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SHORT NOTICE QUESTION AND
ANSWER

MEASURES TO FIGHT LOCUST INVASION

SHRI N. B. MAITI: Will the Minister Of
FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be
pleased to state:

(a) whether a conference of Secretaries
and Directors of Agriculture of the States has
been called in Delhi for the purpose of taking
concerned emergent measures to fight the
serious locust invasions in the country; and

(b) if so, what are those emergent
measures?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE
MINISTRY OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
(SHRI RAM SUBHAG SINGH) : (a) The
Conference of the State Agriculture
Secretaries and Officers concerned with the
locust control was convened on 13th August,
1962. It was attended by the representatives
of the Governments of Jammu and Kashmir,
Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, Uttar
Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh
and Gujarat. The main object of calling the
conference was to review the progress of
locust control operations.

(b) The representatives of the various State
Governments indicated that they are alive to
the situation and have made adequate
arrangements to control locusts in their
respective States. The operations for the
destruction of locusts and hoppers are pro-
gressing satisfactorily. The supply position of
pesticides is satisfactory but some of the State
Governments wanted some power dusters. As
these dusters are not available in the country,
steps have been taken to import them on an
emergent basis.

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL: What are
the districts that are primarily affected by this
menace and may I know whether
Government have any information of their
own apart from what is conveyed to them by
the State Governments about the

egg-laying by the locusts that has taken
place in recent days?

SHRI RAM SUBHAG SINGH: I read out
the names of the States that have been
affected by the locust menace, and the names
are, Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Himachal
Pradesh, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar,
Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and also Gujarat.
But the representative of Gujarat told us in
that conference that his State was not
primarily affected. But the others are affected.

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL: Do I take
it that whole areas of these several States are
affected or that only certain districts are
affected? My question was about the districts.

SHRI RAM SUBHAG SINGH: Districts? In
Rajasthan, in the Scheduled Desert Area,
eleven districts are affected. There is one
desert area—one district—in Punjab also; and
in the cultivated area in Rajasthan eleven
districts, in Punjab thirteen districts, in Delhi
one district and in Uttar Pradesh thirteen
districts. In that way, in all, fifty districts are
affected but some locusts are flying over to
other States also like Madhya Pradesh —
Morena and Shivpuri—Bihar, etc.

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL: Since the
most dangerous part of the locust menace is
their egg-laying period, what steps have
Government taken to destroy the eggs when
they are laid first during the earlier days when
the locusts attack the crops?

SHRI RAM SUBHAG SINGH: Actually, as
I had said in my reply to the Starred Question,
the most effective steps that can be taken in
regard to destroying the eggs are taken by the
cultivators themselves because they are
ploughing the field and thereby killing the
eggs. But we are having aerial operations
also. At the moment in Rajasthan our aerial
unit is working in the Scheduled Desert
Areas— meaning thereby in one district of
Punjab also—and in the cultivated area as
well.

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL: I have not followed his answer. He says that the only effective way of destroying the eggs is by ploughing the field. How is it that the farmers can plough the fields when standing crops are there?

SHRI FARIDUL HAQ ANSARI: May I know what is the estimated loss suffered due to the locust menace?

SHRI RAM SUBHAG SINGH: Actually, this has not yet been calculated in terms of money. But as you know, Madam, the fields have been sown with maize, cotton, jowar, etc. The menace is mostly in certain parts. In parts of Punjab they have become grown up. But yet the loss has not been calculated. The damage is not very heavy. But in that district and in some parts of Ludhiana, Jullundur and Karnal, it is no doubt large but in other districts it is not so heavy.

And in regard to Mr. Patel's question, I would like to submit that he has not perhaps followed me because the locusts do not distinguish between fields where crops are standing and fields where there are no crops. Where there are no crops, ploughing is a very effective way of killing the eggs. Where there are crops the farmers try to spray some insecticide, etc., they beat drums also or they do some other thing. The difficulty that we are experiencing is that in densely populated areas, it is not possible, because we are not getting the co-operation of all the villagers so that we can carry out aerial spraying operations and the villagers fear that the health condition of their cattle as well as of human beings will also be affected. These things are coming in our way. If he knows any particular district, he can straightway tell me and I will see that it is sprayed.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Dahyabhai Patel's question was: "How do you destroy eggs when they are first laid?" You do not destroy them by the beat of drums.

SHRI RAM SUBHAG SINGH: Perhaps, you have not also understood me, Madam. The eggs get spread over a wide area and, therefore, ploughing is the most effective way of killing the eggs. But the hoppers are sprayed upon because when the eggs sprout in the shape of hoppers, then aerial spraying is effective. It is not very effective in regard to eggs.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

COMMONWEALTH POOL

*385. SHRI SITARAM JAIPURIA: Will the Minister of TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the BOAC-Air India-Qantas pool, known as the Commonwealth Pool, is likely to be declared void in the United States of America;

(b) whether the United States Air Transport Association has attacked the pool as unfair competition;

(c) whether President Kennedy has asked for an official committee to report to him on the possible action against the pool; and

(b) if so, how does Air India hope to meet the situation?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI B. BHAGAVATI) : (a) The U.S. Government are understood to have no intention to declare the pool as void.

(b) and (c) Neither the U.S. Air Transport Association appear to have filed any formal protest against the BOAC-Air India-Qantas commercial pool nor has President Kennedy appointed any official committee to report on possible action against the pool.

(d) Does not arise.