

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: May I know whether the idea is to practise it, and is it the establishment of a classless society that they have in mind?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. Next question.

RESERVE STOCKS OF FOODGRAINS

•121. SHRI J. H. JOSHI: Will the Minister of FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the present position of reserve stocks of foodgrains in India; and

(b) what measures are adopted to implement the recommendations of the Asoka Mehta Foodgrains Enquiry Committee in connection with the building up of stocks?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (SHRI A. M. THOMAS): (a) The Central and State Governments had on 1st August, 1958 a stock of about 14.5 lakh tons of foodgrains.

(b) The need for maintaining adequate reserve stocks has been the policy of the Government. At the beginning of 1957 the total stock in the hands of Government was only 2.9 lakh tons. In spite of 29.5 lakh tons issued to the fair price shops etc. during 1957 the closing stock was increased to 11.9 lakh tons. In 1958, about 20 lakh tons of foodgrains have already been distributed, but even then the reserve stock with the Government has gone up to 14.5 lakh tons.

SHRI J. H. JOSHI: Is it a fact that there is fall in the production of foodgrains to the tune of 10 to 12 per cent, this year; and, if so, what steps are proposed to be taken by the Government to fill this gap?

SHRI A. M. THOMAS: All the steps that are within the powers of the Government are being taken. Besides

importing foodgrains from abroad, we are also procuring foodgrains from surplus areas too. The present stock position would be enough to meet our commitments to the States for the coming months. We are now negotiating a further P.L. 480 agreement and also a barter agreement by giving manganese ore.

SHRI J. H. JOSHI: What is the quantity of foodgrains imported in the year 1957-58 and what is the cost of those foodgrains; and what is the amount of the freight charges?

SHRI A. M. THOMAS: From January to July 1958 we have imported 3,23,000 tons of rice and 14,69,000 tons of wheat, that is, altogether 17,92,000 tons of foodgrains. And then the estimate of expected arrivals for the current month according to the agreement already entered into will be about 9,92,000 tons.

SHRI J. H. JOSHI: He is not giving us costs.

SHRI A. M. THOMAS: It is not possible to say offhand . . .

SHRI J. H. JOSHI: What about the freight charges?

SHRI A. M. THOMAS: The estimated cost of the quantity that we expect to import according to the budget estimates would be about Rs. 111 crores, for which the foreign exchange component would be Rs. 36 crores. That will all be seen from the leaflet 'Food Position'.

SHRI P. S. RAJAGOPAL NAIDU: May I know, Sir, when there is so much reserve stock in the country, why the prices have been shooting up abnormally in recent weeks?

SHRI A. M. THOMAS: There has been a substantial drop in production and from the leaflet hon. Members would have gathered that there is a drop to the extent of 6.7 million tons of foodgrains.

SHRI P. C. BHANJ DEO: May I know, Sir, how much rice from Burma is expected to be imported during the current year and at what price?

SHRI A. M. THOMAS: During the current year it will be about 3 lakh tons. The landed cost would be about Rs. 18 to Rs. 19 per maund.

SHRI V. PRASAD RAO: Because of the drop in production may I know whether the Government is thinking that the present buffer stock would be sufficient and whether it would be necessary to increase the buffer stocks?

SHRI A. M. THOMAS: We do not think that the present stocks would be sufficient. That is why we are negotiating for further imports.

DR. SHRIMATI SEETA PARMA-NAND: We are supposed to save Rs. 100 crores as a result of the successful Grow More Food Campaign. How is it that we require Rs. 100 crores worth of foodgrains still more to come?

SHRI A. M. THOMAS: Natural calamities.

SHRIMATI SAVITRY DEVI NIGAM: May I know, Sir, how many fair price shops are still working in Delhi in the rural areas?

SHRI A. M. THOMAS: There are only a few fair price shops working because Delhi is included in the zone comprising Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi and here the price of wheat is not as high as in other areas in the country.

SHRIMATI SAVITRY DEVI NIGAM: May I know, Sir, if the hon. Minister has received any complaint from the rural areas here that wheat is selling at about Rs. 20 per maund?

SHRI A. M. THOMAS: That is not correct.

DERAILMENT OF THE CARRIAGES OF ALLAHABAD EXPRESS AT DULAHPUR STATION

♦122. SHRI J. H. JOSHI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there was derailment of the carriages of the Allahabad Express at Dulahpur Station on the 31st May, 1958;

(b) what is the number of persons who (i) died, and (ii) received injuries; and

(c) what are the causes of the derailment?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SHAH NAWAZ KHAN): (a) Yes, at about 3.23 hours on 31st May, 1958 while No. 5 Up Allahabad Express train was entering Dulahpur station on the Bhatni-Varanasi, Metre Gauge Section of the North Eastern Railway, two vehicles next to the engine got derailed near the facing points.

(b) One person was killed and 19 received minor injuries.

(c) The Government Inspector of Railways has held his statutory enquiry. The Assistant Station Master and the Pointsman on duty have been arrested and released on bail. The case is sub-judice.

SHRI J. H. JOSHI: What is the maximum amount paid as compensation to the dead and what is the minimum amount paid to the dead?

SHRI SHAH NAWAZ KHAN: The dead do not actually receive any compensation. Their dependants do.

SHRI V. K. DHAGE: Question No. 123 is on a similar subject, relating to another similar accident. It may be taken up together.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is it all right, Mr. Joshi? Put the two questions together.