling in this big country at multi-points, we have the difficulty in the transit leading to losses. That we are trying to solve by these security arrangements. We are augmenting scientific storage capacity, reduction of storage in the open, that is, the CAP, surprise checks by squads and roving teams. We are also trying to maintain the quality during the storage because at that period we have grain drying also added to spillage. So we are trying to do that also and we are doing packing in gunny bags to prevent this spillage. We are avoiding transport in the open railway wagons. You will be happy to know that we had about 14 per cent being carried in open wagons, now we have reduced it to 6 per cent in open wagons, and we are trying to speak to the Railway Minister that we should have still less of open wagons. I hope that with these measures that I have enumerated, it would be possible for me in the coming year to minimise the loss both in storage and transit.

About the Committee, from time to time we try to find out, we have our internal committees, sometimes we send squads and they tell us the measures which we try to enforce upon.

About the two figures that he has particularly quoted I cannot say anything on that. I would like to have a separate notice for that.

SHRI HARIKESH BAHADUR Sir, I have given these figures from a very important newspaper, a Hindi daily that is published from UP viz, *Dainik Jagaran*. It is clearly mentioned in this newspaper that in the year 1981-82 there has been a loss of 6,60,000 tonnes worth Rs 118 crores. It is a very huge loss and these losses are due to storage, handling etc and it is approximately 15 to 20 per cent every year. This is the situation. Similarly, in the year 1980-81 there had been a loss of Rs 101 crores, i.e., 6,58,000 tonnes of foodgrains. That is why my question is based on this

particular information. If losses are minimised, I think there will be no need at all for import of foodgrains, which is being done, but the Government is completely unable to stop these losses. Therefore, I would like to ask the hon. Minister: If they cannot manage the storage facilities for this indigenous production, why are they importing foodgrains? I think the hon. Minister will reply to this question: If you cannot manage storage facilities for indigenous production, what is the use of importing foodgrains from outside?

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD: Sir, the hon. Member has said about some figures. I would say myself that in 1980-81 we had the losses totalled to 6.43 lakhs, which means 2.76 per cent of the total purchases and sales which came down in 1981-82 to 2.28 per cent. In 1982-83 it has slightly increased to 2.37 per cent. We propose to decrease this transit loss and storage loss.

Sir, it is known that when we purchase the grains after a certain period there is drying. So, there are certain inevitable losses with we cannot avoid. Certainly we can avoid pilferage and theft. That is where we are concentrating our attention. In this country where we are moving the bags from one end to the other end, there are multi points carrying on loading and unloading where the bleeding of bags in some cases become natural. That we cannot avoid. Therefore, what we can avoid, we are trying to do that. I have enumerated the measures which we are taking. I am confident that it would be possible for us this year to reduce the losses.

So far as linking of import is concerned, what is inherent cannot be avoided. Apart from that which can be done, still we need import. As I said in my main reply, we had a very difficult year—1982-83. We had a drought which affected 31 crores people in this country and 48 million hectares. Therefore, to replenish our buffer stock we had to import and that is why we imported.

SHRI E. BALANANDAN: The hon. Minister in his reply said—this year we are going to have storage problem, not only losses. We are having a bumper crop. The Kerala Government has always been

requesting the Central Government to send 2 lakh 10 thousand tonnes rice per month which the Central Government could not give. Now due to the special situation prevailing—as we are having enough stocks and best procurement, will the Central Government consider again and supply them 2 lakh 10 thousand tonnes per month? Will the Central Government also see that Kerala Food Corporation has a buffer stock of 4 lakh tonnes?

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD: I must make it clear that it is impossible for the Central Government to supply 2 lakh 10 thousand tonnes per month. We are giving maximum to the Kerala Government—1 lakh 10 thousand tonnes rice per month. We had also given 10,000 tonnes per month additional allotment from August—Nov. '83 Even in the flush season we did not cut this. We cannot do more than this. We have not only to supply to Kerala but we have to supply to the entire country. I would advise the hon. Member to advise the State Government to eat what we produce. We produce more wheat. Therefore, we should eat more wheat. That is very necessary. Seriously speaking, there is a demand even for rice from those States who were not eating much rice so far. Therefore, the demand of rice has gone up. We can provide what we produce in the country. We can provide more wheat. We are trying to import rice to meet the demand of the country. But rice is not available even outside. What little we can do we are doing that by way of import from Thailand and Burma to meet the demand that is made from different Governments. But demands are at a very high level which is not possible for us to meet.

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI: In view of the bumper crop this year, is the buffer stock position going to improve? He said—25 million tonnes. Is that correct? In view of the bumper crop, are further imports not going to take place? In spite of the Central Government's direction, the farmers are not getting a reasonable price for the huge bumper crop that they are growing. Is the incentive which the Central Government wanted to give to the farmers not reaching them? Is the Government aware of this? These are my three queries.

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD : How can I reply three supplementaries? If it is one question with (a), (b) and (c), then I will reply.

MR. SPEAKER : He is one of the Chairmen. He knows the rules better.

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD : So far as price factor is concerned, it has been said many times that we go by the recommendation of APC. Whatever the Government fixed for this year is being paid. It has always an element of what is called a reasonable profit to them over the cost of production. That has been given. APC have given them the cost of production and profit. Anyway, we have given the price according to the recommendation of the APC.

About buffer stock, I would say 'yes'. I am sure buffer stock position will improve this year as we are having good crop.

About the import of wheat, I may say that we do not want to import. As it is known, from June, 1976 we stopped the import completely. But unfortunately in 1981-82 and 1982-83 being the drought year, we had to import. Imports are dependent upon the production as to what we will have in the country. It depends upon demand and distribution system in the country. It depends upon many other factors. Therefore, at this moment, it is not possible for me to say what will be the future action by the Government.

PROF. N.G. RANGA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have a supplementary question. My hon. friend, the Food Minister says that they would go by the recommendations of the A.P.C. It has not been the policy of the Government to accept the recommendations of the A.P.C. as sacrosanct. It is, in fact, the privilege of the Government to consider the recommendations of the State Governments and thereafter come to a conclusion.

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Professor, we have got a resolution and there is going to be a full discussion on that.

Sugarcane Arrears

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*24. **SHRI SATISH AGARWAL :**
SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN :

Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL

SUPPLIES be pleased to state :

(a) whether sugar mill owners have failed to pay the outstanding dues of Rs. 500 crores due to the cane growers ;

(b) if so, the reasons thereof ;

(c) whether Government propose to take any action for non-clearance of cane growers' dues from sugar mills ; and

(d) if so, the details thereof ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRONICS AND IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (DR. M.S. SANJEEVI RAO) : (a) As on 15.1.84, the total cane price arrears were only Rs. 100.51 crores, of which Rs. 42.37 crores related to 1982-83 and Rs. 7.36 crores to the earlier seasons.

(b) The arrears are due to high cane prices, record production of sugar and sugarcane during the last two seasons, and unusually large stocks of unsold sugar with the factories.

(c) and (d). Ensuring payment of cane price dues is the direct responsibility of the State Governments who have the necessary field organisations and powers to enforce such payments. The Central Government monitors the position and issues advices to the State Governments, from time to time, for expeditious clearance of cane price dues. The Central Government, on its part, takes steps, as it did during the last season, aimed at improving the general liquidity of the industry to enable it to pay cane price in time. The steps include liberalised bank credit facilities, maintenance of a buffer stock, judicious monthly releases of free sale sugar and grant of excise duty rebates.

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the question of arrears due to the sugarcane growers is being raised in this House from time to time and the Government also has been assuring this House that they will take some effective steps and advise the State Governments to ensure timely payment to the sugarcane growers. Now, in this particular case, in part (b) of the reply, the hon. Minister has given reasons for the arrears. One of the reasons is :