

(b) whether it is a fact that a substantial quality of steel is also lying with the steel plant; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken to dispose of these stocks?

**THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV):** (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. About 1 million tone stocks are lying at stockyards and plants at Bokaro, Rourkela, Bhilai and Durgapur put together.

Details of stocks, as on 01.11.1996, are as under:—

	(000 T)
	01.11.1996
Stocks at Plants	189.4
Stocks at Stockyards	810.1
Total Stocks	999.5

Measures taken to dispose of these stocks include vigorous customer contact and follow-up of individual customer orders for affecting speedier delivery, orienting product mix to suit market needs and adjusting production as per market requirements, arranging stock transfer from one branch to another to meet requirements of various customers, adopting strategic pricing depending upon market segment, competition and quantity linked bulk purchases, maximising exports of some categories to bring down the stock levels, etc.

#### **Elimination of child labour in India**

**1075. DR. B.B. DUTTA:** Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have an estimate of the number of child labourers in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government propose to eliminate child labour by 2000 A.D.; and

(d) if so, in what manner this target would be realised?

**\*THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM):** (a) and (b) According to 1981 census, the total number of working

children in India was 13.6 million. As per the 43rd round of National Sample Survey conducted in 1987-88, the total number of working children increased to 17.02 million. It is estimated that presently there would be around 20 million working children in the country. Out of this, around two million children are estimated to be working in hazardous occupations.

(c) and (d) The Common Minimum Programme (CMP) announced by the government seeks to eliminate child labour from all occupations and industries and make free and compulsory elementary education a fundamental right. To begin with, Government is engaged in the task of rehabilitation of about two million children working hazardous occupations. Under the programme, the children working in hazardous occupations are rehabilitated by putting them in special schools where they are provided with non-formal education, vocational training, stipend, nutrition and health check. So far, 76 child labour projects have been sanctioned for rehabilitation of around 1.5 lakh children.

#### **Procurement of wheat on a staggered basis**

**1076. PROF. RAM KAPSE:** Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether a decision on the question of procuring wheat on a 'staggered' basis has been taken;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, by when the decision is expected to be taken?

**THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV):** (a) to (c) With a view to easing pressure on storage space, due to high levels of procurement of foodgrains for the Central Pool, particularly during the period of 1993-96 Rabi seasons for wheat and 1993-94 and 1994-95 kharif seasons for paddy/rice a suggestion was made for procurement of foodgrains in a staggered manner with graduated price structure. Subsequently procurement of wheat during 1996-97 Rabi marketing season has come down to 81.82 lakh

tonnes as compared to 123.27 lakh tonnes procured during the previous year. Procurement of rice during 1995-96 kharif marketing season also came down to 98.80 lakh tonnes compared with 134.03 lakh tonnes procured for Central Pool in the previous year. Large quantities of wheat and rice have since been disposed of from the Central Pool by way of open sale, export etc. These developments have considerably relieved the pressure on storage system. The existing system of procurement of foodgrains could thus be continued.

#### **Procurement of wheat and rice by FCI**

1077. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) the amount of wheat and rice procured by the Food Corporation of India in different parts of the country so far during the current year;

(b) whether the procurement has been as per the target fixed; if not, the reasons therefor;

(c) if so, the steps Government are taking to meet the target;

(d) whether Government agencies are offering the farmers Rs. 15 to Rs. 20 less than the support price; and

(e) if so, the reasons therefor and the steps Government are taking to ensure payment of support price to the farmers?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) A quantity of 81.83 lakh tonnes of wheat and 45.33 lakh tonnes of rice have been procured for Central Pool upto 27.11.96 during the current Rabi and Kharif Marketing Season 1996-97.

(b) and (c) Wheat and paddy are procured for Central Pool under minimum price support scheme on a totally voluntary basis. Rice is procured under a system of statutory levy imposed on rice millers and traders. The quantum of levy rice collected in turn depends on the quantity of paddy purchased by the millers. No target for procurement of wheat and rice can thus be fixed.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Does not arise.

The House then adjourned at ten minutes past eleven of the clock till eleven of the clock on Tuesday, the 3rd December, 1996.