

Financial assistance to artists

1072. SHRIMATI AZIZA IMAM: Will the Minister of EDUCATION, SOCIAL WELFARE AND CULTURE be pleased to state.

(a) whether Government have any scheme for providing financial assistance to artists in the field of fine arts, literature, sculpture, music (vocal and Instrumental), dance and drama who have made valuable contribution and are at present in financial stringency; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WELFARE AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE (SHRI D. P. YADAV): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A scheme has been in operation since 1952-53 for extending financial assistance to persons who have made contributions in art and letters but are now in indigent circumstances and to dependents of such writers and artists who leave their families unprovided for. Under this scheme, about 1200 writers and artists or their dependents are currently receiving financial assistance from Government. In cases where assistance has been sanctioned prior to April 1961, the Central Government is meeting the entire expenditure. In other cases, the Central Government and State Governments concerned are sharing the expenditure in the ratio of 2:1.

As the funds available for this scheme have been barely sufficient to meet the existing commitments, it has not been possible since 1-4-1969 to consider fresh cases. A proposal is, however, under consideration to reactivate the above scheme so as to consider fresh cases under it.

Shortage of Food

1073. SHRI M. K. MOHTA : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the extent of present shortage of food, if any, in the country against the anticipated demand; and

(b) the quantity of food proposed to be imported during the current year and the extent to which the shortages are likely to be met as a result thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ANNASAHAB SHINDE):

(a) and (b) Shortfall in production of foodgrains in 1972-73 is estimated at about 10 million tonnes compared to that in 1971-72. Requirements of foodgrains are dependent on a number of factors is availability, other substitute foodstuffs, their comparative prices, levels of income, population growth, extent of urbanisation, etc. It is, therefore, not possible to frame any precise quantitative assessment of foodgrains requirements as also of the shortage of foodgrains.

In order to replenish the stocks of foodgrains with the Government, a quantity of about 4.1 million tonnes of foodgrains has been purchased from abroad from December, 1972 to October, 1973. In addition, the Russian offer for a loan of 2 million tonnes of wheat has been accepted by the Government.

Agitation launched by the employees of F.c.r.

1074. SHRI DEBANANDA AMAT SHRI LOKANATH MISRA : SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO : SHRI K. C. PANDA :

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether distribution of wheat throughout the Union Territory of Delhi