

notice in which the salary which should have been paid to a teacher has not been paid, he will look into it. That is the policy of the Government and we will take whatever action is possible under the law.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Next question.

Fifth Plan Food Targets

*63. SHRI SHYAMLAL GUPTA : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether at a recent meeting with the State Chief Ministers held in New Delhi, serious doubts were expressed in attaining the Fifth Plan foodgrain targets in the absence of adequate irrigation, power, fertilizer and credit facilities;

(b) if so, what are the year-wise and State-wise food targets for the Fifth Five Year Plan period; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to eliminate the bottlenecks in the way of attaining the food production targets during the Fifth Plan period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ANNASAHAB P. SHINDE) : (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

(a) and (b) In the meetings held recently with the State Chief Ministers, the main focus was on the production programmes of 1974-75. As such the targets for the Fifth Plan were not discussed. The year-wise targets are fixed in the Annual Plans after reviewing the achievements of the previous year. The State-wise Fifth Plan targets for foodgrain production are given at Annexure.

(c) The strategy to achieve food production targets during the Fifth Plan will revolve around the increase in area under important crops; extension of area under high yielding varieties of crops; multiple

cropping; change in cropping pattern; efficient use of inputs like fertilisers, pesticides and irrigation water etc.

ANNEXURE

State-wise Foodgrains Production Targets for the Fifth Plan*

State	Peak targetted production 1978-79
(lakh tonnes)	
1. Andhra Pradesh	93.00
2. Assam	32.00
3. Bihar	120.00
4. Gujarat	60.00
5. Haryana	61.00
6. Himachal Pradesh	14.00
7. Jammu & Kashmir	14.00
8. Karnataka	75.00
9. Kerala	22.00
10. Madhya Pradesh	150.00
11. Maharashtra	85.00
12. Manipur	3.75
13. Meghalaya	11.70
14. Nagaland	1.10
15. Orissa	70.00
16. Punjab	103.00
17. Rajasthan	88.00
18. Tamil Nadu	91.00
19. Uttar Pradesh	250.00
20. Tripura	3.64
21. West Bengal	105.00
22. Union Territories	6.44
All-India	1400.00†

*Source : Draft Fifth Five Year Plan 1974-79, Volume II, Government of India, Planning Commission.

†The aggregate of States and Union Territories is somewhat high than the all-India figures.

SHRI SHYAMLAL GUPTA : The hon. Minister said that the strategy to achieve food production targets will revolve around the increase in area under important crops; extension of area under high yielding varieties of crops; multiple cropping; change in cropping pattern; efficient use of inputs like fertilisers, pesticides and irrigation water, etc. My specific question was whether there is any proposal with the Government to launch an emergency food production drive in the coming kharif season as also in the next kharif season in areas which have abundant resources; if not, whether the Government would consider the desirability of launching such a drive...

SHRI ANNASAHAB P. SHINDE : The question is very clear...

SHRI SHYAMLAL GUPTA : I do not think he has got my question. Shall I repeat it? My specific question is this : Is there any proposal with the Government to launch an emergency food production drive in the coming kharif season as also in the next kharif season in areas which have abundant resources; if not, whether the Government would consider the desirability of launching such a drive...

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM : This question is completely different from the one that appears in the Agenda...

SHRI SHYAMLAL GUPTA : He has not answered it.

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM : The hon. Member is reading a completely different question. Question No. 63 is different.

SHRI SHYAMLAL GUPTA : The answer given to (c) is not what I wanted. My specific question is what I read out just now. The reply is about the Fifth Plan and not the annual plan.

SHRI ANNASAHAB P. SHINDE : In the Plan and the annual plan itself very ambitious targets have been fixed. In a situation like flood or failure of rains, we can take up emergency operations. I am not eliminating that possibility. What was

discussed with the Chief Ministers of States was how in certain difficult situations, for instance in a situation where there is power shortage or shortage of fertilisers, the programme can be made successful. Our effort is to make all sincere efforts to reach the targets which have been laid down in the annual plan with regard to various States.

SHRI SHYAMLAL GUPTA : My second question is this. The annual plan 1974-75 for agriculture has been slashed from Rs. 310.72 crores to Rs. 260.10 crores. How far the pruning in the annual plan is likely to affect the food production target during 1974-75. What is the present machinery to ensure adequate and timely supply of seeds, fertilisers and other essential inputs at proper prices to both at the Central and State levels to various States and to remove difficulties and deficiencies that the small farmers have to face in their procurement? To what extent...

MR. CHAIRMAN : Your question is too long.

SHRI SHYAMLAL GUPTA : To what extent the cost of seeds, fertilisers, etc. is subsidised? What are the...

MR. CHAIRMAN : I cannot permit.

SHRI SHYAMLAL GUPTA : Only two lines more. What are the credit facilities provided to small farmers? Bankers are giving advances only to larger farmers. The smaller farmers are at their mercy.

SHRI ANNASAHAB P. SHINDE : One major input for agriculture is fertiliser. But I would like to remove one general impression from the minds of hon. Members. Of course shortages are there and there is a gap between demand and supply. But the impression should not go round that the availability during the current year is going to be lower than what it was during the last year. In fact, the total availability of fertilizer, NPK, last year... (Interruptions).... Just wait. I am trying to explain the whole thing. Last year, the total availability of NPK fertilizers

came to the tune of 28 lakh tonnes and this year we propose to give to the various States and farmers about 32 to 33 lakh tonnes. So, the total availability would be larger than last year's. Now, the honourable Member referred to the distribution arrangements. Now we are going to make allotments to the State Governments and we have requested the State Governments that to a large extent possible, the quantity of fertilizers should be made available through co-operatives and the public sector agencies. As far as the pool fertilizers are concerned, their distribution is through the public sector agencies.

Then, as regards the seeds, our recent examination shows—and I must concede—that there are many difficulties and there are many weaknesses in the seed production programmes and we have identified those items. For the time being, with regard to the seed availability as per the demands of the State Governments except the bajra seeds, by and large there are no difficulties. Difficulties arise because some of the State Governments come with their demands for seeds just prior to the sowing season. Seed production programmes can be taken up only a year earlier and if firm demands or indents are placed by the State Governments well in advance, then these can be taken up. Now, we have identified the weaknesses and the difficulties and we have explained to the State Governments that they should place their indents in time and in times to come we propose to undertake a very ambitious seed production programme including the programme of production of nucleus and foundation seeds.

As far as the credit availability is concerned, this is a very important aspect of the production programme. Unfortunately, in this country, credit availability to small farmers still continues to present considerable difficulties. Now, the Government has taken up under the Fifth Plan about 160 districts, the SFDA etc., and special arrangements have been made to see that the small farmers receive the credit. But I am prepared to concede that there are many difficulties faced by the

farmers. There are many difficulties, institutional and otherwise also. But we must continue to attain the target and as far as our policy is concerned, we are very clear about it. Policy directives have been given to the nationalised banks and the co-operative banks that they have to give preference and priority for giving credit to the small farmers and as far as the co-operatives are concerned, even a percentage of credit has been earmarked for the small farmers.

श्री प्रकाश वीर शास्त्री : श्रीमन्, भारत के दूसरे राष्ट्रपति डॉ॰ राजाजीवराज गेहेर वर्तमान राष्ट्रपति श्री बी० वी० गिरि तक ने समुद्र के संयुक्त अधिवेशन का उद्घाटन करने हुए, इस बात पर बल दिया कि 1971 के बाद एक भी दाना विदेशों से आयात नहीं किया जायेगा। लेकिन आज जो स्थिति है, मैं जानना चाहूंगा, उसके लिए प्रकृति का कोप दापी है या सरकार की गलत नीतियाँ? आपने-अपने विवरण में जा उत्तर प्रदेश के आंकड़े दिए हैं उसमें बताया है कि अगली पंचवर्षीय योजना में उत्तर प्रदेश में 250 लाख टन गन्ने का उत्पादन होगा, परन्तु उत्तर प्रदेश की बिजली खाद और पानी की जो इस समय दयनीय स्थिति है उनको ध्यान में रखते हुए क्या आप पंचवर्षीय योजना के इन आंकड़ों को पूरा कर सकेंगे; यदि नहीं तो उत्तर प्रदेश में बिजली, पानी और खाद की जो योजनायें हैं उनके द्वारा उत्पादन बढ़ाया जा सके, इसके लिए आपने कोई विशेष कार्यक्रम निर्धारित किया है?

SHRI ANNASHEB P. SHINDE : Sir, the honourable Member has put a very important question. I quite concede the position that there has been some slide back in our agricultural production programmes during the last two years. But, at the same time, our achievement during 1970-71 is that the potential of our agriculture was thrown up and our Indian agriculture has the potentiality to produce more and meet our requirements and I think this is a great achievement and that is why there was a world-wide appreciation of the production programmes in India. But there was some slide-back. We have to find out

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whether our agricultural production programmes are wrong or whether there has been something which is due to factors beyond our control which has affected our production adversely. Now, during 1972-73, the honourable Member himself will appreciate, very large parts of our country had very unusual and unpleasant drought conditions and that gave a terrific setback to the production programmes and our production went down to 95 million tonnes. That is one thing. Of course, to the failure of rains was added the shortage of power and the honourable Member comes from U.P. and he knows about the Rihand reservoir. It is one of the very important reservoirs for the generation of electricity and its catchment areas did not receive any rainfall for two years continuously and there were other factors also and the honourable Members are aware of these things. I am not explaining that this is the only factor. But what I am saying is that power shortage also created some problems for our production programmes.

The power shortage also created some problems for production programme. Naturally I have no remedies for everything. But I can only say that the potential of Indian agriculture continues to be the same. Our basic strategy is sound, supported by modern seed industry, necessary seed law, increasing availability of fertilizers and modern intensive techniques of development of agriculture. The only thing is that the power shortage is likely to present some difficulties. It has actually presented some difficulties. But my hon. friend will appreciate that three or four days back my senior colleague, Shri Subramanian, took a very drastic decision for protecting the interests of the country. He even took the decision of stopping fertilizers plant at Nangal and that power has been made available for transplantation of paddy to Punjab and Haryana. The options are very limited. The choice before us was whether to lose the nurseries. But power was not available. The Government of India is attending to these problems. We are aware of these difficulties. But I can

only say that as far as our basic strategy is concerned, I think there is nothing wrong. There can be areas where some weaknesses can be removed. But I think that our strategy is very sound which has been evolved with the help of scientists, politicians and others.

SHRI HARSH DEO MALAVIYA: Sir, in the tabled reply, in paragraph (c) while mentioning the strategy to achieve food production, we find that there is no mention of land reforms. May I ask the hon. Minister, what importance does he attach, or does he attach no importance, to land reforms and to the redistribution of holdings by putting a ceiling upon holdings? What is its place? Is it not a fact that since this land reforms aspect has been ignored, our food production has very much failed?

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: Sir, we attach great importance to it; there is no doubt about it. This question came in the background of the discussions with the Chief Ministers as far as annual production programme is concerned. That is why there is no specific reference to it. But we attach great importance to it. We have drawn the attention of the Chief Ministers to this particular aspect, that whatever land laws have been enacted according to the national guidelines they have to implement them with sincerity, as early as possible.

SHRI HARSH DEO MALAVIYA : What has been done about it, specially in the Union Territories?

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: I would request the hon. Member to put a separate question on land reforms, and I shall be glad to answer it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right.

SHRI P. K. KUNJACHEN: Sir, the Minister has expressed complacency. But the things are moving in the opposite direction. Brown hoppers are spreading from field to field. Also, a kind of weed, especially in Kerala, known as the African payal, is spreading from field to field. At the same time, the Government is increas-

ing cess on water, electricity charges and the prices of manure. Also, there is no manure available. There is no land policy and the Government has miserably failed to bring land legislation...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you putting your question or not?

SHRI P. K. KUNJACHEN: Considering all these things—the taxation, the absence of pesticides, etc.—how does the Government expect to produce more or achieve the target? The Government is not going to achieve the target unless and until the Government has evolved a comprehensive policy relating to land reforms and all other aspects. Is the Government prepared to consider all these things in a comprehensive way? That is what I wanted to know.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: Sir, I hope the hon. Member will not misunderstand me. For instance, he made a statement that we are raising the water cess. Now, there is, I think, a common understanding on all sides, irrespective of party affiliations in this country. The agriculturists who are the beneficiaries should not mind this thing. I do not know what he means by 'comprehensive' scheme. I am prepared to welcome any constructive suggestions from him. In fact, I am prepared to furnish any material to him to help me. We are not prepared to say that we are hundred per cent right. But we have a comprehensive plan and programme for agricultural production. We shall appreciate if he can pinpoint a specific aspect. For instance, for power shortage or failure of rainfall, I have no ready-made answer. Perhaps a long-term plan for a proper balance between the thermal power generation and hydro power generation is necessary. It will take a long time. But as far as comprehensive plan is concerned, we have a really very comprehensive plan for agricultural production.

SHRI P. K. KUNJACHEN: Does the Government of India think that the modern plan is increasing the pressure on land?

Does the modern levy mean increasing the pressure on land reforms or does it mean decreasing the pressure on land reform?

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: This is really not a question which can fall within the purview but I would not like to avoid it. I do not think implementation of land reforms would increase the pressure on land. Pressure on land is there because of a number of other factors. All other factors are known to the hon. Member. I can only say that in this country there have been quite large holdings in certain parts and their utilisation to the maximum extent possible has not been made. Land reforms are intended to make intensive use of land and, therefore, I think as far as our economy is concerned, it will get more strength.

SHRI V. B. RAJU: Part (c) of the question relates to the steps taken by Government to eliminate the bottlenecks. Most significant bottleneck is the erratic nature of the monsoon. Is the Minister aware that in this present first year of the Fifth Plan, the monsoon has failed in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, part of Mysore, Part of Maharashtra from where the Minister comes and part of Madhya Pradesh? Has the Minister any information to give to us and what steps would the Government take? It seems that in a cycle of 3 or 4 years, one year is going to be a drought year in these parts of the country. This should have been anticipated. Will the Minister assure the House that immediate steps will be taken to produce food at places where water is available in the reservoir, by supplying fertilizers instead of scarce supply of fertilizers here and there? Will the Minister look to an emergent policy of distribution of fertilizers and take steps to meet the present emergency in the parts of the country which I have just referred to?

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: This year the monsoon has been generally late. In fact, in North India also, ten days back the picture was not encouraging. South India received early rains and even pre-

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monsoon showers in some places but there has been some dry spell. If this dry spell is over in 8 or 10 days, perhaps, the situation may not deteriorate but I cannot say anything. I cannot forecast the behaviour of monsoon in times to come. But the suggestion of the hon. Member is very relevant. In fact, my senior colleague and even the Prime Minister have toured various States and discussed with the Chief Ministers and the Agricultural Officers. One of the points that is being conveyed to the State Governments is that we have limited resources but we would like to utilise them to the maximum national advantage. Therefore, all these suggestions are very useful. We have them in mind and we propose to have an elasticity in our agricultural planning. In fact, even emphasis has been laid on tuber crops like potatoes and tapioca because per unit production is much higher. All these points are being borne in mind while taking all these difficulties into consideration.

SHRI NIREN GHOSH: Sir, I would like to know what happened to the much-wanted green revolution? In the name of self-sufficiency and export of food, is the Minister aware that lakhs of peasants just now are being evicted from their lands? He talks of increased production. How can this happen in view of this large-scale eviction? How can these small weak people, the small peasantry get those inputs? They have no credit. He talked of difficulties in supplying credit to the small farmers. First there is eviction and then no supply of credit to the small farmers and no irrigation for multiple cropping. It can reduce production...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now you have put your question.

SHRI NIREN GHOSH: ...Do you propose to increase food production to make up for the shortfall? To what extent are you going to do it? What will be the cost in hard currency, I would like to know.

SHRI ANNASAHAB P. SHINDE: Sir, as far as the last part of the hon. Member's question is concerned, he can put a separate question and we are available to him to reply to his queries. As far as the first part is concerned, if eviction is taking place in any part of the country, I think we have common sentiments on this that no eviction should take place and necessary protection should be provided. Even if it is taking place in small areas, I would appeal to the State Governments to attend to this problem and see that no eviction takes place. But the point is that it is not taking place all over the country; it is taking place in small areas. I am not minimizing the importance attached to the point raised by the hon. Member. The point is that a general impression should not go as if it is taking place in many parts. In many parts, the tenants have been given permanent rights of occupancy and ownership also. If the eviction is taking place in certain vulnerable areas, it needs attention. But that should not upset the production programme.

SHRI NIREN GHOSH: I seek your protection, Sir. You say that there are difficulties in supplying credit to the small farmers. There are no irrigation facilities. How can they make intensive cultivation? How can you expect the production to shoot up?

SHRI ANNASAHAB P. SHINDE : I have already replied earlier, therefore, I did not repeat it. While replying to another hon. Member I did say that credit continues to present a weak link in our production programme. As a result of efforts made during the last three or four years, we have been able to identify the weaknesses. And small farmers development agencies have now been operating in almost 85 districts in the country. During the Fifth Plan, 160 districts in the country would be covered by these agencies. These agencies are mainly expected to attend to the problems mentioned by the hon. Member such as providing credit—even medium and long-term credit—providing necessary inputs and all that. And

even outside these areas, necessary directives have been given by the Government of India to credit institutions to give preference to the needs of small farmers.

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: The target fixed for the Fifth Plan is 140 million tonnes. But the Government is aware that they have miserably failed to achieve the target that was fixed for the Fourth Plan. So far as food production is concerned, the shortfall is of the order of 40 per cent. I do not know on what basis the Government says that they are going to achieve this target, and on what basis has it been fixed. The hon. Minister is aware that 75 to 80 per cent of our land is not irrigated and it has dry farming. I am sorry to say that not even 25 per cent of the provision made for the development of dry farming in the Fourth Plan has been spent.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Kindly put your question.

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: But in our country, 75 per cent of the land depends only on rains. If there are no rains, nothing could be done. That is why they have thought of the development of dry farming during the Fourth Plan period. I want to know as to what has happened to that and whether they are going to pay the same attention as they have done during the Fourth Plan. If they are going to give any special attention for the development of dry farming, I think, it is possible to achieve some targets. I want to know the steps that the Government intends to take in this respect.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: Sir, I quite agree with the hon. Member that dry farming is almost 70 to 75 per cent in the country today. It has a very important place in our agricultural economy. But even under dry farming, for instance, there is a classification. Certain dry farming areas are covered by assured rainfall or well distributed rainfall. That category is different. There the problem is really the supply of inputs, new seeds and the extension machinery. Now, there are other

categories also in the area from where the hon. Member comes and I myself come. There is the drought-prone area where the distribution of rainfall is not only uneven but even the total quantum that is available is very limited. Those areas really present a very very difficult problem. In these areas very special programmes have been taken up. I would like to put the record straight and say that for these drought-prone areas special programmes were taken up and all the amount that was sanctioned in the Fourth Plan has been spent. In fact, in some States the money spent has been in excess of the sanctioned amounts and they are now pestering us that we should issue sanctions for these amounts.

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: No, that is not the...

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: I would like to take the hon. Member with me. He is a very knowledgeable Member. He understands agriculture. There was only one item on which there has been a shortfall. There were certain dry farming projects and they took some time. But they were experimental projects covering only few tehsils. Our Indian Council of Agricultural Research and State Departments of Agriculture are trying to carry out similar experiments for identifying the problems of dry agriculture. There has been some shortfall in expenditure but we shall attend to that and rectify the position in the coming years. Sir, in the days to come our attention and strategy should be on both, i.e. exploiting the areas where irrigation potential has been created by spending very large capital amounts and, at the same time, not neglecting dry farming areas.

श्रीमती लक्ष्मी कुमारी चूडावत: अभी सवाल के उत्तर में मंत्री महोदय ने विस्तार से बताया कि प्रोडक्शन बढ़ाने के लिए सरकार ने इतना किया और यह भी सही है कि ड्राउट केवल एक साल के लिए पड़ा। तो मैं मंत्री महोदय से जानना चाहती हूँ कि प्रोडक्शन इतना होने के बाद भी

[श्रीमती लक्ष्मी कुमारी बूढावत]

आज जो अन्न की कमी अपने देश में हो रही है क्या यह हॉर्ट्स द्वारा अपने कटोरे में खाना कर लेने के कारण हो रही है ? क्या इसका मुख्य कारण यह है ? क्या हॉर्ट्स के पास से उसको निकालने की कोई योजना सरकार के पास है ?

SHRI ANNASAHAB P. SHINDE: Sir, one thing is true and that is that there is not so much scarcity as is being felt or considered. Actually, the production this year is much larger as compared to the last year. But, even then, I think, hoarding of stocks at various levels is causing some trouble to us. I think that would be a correct analysis of things as far as production is concerned. As I have already explained, there has been some setback to production due to the peculiar behaviour of nature, failure of winter rains and some other factors.

SHRI SANAT KUMAR RAHA: Sir, I want to know from the hon. Minister what the rational basis and principles are on which distribution of fertilizers is being made. Is there any discriminatory policy between State and State? If not, what is the basis for the distribution of fertilizer? The State of West Bengal demanded certain quantity of fertilizer. It has been neglected. I want to know from the hon. Minister how the demand of West Bengal has been satisfied in this matter.

SHRI ANNASAHAB P. SHINDE : Sir, so far as the distribution of fertilizer between different States is concerned, we have evolved certain principles. First of all, we have given option to the State Governments to select any year during which there was maximum consumption of fertilizer. They can select any year after 1969-70. Then, over and above that 5 per cent to 12 per cent is added for every additional year and the total quantity is worked out on the basis of production programmes as to how much is to be used for high-yielding varieties and how much for non-high-yielding varieties. Therefore, well set principles have been laid down for all the States. But, some of the State Governments have ex-

pressed dissatisfaction about the way in which the allotment is being made. Therefore, the Government of India has constituted a fresh committee on which some of the State Governments are also represented and that committee is at the moment working out certain principles. On account of shortages and gap between demand and supply there has been some dissatisfaction. We are now trying to work out sound principles which will enable us to use rationally the fertilizer to maximum advantage to have maximum production.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI : Sir, the hon. Minister has given so many explanations and described a very hopeful picture. I would like to know how the targets are going to yield results and how they are going to be increased.

[Mr. Deputy Chairman in the Chair].

The hon. Minister is saying that the present programme is suffering on account of rains. That is a natural cause. But the production of quality seeds by the National Seeds Corporation has failed the Government and agriculture. I myself have sown the fields, jowar and other crops, for which standardised seeds were purchased. But germination is only 40 to 45 per cent. That is the latest report. The same is the position with the poor farmer. If germination is only 40 to 45 per cent, who is responsible for this. This is the certified seed given through Zila Parishads. One of the private sector units, the Patel and Co. of Akola and Jalgaon is supplying seeds to Maharashtra through Zila Parishads. But, germination has not come above 40 per cent.

Would you assure that the company will be enquired into and who is responsible for this lapse, will be gone into? I do not want to touch other problems but the position is very grave, not on account of rains but because the seed programme is faulty.

SHRI ANNASAHAB P. SHINDE : I have made general observations about the seed programme and I have even admitted cer-

tain weaknesses and the need to strengthen it. I have indicated the lines also which we propose to follow. As far as this specific case which has been brought to the notice by the hon. Member on the floor of the House is concerned, we shall enquire from the State Government and we shall...

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: Not from the State Government but from Patel and Company Akola.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: I appreciate the enthusiasm of the hon. Member. I would like to tell the hon. House that there is a seed law and in fact this country, India, has one of the best seed laws in the world. Unfortunately, there has been some weakness in the implementation. What will have to be done is to see how to implement the seed law with the help of the State Government. That is a larger issue.

As far as this specific case is concerned, we will make reference to the State Government and find out and also suggest to the State Government to take stringent action if there is some cheating involved or if somebody has deliberately tried to exploit the farmers.

As far as rainfall is concerned, I do not think we should take a frightening view. If the rainfall situation improves in 10 days, perhaps, the situation will be absolutely normal. Even if it does not come to that, as a nation, I think we should boldly and courageously work out a plan and see that this country is in a position to act and has the ability to face some of these difficulties...

SHRI NIREN GHOSH: Not with you.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: Do not always move in the dreamland; move in the practical field.

SHRI YASHPAL KAPUR: There have been schemes like SFA, NLFA, in certain taluqas of the districts all over the country. Is the Ministry proposing to extend

the benefits under these schemes to the small farmers and marginal farmers during the Five Year Plan?

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: I have replied earlier that this will be extended to 160 districts in the country, that is practically half of the country will be covered. As far as the remaining area is concerned, we have given general suggestions to the State Governments and directions to the financial institutions to help farmers in the remaining areas. But as I said this is an area where we seek the co-operation of the politicians and social workers. We have to deal with millions of farmers and the magnitude of the problem is very vast.

SHRI N. R. CHOUDHURY: Sir, I want to know whether they consider that whatever measure is taken for higher production of rice, that is not possible without a pest umbrella. I want to know whether the hon. Minister has considered that and if so, what steps is he going to take to stop this pest attack on rice so that the target of production can be achieved.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: The hon. Member has rightly pointed out that major problem in rice today is the pest attack. Even if the crop is there, even if we have other inputs, the pests bring along a devastation on the crop. So our entire approach is to provide plant protection. We have even suggested involvement of students community in this exercise. Even the Prime Minister is having talks with the State Governments and we are trying to see to what extent emergency squads could be constituted to protect the crops from the pests.

12 NOON

And as far as availability of inputs, plant protection material, pesticides and technical grade material are concerned, we have tied up the ends to either indigenous production or necessary imports.

श्री महादेव प्रसाद वर्मा : श्रीमन्, पिछले कई वर्षों से लगातार खेती की पैदावार गिरती जा रही है। क्या मैं सरकार से पूछ सकता हूँ कि हमके पीछे किसानों के विरुद्ध कोई विशेष नीति काम कर रही है कि पैदावार का दाम कम किया जाये, पानी का दाम बढ़ाया जाये और खाद का दाम बढ़ाया जाये ? क्या सरकार इस नीति के अन्तर्गत पैदावार का दाम कम कर रही है जिससे किसानों के जीवन पर संकट आ रहा है ?

SHRI ANNASAHAB P. SHINDE: It would not be a correct understanding, in fact, to say that production is progressively going down. If I can make a submission, production is progressively coming up and I can justify it by figures. Take the case of wheat. Our production in the country was 10 to 11 million tons. Now it has touched 24 to 25 million tons. Even in rice production last year despite the whims of nature, etc. We had a record rice crop and it was mainly because of new seeds, new strategy of agricultural production. The main thing is because of our population increase it is not adequate to meet our demand and there has been some setback during the last two years in agricultural production. But to say that somebody is working against the interests of farmers, I do not think it would be a correct appreciation. On prices we can have two views as to what should be reasonable prices. Ultimately we have to balance the interests of the consumers who are very poor in this country and at the same time we have to look to the interests of the producers. I would like to tell the hon. Member that we do like to encourage agriculturists in this country to produce more and more and that is why our effort is to help the agriculturist so that he is in a position to successfully implement the programme.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over.

Re Starred Question No. 64

SHRI KRISHAN KANT: Mr. Deputy Chairman, before you proceed to the next item I would like to submit that the next

question is an important question, but due to lack of time it could not come up today and that is on procurement of wheat. During the last Session you had seen how the House wanted to discuss the new procurement policy. Mr. Om Mehta said "We shall discuss it in the next Session". We have given notice of it. This question could not come up. I want to request you kindly to give some time during this Session so that we can discuss how the new procurement policy has been working.

श्री श्रीम प्रकाश त्यागी : श्रीमन् यह महत्वपूर्ण विषय है, इस पर डिस्कशन होना चाहिए।

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You send notice of discussion.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT: We have sent.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: If you have, then we shall see. Next item, Papers to be laid on the Table.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Report of the Committee on operational cost of Food Corporation of India

*64. SHRIMATI RATHANABAI

SREENIVAISA RAO :

SHRIMATI PRATIBHA SINGH :

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA :

SHRIMATI LEELA DAMODARA
MENON :

SHRI KHURSHED ALAM KHAN:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to refer to the answer to Starred Question 303 given in the Rajya Sabha on 8th May, 1974 and state the action taken by Government on the recommendations of the Committee on the operational costs and administrative overheads of the Food Corporation of India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ANNASAHAB P. SHINDE): The mechanics of implementing the recommendations made by the Committee are being worked out by the Food Corporation of India.