

SHRI SIT ARAM JAIPURIA: Sir, most of the Wage Boards that were appointed had very wide terms of reference but the outcome of that has been mostly an *ad hoc* increase. In view of the fact that the situation differs from town to town and from State to State and an *ad hoc* increase does not give a rational picture of the wage situation as it should be, under these circumstances may I know how the employers or the employees can have confidence in the implementation of the Wage Board decisions expeditiously?

SHRI JAISUKHLAL HATHI: When ever a Wage Board is appointed naturally it is appointed because the workers want a rise in their wages. A Wage Board generally is not appointed to decrease the existing wages. That is one part. Secondly, while fixing the wages they also look to the productivity aspect. That is one of the terms of reference. Thirdly, it is not always that the increase in wages is uniform for all the places. For example, if you look to the latest recommendation of the Wage Board for journalists and non-journalists, they have done it according to the places also. So. it is not that. It is *ad hoc*; for certain towns with some population it is more, in others it is less.

FOOD AGREEMENT WITH U.S.A.

*509. SHRI M. V. BHADRAMij: :

SHRI P. K. KUMARAN :

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

(a) what is the total quantity of food-grains to be imported under the new agreement with the U.S. Government; and

(b) what is the value thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CO-OPERATION (SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE): (a) and (b) Negotiations for

†Transferred from the 13th December, 1967.

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the house by Shri M. V. Bhadram.

the next P.L. 480 agreement with the U.S. Government are still in progress. The quantity which is likely to be made available under the next agreement is 3.5 million tonnes for shipment during the first six months of 1968. The value of the foodgrains to be made available under the next agreement and the other conditions to be incorporated therein have not yet been finalized.

SHRI M. V. BHADRAM: May I know, Sir, what is the total shortage that is envisaged next year keeping in view the fact that the prospects of the crop have increased this year?

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE: It won't be appropriate to treat the import programme as mainly based on shortages though we have calculated that we may require to import to the tune of 7.5 million tonnes. Our approach is to build up a buffer stock of 3 million tonnes out of internally procured and imported grains. It is calculated that about 4.5 million tonnes may be required for consumption. Even though the production prospects are very favourable this year, because the carry-over stocks are not there to our satisfaction, we are taking adequate care to see that adequate food is available during the next year.

SHRI M. V. BHADRAM: The hon. Minister stated that 3.5 million tonnes are expected to be imported during the first six months of 1968. What would be the cost of that food?

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE: As I have stated, it is rather difficult to anticipate the approximate cost or value of these foodgrains because normally we purchase these foodgrains through our Indian Supply Mission in the U.S.A. After we get the authorisation to purchase the foodgrains in the U.S.A., they call for and get the tenders, and according to the tender price we purchase these foodgrains. So it would be very difficult to state the approximate figures at this stage.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: The hon. Minister in his reply made a statement—it is rather interesting—that he would

build up a stock of 7 million tonnes out of imported foodgrains and internal procurement also. Now, Sir, two years ago the Government's internal target was 7 million tonnes of foodgrains. Today we find that the production has gone up. All the same the internal procurement target has been reduced—it seems because they want to build up, with the help of the foreign imported foodgrains, a stock of 7 million tonnes. I should like to know why it is so. What made Government think that the internal procurement should be reduced compared to the original target that was fixed? Mr. Subramaniam gave an assurance in this House that besides whatever . . .

SHRI ANNASAHAB SHINDE: I am sorry the hon. Member has not properly understood. In what I said I quoted the 3 million tonnes figure and said it was the figure of buffer stock. The procurement target of this year is much higher as compared to any figure in the previous years.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: What is the target?

SHRI ANNASAHAB SHINDE: The Agricultural Prices Commission had broadly indicated that 7 million tonnes should be out of *kharif* cereals and 1 million tonnes should be out of *rabi* cereals as far as procurement is concerned.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Internal procurement?

SHRI ANNASAHAB SHINDE: Yes, internal procurement. At the Chief Ministers' Conference this matter came up for discussion and there was broad agreement though some States thought it was rather on the high side, but it was indicated that all States would exert themselves to have the maximum procurement possible.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Who has confused the issue, I do not know. I have not. Now the position is, here the target is 7 million tonnes. I do not know what the extraordinary procurements is going to be according to him if the

Americans give their word to, or oblige them with 7.5 million tonnes. Therefore we get the Government stock, with procurement internal and purchases abroad, at 15.5 million tonnes. Is that so? And I should like to know, if the target has been fixed at 7.5 million tonnes, whether a corresponding arrangement has been made for internal procurement operations. And, secondly, in this connection I should also like to know the total amount sanctioned by the Government so far. Is it not a fact that so far the Government has only sanctioned Rs. 26 crores or so to the Food Corporation of India, which is far too inadequate for procurement operations? Now if you have to buy 7 million tonnes, a lot of money, several hundred crores of rupees will be needed. Do we have then the assurance that the money will be available from the Reserve Bank and other sources of the Government in order to finance the procurement?

SHRI ANNASAHAB SHINDE: May I assure the hon. Member and the hon. House that the procurement programme will not suffer for lack of resources or for lack of finance? The Government has already taken adequate steps to see that the Food Corporation of India is provided with adequate finance but still, if in any case at any stage the Corporation finds difficulty in regard to finance, we shall see that the necessary finance will be supplied to the Food Corporation of India, and for the first time very big and large scale arrangements have been put in the field in order to procure foodgrains in the-country.

SHRI DALPAT SINGH: May I know which of the States is not the most deficit in foodgrains—number one—and in which of the States the target of procurement has been reached according to the programme?

SHRI ANNASAHAB SHINDE: Sir, it is just the post-harvest period, the be-ginnig of it, when the normal market arrivals take place. As far as the *kharif*

cereals are concerned, the peak period is between January and March. The market arrivals have just started coming in, and the procurement is also taking place, it has just begun, and at this stage it will not be possible to say what would be the size of the procurement in the various States. But the trends appear to be very encouraging.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: May I know, Sir, from the hon. Minister—I refer to part (b) of the question—what is the component of the freight charges, of the 'value thereof? Secondly, is it a fact that under this food import agreement we have to make the import of these foodgrains only by U.S. ships, and that the freight charges are unfavourable to us compared to those of some other shipping companies?

SHRI ANNASAHAB SHINDE: Sir, the position is like this. Under the agreement 50 per cent of the P.L. 480 grains are to be imported through U.S. Flag Ships. The rest of the 50 per cent may be imported through other ships. We could have imported the rest of the quantities through Indian ships, but Indian shipping capacity is inadequate, only 15 to 18 per cent, of the total import programme can be handled by Indian shipping. So naturally we have to resort to other ships. And as far as the rates are concerned, the figure is not at the moment with me.

SHRI M. M. DHARIA: Sir, may we know from the Government whether there is any programme to do away with dependence on foreign food aid, and may we know by what year this country will be self-sufficient in food-grains? Secondly, in view of the fact that the crop has been fair this year, may we know from the Government whether the Government is considering to reallocate the targets of procurement by enhancing the targets in such of the States where the crops have been far better?

SHRI ANNASAHAB SHINDE: Sir, I can appreciate the anxiety of the hon. Member about attaining self-sufficiency in our country, and I entirely share the sentiment that we should try to be self-

sufficient in regard to our food requirements. The entire approach to agricultural production, the entire strategy is based on that, and there appear to be reasonable grounds for the strategy being successful. Already there are encouraging signs—I am referring to the production aspect of the problem—and as far as the present approach of the Government is concerned, we feel that if no unforeseen factors come in we may be in a position, we should be in a position to attain self-sufficiency within the next three or four years. And as far as the other part of the hon. Member's question in regard to raising of procurement targets is concerned, I may say that the targets which have been worked out at present are almost double of last year, and I think they are ambitious targets.

SHRI HARISH CHANDRA MA-THUR: Now, Sir, the hon. Minister, Shri Jagjivan Ram, has been in this Ministry for a fairly long time. What is his own impression and reaction to the general feeling among the people that much of our trouble is due to mismanagement and corruption, to disputes between corrupt Ministers, the administrators, the big zamindars and the traders, that it is due to all this that the foodgrains get scarce, that the procurement is not satisfactory and that the prices shoot up? The example of Haryana is very much before us, where the prices of pulses shot up from 50 to 60 rupees to 128 rupees or so, and I would like to ask him in this respect what he has to say in regard to what the late Dr. Rajendra Prasad, President of India, has said, which is this:

"In time of relative plenty we do not do enough to conserve stocks. In times of relative scarcity we fail to organise fair distribution. The shortage are aggravated by the selfishness of the people, by hoarding, speculation and mismanagement. We are not willing or able to take action against anti-social elements."

This is the general feeling of the citizens and a President of India had also ex-

pressed it. May I know what is the hon. Minister's own impression and what steps he proposes to take to see that there is no mismanagement and that the people's fears are allayed?

SHRI JAGJIVAN RAM: Sir, my hon. friend has raised a very wide and fundamental question about the moral standard of the entire country. I do not claim to be powerful enough to rectify all the evils in the social fabric of the country. That will be too big a task and too great a responsibility for me to undertake. That will require the cooperation of all the people in the country, both official and non-official, to root out corruption and undesirable activities wherever they exist. I may, however, say that the prospects of food production this year are very hopeful. A sense of confidence has been created in the people all round in the country and prices have already shown a tendency of going down. They are falling. And one great and important and encouraging factor is that all the State Governments are very particular about maximising procurement and some of the State Governments are already expecting to exceed the targets fixed for those States.

And now, Sir, the hon. Member expects the Centre to rectify all the mismanagement in all the States. Well, we are trying and wherever instances come to my notice and we find that we have the statutory or legal power to rectify the thing, I do not lose any time in rectifying it. My hon. friend referred to mismanagement in Haryana. As he is aware, as soon as it came to my notice I took prompt action to stop it. But I cannot say that I will be in a position to rectify all the social evils in our country. That will be too big a task for me.

SHRI NIREN GHOSH: May I know whether it is a fact that during the last few years the Reserve Bank advanced large amounts of credit for speculation and hoarding of grains and . .

SHRI JAGJIVAN RAM: How does that question arise from this?

SHRI NIREN GHOSH: Because it concerns your Department.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But it must relate to this main question. You cannot have a general debate on the matter during the Question Hour.

SHRI NIREN GHOSH: I only want to know whether the Ministry will take steps to stop these undesirable credits advanced from the Reserve Bank for the purpose of hoarding and speculation. That is number one. Secondly, is it a fact that if monopoly procurement from surplus areas is made compulsory then all the cities can be covered by an adequate quantum of ration? Also, may I know whether the prices of imported foodgrains are much higher than the international market prices and is that condition dictated by the United States of America?

SHRI JAGJIVAN RAM: Sir, the hon. Member has raised many questions which are not quite relevant to this main question. For instance, he has referred to credit and other things. Perhaps he is not aware that the price of imported foodgrains, even when not subsidised, is lower than the prevailing price in the market and even lower than the procurement price. I should like to bring it to the notice of the hon. Member and of the House that imported foodgrain prices, even when not subsidised, are cheaper than the procurement prices that we have fixed in this country.

PRICE OF LAND AT KALKAJI

*596. SHRI CHITTA BASU: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND REHABILITATION be pleased to state:

(a) what was the original estimate of price of land allotted to the displaced persons from East Pakistan near Kalkaji under the heads namely (i) Purchase Price, (ii) Development Cost;

(b) what is the present estimate of price of land under the above heads in terms of the Provisional estimate as announced by the Ministry's Press Note dated the 4th January, 1966 and 13th August, 1967; and