

high level meetings in the Ministry and decisions taken thereon. Further action to implement the various decisions is being taken.

SUBSIDY ON FOODGRAINS

1369. SHRI R. P. KHAITAN: Will the Minister of FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to refer to the answer to Starred Question No. 275 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 6th March, 1970 and state:

(a) the names of the States and the amount of subsidy for foodgrains being provided by Government of India to the States and its relevant data for the last three years;

(b) whether Government propose to abolish subsidy for foodgrains keeping in view the improved food situation of the country;

(c) if so, since when; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION (SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE): (a) The Government of India do not give subsidy to any State for procurement or distribution of foodgrains. Subsidy if any is built-in into the issue prices and the issue prices for the Central stocks are the same throughout the country.

(b) to (d) The Government has already reduced substantially the subsidy on foodgrains consistent with the objective of the price policy, viz., ensuring remunerative price to the farmer and reasonable prices to the consumer, particularly the vulnerable sections of the society.

WORKERS' EDUCATION

1370. SHRI R. P. KHAITAN: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND REHABILITATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have reviewed the programme of workers' education;

(b) if so, the results thereof; and

(c) the steps taken to enlarge the scope of workers' education?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND REHABILITATION (SHRI D. SANJIVAYYA): (a) to (c) The National Commission on Labour has recently carried out a comprehensive review of the Workers Education Programme and its recommendations are now before Government. A copy of the Report of the National Commission on Labour is available in the Parliament Library.

PLANT PROTECTION OFFICE AT AMRAVATI

1371. SHRI T. G. DESHMUKH:

SHRI N. P. CHAUDHRI:

Will the Minister of FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Central Plant Protection and Quarantine Office at Amravati is being abolished; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION (SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE): (a) Yes, Sir. The Central Plant Protection Station, Amravati has been closed from 28th February, 1970.

(b) The Station was opened in 1957 to assist the State Government with technical personnel, plant protection equipment and pesticides for the control of crop pests and diseases outbreaks. Since Maharashtra State is having now fairly substantial organisation for this work, the Station has been closed.

BIOLOGICAL CONTROL OF PESTS AND INSECTS

1372. SHRI T. G. DESHMUKH:

SHRI N. P. CHAUDHRI:

Will the Minister of FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any research has been conducted in regard to the biological control of pests and insects which are harmful to agriculture; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION (SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE): (a) Yes, Sir. Research has been conducted and work is also in progress in

regard to the biological control of insects which are harmful to agriculture.

(b) Work has been done for utilisation of indigenous parasites for the control of various pests. Two outstanding examples are those of *Trichogramma minutum* for the control of sugarcane borers and *Microbracon*, *Elasmus*, *Trichospilus* and *Perisporus* for the control of *Nephantis* caterpillar of coconut. Some work has also been done on the import and acclimatisation of exotic natural enemies of certain pests. Three such introductions have helped to keep in check the insect pests concerned, viz., *Aphelinus mali* on woolly aphid of apple, *Rodolia cardinalis* on the cottony cushion scale of citrus and *Cryptolaemus montrouzieri* for the control of mealy bugs of citrus. Similarly, the cochineal insect (*Dactylopius* spp.) has been used in South India for wiping out the prickly pears (*Opuntia*) weed. The consensus of opinion among the leading workers in the field of biological control is that there is greater scope for success in the control of indigenous pests of crops with the importation of exotic parasites and predators. Some efforts have been made recently in this direction.

The Commonwealth Institute of Biological Control established a station at Bangalore in cooperation with the Government of India in 1957. Since then much valuable information on the indigenous natural enemies of several important pests has been collected on various biological control projects. This will be helpful in selecting suitable, potentially effective natural enemies of these pests occurring in other countries for introduction and trials in India.

Workers in the field of biological control have also succeeded in establishing in India the following exotic natural enemies: *Prospactella perniciosi* against the San Jose Scale of apples, exotic races of *Trichogramma australicum* and *T. japonicum* against sugarcane borers and the gall fly *Procecidochares utilis* against the croton weed (*Eupatorium adenophorum*), etc., and worked out the laboratory rearing techniques. These are now available for field tests.

PRODUCTION OF COTTON

1373. SHRI M. K. MOHTA :

SHRI R. P. KHAITAN :

Will the Minister of FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government propose to formulate a package programme to raise cotton production in the country;

(b) whether the programme has since been finalised; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the extent to which the production of cotton is likely to be raised as a result thereof and the likely reduce in the import of cotton?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION (SHRI ANNASAHAB SHINDE): (a) and (b) Centrally Sponsored Schemes for increasing the production of cotton on the lines of package programme are being implemented in potential areas of important cotton growing States and will be continued during the remaining years of the Fourth Five Year Plan.

(c) The details are as follows :

1. Maximised Production of Cotton.

(i) Package programme to cover an area of 4.54 lakh hectares annually under which technical staff is provided to guide the farmers and 25% subsidy is given on plant protection chemicals and hand operated equipment.

(ii) Production of adequate quantity of nucleus and foundation seed to progressively saturate all the tracts with pure seed. Government of India meets 100% grant for this scheme on cultivation charges and other contingencies.

(iii) Laying out of a large number of demonstration plots to educate the farmers in the new improved techniques of cotton cultivation and benefits of plant protection. The entire cost of seeds, and plant protection chemicals required for these plots is met by the Government of India.

(iv) Establishment of facilities for voluntary grading of kapas at regulated markets located in the central