

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: You never copy in the matter of the United States of America.

SHRI C. SNBRAMANIAM: Sir, theoretically I do not agree that with better procurement and control of the stocks the situation would be better but how far is it possible? The other practical considerations also will have to be kept in mind.

SHRI M. N. GOVINDAN NAIR: Mr. Pai has clearly stated that he was not permitted to procure from the 58 surplus districts. I want a categorical answer from the Minister whether that is true. Secondly he has said that in one State he was permitted to procure but that State did not permit that stock to be taken out of that State. I want to know whether these two facts are true.

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: Even in the beginning I stated this. This alternative was considered in evolving the food policy. As a matter of fact my preference was this that we should undertake complete procurement in these 52 districts and allow the rest of the country to function as a free zone and taking advantage of the surplus in these 52 districts we can organise rationed distribution in almost all the cities of the country and the rest of the country will be a free zone. It was on this basis we wanted to work but in the discussions with the Chief Ministers naturally we have to give and take and ultimately we came to the conclusion that in the present circumstances of drought, failure of rains and all these things this may not work because even what we considered surplus districts have become deficit districts now. Therefore there is no use thinking in terms of surplus districts in the present context; that could be done in normal circumstances. That is why each State was allowed to be constituted as a separate bone to tackle the situation which exists in each State. Therefore in the present conditions to say that he was not allowed to procure

in the 52 districts is a little bit misleading.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: I would like to know why the State Governments cannot be asked to confine themselves to the task of increasing production and the work of procurement and distribution cannot be completely taken over by the Corporation.

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: That is the idea, but the Corporation also has to build up its organisation and gain experience in dealing with this. Otherwise if we undertake an operation for which the organisation has not been built, that will be the surest way to breakdown. But whatever it is, this is a concurrent subject and the executive authority of the State Governments is there. We cannot just apply the steamroller and say this is the thing which they have to accept. We function in a federal structure and I have no doubt in my mind that it is only by consultations and conferences and by agreed decisions that we will be able to function.

IMPORT OF RICE FROM U.A.R., BURMA AND THAILAND

*94 SHRI RAM SINGH:

SHRI M. C. SHAH:

Will the Minister of FOOD, AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CO-OPERATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether arrangements have been finalised to import rice from the United Arab Republic, Burma and Thailand to help meet the scarcity conditions prevailing in the country;

(b) if so, what are the details of the arrangements; and

(c) whether supplies have started flowing in?

The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri M. C. Shah.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CO-OPERATION (SHRI-P. GOVINDA MENON) : (a) and (b) Arrangements to import rice from United Arab Republic, Burma and Thailand during the current year under new arrangements to be entered into will be finalised shortly. The details are under discussion with the concerned Governments.

(c) One shipment of rice from Bunna against an *ad hoc* purchase has already been received. The shipments of rice from U.A.R. in respect of the balance quantities of the existing agreement are also in progress. It is expected that the shipment of rice from Thailand under the new agreement under finalisation will commence in the near future.

SHRI M. C. SHAH: What was the actual quantity of rice contracted to be procured from these countries and what has actually been received?

SHRI P. GOVINDA MENON: From Burma in 1965-66 up to 31st January, 1966, 1,51,000 tonnes; from Thailand, 1,98,000 tonnes; from Cambodia 12,000 tonnes; from U.A.R. 16,000 tonnes. These are the figures.

SHRI M. C. SHAH: What was the quantity contracted from the U.A.R. and what was actually received? I want to know these two things.

SHRI P. GOVINDA MENON: With U.A.R. there was an agreement entered into in November 1964 that provided for a total quantity of about 71,000 tonnes. Then a new rice purchase agreement was also concluded with the U.A.R. which provided, *inter alia*, 'for purchase by India from U.A.R. of rice worth about Rs. 1-25 crores which would come to about 27,000 tonnes during the period from 1st March 1965 to 28th February 1966. This was in addition to the

arrangement under the rice agreement of November 1964. Thereafter as a consequence of the discussions with the U.A.R. and the Trade Delegation which visited India in December 1965 the provision was raised from Rs. 1-25 crores to Rs. 2-5 crores. This amount of Rs. 2.5 crores was expected to fetch about 44,000 metric tonnes of rice at the last year's price. That is the position.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: One can understand the bilateral agreement with U.A.R. and other friendly States to get rice. But recently we noticed that a conference of Ambassadors of the various countries was held in Delhi where where our Food Minister went and posed as if he was an international charity boy asking for 'food from everybody. May I know since when it has become the policy of the Government of India to substitute bilateral agreements by this kind of exhibition of India's position before conferences of this kind and why is it that the Government behaves in a manner which is by no means compatible with self-respect and dignity of a great nation like ours? I should like to be enlightened on this subject.

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: This has nothing to do with all this. Of course the point raised by the hon. Member is with regard to the aid that we are receiving to meet the present situation arising out of the drought conditions in India. As a matter of fact the aid is on a bilateral basis and I had the meeting with the Ambassadors only for the purpose of co-ordinating these aids that were coming and also for informing them of the situation because all sorts of news raising a scare that millions of people would die was being put out. This meeting was to inform them that we are quite confident of meeting the situation and also for the purpose of coordinating the various aids which were coming in. I do not think in the international community when such a situation develops to get aid is below our self-respect. On the

other hand, today, we also give aid when other countries are in distress, it does not mean it is beneath their self-respect to accept aid when we offer aid to other countries when they are in distress.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR: May I ask the hon. Minister whether he can quote any other instance of any other country in the world, when Ambassadors have been invited in this fashion to beg 'for food, whether the situation may be difficult or alarming? At least I do not know that any other country has invited a conference of Ambassadors to ask them for food aid. Moreover, Mr. Chairman, I would draw your attention to the fact that only a day before when I asked the hon. Prime Minister whether this generosity of Mr. Johnson was self-generating or whether the Government of India had approached them for such generosity, the External Affairs Minister replied that they had not made any appeal but the UNO had made it and only a day after the Food Minister convened the conference here in Delhi when Parliament was meeting and no other reference was made, even when the Food Minister was making a statement on the food situation . . .

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL: Is he making a speech or putting a question?

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR: May I know whether he thinks it is according to the prestige and dignity of the country that Ambassadors should come in a conference for us to beg for food without taking any policy decision?

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I fully associate myself with the sentiments expressed by the hon. Member.

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: I am sorry that the hon. Member is not fully informed about the proceedings and has made a wrong assumption that it is for begging for food. I wish he had gone through the proceedings of the meeting to see if there is any-

thing below the dignity of the country or the Minister or anything else concerned in it. I would respectfully suggest that there is no such thing.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Sir, one question. Otherwise, Mr. Kamraj will have to answer it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, no.

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: I have already explained the purpose for which the meeting was convened.

FOODGRAINS PROCUREMENT IN BIHAR

*95. SHRI A. D. MANI: Will the Minister of FOOD, AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CO-OPERATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Government of Bihar has informed the Government of India that they would not be in a position to go in for monopoly trade of foodgrains to tide over the crisis; and

(b) if so, on what grounds the Government of Bihar has refused to accept responsibility for monopoly trade of foodgrains?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CO-OPERATION (SHRI P. GOVINDA MENON): (a) The Central Government have not received any communication from the Bihar Government to this effect.

(b) Does not arise.

SHRI A. D. MANI: The Chief Minister of Bihar made a statement in the Vidhan Sabha on the 22nd December. He said that the move to have monopoly procurement would not only eliminate private trade but also make the Government responsible for feeding the State's entire population of five crores. He added: "I consider this beyond our capacity." May I ask the hon. Minister whether, either in private conversations or in any letter, he has written to him or informed him that the State