

Financial Irregularities in the New York Office of STC

*430 SHRI GOPALSINH, G. SOLANKI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been misappropriation of Government funds and financial irregularities in the New York office of the STC;

(b) whether both the CBI and Government audit party have given adverse remarks in this matter;

(c) if so, whether any official posted at New York was abruptly transferred back to India;

(d) whether Government have held further inquiry into these matters; and

(e) if so, the action taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) to (e) The Government Audit party in its inspection report on the New York Office of STC for the period April, 1987 to March, 1991 had raised issues regarding wasteful expenditure in hiring of office accommodation, arrears in recovery of rent from the sub-tenant, failure to realise interest on the security deposited with the landlord, etc. comments on these issues have since been furnished by STC to the Audit Party. However, no remarks have been received by STC in this matter from CBI.

A vigilance inquiry was also taken up by STC into the alleged leasing of STC's office space to a private party in violation of the rules. Preliminary report has been submitted by STC to the Government on this matter on which further information has been sought.

The Marketing Manager who was posted to New York office of STC in January, 1991 was recalled by the management of STC in December, 1991 as his performance was not found to be satisfactory.

Export of Grapes

*432. SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE:

SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that export of grapes have increased in terms of quantity by over twelve times since 1993, but the net price fetched per kilogram has dwindled enormously;

(b) if so, the quantum and cost of grapes exported, year-wise from 1993 to 1996;

(c) the main reasons for loss in export earnings; and

(d) the steps taken by Government to help the grape exporters to sustain the trade?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) to (c) The quantity and value of grapes exported during 1993-94, 1994-95 and 1995-96 and the average value realisation are as follows:

	Qty (In Mts.)	Value (Rs in Crores)	Average Price realisation (Rs. per Kg.)	%increase over the previous year	Value terms	Qty terms
1993-94	15928	33.90	21.28	—	—	—
1994-95	16813	40.49	24.10	5.56	19.44	19.44
1995-96	22287	53.24	23.89	32.56	31.49	31.49

Source DGCI&S, Calcutta.

The average price realised from export of grapes during 1995-96 was slightly lower than the previous year. Some of the reasons for the same are:—

(i) Stiff price competition from grapes exported from Chile.

(ii) Overseas buyers sourcing inferior quality of grapes from India.

(d) Some steps taken to enhance the export of perishable agricultural products including grapes are:

(i) Providing financial assistance for development of infrastructural facilities such as purchase of specialised transport units, establishment of precooling units/cold storage facilities;

(ii) Soft loans given for setting up of grading/processing centres, auction platforms, ripening/curing chambers and quality testing equipments;

(iii) Grant of financial assistance for improved packing and strengthening of quality control;

(iv) Grant of financial assistance for market development and export promotion;

(v) Establishment of walk-in-type cold storage for export consignments awaiting clearance;

(vi) Setting up of air cargo facilities for cargo handling and customs clearance facilities under one roof;

(vii) Establishment of vapour heat treatment facility for improved acceptability of the products;

(viii) Setting up of dedicated cargo handling facilities at air-ports;

(ix) Arranging buyer-sellers Meets and participation in international trade fairs and exhibitions;

(x) Providing information about trend of prices in foreign markets to producers/exporters,

Delay in Supply of Wheat by FCI

*433. SHRI AHMED PATEL: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether foodgrains particularly wheat stocks procured by Food Corporation of India (FCI) are not flushed out well in time to the consuming areas like Gujarat and Southern parts of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof and reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps Government have taken or propose to take for the timely despatch of wheat and rice stocks by FCI to the consuming areas like Gujarat etc. in the country?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC