

RAJYA SABHA

Friday, the 21st August, 1970/the 30th
Shraavana, 1892 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock,
MR. CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

SHORTAGE OF SOYABEAN OIL

*530. SHRI M. K. MOHTA:†

SHRI SITARAM JAIPURIA:

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

(a) whether it is a fact that there is an acute shortage of soyabean oil in the country which has hit hard the vanaspati manufacture;

(b) what is the requirement of soyabean oil for vanaspati industry annually;

(c) whether Government have decided to import soyabean oil to stabilise oil prices in the markets; and

(d) if so, what is the quantity to be imported this year and from which country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & CO-OPERATION (SHRI ANNASAHAB SHINDE): (a) No, Sir. The imports of soyabean oil are planned with reference to the indigenous availability of edible oils and needs of the vanaspati industry.

(b) This depends on the production of indigenous raw oils from year to year and its adequacy for meeting the demand therefor.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The possibility of importing 1,35,000 tonnes of soyabean oil from the U.S.A. under P.L. 480 during July, 1970—June, 1971 is being explored.

SHRI M. K. MOHTA: In view of the fact that there is a very serious shortage of all kinds of edible oils in the country, so much so that the output of oilseeds has been hardly 75 lakh tonnes as against the Third Plan target of 98 lakh tonnes and the Fourth Plan target of 107 lakh tonnes, may I ask the hon. Minister as to how much foreign exchange it will cost the country to import the 1.35 lakh tonnes of soyabean oil from the U.S.A., as has been stated by the hon. Minister, and what is the reason why oil is being imported from the U.S.A. and not the soyabean itself which could be crushed in the country?

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri M. K. Mohta.

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SHRI ANNASAHAB SHINDE: First of all I would like to say that we do not import soyabean oil for direct consumption. But as the hon. House is aware, there was due to drought and other reasons a substantial shortfall in the production of groundnut, and we get our edible oil from groundnut. The Vanaspati industry uses groundnut as one of its important raw materials. In order to make up the shortfall we have been importing soyabean oil. As to what would be the foreign exchange if we have to import, as the hon. Member asked, 1.35 lakh tonnes of soyabean oil, it will depend at the time on whatever the purchase price is, but broadly I can say that when we imported in 1969 1.12 lakh tonnes of soyabean oil, the total cost came to about Rs. 5½ crores in foreign exchange including freight and other things. From that price some judgment can be had. About the question as to why not import soyabean itself in the raw form, I think the U.S. Government is prepared to offer oil, but not soyabean. In our own country there is no arrangement so far to crush soyabean seed itself, but now we are making arrangements because we are trying to increase production, and we have advised the Food Corporation to make some arrangement for crushing soyabean in our own country.

SHRI M. K. MOHTA: My second question to the hon. Minister is whether the Government has investigated the possibility of meeting the shortfall in our requirements of oil by higher production of minor oilseeds such as neem, mohua, kusum, karanja and sal seed, etc.; whether the Government has also investigated the possibility of increased oil turnover by encouraging solvent extraction plants which, if developed to the fullest possible capacity in the country, will be in a position to meet the entire shortfall, so that whatever is the foreign exchange outgo, whether it is Rs. 15 crores or Rs. 20 crores, could be saved entirely.

SHRI ANNASAHAB SHINDE: Sir, the hon. Member is right because all these oilseeds are important in our economy. Even from the research side we are trying to improve their seed quality, the seed genetic materials and also on the production aspects. But one of the main difficulties in our country is that most of our oilseeds are under rain-fed conditions, they are grown in rain-fed conditions. If there is any fluctuation or any irregularity therein, then it affects production. But I feel that what is necessary in India is to diversify our base of oilseed production. For instance, we have introduced soyabean this year, and there will be sowing to the extent of one lakh acres. Then we have introduced sun-flower seed. We have introduced some seeds from the Soviet Union. We have tried them under various climatic conditions and that has given encouraging results. If we diversify our base, the oilseed production, perhaps it may be possible to make up the shortfall.

SHRI M. K. MOHTA: The second part of my question was about extracting oil from the oil-seeds that are available in the country.

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE: I said, yes, Sir.

श्री निरंजन वर्मा : क्या श्रीमान् यह बतायेगे कि अपने यहां पर जैसा आपने बताया, मूंगफली की कमी होने के कारण वनस्पति तेल के उत्पादन में कमी हुई। आपने यह भी बताया कि पिछले 3 वर्षों में महाराष्ट्र, मध्य प्रदेश और गुजरात इन तीन प्रदेशों में मूंगफली बहुत अधिक हुई थी लेकिन तब भी मूंगफली की कमी के कारण तेलों के उत्पादन में कमी हुई। तो क्या आप यह प्रपोज करते हैं कि इन तीनों प्रान्तों में जब कभी मूंगफली नहीं आए तो उन स्थानों पर किसानों के लिए सोयाबीन का बीज आप सरकार की तरफ से देंगे और उसकी उन्नति करने के लिए और उसकी कृषि करने के लिए आप प्रत्येक प्रकार की सहायता देंगे ताकि जब कभी मूंगफली का तेल उपलब्ध न हो तो सोयाबीन के तेल को वनस्पति तेल के काम में लाया जा सके।

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE: The hon. Member is right. That is our approach. And the National Seed Corporation which is a public sector undertaking has been asked to take up a very large programme of soyabean seed production, and in addition to that, the Pant Nagar Agricultural University and also the Madhya Pradesh Jawaharlal Agricultural University have taken up this seed development programme.

SHRI S. D. MISRA: The prices of Vanaspathi products have been rising since the last few years. Especially this year, there was a very great rise, the principal reason being—I think the hon. Minister will agree—that oil-seed production has not risen. I have just before me his Ministry's Report on the last page of which it is said in a statement that the index of rise from 1955 up to 1969 has been only of the order of 91 then and 95 now, whereas other agricultural items have gone up from 102 to 130. Therefore it is obvious from his own Ministry's statement that oil-seed production has been very slow, it is almost static. In view of the fact that the prices are rising, what has the Government done for more soya-bean production? I am conscious of the fact that one lakh acres or one lakh tonnes will be introduced. But is it not a fact that the efforts made are only on paper, efforts to see that the

production is increased. While the farmers increase their production, they are not able to sell because there is no agency to sell or to buy the soya-bean. What is the agency? I have my experience. In many places, why is it that they have no selling arrangements. I want to know what is the selling arrangement and who is to buy the soya-bean.

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE: We have instructed the Food Corporation of India to purchase soya-bean if it be available. We have also fixed up the prices. There were some complaints against the price which was fixed at Rs. 85 per quintal. We have asked the Agricultural Prices Commission to go into the prices. But the Food Corporation would be prepared to purchase it.

SHRI A. D. MANI: May I refer to part (c) of the question and the answer given by the Minister? The Minister stated that about 1 lakh tonnes of soya-bean is going to be imported from the United States. May I ask him whether the Government made an attempt to explore the possibility of getting soya-bean from Far-East Asian markets where the prices are supposed to be highly competitive, and what is the result of the efforts made?

SHRI ARJUN ARORA: They have no 420, PL 480.

SHRI A. D. MANI: Sir, I strongly object to this sort of interruption.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA: Sir, this thing must be made clear, Mr. Mani . . .

SHRI A. D. MANI: I strongly object . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: You could interrupt if he had finished his question and if there had been any error. But if you interrupt the questioner in the middle of the question . . .

SHRI A. D. MANI: I never interrupt him . . .

SHRI ARJUN ARORA: Now he is interrupting me.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Mani should go on with his question.

SHRI A. D. MANI: You should prevent a running commentary when an hon'ble Member is speaking.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA: You have agreed to listen to me.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA: I have not been able to make my point. My submission is that interruption is part of parliamentary practice. Why should Mr. Mani object particularly when Mr. Mani also interrupts other hon'ble Members?

SHRI A. D. MANI: Sir, I invoke the Rule which prevents an hon'ble Member from making a running commentary when an hon'ble Member is speaking. I was submitting, Sir, that when the prices are said to be highly competitive in the Far-East Asian markets for soabean, why has the Government chosen to buy the entire lot from the United State?

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE: Sir, the impression of the hon'ble Member is not correct. We tried to make some commercial purchases, made enquiries all over and we found that only small quantities at competitive rates were available, not in the Far-Eastern markets, but from Spain. We tried to purchase it. If any hon'ble Member has any information that soabean is available at cheaper prices, I would be glad to receive it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Phool Singh.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA: What about me, Sir? Please permit me to put a supplementary. You should call me. I am also on your list.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I am not bound to call in the order you prescribe.

SHRI PHOOL SINGH: Is it not due to the fact that the production of oilseeds is not increasing?

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE: As there has been no fruitful research in oilseeds so far, part of the hon'ble Member's statement is correct that oil production is not coming up satisfactorily. But we are very much at it. Co-ordinated research projects have been taken up as a result of the experience during the last three years. Package programmes of production are being taken up.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: May I know, Sir, if it is not a fact that in the Ministry of Food and Agriculture the programme of import substitution, particularly in the case of oilseeds and cotton, is an utter failure? The poor people do not get groundnut oil for getting them some nourishment. To obviate the suffering to the poor, will the Government at least agree to the following proposal? First, they should ban these vegetable ghee product companies from using pure groundnut oil. Instead, they should use solvent oil because at present the groundnut cake production is 28 lakh tonnes while we crush only 8 lakh tonnes in the solvent extraction. The rest is used for cattle feed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What is your question?

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: This is a technical subject and a subject of the highest importance. Perhaps Mr. Shyam Dhar Misra, who is also a co-operator like me, will agree with me that out of 28 lakh tonnes of groundnut oil cake only 8 lakh tonnes is

used in this solvent extraction. You should ban the vegetable ghee plants from using groundnut oil so that at least that much oil is saved. That is number one. Secondly, Sir, I want to know . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Kulkarni, you should have regard for others also.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: I will give them a chance. You do not worry. Secondly, regarding rice bran oil, you have got an installed capacity of 3 lakh tonnes, but you are achieving only 1.5 lakh tonnes. What solution have you got to improve the position?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have requested you not to put such long questions.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: Sir, if your request for not putting long questions is addressed only to Kulkarni, I am not prepared to accept it. It must be followed by other Members also.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, somebody has to make a beginning.

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE: Sir, in the present context, it is not practical to ban the use of groundnut oil in Vanaspathi factories. But the Government has been making efforts to see to what extent groundnut oil can be replaced by other substitute oils. For instance, the use of cotton-seed oil by all vanaspathi factories is being actively encouraged through active rebates etc. However, only a certain percentage can be used, because according to the experts, it is not desirable to use 100 per cent cotton seed oil and so what percentage should be used needs to be looked into.

The other suggestion is from a long-term development point of view. We shall examine this suggestion of the hon. Member. But immediately it is not a practical proposition.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: What about rice bran oil?

(No reply)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next question.

RELIEF TO NEW MIGRANTS

*531. SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA:†

SHRI B. K. KAUL:

SHRI GANESHI LAL CHAUDHARY:

SHRI S. D. MISRA:

SHRI NAWAL KISHORE:

CHAUDHARY A. MOHAMMAD:

SHRI MAHAVIR TYAGI:

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Bhupesh Gupta.