

sugar-beet can be grown in India, but commercial possibilities are not quite bright.

SHRI A. D. MANI: May I ask the Minister who conducted the investigation into the commercial possibilities of sugar-beet Was it done by Government or a private agency"

SHRI A. M. THOMAS: By the Government.

SHRI G. RAMACHANDRAN: It is generally said, Sir, that sugar-cane requires the best soil. Does beet also require the same good soil, or is there any difference between the soil required for the cultivation of sugar-cane and of sugar-beet?

SHRI A. M. THOMAS: The beet crop also should have good soil, but the crop could be grown in Kashmir Himachal Pradesh and the cold regions of Punjab and Uttar Pradesh. That is what our experiments also indicate. As I have said, it is not a question of growing of sugar-beet alone but it is also a question of manufacture, question of whether commercial possibilities of manufacture of crystal sugar exist. In fact our experiments indicate that it cannot be had on a commercial scale, but all the same we want to experiment again. We want to start a pilot plant at Dehra Dun.

SHRI G. RAMACHANDRAN: That is not my question. My question was this. It is generally said that sugarcane requires the best soil and best water facilities and so on. Comparing beet-root with sugar-cane, does beet also require the same first-rate soil and water facilities?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Minister seems to think that it does. There is no difference with regard to soil and other things.

SHRI S. C. DEB; May I know what is the production of sugar-beet in the

last two years and what is the position about its marketability?

SHRI A. M. THOMAS: There has not been any regular production except, as I have already indicated, on an experimental basis at certain of our stations.

SHRI K. S. RAMASWAMY: May I know whether it is not possible to manufacture sugar on a cottage industry basis with the sugar-beet?

SHRI A. M. THOMAS: That may be possible.

SHRI DEOKINANDAN NARAYAN: May I know if more experiments are likely to be carried out on sugar-beet cultivation on a large scale?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Minister said that more experiments will be carried out.

FAIR PRICE SHOPS

*60. SHRI B. K. GAIKWAD: Will the Minister of FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased, to state:

- (a) the number of foodgrain fair price shops functioning at present in the country; and
- (b) the number of fair price shops in the rural areas and in the tribal areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (SHRI A. M. THOMAS): (a) Over 77,000 fair price shops.

(b) Separate information regarding the number of fair price shops functioning in the rural and tribal areas is not readily available.

SHRI B. K. GAIKWAD: Are Government aware that there are no such shops in villages, particularly in the tribal areas? You will find, Sir, that the people living in tribal areas in villages suffer more than the people living in cities. Under the circum-

tances may I know why Government is so callous, careless and indifferent to the interests of the downtrodden people and the Scheduled Tribes?

SHRI A. M. THOMAS: It is a matter which has to be left to the various State Governments. They have to judge where on account of short supply of foodgrains and high prices, the fair price shops should be opened. As far as our experience goes, the State Governments have been opening more and more fair price shops. The number has increased for the last three or four months of this year by about 28 per cent; the number is about 77,000. In fact, the State Governments should be left to exercise their own discretion in the matter of opening fair price shops. I do not think the tribal areas are omitted.

SHRI SITARAM JAIPURIA: May I know whether it has come to the notice of Government that quite a large number of fair price shops in different States, specially in U.P. and Rajasthan, do not get their requirements which they can sell at any price, fair or unfair?

SHRI A. M. THOMAS: That is not correct: having regard to the supplies that we make. For example, in the last month, that is in the month of March, wheat alone we have supplied 7,17,000 tons. It is a record figure. In the previous month it was 5,17,000 tons. In January it was 4,52,000 tons. In fact, in the last three months we have supplied in the form of wheat alone about 1.7 million tons, whereas the total supplies in the whole year of 1963 was only 3-8 million tons. So we meet all the demands of the State Governments. With regard to rice also, whereas in 1963 we distributed 208,000 tons in the first three months, we have distributed 2,30,000 in the same period this year.

SHRI B. K. GAIKWAD: Are Government aware that in Scheduled Tribe areas during rainy days, for want of foodstuffs, these Scheduled Tribes live on the roots and leaf of I

the trees and the gums which are grown in the forest lands which are bitter? Under the circumstances, may I know whether Government will take more care in future to provide cheap fair price shops, particularly in these areas and take care of the downtrodden people?

SHRI A. M. THOMAS: The policy of the Government is that wherever there is justification, fair price shops should be opened irrespective of whether they are Schedule Tribe areas or otherwise. In fact, for example, I think in the Scheduled Tribe areas in Madhya Pradesh, they have opened so many fair price shops. This is a matter the State Government would take care of.

SHRI B. K. GAIKWAD: The hon. Minister has referred to Madhya Pradesh but as far as Maharashtra is concerned, I know definitely that in tribal areas there are no shops.

ANT HON. MEMBER: Even in U.P. there are no shops.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Minister has indicated that wherever they are needed, they will be opened.

SHRI B. K. GAIKWAD: So, my request is that Government should not observe this invidious distinction and see that such shops are provided in the poor localities particularly in the tribal areas.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is all right.

SARDAR SWARAN SINGH: May I, Sir, add that it is not correct to say that there is any invidious distinction against the Scheduled Tribes people? The hon. Member has pointed out that there are scarcity areas where shops are not opened. We will certainly pass this information on to the Maharashtra Government and any area or any class of people who are facing any particular difficulty will definitely be cared for.

SHRI MULKA GOVINDA REDDY: May I know whether Government have advised industrial establishments and public undertakings including the Railways to open subsidised fair price shops and, if so, how many have been opened?

SHRI A. M. THOMAS: In fact, it is open to them to form themselves into co-operatives and then open consumer stores and other things. Apart from the general help that we give to the fair price shops that are run by the State Governments, we are not opening them separately in these establishments as has been referred to by my friend.

SHRIMATI TARA RAMCHAKDRA SATHE: How many shops are run by Government departments for their employees when the Government wants to popularise such shops?

SHRI A. M. THOMAS: That is exactly what I answered. It is open to the Government employees to form themselves into co-operatives and run consumer stores, as has been done in Delhi. In fact, the Central Government has sponsored certain consumer co-operative stores about which the hon. House is aware.

SHRI B. K. P. SINHA: May I know if Government's attention has been drawn to reports in the newspapers within the last two or three days that many fair price shops in the State of U.P. have put up 'No stock' notices? If so, have Government tried to ascertain the real position in this respect and take corrective steps?

SHRI A. M. THOMAS: There is nothing like that. U.P. has got more than 12,000 fair price shops. In fact, at the beginning of the year, it was only 5,000. They have now started more than 12,000. More than 12,000 are functioning there. We are meeting their entire requirement of wheat for distribution through these fair price shops. As far as rice is concerned, the U.P. Government itself is

procuring rice and distributing it to the fair price shops.

SHRI DEOKINANDAN NAHAYAN: It is seen in villages that many a time these fair price shops are closed for days together because of want of supply. There is no regular supply. Is there any arrangement that each shop would regularly get regular supplies from the Government.

SHRI A. M. THOMAS: I do not think that inference is correct.

SHRI DEOKINANDAN NARAYAN: I have seen it.

SHRI A. M. THOMAS: Of course, there may be some stray cases; due to transport difficulties or otherwise, the fair price shops would not have got their supplies. But the figures are an eloquent testimony to the efforts that are being made by the Central Government. Our supplies of wheat alone in the last month comes to more than seven lakh tons and even then Members complain that they are not getting supplies. I do not know.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: Some time back the Government of India issued a directive to its various Ministries and autonomous concerns and civic bodies in Delhi to open fair price shops for their employees. Is it a fact that some of these refused to open these shops because firstly they do not wish to make investment of their own, secondly because they are afraid that the stock of wheat supplied to them remaining unsold will not be taken back by the Food Ministry and thirdly because in spite of these protestations the Government has not been able to persuade its own Ministries to open these shops for their employees.

SHRI A. M. THOMAS: The suggestion that the stocks must be taken back by the Government if unsold is a very difficult condition to be complied with. As far as Delhi in which

the hon. Member is interested is | concerned, there are 812 fair price shops functioning and we are meeting the wheat requirements of the fair price shops.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: The Minister has not replied to my question. My question was that the Ministries of the Government of India have not agreed to or accepted the suggestion of the Government of India to open fair price shops for their own employees for the various reasons which I have just mentioned.

SARDAR SWARAN SINGH: I do not see why separate Ministries should open separate shops. I do not know which directive is in the mind of the-hon. Member. For instance, Government employees are living in Vinay Nagar and I cannot visualise ten fair price shops being opened for catering to the individual Ministries. I can understand fair price shops being opened for Government employees belonging to any Ministry. So, I am not aware of this particular instruction about which the hon. Member is referring. If he gives me the details, I will certainly find out. Maybe, when he was connected with the New Delhi Municipal Committee some indication might have been given by the Delhi Administration that it should open a fair price shop for its own employees and if it has not taken action, I would like to discuss as to why it was not possible to open a fair price shop. But we cannot agree to impossible conditions. If there is no possibility of off-take, apparently there is no case, for opening a shop, which means that the pressure of offtake is not much. So, we have to take all these into consideration before we decide and encourage the opening of a fair price shop.

SHRI B. K. GAIKWAD: May T know whether Government are aware that while giving licences to run such shops the licences are not given to new comers but are given to those

whose forefathers were running such-shops? Is it a fact and are Government aware of it?

SHRI A. M. THOMAS: It is a matter which the hon. Member has to take at the State level. It cannot be expected of the Central Government to select the persons and say that the fair price shops should be given to them; It is impossible.

SHRI G. MURAHARI: The Minister has just now informed that stocks are supplied to these fair price shops. But often it is found that these shops put up notices that no stocks are available and later, most of the stocks are found to go into the blackmarket. What steps do the Government propose to take to check this practice of passing these stocks of wheat provided for the fair price shops into the blackmarket?

SHRI A. M. THOMAS: If there are abuses, they have to be checked and we have advised the various State Governments to strengthen their administrative machinery. We have also agreed that even for running the machinery, a part of the expenditure-would be borne by us.

SHRI FARIDUL HAQ ANSARI: May I know how many fair price shops are today functioning in the City of Delhi in different parts?

SHRI A. M. THOMAS: I have already indicated—in Delhi, 812 shops.

SHRI G. RAMACHANDRAN: Since it appears to be very clear that there is a strong consensus of opinion in this House that these fair price shops are not well distributed and are not well-provided with the things that should go into them, will the Government drop this kind of its defence mechanism in regard to a matter like this and give a positive assurance to the House . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: I thought you would put a question;

SHRI G. RAMACHANDRAN: I am putting it. Is it not necessary that we should have from the Government side a positive assurance that these urgent matters will be most carefully attended to?

SHRI A. M. THOMAS: These matters are carefully attended to. At every stage we discuss the matter with the various State Governments and then we advise them to start as many fair price shops as are warranted and that is why, having regard to the figures that I have given, during the last three months the number of fair price shops has gone up by 28 per cent, and I think that more than 77,000 fair price shops are functioning throughout the country now. It is not a small figure and I think the inference that has been drawn by the hon. Member is not correct.

श्री महेन्द्रगुप्त : क्या वर्ज साहब फर्म प्राइस शॉप तक जनता को नजान मिल जायगी और गवर्नमेंट इस काबिल हो जायगी कि लो को आसानी से खुराक मिल सके—अपने राज में क्या यह गवर्नमेंट ऐसा कर सकेगी या नहीं कर सकेगी ?

सरदार स्वर्ण सिंह : जहर कर मन्त्री और हमारे ही राज में होगा क्योंकि आपका राज तो आने वाला नहीं है ।

श्री अब्दुल गनी : क्या वर्ज साहब फर्म प्राइस शॉप तक जनता को नजान मिल जायगी और गवर्नमेंट इस काबिल हो जायगी कि लो को आसानी से खुराक मिल सके—अपने राज में क्या यह गवर्नमेंट ऐसा कर सकेगी या नहीं कर सकेगी ?

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के क्या इन के علم में ये बात थी
 है कि हल्द्वस्तान हाउसिंग फॅक्टरी
 में काम करने वाले आदिमियों
 ने इस बात की डिमांड की थी कि इनको
 वहाँ एक दुकान खोलने की इजाजत दी जाय
 लेकिन सरकार की डायरेक्शन के बावजूद
 वहाँ के जो हाकिम हैं यह दुकान खुलवाने
 की इजाजत नहीं देते—इस सिलसिले
 में गवर्नमेंट क्या कार्यवाही कर रही है ?

सरदार स्वर्ण सिंह : हिन्दुस्तान हाउसिंग
 फॅक्टरी बक्स हाउसिंग मिनिस्ट्री के नीचे
 काम करती है । उसका मानिक एक तरह
 से कारपोरेशन है जो नीम सरकारी है ।
 आपने जो यह बताया है मैं उनकी नोटिस में
 ला दूंगा ।

श्री विमलकुमार मन्नालालजी
श्री रमेशचन्द्र शंकरलालराव
सांडेकर :

क्या साहब तथा कृषि मंत्री यह बताने
 की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) वर्ष १९६३-६४ के मौसम के
 लिए चीनी के उत्पादन का मूलतः कितना
 लक्ष्य निर्धारित किया गया था ;

† The question was actually asked
 on the floor of the House by Shri