

PRODUCTION SCHEDULE OF FERTILIZERS

*624. SHRI I. K. GUJRAL : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have taken any steps to advance the production schedule of fertilisers; and

(b) whether India would be self-sufficient in fertilisers by the end of the Fourth Five Year Plan ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

■(b) A substantial portion of the demand would be met by the end of the Fourth Plan.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL : Sir, the Government have said that they have taken some steps to advance the production of fertilisers. May I ask him what specific steps have been taken and when will they start showing effect ?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN : We are going ahead with the work in several public sector units as well as private sector companies. Several private sector companies, one in Goa, two in Rajasthan, etc. have been licensed and they are going ahead with the arrangements for foreign collaboration etc. In addition to that we have taken up very vigorously the pursuing of public sector schemes in Cochin, Madras, Durgapur, etc. These are the various steps that we have been taking to increase the production of fertilisers.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL : Is the Government aware that in view of the shortage of electricity in Punjab an electricity cut of 18 per cent has been effected on the Nangal Fertiliser Factory and how much will be the shortfall because of that in fertiliser production ?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN : It is really unfortunate that there is power shortage. It is almost universal this year. The

shortage is not only there but in several other areas also and this power cut would adversely affect production not only of fertilisers but of other industries as well. In Nangal also unfortunately we have been threatened with a cut and the management has taken it up with the State Electricity Board and the State Government and they are trying to get as much electricity as possible. I cannot now estimate what will be the shortfall on this account.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL : I hope the hon. Minister is aware of the very serious apprehension in the public mind that in view of this unnatural situation as well as due to lack of drive on the part of the Government we are not doing as much in the sphere of stepping up the production of fertiliser as we should and may I ask him how the production will compare this year to that of last year ?

—SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN : 965-66 it is expected to be 3,20,000 tonnes; last year it was less viz., 2,40,000 tonnes.

SHRI HUMAYUN KABIR : Sir, I would like to supplement this answer. I would not accept my friend's suggestion that the Government is not pursuing this vigorously. In fact even with regard to this power cut, the moment this came to our notice I personally telephoned to the Chief Minister of Punjab. I have also written to him and as a result of that some part of the cut has already been restored. I have made certain other suggestions also by which some more electricity may be released for Nangal.

SHRI MULKA GOVINDA REDDY : I would like to know whether all the concerns licensed to manufacture fertilisers have gone into production and secondly whether it has come to the notice of the Government that two factories in Mysore have stopped working for want of raw materials such as rock phosphate and what steps Government intend to take to import more rock phosphate.

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN : Unfortunately there is a world shortage of rock phosphate and sulphur and we are trying to enter into

long-term agreements for these two products.

SHRI MULKA GOVINDA REDDY: Sir, he did not answer my question.

SHRI P. K. KUMARAN : May I know, Sir, whether the Government are expecting to achieve the target set for the Fourth Five Year Plan and if they are expecting any shortfall, what are the concrete steps they are taking to cover the shortfall ?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN : In the Fourth Plan it is a very huge task that we have undertaken. From a production of 3,20,000 tonnes we want to reach a production of two million tonnes and, if not, at least 1.7 million tonnes. This will be five to six times the present production and towards that end we are taking all steps.

SHRI M. M. DHARIA : In view of the food shortage and the need for fertilisers, may we know whether the Ministry has approached the Planning Commission for any additional amount in the Fourth Five Year Plan and also the Finance Ministry for making the foreign exchange available ?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN : Yes, Sir. Knowing the difficult foreign exchange position we have been approaching the Finance Ministry and they have been trying to accommodate us. If the position had been a little rosier, certainly we would have been accommodated much more easily than it has now been possible.

SHRI HUMAYUN KABIR: Sir, I would like to supplement this again. The whole matter is now under discussion in the Cabinet itself and the Planning Commission also presents its point of view here. We are making every effort, through aid from friendly countries, through commercial credit and in other ways, to meet this demand and it is recognised that if we have to solve the food problem the first priority must be the production of fertilisers inside the country.

SHRI MULKA GOVINDA REDDY : I would like to know whether the Government of India have tapped the African and Arab countries for the supply of rock phosphate and if shortage of foreign exchange is coming in the way whether any barter agreement could be arrived at.

SHRI HUMAYUN KABIR : Yes, we are making those efforts. Actually as soon as it became known about six months ago that there may be a shortage of sulphur, we have been making special efforts. An Officer was sent from here specially to locate sulphur and after that we are trying to enter into long-term agreements, as mentioned by my colleague, both against foreign exchange as well as against barter, wherever possible.

श्री जगन्नाथ प्रसाद : श्रीमन्, मंत्री महोदय ने चौथी पंचवर्षीय योजना के बारे में कोई निश्चित बात हम को नहीं बतलाई, इसलिए मैं यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि राजस्थान में, जहाँ पर कि बहुत बड़ा इलाका एग्रीकल्चर के अंडर आने वाला है और बहुत दिन से इस बात की मांग चल रही है, राजस्थान सरकार की ओर से भी और जनता की ओर से भी, कि राजस्थान की भूमि को देखते हुए वहाँ पर फर्टिलाइजर की बहुत बड़ी आवश्यकता है, तो फोर्थ प्लान में आपने कितने लाइसेन्सेज फर्टिलाइजर प्लान्ट बनाने के लिए दिए हैं और उनमें से कितने प्राइवेट सेक्टर में और कितने पब्लिक सेक्टर में हैं और वे प्लान्ट कहाँ लगेंगे ?

SHRI HUMAYUN KABIR : This information was supplied to the House when I made a statement on the fertiliser position in the country. So far as Rajasthan is concerned, we issued a licence to Rajasthan even during the Third Plan. That did not materialise. Now, two licences have been issued, *i.e.*, one licence and one letter of intent for Kotah and these are being actively pursued. We hope that this will fructify fairly soon.