

(Interruptions)

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : What steps have been taken by the Government to recover these arrears ?

(Interruptions)

Farmers Problems

*129. **SHRI V. SOBHANADREESWARA RAO :** Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether any committee has been set up to find out the problems of farmers; and

(b) if so, its composition, terms of reference and other details ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

SHRI V. SOBHANADREESWARA RAO : Mr. Speaker, Sir, as President of the Bharat Krishak Samaj you know more than anybody else the problems of farmers. Some time back, on 1st February, 1987. You have stated in a rally of the farmers at Panta that you have submitted a draft to the Prime Minister regarding the real position of the agricultural sector and the requirements to improve the financial conditions of the farmers, and you also stated that the agricultural equipments should be exempted from sales tax and that the prices of agricultural commodities like wheat and other things should be linked with price index. Sir, the fact is today a farmer with 15 acres of land with assured irrigation to raise one crop is not in a position to lead his life which matches with the life that is being led by a clerk working in Government or in a bank or in LIC. That is a hard reality.

SHRI M. RAGHUMA REDDY : It is as 'attendant' Sir, not as 'clerk'.

SHRI V. SOBHANADREESWARA RAO : Sir, I agree with my colleague who substitutes 'clerk' with 'attendant'. But the fact is that under these circumstances the farmers are genuinely feeling that the in-

crease in prices of the agricultural inputs like G.I. pipes, H.D.P. pipes, cement and steel, diesel engines, electrical motors and pesticides etc. is much more than what they are getting in return for selling their agricultural produces because the terms of trade are against the farmers and the index is 30 points for manufacturing goods, it is 30 points higher than that for agricultural goods.

MR. SPEAKER : Please put the question.

SHRI V. SOBHANADREESWARA RAO : Yes, Sir, I am putting the question. At present the CACP does not cover chillies or turmeric crops. With regard to comprehensive crop insurance scheme, cotton, sugarcane, tobacco, horticultural crops like potato or plantations like bananas are not covered. So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government will appoint a Committee to look into these problems and several other problems that are being faced by the farmers throughout the country and ask the Committee to give suggestions to overcome these problems that are being experienced by the Government.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : Sir, the Government has no proposal at present to appoint such a Committee. But I would like to clarify at this stage that so far as the prices of agricultural commodities are concerned, the CACP is there and in their terms of reference we have introduced in March 1980 thus the terms of trade should be taken into consideration while fixing the prices of the agricultural commodities. Therefore, the point raised by the hon. Member has no strength at all.

PROF. N. G. RANGA : No strength ? What is this answer ?

SHRI M. RAGHUMA REDDY : What is this, Sir ? Mr. Makwana is not a farmer, he does not know farmers' problems.

(Interruptions)

SHRI V. SOBHANADREESWARA RAO : When some farmers are put to serious loss due to loss of crops by natural calamities, sometimes in succession,

they will not be in a position to repay the loans, because their re-payment capacity is fully lost. Why do the Government not consider writing off the loans in such a bad situation? After all, the Government or the Reserve Bank is writing off the dues from industrial units as bad debt every year to the tune of hundreds of crores of rupees. The irony is even the information is not supplied to this very House under the Secrecy Act.

I want to know categorically from the Minister, through you, whether the Government will now take a decision to write off loans of farmers who are very badly affected due to successive droughts, due to floods, cyclones, as in the case of Prakasam district, Andhra Pradesh where in the matter of 15 days, two cyclones have hit the farmers. Will the Government appoint a committee to study this aspect and suggest ways and means to help the affected farmers?

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : Already there is a scheme for it. There is a comprehensive crop insurance scheme to restore credit eligibility to the farmers. It is for the States to accept this scheme. As far as I remember, Andhra has a scheme of comprehensive crop insurance where the farmers eligibility to obtain the credit is restored.

So far as the loans are concerned, there is a provision where in case of natural calamities, we are converting the short-term loans into medium-term loans and we are re-scheduling the loans.

SHRI V. SOBHANADREESWARA RAO : That is not the answer. What about writing off the loans?

[Translation]

SHRI BALKAVI BAIRAGI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has stated that there is no committee and the Government has no intention to form a committee. The farmers are unorganised in this country and Government's efforts are also unorganised, which is very unfortunate. I would like to know from the hon. Minister in this connection if the Government will take any steps afresh on its own so that a committee may be formed including *inter alia* all the members of

Bharat Krishak Sevak Samaj to take immediate decision on all the problems of the farmers and start work based on those decisions? Have any steps been taken in that direction?

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : The Government appoints a committee where it is necessary. For example, a committee has been appointed to look into the affairs of seed production and fix the prices. A committee has also been appointed for re-structuring of I.C.A.R. Hence the Government appoints committees for different purposes.

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (DR. G. S. DHILLON) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, you are the Chairman of Bharat Krishak Sevak Samaj. My position is very awkward. As a Minister and *ex-officio* President of the Bharat Krishak Sevak Samaj, whom should I obey? Should I obey you, or myself or my Minister?

MR. SPEAKER : In a democracy you should obey the majority.

[English]

PROF. N. G. RANGA : So far as the credit is concerned, my hon. friend, the Minister is saying that the Reserve Bank has got some policy to reissue the loan and so on. Have they taken any decision to ask the Reserve Bank and the other banks not to charge penalty rate on the farmers, when they are not able to repay in time?

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : In case of natural calamities, we are re-scheduling the loans so that farmers are not to pay the penalty. It is because, penalty is for not paying it in time. When re-scheduling is done, care is taken that he will be paying it when there is a good crop year. That is why, we are doing the re-scheduling converting the loan. There is no question of paying penalty in case of rescheduling.

(Interruptions)

SHRI M. RAGHUMA REDDY : Mr. Speaker, Sir, you are a *Krishak Neta*. Our Minister is *Krisshi Pandit*. I do not know whether the Minister of State is having any degree.

The hon. Minister has clearly, avoided the question put by the hon. Member. The

question is whether there is a Committee to go into the details. The hon. Minister said about the ICAR. We are not interested in the ICAR. The question is are you going to appoint a Committee to study the grass-root problems, of the farmers.

The other question is whether you are going to waive the loans of the farmers. In Andhra Pradesh, the State Government had waived the interest of cooperative loans since 1960 onwards. I want to know from the hon. Minister through you whether the farmer's problem will be taken up by the Government and whether the problems will be studied by a Committee consisting of the Parliament Members under the Chairmanship of the Hon. Speaker.

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD : That will be against the Committee.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : My reply is categorical. I said about the Committee 'No'. There is no such Committee. So far as the appointment of the Committee is concerned, I said that there is no necessity. So far as the loan is concerned, I have given positive reply.

MR. SPEAKER : Are you allergic to me ?

SHRI V. SOBHANADREESWARA RAO : Yes, Sir. They are quite allergic to it. While they are not hesitating to write off hundreds of crores of rupees to the industrialists as bad debts, they are not prepared to write off the loan arrears of the farmers. Reschedulment is not a solution.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : I said it is not necessary. Wherever there is a problem or a special problem, we have a special Committee for the purpose.

Upgradation in Air India Fleet

*134. **SHRI DHARAM PAL SINGH MALIK :**

SHRIMATI KISHORI SINHA :

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether Air India has any proposal to augment its fleet during next one year;

(b) if so, the broad outlines of the proposal and financial implications thereof;

(c) the number of persons likely to get employment as a result thereof;

(d) whether any aircraft is likely to be taken or being taken on lease; and

(e) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Air India will be acquiring two Boeing 747-300 (Combi) aircraft at an estimated cost of Rs. 371.74 crores including rupee expenditure, in October/November, 1988. The foreign exchange expenditure of this project is US \$ 274.20 million.

(c) 498 persons are likely to get direct employment, as a result of the induction of these aircraft.

(d) and (e) Air India has signed an agreement on 16th October, 1987 with M/s. Aeroflot for the wet leasing of one IL-62M aircraft for scheduled operation on the India-USSR Route.

SHRIMATI KISHORI SINHA : In view of the fact that AIR India has been rated as one of the worst airlines in a recent survey due to inadequate number of air craft resulting in cancelled and delayed flights, whether Government in addition to purchasing 2 Boeings proposes to acquire some aircrafts on lease in order to improve the image and performance of Air India.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER : I would like to correct the hon. Member. Air India does not come under one authority. It is some unrecognised Body. It is not even recognised anywhere in the world. Some Users Committee has got up and said "We boarded some aircraft but we do not find it up to standard." Let me tell you that Air India is one of the finest companies in the world and is rated so and its services are also rated so. No doubt, the requirements of Air India are large because there are many routes which have been unutilised. It is because of the capacity. We are not able to have aircraft. We have entered into an agreement to purchase 2 Boeing