

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA): (a) to (c) A Committee headed by the Chairman, Food Corporation of India has been set up to, *inter alia* formulate a clear and comprehensive policy framework for the export (and import) of foodgrains, over a period of time, as also to recommend Operational Guidelines pertaining thereto.

There is, separately, a High Level Committee constituted by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution which continues to function on a regular basis.

Pesticides in bottled water

971. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has ordered an inquiry after noticing the reports in the press about pesticide contaminated bottled water;

(b) if so, whether Government have received the report, and if so, the outcome thereof; and

(c) what action Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) No, Sir. The report of the Committee is awaited.

Foodgrains storage in West Bengal

972. SHRI TARINI KANTA ROY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that foodgrains are being kept by F.C.I. in hired godown at Coochbehar in West Bengal;

(b) whether there is any proposal to construct a ten thousands M.T. capacity godown at Coochbehar; and

(c) if so, the time-frame thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) The question does not arise.

Arrears of sugarcane growers

973. DR. AKHILESH DAS: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether sugarcane growers in different States, particularly Uttar Pradesh have been agitating for payment of arrears of sugarcane dues by the sugar mills;

(b) if so, the arrears of payment of sugarcane dues as on January, 2003, State-wise; and

(c) the steps taken by the Central Government and respective State Governments for clearance of these dues and the details of the dues settled, so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) As per the information received from the Government of Uttar Pradesh, there had been one incident at Munderwa, District Basti during agitation by sugarcane farmers.

(b) and (c) Statement showing the State-wise sugarcane price arrears position upto 2001-2002 sugar season and 2002-2003 season are given in the Statement I and II respectively. (*see below*)

The Central Government, on its part, besides writing to the Chief Ministers of States from time to time for expeditious clearance of the same, has taken various steps to improve the financial health of sugar industry with a view to enabling it to reduce the sugarcane price arrears:

(i) The levy obligation of sugar factories has been reduced to 10%