

SHEI SHAH NAWAZ KHAN: Sir, I may just make a little clarification. The idea is not to double the track completely between Gudur and Bez-wada. The track is to be doubled only in sections.

IMPORT OF WHEAT FROM THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

*29. SHRI M. VALIULLA: Will the Minister for FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of wheat so far imported from the United States of America during 1957; and

(b) the quantity of wheat proposed to be imported from that country up to the end of this year?

THE MINISTER FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (SHRI A. P. JAIN): (a) About 6 lakh tons during January to April 1957.

(b) The import programme is reviewed from time to time in the light of requirements and availability of shipping. The present intention is to import about 2½ lakh tons a month.

SHRI M. VALIULLA: Sir, will it satisfy the need of this country if we were to import only about 1½ lakh tons per month?

SHRI M. V. KRISHNAPPA: It will be more than enough, because we have enough stock in this country—more than 1½ million tons of wheat—and we will be getting 3 million tons of wheat this year.

DR. RADHAKUMUDMOOKERJEE: May I know the approximate cost in lakhs of foreign exchange on account of these imports?

SHRI M. V. KRISHNAPPA: We are importing it under the American Programme. There is no direct foreign exchange involved immediately. It is paid in rupees in long instalments.

SHRI M. VALIULLA: We have been given to understand that there is more

and more production and we are importing more than what we need. What are the measures that are being taken by the Government to see that there is proper marketing for the commodities?

SHRI M. V. KRISHNAPPA: Sir, we are not importing more. In 1951 we had imported foodgrains worth Rs. 216 crores, whereas in 1955 it has been reduced to merely Rs. 33 crores worth of foodgrains. And in 1955 we had nearly one million tons of foodgrains in our hands. So, if you take into account five or six years' figures, you will find that the imports have been considerably reduced now.

SHRI M. VALIULLA: Sir, my question is not answered. It is clear from the answer given just now that we are importing more than what we need and we are also producing more than what we need. What is the Government doing for marketing these things?

SHRI A. P. JAIN: Well, Sir, out of the imports we will be meeting the current demands and also building a reserve stock, and the very fact that we are trying to maintain reasonable prices by itself goes to show that more stocks will be needed.

SHRI M. GOVINDA REDDY: May I know, Sir, if it is a condition precedent that this imported wheat should be carried to India only in American bottoms, or are we free to engage our own ships?

SHRI A. P. JAIN: 50 per cent, are to be carried in American flag ships and 50 per cent, in non-American flag ships.

SHRI D. A. MJRZA: If we are importing more, why is there this food crisis?

SHRI M. V. KRISHNAPPA: We are not importing more. As I have already pointed out, in 1951 we had imported Rs. 216 crores worth of foodgrains, whereas in 1955 we imported only Rs. 33 crores worth of foodgrains. As the country goes on

producing more and more foodgrains. the imports will be reduced.

SHRI D. A. MIRZA: Because we have cut short the imports, hence this food scarcity today.

SHRI A. P. JAIN: Sir, the position is that while the production has been going up and we have also been importing foodgrains from abroad, the demand is going up even on an increasing scale. The increase in production has not been able to keep pace with the increase in demand, and therefore we have to meet part of the demand by imports. But the shortfall is only marginal.

SHRI B. B. SHARMA: May I know, Sir, the amount of foreign exchange required for importing foodgrains in 1956?

SHRI M. V. KRISHNAPPA: In 1956 we had imported Rs. 56 crores worth of foodgrains.

SHRI B. B. SHARMA: Was it also on the basis of the American aid programme?

SHRI M. V. KRISHNAPPA: Partly we have imported it under that American aid programme.

SHRI B. B. SHARMA: Is this aid in the form of gift or loan?

SHRI M. V. KRISHNAPPA: Partly it is a gift and partly a loan.

SHRI B. B. SHARMA: How much gift and how much loan?

SHRI M. V. KRISHNAPPA: Sir, it is for the Finance Ministry to say that. I am only concerned with getting foodgrains.

SHRI A. P. JAIN: Ten to eleven per cent.

SHRI D. A. MIRZA: Why have we reduced the import when we are not producing more?

SHRI A. P. JAIN: We have not reduced the imports. All that we done; is that we have reduced the expenditure on foreign imports.

SHRI M. VALIULLA: What is the interest that we pay for the deferred payment? I want to know the rate of interest.

SHRI A. P. JAIN: I will require notice.

श्री राम सहाय : मैं मिनिस्टर महोदय से यह जानना चाहूंगा कि जब देश में गेहूं की कमी महसूस की जा रहा है, तो इम्पोर्ट कम क्यों किया जा रहा है ?

श्री ए० पी० जैन : मैंने तो इस बात को साफ कर दिया है कि इम्पोर्ट कम नहीं किया जा रहा है । करीब करीब ३० लाख टन गेहूं का इम्पोर्ट जो है, वह अगले साल २० लाख तक हो जायगा, यह कम नहीं है ।

SHRI DEOKINANDAN NARAYAN: May I know if wheat can be procured from countries other than America at cheaper rates than we can procure from America?

SHRI A. P. JAIN: Australian wheat is somewhat cheaper, but it is always better to get wheat under the Aid Programme because we do not have to pay in terms of foreign exchange.

PURCHASE OF LIBERTY TYPE OF SHIPS FROM U.S.A.

♦30. SHRI M. VALIULLA: Will the Minister for TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to refer to the reply given to Starred Question No. 36 in the Rajya Sabha on the 27th I March 1957 and state: