

RAJYA SABHA

Wednesday, the 19th August, 1981/
the 28th Shrawana, 1903 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock, Mr. Chairman in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Supply of sub-standard pesticides to farmers

*41. DR. (SHRIMATI) NAJMA
HEPTULLA:†
SHRI NAND KISHORE
BHATT:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a survey team sent by the Central Government has reported that 58 per cent of the supplies of pesticides made to farmers in the Central zone were sub-standard;

(b) what are the findings of the survey teams in other zones of the country; and

(c) what remedial measures Government contemplate to take in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL RECONSTRUCTION AND IRRIGATION AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (RAO BIRENDRA SINGH): (a) and (b) In October, 1980 the Government constituted the Survey Teams on zonal basis to report on the quality control arrangements for pesticides existing in different States. The Survey Team on Central Zone took 98 samples and found 57 samples (about 58 per cent) to be sub-standard. No assessment as regards percentage of total supplies of pesticides made to the farmers being sub-standard has been made by them. The Survey Team for the Northern Zone found 7 of the 33 samples drawn as not conforming to

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Dr. (Shrimati) Najma Heptulla.

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the required specifications. The Survey Teams for the Western and the Southern Zones did not draw samples. The Team for the Eastern Zone is yet to submit its report. The general finding of the four Teams is that there is need for improving the quality control arrangements of pesticides.

(c) The four reports so far available have been sent to the State Government concerned for immediate remedial action. The reports are also being examined by the Central Government for necessary action at the Central and the State levels.

DR. (SHRIMATI) NAJMA HEPTULLA: Have you laid down any standard of quality for the pesticides as in the case of drugs under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act and as in the case of fertilisers under the Fertilisers Control Act? Sir, a Committee was formed in 1971, a decade ago, under the Act. What action has been taken in this matter because otherwise it costs the nation very much?

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: To part (1) of the question, Sir, I say 'yes'. As regards the working of the Insecticides Act, rules were framed and under those rules, the Act is being enforced by the State Governments.

DR. (SHRIMATI) NAJMA HEPTULLA: There is a great demand for pesticides as there is a demand for fertilisers. Sir, I request the Minister to please tell us why there is a monopoly as far as pesticides licensing is concerned and why only multinational companies are given licences and why are not indigenous companies given any free licences to go into this field of development? I think our scientists are intelligent enough to make pesticides when they can send APPLE in the air.

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: We are encouraging indigenous manufacture of insecticides and pesticides. There is a very large capacity already installed within the country. But there

are certain insecticides and pesticides which we still have to import because their manufacture within the country has not started

SHRI NAND KISHORE BHATT: Sir, I would like to know what steps have been taken by the Registration Committee to standardise the insecticides and the pesticides manufactured and sold in the country?

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: Sir, the Registration Committee only registers the companies and this is being liberally done provided the products have been first tested and they are found to be efficacious for plant protection and they are not injurious to public health. But the implementation of the Act and the actual licensing are to be done at the level of the States. Except in the case of large and medium firms we are encouraging the manufacture of these things in the small-scale sector also. My friend wanted to know the earlier questioner, whether we were encouraging only the multinationals. The fact remains that there are only 14 multinationals as against 700 indigenous cases in the field of manufacture of pesticides.

SHRI SADASIV BAGAITKAR: What about their portion of the trade?

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: You can put your question when your turn comes and I will reply.

SHRI NAND KISHORE BHATT: Is it not also the grievance of the indigenous manufacturers that the Act should be amended to meet the present demand? Should not the Act be amended?

SHRI SUSHIL CHAND MOHUNTA: Sir, fertilizer is very important.....

MR. CHAIRMAN: Louder please.

SHRI ERA SEZHIYAN: Sir, Mr. Bhatt is already putting his question.

SHRI NAND KISHORE BHATT: Is it not necessary to amend the Act?

MR. CHAIRMAN: One question only.

SHRI SUSHIL CHAND MOHUNTA: Sir, fertilizer is very important for the agricultural development in this country and if we have a scandal of the type which the honourable Minister has been pleased to tell, then two things immediately come to anybody's mind. Which was the Government agency which approved the purchase of those fertilizers? That is number one. Were any tests performed for the purchase of these pesticides and fertilizers?

AN HON. MEMBER: Not fertilizers, but pesticides.

SHRI SUSHIL CHAND MOHUNTA: I am sorry. It is pesticides. Which were the firms and which were the Government agencies which approved those pesticides? After having approved them, in the supply of the pesticides by these firms, was it a deliberate act of making the sub-standard or was it there for some other reasons? I would like to know whether, the moment the survey report was there, any inquiry was held and a case was registered against some firms...

MR. CHAIRMAN: The second part of your question has been answered.

SHRI SUSHIL CHAND MOHUNTA: ...and the loss which has been incurred by the farmers. How does the Government intend to compensate these farmers? I ask this because when one goes for purchasing the pesticides, it is for protecting the crops only and if the crops are not protected adequately, then the responsibility is on the Central Government to see that those pesticides are of the right quality.

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: It is precisely with the object stated by

the honourable Member that we decided to set up these Survey Teams and get information on this subject. The Government felt concerned, felt deeply concerned, about the poor quality of the pesticides. I suspected this and warned the insecticide manufactures time and again. We also wrote to the States to take effective action in the matter. But when I felt that we had to be armed with full information and facts and figures on the subject, we decided to set up these Teams and we have now received the full information. It is only with a view to trying to enforce the Act properly and to take effective action against the firms which are supplying the sub-standard material. There are several States—We have now come to know—which have no laboratories at all, where no samples have been lifted by the State agencies and there have been samples lifted and tested, and prosecutions have been launched in many cases. All that information has now come to me. We have written to the States and if is only for the purpose of helping the farmers that we have taken this action.

SHRI HAREKRUSHNA MALLICK: Sub-standard pesticides have been given and these firms are there. What action is he taking against them?

(Interruptions)

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: Instead of appreciating what has been done, the honourable Member knows only to criticise. It is for the first time that we have done this.

(Interruptions)

SHRI HAREKRUSHNA MALLICK: Who is responsible for the poor quality of the pesticides?

(Interruptions)

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: Sir please see this side also.

SHRI HAREKRUSHNA MALLICK: What is the action taken against them?

(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI USHA MALHOTRA:

Please allow me to put my question, Mr. Mallick.

SHRI HAREKRUSHNA MALLICK: Sir..

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nothing of what Mr. Mallick says will be recorded.

(Shri Harekrushna Mallick Continued to speak)

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is not to be taken down.

(Shri Harekrushna Mallick continued to speak)

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have not permitted you to speak.

SHRIMATI USHA MALHOTRA: Will the hon. Minister of Agriculture be pleased to state, what steps the Government intend taking to punish the firms which have been unearthed as was pointed out over the T.V. that certain steps have been taken by the Government? What do they do to give an exemplary punishment to such people, to teach a lesson to those who go in for sub-standard production of pesticides and insecticides?

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: Sir, the punishment depends upon the decision of the Court. As I said, we are now very keen...

MR. CHAIRMAN: As you said just now, you are trying to get information and prosecute.

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: Whosoever has been caught and prosecuted, we shall see that prosecutions are properly attended to by the State agencies, and wherever we can we shall also get the licences of manufacturers cancelled.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Last question.

SHRI SADASIV BAGAITKAR: The hon. Minister did not answer the pertinent question as to who were the Government agencies who certified...

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Bagaitkar, this is becoming itself a pest and I have no pesticides.

(Interruptions)

SHRI SADASIV BAGAITKAR: Let him answer the pertinent question.

(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI PURABI MUKHOPADHYAY: Mr. Sankar Prasad Mitra is a newly elected Member. He is raising his hand. Please give him a chance, because it will be his maiden chance.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. I will give you a chance out of comity of courts.

SHRI SANKAR PRASAD MITRA: I would like to know why prosecutions have not been launched against the delinquent firms.

(Interruptions)

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: Prosecutions are launched after an offence has been detected.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have not detected the offence?

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: The prosecution has been launched by the States. We have also gathered information as to how many people have been convicted and how many cases are pending for a long time. We are taking steps to expedite the decisions in those cases in the courts. But this survey was conducted only to find out how far the States were taking action in this matter. The enforcement of the Act rests with the State Governments and not with the Central Governments. We are not prosecuting people. We have not launched any cases.

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister what steps have been taken to rectify the anomalies, when there are not adequate laboratory facilities, and also there is no quality control as has been pointed out by the survey team, and also because this is a serious matter when prosecutions have not been launched in many cases. For example, I would like to know

from the hon. Minister whether it is true that in the year 1979-80, 385 samples were collected, 134 were analysed, 44 were found to be sub-standard and prosecutions were launched only in 13 cases. It is very interesting to note that in the year 1980-81 it is even worse: 357 samples were collected, 148 were analysed, 30 were found to be sub-standard and prosecution was launched only in 7 cases. Sir, it is very serious. So the Government should take all necessary steps to launch prosecutions in all cases. It is a very serious matter affecting the farmers.

MR. CHAIRMAN: They are taking interest. That they have said.

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: What about quality control?

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: I have already said that some States have not set up any laboratories at all.

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: Why don't you name the States?

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: Those States have not set up the laboratories. At the central level, we have decided to set up five regional laboratories. It will also help the States to send their samples to our laboratories. The State of the hon. Member, who has put the question, has done well. There are seven laboratories in Tamil Nadu at present. But certain States do not have any laboratories at all. We have asked these central teams to survey as to how far this facility exists and what the Central Government should do to provide further facilities in the matter and which are the States which do not have this facility so that we can request them to take effective steps. It is only for that purpose that this survey has been undertaken. You should appreciate the steps that this Government has taken so far. This matter has been neglected so far. Instead of trying to help the Government to implement the law properly, you are trying to criticise us for what we have done.

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: Can't the Central Government make a request to the State Governments to launch prosecutions in all the cases?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is their duty. No direction is needed.

Sub-leasing of Plot for construction of Hotel

*42. SHRI AMARPROSAD CHAKRABORTY:†
SHRI SYED SHAHA-BUDDIN:

Will the Minister of WORKS AND HOUSING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a plot of Government land at the crossing of Janpath and Raisina Road in New Delhi which had been leased to the N.D.M.C. has been sub-leased by the latter to a private company for constructing a hotel;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the N.D.M.C. was specifically barred from sub-leasing it and was expected to construct the hotel itself;

(c) whether Government propose to cancel the lease to the N.D.M.C. for violation of the terms of the lease and to restrain the sub-leasee from proceeding with the construction; and

(d) whether any tenders were called by the N.D.M.C. and on what terms the land has been sub-leased?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF WORKS AND HOUSING (SHRI MOHAMMED USMAN ARIF): (a) and (b) The Government had allotted a hotel site measuring about 4.5 acres, at the crossing of Janpath and Raisina Road to the NDMC for construction of a five-star hotel to meet the requirements of hotel accommodation for Asian Games, 1982. The allotment envisages that the plot will be held initially on license basis by the NDMC

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the house by Shri Amarprosad Chakraborty.

under an agreement, and after the conditions of allotment are fulfilled a lease deed will be executed. Apart from the usual terms and conditions, the allotment is subject to the condition that the NDMC shall not sub-lease the land in favour of any other party but can make such arrangement for construction and running of the hotel as will not involve sub-lease of the plot. NDMC has reported that they have entered into a licence agreement with M/s. Pure Drinks (New Delhi) Ltd. for construction, furnishing and commissioning of a five-star hotel at this site.

(c) Does not arise in view of the fact under the terms of allotment, the NDMC can make such arrangements for construction and running of the hotel as will not involve sub-leasing of the plot.

(d) The NDMC has reported that it invited by advertisements in six daily newspapers on 6/7th February, 1981, reputed firms who were already running Five Star Hotels in India or abroad to discuss possibilities collaboration for construction and running of hotel at this site. In response 17 parties contacted NDMC and ultimately 14 offers were received. The NDMC have accepted the offer of M/s. Pure Drinks (New Delhi) Ltd. for construction, furnishing and commissioning of a Five Star Hotel at this site at their own cost and on payment to NDMC of an annual licence fee of Rs. 2.68 crores or 23 per cent of the annual gross turnover of the hotel, whichever is more. The NDMC has entered into a licence agreement with M/s. Pure Drinks (New Delhi) Ltd. The land has not been sub-leased.

SHRI AMARPROSAD CHAKRABORTY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please be brief. I am sure that a number of questions will be asked and I can assure you that there is no gold medal, no silver medal and no bronze medal.