

12 Noon

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 concerted 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 progressing 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.