

(b) whether it is also a fact that the 1.2 lakh tonnes of wheat with tags as 'Not fit for Human consumption' and 'Cattle feed' was sold in the open market; and

(c) if so, whether this process was carried out as per normal practice and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (c) No, Sir. However, a news item had appeared in the Economic Times on 18th June, 2004 to this effect. The matter was enquired into by the Managing Director, Food Corporation of India and the allegations were found to be baseless.

Market Borrowings by FCI

529. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Food Corporation of India (FCI) has set up a steering Committee to go into the aspects of market borrowings for debt serving;

(b) whether it is also a fact that FCI was allowed to borrow Rs. 5000 crores from the market;

(c) if so, the details for which it is going to borrow from the market;

(d) whether FCI is seriously thinking of entering into commercial ventures such as export etc., and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) The Reserve Bank of India constituted a Working Group consisting of representatives from the Ministries of Finance and Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution; Food Corporation of India, State Bank of India and SBI CAP to examine various issues relating to market borrowing programme of FCI. The report of the Working Group has been received by the Government.

(b) and (c) The Government have received a proposal from the FCI seeking Government permission to allow the Corporation to go in for market borrowings to the extent of Rs. 5000 crores in stages, which is under active consideration.

(d) and (e) No specific proposal from the FCI for entering into commercial ventures such as export etc., has been received by the Government.

Setting up of Consumers' Information Centres

†530. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have set up or propose to set up Consumers' Information Centres;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of the powers and functions of these Consumers' Information Centres; and

(d) the amount allocated by Government to set up such centres?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN):

(a) and (d) District Consumer Information Centres (DCIC) have been approved for 102 districts in the country from the Consumer Welfare Fund out of which grant has been released to 79. A statement showing the Districts for which grant has been released for setting up the Centre is given in the Statement (See below).

(c) The scheme to set up a District Consumer Information Centre in each district of the country in a phased manner was launched in October 2000. These Centres are to be set up and run by Zilla Parishads/ Voluntary Consumer Organizations/Education Institutions of repute on a continuous basis. The main functions of DCIC are to disseminate information on consumer protection not only to direct users but to all local bodies and institutions, act as watchdogs for consumers, facilitate filing of complaints, liaise with the District Weights and Measures authorities and to raise consumers awareness.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.