

CALLING ATTENTION TO A MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Reported use of Ethylene DI Bromide for fumigating foodgrains, which causes cancer, infertility and deformity in new-born children

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI (Madhya Pradesh): Mr. Deputy Chairman, I call the attention of the Minister of Agriculture to the reported use of Ethylene DI Bromide for fumigating foodgrains, the use of which causes cancer, infertility and deformity in new-born children, and the action taken by Government in this regard.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Ethylene Dibromide (EDB) is registered as a fumigant under the Insecticides Act, 1968 since long and has been in use in this country for more than two decades against stored grain pests. While granting registration, critical evaluation regarding its safety and efficacy was done by the Registration Committee constituted under Section 5 of the Insecticides Act, 1968.

In this country, treatment of stored foodgrains with EDB is done only once a year, and not more than twice in the entire life span of the stored foodgrains. The major users of EDB are the Food Corporation of India and the Central and the State Warehousing Corporations. It is also used in small quantities on stored grains by farmers and others.

News items have recently appeared in the Press stating that scientific studies abroad on Laboratory Animals tend to indicate EDB to be a cancer causing agent and that it is usually potent in causing cancer, mutation and sterility in animals.

In India, EDB is used mostly for space fumigation of sheds where the grains are stored in bags. During the process of cleaning, milling and cook-

ing, the residues get eliminated. EDB is a highly volatile substance and consists of organic and inorganic bromides. In a tropical country like ours, due to high temperature, the organic bromide released from EDB dissipates completely. The inorganic bromide is left behind as residues in negligible quantity ranging from 2 to 4 parts per million. This order of residues in the foodgrains is far below the permissible limit of 25 parts per million for foodgrains under the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act.

The Government will take an appropriate decision regarding the continued use of EDB in India after considering the views of the Registration Committee constituted under the Insecticides Act and other expert bodies concerned. -

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI: Sir, I wish this House had occasion to discuss the problem - of hazards of pesticides in general. This is a very serious matter, particularly in the Third World where the bulk of these pesticides are imported from the West, particularly, from America. In the U.S. where there is a very powerful lobby of multinationals which is interested in promoting the use of pesticides in these Third World countries though several of those pesticides have been banned in America itself and in other advanced countries.

Sir, today's Call Attention refers mainly to the use of ethylene dibromide. I am sure that the Ministry is aware that ethylene dibromide is mainly used as an additive to petroleum product to gasoline. But since 1940 it has been used even for agricultural purpose as a pesticide, as a soil fumigant to ward off root worms in vegetable crops, and for post-harvest fumigation to kill pests in stored foodgrain.

Sir, in 1974, the National Cancer Institute of America conducted certain laboratory experiments on animals and they came to the conclusion-

[Shri Lal K. Advani J

tion that even traces of ethylene dibromide cause cancer. So they recommended that this should not be used. However, it continued. By 1973, other studies were conducted • and they revealed that there is a link between ethylene dibromide and infertility and genetic disorders, to which also a reference has been made in my Call Attention motion. It was in late 1980 that the Environmental Protection Agency in America, which is a very important body there, decided to phase out EDB altogether saying that it should not be used for agricultural products or as fumigant. And they gave the manufacturers three years to phase it out. They said that within three years EDB should not be in use, and should be phased out. However, as I said earlier, this product has a very powerful lobby and that lobby brought pressure to bear on the Reagan Government, as a result of which their protagonists within Government asked them to ignore the three years' notice of the Environmental Protection Agency. And so went on. This became a continuing war. The latest position is that the EPA are very firm about it. In fact, 20 senior officials of the Environmental Protection Agency have resigned on the issue; it is so serious an issue there. But my question to the Government is that while this kind of war continues in America between this EDB lobby and those who are interested in public health and environment, is the Government aware that the use of EDB as a fumigant, as a soil fumigant or as a post-harvest fumigant of stored foodgrains has been banned already in Canada, in Britain, in South Australia and in Western Australia. I have named four important countries where the use of ethylene dibromide or any of its mixtures has been totally banned because it has been found to be harmful and poisonous. In fact, as I said at the outset this is a very grave issue. An assessment has been made by the W.H.O.

that every year in the Third World about 3.75 lakh people suffer from pesticides poisoning, out of whom ten thousand persons die. This is an elaborate study and, therefore, the W.H.O. have warned again and again about the hazards of pesticides use. I am not one of those who are opposed to the use of pesticides altogether. I can understand that in a country like India perhaps the alternative would be utter starvation. But there has to be caution, extra caution and extra regulation, and it is therefore, that in this specific case where a particular product has been banned in so many countries I am not able to understand why a similar approach has not been adopted in India. Sir, would the Government tell me, whether there is a communication from the Food Agriculture Organisation, of the United Nations, the communication is dated 15-2-1984, recent, which says that a joint meeting of the FAO panel of experts on Pesticides Residue in Food and the Environment and the WHO Expert Group on Pesticides Residue, concluded that "the level of residues to be accepted in some stored products fumigated with dibromide ethylene or any of its mixtures did not accord with its assessment and it therefore felt that the use of this fumigant in these circumstances is inadvisable." So, here is an expert group of the U.N. also which has by a communication told the developing countries, do not use it. And, if this is so, why has the Food Corporation of India decided to import 600 tonnes of this chemical to treat foodgrains in storage? When was this decision taken and it is only today that in the reply the Government has said that the Government will take an appropriate decision regarding the continued use of ethylene dibromide in India after considering the views of the Registration Committee constituted under the Insecticides Act and other expert bodies concerned. If the matter is still under consideration how has the decision

been taken to import, or, has that decision been suspended in the meanwhile? When was this matter referred to the Registration Committee?

Sir, another thing that I would like to know is since when have we been using ethylene dibromide? What are the other fumigants that are being used and what is the relative proportion of the two? And what are the merits and demerits of these fumigants according to the Government's assessment till now? It goes to the credit of the press that has highlighted this issue and drawn the attention of the public to the dangers involved in the use, continued use of ethylene dibromide.

Lastly, Sir, I would like to know what is the total quantum of fumigants used in the country, how much is indigenously produced and how much is imported? And, who are the main manufacturers of this ethylene dibromide in India? These are the questions to which I would like to have answers from the hon. Minister.

श्री हुसमदेव नारायण यादव (बिहार) :
 उपसभापति महोदय, माननीय आइवाणी जी ने विस्तार से इस संबंध में अपनी राय व्यक्त की है। मैं सरकार से यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि जब दुनियाँ में इस बात की चर्चा हुई तब सरकार कह रही है कि हम भी विचार करने के बाद भारत में ई० डी० बी० का सतत प्रयोग करने के बारे में उपयुक्त निर्णय लेंगे। जब शुरू में पंजीयन समिति द्वारा इस पर विचार किया गया था तो क्या उस समय इसका विश्लेषण दिया गया था या नहीं? इस समय जो विश्लेषण किया गया है और अब जब विदेशों में जो ये बातें आई हैं, तो क्या ये बातें उस समय यहाँ की पंजीयन समिति ने पाई थी या नहीं पाई थी? उनके नोटिस में यह बात आई थी या

नहीं आई थी? यदि आई थी तो इतने दिनों तक भारत सरकार का ध्यान इस ओर आकृष्ट क्यों नहीं हुआ? जब दूसरी जगहों पर ये बातें उठी तभी भारत सरकार का ध्यान इस ओर आकृष्ट हुआ। इस तरह से जो दवायें प्रयोग होती हैं, कीटनाशक दवायों का प्रयोग जो खाद्य पदार्थ में होता है कृषि कार्यों में भी यह दवाएं उपयोग की जाती हैं। यह दवाइयाँ कैसे बनती हैं, कैसे नहीं बनती हैं, नकली बनती हैं असली बनती हैं, आए दिन अखबारों में आता रहता है जिसके मन में जो आता है बनाता है। किसान जो इनका प्रयोग करता है उसको इस का प्रोपर प्रशिक्षण नहीं मिलता है कि किस दवा की किस मात्रा में, किस अनुपात में प्रयोग किया जाए। यह वह नहीं जानता है कि इससे क्या बीमारी दूर होगी और क्या फैलेगी। वह इन दवायों को घड़ल्ले से पौधों पर प्रयोग करते हैं, घर में किसान जो सामान लाता है उस पर प्रयोग करते हैं। सरकार के द्वारा भी कीटनाशक दवायों का प्रयोग किया जाता है इसलिए सरकार को इस सम्बंध में प्रशिक्षण की व्यवस्था भी करनी चाहिए। व्यापक पैमाने पर किसानों को इस संबंध में प्रशिक्षण मिलना चाहिए। यह बताया जाना चाहिये कि किन दवायों का प्रयोग करने से क्या-क्या हानि होती है, स्वास्थ्य पर क्या बुरा असर पड़ता है। किस अनुपात में इन दवायों का प्रयोग किया जाना चाहिए इस बात की ओर भी सरकार का ध्यान जाना चाहिये। यह जो दवाएं आज प्रयोग की जा रही हैं दुनियाँ में इस पर काफी चर्चा हुई और वैज्ञानिकों ने अपनी राय दी है। इसलिए भारत सरकार को भी इस दिशा में कार्यवाही करनी चाहिये। जहाँ तक इनको विदेशों से मगाने की बात है, इस पर तुरंत प्रतिबंध लगा

[श्री हुक्मदेव नारायण यादव]
 दिया जाना चाहिए । विदेशों से मंगाने
 पर करोड़ों रुपए का नुकसा नहीं रहा
 है, यह नुकसान नहीं होना चाहिये ।

SHRI SHRIDHAR WASUDEO
 DHABE (Maharashtra): This is a very important matter so far as the health and security of life of the people is concerned. Sir, the wheat is being distributed through public distribution system and unless there is a guarantee that the Food Corporation of India preserves the foodgrains and takes steps, it will be a great risk and may result in calamities. And that in foreign countries, this question had been discussed and many countries have banned the use of EDB, like Canada and the U.S.A. Sir, in the 'Newsweek' and the 'Time' on 13-2-84, the Environmental Protection Agency Chief has asked for long-term planning against the health risk and recommended ban on the use of EDB as fumigant for the foodgrains and other food products. Sir, the major two parties using EDB are the Food Corporation of India and the Central and State warehousing Corporations. I would like the Minister to tell us as to what are the other parties, the private companies which are using this chemical for the preservation of food products, like EDB, which has been found to cause cancer. Secondly, the statement of the Minister is alarming that they are still thinking of taking is after considering the views of the Registration Committee. This

is a matter in which they should have taken urgent steps. Any delay is dangerous to lives of thousands of the people. May I know whether the Minister will take urgent steps so that its use is stopped and also to please let us know which are the other parties interested in the use of EDB and what is the total consumption in the country.

PROF. C LAKSHMANNA (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, while the Minister was replying, he stated that Gov-

ernment will take an appropriate decision; but I would like to invite your kind attention to the preceding paragraph which says; "The inorganic bromide is left behind as residues in negligible quantity ranging from 2 to 5 parts per million. This order of residues in the foodgrains is far below the permissible limit of 25 parts per million for foodgrains under the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act. I have got a lurking feeling that it is because of the multinationals who are trying to find a ground for dumping it, and because in their own countries where it is produced, it has been banned, they have to seek alternate areas. I think, I have a feeling, under the influence of these multinationals, Government is going to take a decision. This is because, Government says-, it is only negligible. Look at the paragraph wherein it has been stated that it is only negligible part. Therefore, under this pretext, I have a feeling that the country is going to have, will continue to have this EDB as a fumigant. Secondly, from the evidence which has been brought forward in this august House, it is very clear that this is a very dangerous and deadly poison. Therefore, my first question is, has the Government made any effort to find out an alternative fumigant? Sir, as it has been pointed out earlier, it is necessary that things should be preserved. It is necessary that things should be protected from certain pests and diseases. Therefore, has the Government made any effort through its research wing to find out an alternative fumigant which will not affect the health of the people? If not, with a huge research organisation at the command of the Government, what for is this in existence? Then, secondly, has any research been made by the Government, on the part of the Government of India, as to what is the impact of this fumigant on the poorer sections of the people? Has there any research been done? Has there been any effort made by the Government because I

have a feeling that in all these matters, just as the Third World Countries are the dumping ground, the poorer sections of the society are the dumping ground. They are the worst victims. Therefore, I would like to seek a clarification from the Government on these two matters, firstly, whether an alternative fumi-gant has been found out and, secondly, how it is affecting the poorer sections of the Indian society.

श्री सैय्यद सिन्ने रजी (उत्तर प्रदेश) :
मान्यवर, कीटनाशक दवाओं का प्रयोग हमारे खाद्यान्नों में उनको कीड़े-मकोड़ों से बचाने के लिए किया जाय या न किया जाये यह बहस का एक बहुत बड़ा मुद्दा रहा है, तरक्कीवाप्ता देशों में भी और जो प्रगति कर चुके हैं उन देशों के अन्दर भी । ई डी बी की बात नहीं है दूसरे जो पेस्टिसाइड्स हैं उनके बारे में भी बहुत से लोगों का जिन्होंने शोध कार्य किये हैं, विचार है कि किसी न किसी प्रकार से जनकल्याण और जो व्यक्ति का सामान्य स्वास्थ्य है उस पर इनका प्रभाव अवश्य पड़ता है । हमें, अपने देश का जो आर्थिक ड्राँचा है और जो हमारे देश के मौलिक उद्योग हैं, उस परसेमजर को सामने रखते हुए, इस सवाल पर बहस करनी ही होगी और इस सवाल का तजिकरा करना होगा । मान्यवर, हमारा देश जो एक खेतिहर देश है उसमें लगभग 25-30 प्रतिशत अनाज हर साल कीड़े-मकोड़ों के द्वारा हानि पहुँचाने से तबाह हो जाता है । ऐसी स्थिति में किसी न किसी कीटनाशक दवा का प्रयोग तो करना ही होगा । जहाँ तक अभी अमेरिका और इंग्लैंड की बात आई निश्चय ही अमेरिका में लगभग 40 वर्ष तक लगातार ई डी बी का प्रयोग किया गया और अब वहाँ के साइंसदान और शोध करने वाले व्यक्ति इस तताजे पर पहुँचे कि इसको

फौरन रोक दिया जाना चाहिए और यकीनन पिछले कई वर्षों से अमेरिका, इंग्लैंड आदि ऐसे बड़े प्रगति किए हुए देशों के अंदर ई डी बी पेस्टिसाइड का बिल्कुल प्रयोग नहीं हो रहा है । यहाँ पर निश्चय ही एक बहुत बड़ा सवाल उठता है कि इस पेस्टिसाइड से बनाया हुआ सामान या दवाएँ जो बड़े देशों ने अपने देश के अंदर बंद कर दिए हैं क्योंकि जीवन के लिए रिस्क है, क्या ऐसा तो नहीं है जो तीसरी दुनिया के देशों के अंदर यह दवा भेजी जा रही हो क्योंकि आप जानते हैं कि बहुत बड़े वनाध्य देशों का जीवन के बारे में, दुनिया के लोगों के बारे में कल्याण का कोई बहुत बड़ा अच्छा मौलिक विचार नहीं है । इसलिए मैं मंत्री जी से आग्रह करूँगा कि इस विषय में हमें सतर्क रहना चाहिए । कुछ अवसरों में रिपोर्ट्स आई हैं जिनसे हमारा कॉलिंग अटेंशन आया है और माननीय सदस्यों का ध्यान इस तरफ गया है । मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से जानना चाहूँगा कि क्या हुकीकत में कुछ ऐसे केसेज या वाक्यात सामने आए हैं जिनसे पता चलता है कि ई डी बी के प्रयोग किये हुए गेहूँ या दूसरे अनाज या जो दूसरे खाद्यान्न हैं उनके कैंसर या और किसी तरह की बीमारियाँ पनपती हैं और बढ़ती हैं जिन का तजिकरा मोशन के अंदर किया गया है ? हो सकता है कि उन नतायज तक पहुँचने में काफी समय और उस बात को समझने में काफी दिक्कत हो, लेकिन मैं मंत्री जी से कहना चाहूँगा कि सब से ज्यादा इस पेस्टिसाइड का प्रयोग हमारी फूड-बारपोरेशन आफ इंडिया के गोदामों में ही होता है और इसका असर हमारे उन गोदामों में अनाज पर तो पड़ता ही है, लेकिन जहाँ तक शोध कार्य करने वालों का विचार है कि जो व्यक्ति इसका इस्तेमाल करते हैं,

[श्री सैयद सिद्दिके रज़ी]

गोदामों में छिड़कते हैं, उनके स्वास्थ्य पर भी इसका बड़ा खराब प्रभाव पड़ता है।

तो इस स्थिति को जानने के लिए क्या फूड कार्पोरेशन आफ इंडिया के गोदामों में जो कर्मचारी काम कर रहे हैं, मेहनतकश, उनका कोई स्वास्थ्य निरोक्षण इस मुद्दे को, इस प्वाइंट को जहन में रखते हुए किया गया है, क्योंकि यदि इस तरह के इन्स्टान्सेज उन कर्मचारियों में मिलते हैं, तो इस बात में ज्यादा भयवृत्ति मिलती है कि इस पेस्टिसाइड का प्रयोग करने से जीवन को खतरा पैदा होता है। लेकिन यदि इस प्रकार के लक्ष्य उन लोगों में नहीं मिलते हैं, तो उससे ज्यादा भयभीत होने की आवश्यकता मैं समझता हूँ कि नहीं है।

मैं मंत्री जी से जानना चाहूंगा कि हमारी फूड कार्पोरेशन आफ इंडिया और एग्रीकल्चर मिनिस्ट्री के अंदर कौन से ऐसे शोध करने के, रिसर्च करने के सेंटर बनाये गये हैं, जिनसे इस प्रकार की दवाइयों के इस्तेमाल से यदि हानि होती है, तो इसके बारे में हमें पता चल सके।

मैं जानना चाहूंगा कि पेस्टिसाइड के प्रयोग के बारे में हमारी राष्ट्रीय नीति क्या है? मैं चाहूंगा कि मंत्री जी इसके ऊपर भी अपने विचार प्रकट करें।

सब से खास बात यह है, जैसे अभी कहा गया है कि कभी-कभी दवाइयाँ जो हैं, वह इतनी हानिकारक नहीं होतीं, लेकिन उनका ज्यादा प्रयोग उनको हानिकारक बना देता है, जैसे मंत्री जी ने कहा कि साल में एक बार ई डाँ बाँ का छिड़काव होता है, लेकिन कभी-कभी ऐसा होता है कि यह दवाइयाँ ज्यादातर विदेशों से मंगवाई जाती हैं और उनके इस्तेमाल का कोई बहुत अच्छा तरीका हमारे

जो कर्मचारी गोदामों में काम करते हैं, उनको मालूम नहीं होता है। अगरली यह देखा गया है कि जो कन्टेनर्ज होते हैं, उनके ऊपर जो शरायत है और जो तरीके हैं और जो कानसेन्स इस्तेमाल करनी चाहिए, जो खासतौर से ऐसे कदम उठाने चाहिए जिससे कोई नुकसान न हो सके, वह लोकल भाषा में, स्थानीय भाषा में नहीं लिखे होते हैं।

क्या सरकार इस बारे में भी कुछ अपना स्पष्टीकरण करेगी कि जो उसका इस्तेमाल करते हैं, उनको उसकी पूरी ट्रेनिंग दी जाती रही है?

मैं इतना और जानना चाहूंगा कि पिछले दो वर्षों के अंदर कितने ऐसे पेस्टिसाइड जो हैं, वह बैस्टर्न कम्प्लेक्स से हमारे देश के अंदर आयात किये गये हैं, क्योंकि अभी हाल में हाँ उन्होंने अपने देश के अंदर रोक लगाई है। कहीं ऐसा तो नहीं कि वह इस माल को हमारे गीसरे देशों के अंदर इस्तेमाल करना चाहते हों।

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA: Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I agree with the hon. Members and I can understand their anxiety after referring to the press reports which appeared in the newspapers, but Sir, I do not agree with them that it is wscd to a dangerous limit in our country. There are different pesticides which are used for fumigation for the preservation of foodgrains in this country. Out of them one is aluminium phosphide which is mostly and commonly used for fumigation by food handling organisations, like the Food Corporation of India, Central Warehousing Corporation and State Warehousing Corporations. This Pesticide is used most commonly. Then comes methyl bromide which is mostly used for quarantine purposes. And

the third one is ethylene dibromide (EDB) which is the subject matter of the present Calling Attention Motion. This pesticide is used for pre-monsoon godown fumigation. It is not used for silo fumigation. It is used only in the stock godowns in order to preserve the foodgrains and it evaporates because of hot climate in this country. In ?old countries, it does not evaporate and creates problems. But it is not like that in this country. The quantity which *h* used also is very negligible. The residues come only 2 to 5 parts per million. As I have stated in the statement, it is not very high and particularly in this country, the inorganic bromide left behind as residues is in negligible quantity ranging from 2 to 5 parts per million, whereas the tolerance limit is 25 parts per million.

PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: I would like to know whether it is more pro-, portion that is left behind in the United States where they have banned it. You said that it is only negligible. quantity. Is there any evidence that it is non-negligible qu. ir. Uly that i3 left behind in USA?

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA: It is a known fact that it evaporates in heat. Because of the hot climate in this country, it evaporates. Therefore, it remains less as residue and the reports are that only 2 to 5 parts per million/ are remaining as residue. I am not concerned with the other things. The important thing is the residue, how much remains behind, and it is 2 to 5 parts per million, according to reports.

PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: My only point is this. Is it that they had 25 to 30 parts elsewhere? And is that the reason for banning there and not here? So I would like to know from th.; hon. Minister what is that which is remaining, according to reports, in the United States, Unit*! Kingdom and Canada wh we it has been banned?

SHRI LAL, K. ADVANI: Even in advanced countries, it has been found that it is not possible to maintain the doses, therefore, they have banned it. Here it becomes even more difficult, virtually impossible to do so.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA: Will you please bear me, Mr. Advani? Then you can speak whatever you like.

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI: Jusf a minute. I raav recall that similar arguments were advanced when there was a dmaod for a ban on Ethyl Parathion. It was only after a tragedy occurred in Kerala and many people died that it was banned. So let this ban not come belatedly after some trageiy actually happens;

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA: Every drug has a toxic effect. Even lifesaving drugs have toxic effect. That does not mean that we should ban them. It is required for the protection of the foodgrains against insects.

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI: Refer it to an expert body.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA: But at the same time we should take all necessary precautions and we should see that the toxic is within prescribed limits.

SHRI LAL Y.. ADVANI: Let us consult an expert body.

SHRI YOGENRA MAKWANA: I will quote the experts also. Please hear me. Sir, they are very keen to know the opinion of the experts. [have also got the opinion of the experts with me.

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI: They are lobbying through some experts

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA: I do not want say this normally, but it is because of the lobby created by the indigenous manufacturers who are interested in pushing their products¹ that this has come. But I do

[Shri Yogendra Makwana]
not want to go into it. I just want
to give the opinion of the experts
only.

Sir, this is what the experts say: EDB gets evaporated very quickly in sub-tropical countries like India where the temperature is 25° C for most of the period during the year. The possibility of residue being left after fumigation with EDB on foodgrains will be well within the prescribed maximum, residue level of 25 parts per million under the Prevention of food-Adulteration Act and rules.

Now the Central Food Technology Research Institute, Mysore, which is a well known institute, has given this opinion on this subject. One of the leading authorities in the country on the use of grain fumigants. Shri S. K. Majumdar, has opined that there is no reason to be alarmed. He has further stated that Prof.

Bruce Ames, Chairman of the Biochemistry Department, University of California, Berkeley, who is one of the world known experts in this matter and a leading academic expert on cancer-causing substances in foods, has concluded that EDB is only a minor risk as compared to the host of other carcinogens that have always been in foodstuffs. There appears to be no reason whatsoever to get panicky and discontinue the use of EDB. Now, Sir, this is the opinion of the experts. Even then we took necessary precautions. As soon as this came to the notice of the Government through the newspapers and through the reports available from our embassy in Washington, this was referred to the Registration* Committee immediately after getting the information in April 1984*.

The hon. Member wanted to know how long it has been in use. Sir this EDB has been in use for the last more than twenty years.

Sir, about the reports which ap-

peared in America, our Embassy there informed us that "We are told that no firm decision has yet been taken by the US Government. While the US AD has accepted the EPA's suggested standards, if any importer wishes to test the levels, they would need to do so through private commercial laboratories". So, in America also according to present information it is not totally banned but it is voluntary. They have given the guidelines to the user agencies to restrict, but it is only voluntary and no firm decision is taken by them even today. So far as the U.K. is concerned, yes, it is banned there. So, far as Canada is concerned, there also it is not totally banned. Sir, I have a report with me in which the Agriculture Minister of Canada says like this: "This use of the five fumigants including EDB will be banned and ten other fumigants would be ordered off the market unless their manufacturers or users can prove they are needed and safe". If the manufacturers or the users prove that it is needed and safe, then they will not ban. Otherwise they will ban, they say. The Agriculture Minister, Mr. Eugene Whelan, says in a statement that "EDB may be kept solely for fumigating milling equipment if it is shown to be essential". If it is essential, they say, it can be used. Even Canada is using.

PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: What is the date?

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA: This is of 24th January, 1984—a recent one.

PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: So, four months have elapsed.

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI: I quoted a *im* expert body also.... (rt-tesrrruption)

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA: Yes, UN expert body also... (Interrptions)... They have given guidelines. They say it is voluntary; they

have not said ban it totally..../;-terruiMons)..
 . Yes, the Government can ban but they have
 not taken the decision; The other question he
 has asked is, where it is used.

SHRI SHRIDHAR WASUDEO
 DHABE: Private manufacturers SHRI
 YOGENDRA MAKWANA:

Now, this is mainly used by the Food
 Corporation of India, the State Warehousing
 Corporations and the Central Warehousing
 Corporation for fumigation in the stock
 godowns—not in the silos. In silos they are
 not using it. After fumigation it evaporates.

SHRI SHRIDHAR WASUDEO
 DHABE: What about ..(Interrup
 tions)

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA: I am
 coming to it. I know you are more interested
 in it. I told you in the beginning itself that
 you are more interested in some of the indus-
 tries which are based in Bombay. I am
 coming to it.

SHRI SHRIDHAR WASUDEO
 DHABE: In India.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA:
 Not India, Bombay. I know the per-
 sons also. Don't worry; I am
 coming to it

SHRI SAT PAUL MITTAL (Punjab): He
 has indigenous interests.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA: A bulk
 quantity of 300 tonnes was imported in 1978-
 79. It was lying with us. It continued to be
 used till 1983-84 because it has a limited use.
 FCI have decided to procure 300 tonnes for
 1984-85, of which 100 tonnes are available
 indigenously, the rest of 200 tonnes are to be
 imported.

Now he wanted to know the names of the
 companies. Sir, there are 11 Parties and
 others holding certificates of registration
 under the Insecticides Act for import or
 manufac-

ture. They can either import or manufacture
 in the country, and for that
 they have got registrations from
 the Registration Committee under the
 Insecticides Act. There are 11 such
 companies: (1) M/s. Excel Indus-
 tries Ltd. Mr. Dhabe is very much in-
 terested

SHRI SHRIDHAR WASUDEO DHABE:
 No, I am not interested. I am interested only
 in saving the people.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA: (2)
 M/s. Tata Chemicals, Bombay.

(3) M/s. Pest Control (India) Ltd.,
 Bombay.

(4) M/s. A.V.M. Research Institute,
 Hapur.

(5) M/s. Prasad Bros., Bangalore.

(6) M/s. Manish Bio-chem Products
 Ltd., Ghaziabad.

(7) Director, Indian Grain Storage
 Institute, Hapur.

(8) M/s. C. P. Chemicals, Ban-
 galore.

(9) M/s. Shroff Industrial Chem-
 icals Pvt. Ltd. Vapi, Guja-
 rat.

(10) M/s. Bharat Pulverising Mills
 Ltd., Bombay and

(11) M/s. I.M.C.C., Bombay.

Now out of these, currently two
 manufacturers are manufacturing EDB viz.

(i) M/s. Tata Chemicals, Mithapur,
 Gujarat; and

(ii) M/s. Shroff Industrial Chemicals.
 Pvt. Ltd. Vapi, Gujarat.

Their production is like this. The -licensed
 capacity of M/s. Shroff Chemicals is 300
 tonnes per annum. Production during 1982-83
 was 55 tonnes; and in 1983, up to September
 1983, it was 28 tonnes. Excel Industries:
 licensed capacity is 100 tonnes; and they have
 not manufactured. Tata Chemicals:

[Shri Yogendra Makwana] licensed capacity is 108 tonnes; and they had manufactured, in 1982-83, 1 tonne. From these figures one can see there is less indigenous production of EDB and requirement is more. So we have to import.

So far as the other pesticides are concerned, like aluminium phosphide, which is widely used in this country by the Food Corporation, State Warehousing Corporations,' and the Central Warehousing Corporation some instances have come to the notice of the Government where some accidental deaths has taken place due to the use of aluminium phosphate because phosphine gas is more dangerous to human beings because of its extreme toxic effect. So this insecticide is also dangerous. All the three, as I said, are as such useful for the protection of foodgrains, but if they are not used properly, they are dangerous for the human life.

About the tolerance limit, another thing which the hon. Member referred to, the Joint Committee of Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization have said that the tolerance limit in foodgrains is 50 parts per million. Now in our country, as I may tell hon. Members, particularly Shri Lal Advaniji because he was very much pressing on it, 2 to 5 parts per million is the standard. Whereas the World Health Organization and FAO of UNO have recommended the limit up to 50 parts per million, we are very much below the tolerance limit.

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI: This might have been the original standard laid down. But this is a specific enquiry conducted by a panel of experts which said after assessing it, they came to the conclusion, that the level of residues to be expected in some stored products fumigated by ethylene dibromide or its mixture did not accord with its assessment, and, therefore, they felt that the use of the fumigant was inadvisable.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA: I do not know experts he is referring to.

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI: This is a communication dated 15th February, 1984.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA: From whom?

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI: From the FAO, U.N.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA: But this is also a FAO report which I have with me. My reports are more authentic than those with the hon. Member because I have an authentic report from the FAO and the World Health Organisation. You may be quoting from press reports. I am quoting from the communication which I have received from them.

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI: Will the Minister lay it on the Table of the House so that we can study the whole thing? Of course, I am basing my remarks on press reports that I have with me. How can I study?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You are referring to something and he is referring to something else.

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI: This is the communication of the 15th of February, 1984 from the FAO.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA: I am also referring to the FAO and the World Health Organisation report.

SHRI SHRIDHAR WASUDEO DHABE: What is the date?

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA: The date is very recent.

SHRI SHRIDHAR WASUDEO DHABE: Recent means what?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You can look into that communication also.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA: I will give the number, date and the gist of the communication if you want.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No number is required. You look into the communication he is having.

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI: After all, it is not a party issue.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA: [do not take it as a party issue.

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI: We are interested in knowing what the Government's response is to a U.N. communication which says that the use of this pesticide is inadvisable. If an expert body of the UN says it, I say, you should consider it.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA: I should consider it, there is no doubt about it. But what I say is, I am equally correct. I have a communication with me which says that the tolerance limit is 50 parts per million. And I am relying on the information with me. But, if the hon. Member supplies his information, certainly I will look into it.

But at present we have referred to the Registration Committee which had registered it. They are examining the issue, and the Government will take a decision after we received the reports from the committee. Unless we receive the reports from the committee, it is very difficult to say anything at this stage.

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI: Meanwhile the import has been suspended?

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA: There is no necessity of suspending the import at present because it is required and it is essential for the preservation of the foodgrains.

SHRI SANKAR PRASAD MITRA (West Bengal): How many cancer specialists have been included in that committee?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Are there experts on the committee? What is it?

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA: Sir, they are all experts, I will read out the names;

The Chairman of the Committee is Dr. M. V. Rao, Deputy Director General (Crop Science), ICAR which is a registered society. Then, the members are: Dr. K. D. Paharia, Plant Protec-

tion Advisor to the Government of India; Dr. Gothoskar, Drugs Controller of India from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare; Dr. Kashyap, Deputy Director, National Institute of Occupational Health, Ahmedabad; Dr. P. V. Krishna, Advisor (Chemicals), Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, then, Mr. K. Rajendran Nair, Secretary Central Insecticides Board and Registration Committee. This is the Committee.

SHRI SANKAR PRASAD MITRA: That was exactly my point, Sir. From the names he has just read out, it is clear that there is not a single cancer specialist in that committee. What kind of a committee is this? Can this committee advise whether this particular chemical can produce cancer?

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA: This is the registration committee of insecticides. Cancer is only, they say, one of the effects of this chemical. So, it is not necessary to have a cancer specialist on this committee. These are experts.

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI: I am afraid, that is the main charge, and on that ground it has been banned elsewhere.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Would it not be proper to include?

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA: Then we will have to associate somebody.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: There should be one person who is an expert in assessing whether it reacts.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA: Let me examine it. I cannot commit it. I will examine it.

SHRI SANKAR PRASAD MITRA: They can expand the committee.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA: It is not necessary. But, for the information of the hon. Member, I may say I will examine it.

PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: Since this is a very important issue, how long will be taken for examining it? We

[Prof. C. Lakshman] Jo examine it in detail. It is a matter of life and death.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA: It has come to our notice only recently.

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI: The Government itself in its formal statement has said in the last paragraph that the Government will take an appropriate decision regarding continued use of Ethylene dibromide (EDB), after considering the views. That means that this continued use will not be there in the meanwhile even though it has been continuing for 20 years. Whether it should continue or not should now be on the basis of the report given by the Committee and not before that. Therefore, the reply given earlier as to how can we stop the import of EDB is not a right answer. If, after considering the report of this Committee, the Government comes to the conclusion that this EDB should not be used—it should be banned. Then what is the point in import? Therefore, I am pressing for the ban until the report of this Committee. Because of this the decision to import EDB should be suspended in the meantime.

SHRI SANKAR PRASAD MITRA: Mr. Makwana you come from Gujarat—the birth place of Mahatma Gandhi who was against the use of dangerous chemicals for agricultural purposes.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA: Sir, I want to make two, things clear. The first thing is the hon. Member is very keen about the Cancer Specialist. I will have a cancer specialist associated with the Committee for this purpose. *He must* be satisfied. The second thing is very important about which the hon. Member, Shri Advaniji, has said. I will urge upon the Members that the Committee is to arrive at a decision *soon* and will submit its report. In the meantime, there will not be any import. So don't worry about it. The decision will be taken by the Committee immediately because we will apprise them that the Members of this session are very keen about the deci-

sion of the Committee. So they will expedite it and then we will do it.

REFERENCE TO THE REPORTED STRIKE BY STUDENTS OF THE NATIONAL SCHOOL OF DRAMA, NEW DELHI.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, we will take up Special Mentions. Yes, Mr. Advani. Let us be brief so that

we can finish it.

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI (Madhya Pradesh): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I will finish in a few minutes..

Sir, I rise to refer to the continuing strike by the students of the National School of Drama in Delhi. This is a prestigious institution. The students of National School of Drama, Delhi, have been on strike for the past several days. In fact, this has become a perennial feature with that institution. This is an important body, but today it is in bad shape, rather a very bad shape. It has been for a long time facing many many problems. I would like to urge upon the Government to look into, these problems and if necessary constitute a Committee either of the Government or of Parliament to examine how this body is functioning. They do not have a campus. They do not have an auditorium. How strange that the National School of Drama does not even have an auditorium. It does not have a proper staff. There are 3 classes and there is only one teacher for acting. If you go and see the boys hostel you will find it a strange hostel, - 'a dormitory sort of thing. There are so many problems that these boys face that I sometimes wonder how in spite

of these troubles they are able to perform so well. I am a frequent visitor to their performances and I can say that the performances by the students of the National School of Drama are of a very high order and considering of the circumstances in which they work this surprised me. They are on strike because they are faced with so many problems directly related with their needs. These should be sorted out im-