

RAJYA SABHA

Friday, the 16th February, 1968/the
27th Magha, 1889 (Saka)

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

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

MAIZE ROTTING IN MANDIS

*91. SHRI S. K. VAISHAM-

PAYEN:†

SHRI S. S. MARISWAMY:

SARDAR RAM SINGH:

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

(a) whether his attention has been
drawn to a report dated the 20th
December, 1967 from Jullundur to
the effect that thousands of quintals
of maize were rotting in the Mandis
there; and

(b) if so, what are the reasons for
which such large quantities of maize
were allowed to rot in the Mandis?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN
THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRI-
CULTURE, COMMUNITY DEVE-
LOPMENT AND COOPERATION
(SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE): (a)
Yes, Sir.

(b) The report is not correct and,
therefore, this question does not
arise.

SHRI S. K. VAISHAMPAYEN:
May I know from the hon. Minister
whether the Government had tried
to procure the actual quantity of mai-
ze which was available in the Mandis
during the month of December and,
if so, the figures and, secondly, may
I know from the Minister whether
any target for procurement of maize
was fixed and how much was actual-
ly procured by the Food Corpora-
tion?

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE: The

†The question was actually asked on
the floor of the House by Shri S. K.
Vaishampayan.

Food Corporation has, according to
the latest information available, with
me, purchased about 1,90,000 tonnes
of maize in Punjab and the total
market arrivals have been round
about 2,30,000 tonnes. So, almost
80 per cent. of the market arrivals
have been covered by purchases.
May I assure the hon. Member that
we have not fixed any target in the
sense that if the target is fulfilled
one may perhaps misunderstand that
we may not purchase further quan-
tities. We would like to purchase as
much quantity as is available in the
market and there would not be any
limitation on that account.

SHRI S. K. VAISHAMPAYEN:

May I know from the hon. Minister
how far the States have fulfilled the
targets of procurement which they
have agreed upon in the Food Minis-
ters' Conference and the names of
such States?

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE: Sir,
I seek your protection. This ques-
tion relates to procurement in Jul-
lundur district and some questions
perhaps about Jullundur may be
asked, but he has raised an all-India
question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Mariswamy.

SHRI S. S. MARISWAMY: Ac-
cording to a report in the *Times of
India* there are thousands of quintals
of maize lying uncaired for in
Jullundur and in other places in
Punjab and no transport arrange-
ments have been made, while the
rest of the country is starving for
want of maize. Why should this
huge stock be allowed to rot there?

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE: The
alleged report, which was published
in the local press there, is not cor-
roborated by facts. I have a state-
ment with me which says that in the
Jullundur district, in important
Mandis, the total arrivals were about
42,000 metric tonnes, out of which
36,000 metric tonnes have been pro-
cured by the Food Corporation of
India. That means that more than
80 per cent has been covered by the

Food Corporation's procurement. As I have already mentioned, if further quantities are available, the Food Corporation would be only too glad to procure them. Moreover, we are purchasing it and making it available to States which are prepared to accept it.

SHRI S. S. MARISWAMY: I have one more question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: According to this your name is second. You can put only one question and I do not allow two questions for everyone else. You have put your question. However, as an exception I allow you one more question.

SHRI S. S. MARISWAMY: According to this report it is stated about 450,000 bags of maize purchased by the Food Corporation are lying in the Karnal Mandi, about 47,000 bags of maize have accumulated at Jagron Mandi, 23,000 bags at Moga Mandi and about 20,000 bags in Durga Mandi, etc. I believe that the Minister is not supplied with the correct facts about the maize lying there.

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE: May I say that I referred to a statement. In fact, I have from Jullundur district information about Jullundur, Nakodar, Shahkot, Nurmahal, Phillaur, Banga, Nawanshahar, Adampur and Kartarpur Mandis and the latest information shows that in the month of January the arrivals were about 127,000 tonnes and out of that 104,000 tonnes have been procured by the Food Corporation. The impression perhaps may be due to the fact that in particular stations in Punjab huge stocks of maize are lying for want of wagons. Large scale movements of rice and other foodgrains are taking place from Punjab and the Railways are not in a position to supply an adequate number of wagons for the Food Corporation. So, an impression has been gathered by ordinary persons that large stocks of maize are accumulating there, but that impression is not correct.

श्री विमलकुमार मन्नालालजी चौरड़िया: क्या श्रीमान् यह बतलायेंगे कि यह जो इम्प्रेशन हुआ कि वहाँ पर काफी अनाज पड़ा हुआ है क्योंकि समय पर उसे ट्रांसपोर्ट नहीं करवाया जा सका तो उसकी वजह से कोई अनाज वहाँ सड़ा अथवा नहीं और अगर सड़ा तो कितना । उसकी वजह से अनाज बड़ा क्वांटिटी न मड़ भी सकता है, तो अगर सड़ा तो कितना परसेट सड़ा इसका कुछ अनुमान लगाया गया है या नहीं ।

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE: No, Sir. No substantial quantities have got damaged as a result of that, but some small, marginal quantities were damaged not because of bad storage of the stocks lying anywhere, but because the Food Corporation purchased some quantities which contained some high percentage of moisture. But, they were very small quantities.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT: May I know from the hon. Minister if it is a fact that the Chief Minister of Punjab and the Government of Haryana approached the Central Government to allow them to export coarse grains which are lying in large quantities in Mandis and what has been the reaction of the Government of India to that?

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE: The Chief Minister of Punjab did meet the hon. Minister of Food and Agriculture and he discussed with him the problem of procurement of maize by the Food Corporation. When the entire position was explained and he was assured that whatever be that market arrivals, more than 80 per cent. of them would be covered by the Food Corporation, I think, he was fully satisfied. As far as the particular report is concerned, over which hon. Members seem to be agitated, we tried to corroborate the information from the Punjab Government. The Chief Secretary to the Punjab Government also does not corroborate the press report about the accumulation of stocks.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT: What about Haryana?

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE: The question relates to Punjab.

SHRI DALPAT SINGH: May I know whether the hon. Minister is aware of the fact that in Rajasthan there are large stocks of maize lying with them and the farmers are not getting the minimum price and they have not been able to sell them? They want to get money for further investment on the next crop. May I know what the Government is doing about it?

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE: All the maize which has been purchased by the Food Corporation is being purchased at the rate of Rs. 55 to Rs. 58 per quintal. This was the price at which, it was decided, the Food Corporation should make purchases. As I have already explained, 80 per cent. of the market arrivals are being covered by the Food Corporation and I do not think there should be any fear of the prices getting unduly depressed.

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA: The situation that has arisen is really a very serious one. Even a marginal increase in production has resulted in a glut in the market and maize is rotting not only in Punjab but even in certain areas of Rajasthan. We know that the price has fallen much below the minimum support price and there is no machinery to buy all that is available with the farmers. We have a very good Rabi crop coming in a few months. May I know what scheme or programme the Government has in view, so that the vast surpluses that we expect to have next year and in future years are not allowed to rot like this, but are bought promptly and stored properly? The Railways and all the other Ministries concerned in the matter should join together to formulate a

really worth-while scheme, so that our programme of agricultural improvement is not retarded.

SHRI JAGJIVAN RAM: There is no truth in the insinuation that the hon. Member has made. It is very easy to say that stocks are lying and rotting there. So far as Rajasthan is concerned and also in respect of any other State, the Food Corporation is prepared to lift any stock that may be lying there at the procurement price. So far as Rajasthan is concerned, according to the decision of the Rajasthan Government, the stocks have to be purchased from the trade and it is not to be purchased from the farmers. If we are permitted to purchase from the farmers, the Food Corporation will be prepared to buy that. As the arrangement exists at present, the levy is from the trade in Rajasthan and to say that huge stocks are lying there is not justified on the basis of market arrivals. If the farmers have stocks and they are willing to sell, certainly it can be presumed that they will bring them to the Mandis. On the basis of the figures of arrivals in the Mandis, the allegation is not justified. That is what I have to say.

SHRI N. SRI RAMA REDDY: It is a very happy thing to know that market arrivals of foodgrains are increasing in the Northern markets. In the Southern markets the situation is not so happy as it is in the North. Therefore, would the hon. Minister kindly consider the question of doing away with the zones...

SHRI JAGJIVAN RAM: How does this arise here?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It does not arise out of this question. I cannot allow it. Next question.