

3 P.M.

CALLING ATTENTION TO A MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

REPORTED BAN ON THE MOVEMENT OF COARSE GRAINS TO GUJARAT

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL (Gujarat): Madam, I, along with Members from Gujarat in this House, wish to draw the attention of the Minister of Food and Agriculture to the reported ban on the movement of coarse grains to Gujarat from the States of Punjab, Rajasthan, etc. which used to supply normally such grains to Gujarat and the sharp rise in prices of foodgrains, particularly coarse grains, all over Gujarat as a result thereof, and the hardship to the people of Gujarat, especially the poorer sections, caused thereby.

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM): Madam, in view of the rise in prices of foodgrains the Governments of the States of Rajasthan, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, U.P. etc. have imposed restrictions on the export of coarse grains from their respective States. The Government of Gujarat have also imposed similar restrictions on export. Keeping in view the foodgrain requirements of Gujarat and the restrictions imposed by other States on export of coarse grains, the Government of India have stepped up supply of wheat and rice to Gujarat from Central stocks.

During the 11 months, January to November, 1964, 4.18 lakh tonnes of wheat was supplied to Gujarat from Central stocks as against 1.05 lakh tonnes supplied last year. During the same period 81,000 tonnes of rice was supplied as against 74,000 tonnes supplied in 1963. For December, 49,000 tonnes of wheat was originally allotted to Gujarat, but keeping in view the difficulties of Gujarat their quota of wheat has been enhanced by 10,000 tonnes. Similarly,

additional 8,000 tonnes of rice has been allotted to Gujarat. In addition to this, last night I had allotted another 5,000 tonnes of wheat and 5,000 tonnes of rice.

Action has also been taken to arrange supply of coarse grains from other States. The Government of Rajasthan have already agreed to release 3,000 tonnes of gram and 1,000 tonnes of jowar. They have promised that after the market arrivals improve, they will make available some suitable additional quantity of coarse grains also to Gujarat. Similarly, some sizable quantity of jowar will become available from Madhya Pradesh during the next month or so.

A close watch on the supplies of foodgrains to Gujarat is maintained. During 1965 also, large quantities of wheat and rice will be supplied from Central stocks and supplies of coarse grains will be arranged from the principal coarse grain producing States.

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL: Madam, I would invite the attention of the Food Minister and the House to the peculiar situation of Gujarat. All the surrounding States seem to have imposed a boycott on Gujarat and banned the export of coarse grains. I would also invite the attention of the Food Minister to this. When the export of oilseeds was banned from Saurashtra, the Government of India intervened and got the ban removed. Today Gujarat is in difficulty. Coarse grains, which are consumed more by the poorer classes, by the people in the rural areas, particularly bajra and jowar, which are eaten in Gujarat—not so much gram—are in short supply. Do you think, does the hon. Food Minister think that these classes will be able to consume rice and wheat at the increased prices at which they are supplying them? Is this, in any way, going to alleviate the suffering of the poorer classes? The situation is very peculiar and the situation has

to a matter of

been accentuated by the policies of the Government. Madam, in July last I remember the Food Minister had called a meeting of the leaders of the various Parties and there one of the things recommended by everybody was the removal of the zones, but the zones seem to have . . .

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You are making a very long statement. Ask for clarification.

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL: I want clarification.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Put your case briefly and ask for clarification. I think he would understand it better comparatively. Mr. Subramaniam, have you any reply?

SHRI P. N. SAPRU (Uttar Pradesh): Just one word. Why is my friend making charges against other States?

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL: I did not.

SHRI P. N. SAPRU I think Mr. Patel said that the other States were deliberately denying . . .

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL: No, no.

SHRI P. N. SAPRU: . . . or boycotting Gujarat.

(Interruption.)

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: According to the Minister, it is mutual. Even Gujarat does not export.

SHRI P. N. SAPRU: Withholding supplies.

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: The hon. Member seems to think that Gujarat is in a state of seige by the other State Governments.

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL: Yes.

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: It is not so. This matter was considered and discussed in respect of various aspects taking into consideration the

Importance

present food situation. It was in the Chief Ministers' Conference in which everybody participated and everybody, of course, expressed his point of view. Ultimately a decision was taken that till March this state of affairs, of each State being a zone for wheat, rice and coarse grains, would continue. This decision had been taken. I do also realise that this creates difficulties for Gujarat, because it is generally an importing State, particularly as far as coarse grains are concerned. I can assure the hon. Member that every step is being taken today to procure from other States the coarse grains and move them to Gujarat. I shall try to take as expeditious an action as possible to meet the needs of Gujarat State.

SHRI A. B. VAJPAYEE (Uttar Pradesh): Madam, I should like to know whether the Central Government have any stocks of coarse grains and, if not, whether there is any proposal to build up buffer stocks of coarse grains also?

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: We have no stock of coarse grains and there is no intention on the part of the Union Government to enter into the procurement or stocking of coarse grains. That is why I have to persuade the State Governments which have got an exportable surplus to move it to Gujarat and I can inform the hon. House that Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh have promised to move quickly some of their available stocks of coarse grains.

श्री जगत नारायण (पंजाब) : क्या वजीर साहब बतलायेंगे कि पंजाब में जोनल सिस्टम होते हुए भी गुजरात को कितना गन्धम और कितना कोर्स ग्रेन भेजा गया है ?

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: Madam, this ban came into existence as far as coarse grain, are concerned only just now. Therefore, I gave some figures with regard to their move-

[Shri C. Subramaniam]
ment. Also, it has to be taken into consideration that this is the harvesting season in Gujarat also. Therefore, though the coarse grains may not be available for the whole of the year, at least for a part of the year it should be possible to meet the situation.

श्री जगत नारायण : मेरे सवाल का जवाब नहीं मिला ।

SHRI SURESH J. DESAI (Gujarat): The hon. Minister was pleased to say that he has arranged for supplies of wheat and rice to Gujarat, which are being distributed by the 6,000 cheap grain shops in Gujarat. But he must be surely aware of the Press statement of the Chief Minister of Gujarat that the requirements of coarse grains are something like 5 lakh tons and the figures which the hon. Food Minister gave are very meagre in comparison to that. He must be also aware of the statement which the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh made yesterday that they would allow export of bajra, that is, coarse grain, to Gujarat only if the Central Government gave them wheat. I am not suggesting that there is an erosion of Central authority, but it amounts to that—the State Governments are stipulating that unless you give us wheat, we will not allow the export of bajra to Gujarat. The usual sources like Madhya Pradesh, Punjab and Rajasthan are imposing certain bans. May I know, Madam, how the hon. Food Minister would arrange to supply five lakh tons of coarse grains to Gujarat and when will the supplies commence?

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: I am not quite sure about this figure of 5 lakh tons and if it is 5 lakh tons, I do agree that it will be almost impossible for any State Government to make available this 5 lakh tons. We shall take into account what has been the traditional movement from the various States and from that point of view try to get from these States

what had been moved from these States during the past two or three years. Apart from that, we shall try our best. We are aware of the difficulties with regard to coarse grains and, as I have already stated, I shall try my best to meet the needs of Gujarat State.

SHRI M. C. SHAH (Gujarat): Madam, I want to know whether the Government are aware that the Rajasthan Government has decided to permit the Gujarat Government to purchase coarse grains either through its own machinery or through the trade channel at the prevailing market rates with a condition that 50 per cent of the purchased stock should be resold to the Rajasthan Government at the price fixed by the Rajasthan Government which is much below the prevailing market price and thereby subsidising the sale of coarse grain to the Rajasthan people at the cost of the consumers of Gujarat. May I know whether the Government of India has agreed to this policy? This is something strange.

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: This matter was discussed at the Chief Ministers' Conference and some working arrangement has been arrived at between Gujarat and Rajasthan so that this anomaly may not arise.

कुमारी मणिबेन बल्लभभाई पटेल :
(गुजरात) : क्या सरकार को यह मालूम है कि यहां तो मिनिस्टर्स यह कह जाते हैं कि हम ऐसा करेंगे, मगर वहां हमारा अनुभव अब तक तो यह हुआ है कि न राजस्थान, न महाराष्ट्र और न मध्य प्रदेश से हमें अनाज मिल रहा है ? और क्या आपने अखबारों में यह देखा है या नहीं कि वहां दो बहनों क्यू में खड़ी खड़ी बेहोश हो गईं और शाम को पुलिस को बुलाना पड़ा ? तो जब इस तरह की स्थिति आ गई है, आप क्या करना चाहते हैं यह स्थिति ठीक करने के लिये ?

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: Madam, the Press report stated that two women fainted when purchasing rice. But as far as rice is concerned, I am giving from the Central stock a little more rice. But the difficult position is with regard to coarse grains, and I have already taken up the matter with the Rajasthan Government and I contacted the Chief Minister last night, and he has promised to extend all help in moving the coarse grains to Gujarat.

कुमारी मणिबेन वल्लभभाई पटेल :

आप यहां तो हां कह देते हैं, मगर जो चीज होती है वह देखने की जरूरत है और वह आप देखते नहीं हैं।

SHRI G. H. VALIMOHMED MOMIN (Gujarat): Is the Government aware that the Gujarat papers reported a statement by the Food Minister of Gujarat that in all there is a deficit of 14 lakh tonnes and unless there is a phased programme to supply this from the Central pool or from the surplus States, probably his fears are—and that is also our experience—that Kerala may be repeated? Is the Government in a position to agree to meet the deficit either from the pool, if any, or from the surplus States by compelling them to do so?

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: Madam, some hon. Member mentioned 5 lakh tonnes. Now it has increased to 14 lakh tonnes. I do not know where I am.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You should stick to your figure.

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: As I have already stated, in the current year as far as wheat and rice are concerned, we gave about 5 lakh tonnes. That we will be able to give. In addition to that, we shall try to get coarse grains from the adjoining States, and I hope it would be possible to the extent these are available from the neighbouring States to meet the requirements of Gujarat.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR (Uttar Pradesh): I should like to emphasise the question put by Mr. Shah. He has just stated that the Rajasthan Government are imposing some impossible conditions on the Gujarat Government, and that is actually the grievance of the Gujarat people. The hon. Food Minister said that they had entered into some arrangement so that this anomaly could not happen. May I know what is the arrangement? Is it true that the Rajasthan Government is trying to trade on the misery of the people of Gujarat, as Mr. Shah indicated, under some sort of agreement between Rajasthan and Gujarat?

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: I do not think the hon. Member is justified in charging the Rajasthan Government of trading on the sufferings of the Gujarat people. It is not so Madam, they have fixed a price within Rajasthan, a statutorily controlled price. But Gujarat merchants were trying to purchase at a higher price. The arrangement was that whenever export was taking place, 50 per cent should be handed over to the Rajasthan Government for their own requirements and the other 50 per cent was to be exported to the other State. It is on that basis this anomaly arose and, as I have already stated, this has been discussed and I hope this anomaly would not be there when actually purchases take place on behalf of Gujarat.

**THE PAYMENT OF WAGES
(AMENDMENT) BILL, 1964—
continued**

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Prof. Lal may continue his speech.

PROF. M. B. LAL: Madam, I was saying that there is not any material change brought about through the amendment embodied in clause 7 of this amending Bill, and I agree with my friend, Mr. Anandan, that Railway