

LOK SABHA

Tuesday, November 28, 1967/Agrahayana 7, 1889 (Saka).

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

उपभोक्ता वस्तुओं के मूल्य

\* 301. श्री मोलाह प्रसाद : क्या खाद्य तथा कृषि मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या सरकार को पता है कि 1960 की तुलना में खाद्यान्न, दूध, दालों, तेल तथा सब्जियों के मूल्य बहुत बढ़ गये हैं; और

(ख) यदि हाँ, तो क्या सरकार उपभोक्ता भण्डारों द्वारा उपरोक्त वस्तुओं को 1960 के मूल्यों पर उपलब्ध करवाने का विचार कर रही है ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION (SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir. It is not possible at present to distribute these commodities at the prices prevailing in 1960. However, the Government have been taking steps to keep their prices under check.

श्री मोलाह प्रसाद : अध्यक्ष महोदय, अभी मंत्री महोदय ने बतलाया कि कदम उठाते रहे हैं लेकिन पिछले महीने जो खाद्य मंत्रियों तथा मुख्य मंत्रियों का सम्मेलन हुआ उसमें क्या आवश्यक वस्तुओं के मूल्य को निश्चित करने के लिए उस पर कोई विचार हुआ है ? अगर विचार हुआ है तो उस का क्या परिणाम निकला ?

SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE : No, Sir; the specific problem of controlling the prices of various commodities was not discussed in the Chief Ministers' Conference, though concern was expressed about the higher prices prevailing in regard to foodgrains, etc., and that is why the programme of procurement has been planned and it was accepted, by and large, by the Chief Ministers' Conference.

श्री मोलाह प्रसाद : अध्यक्ष महोदय, क्या मंत्री महोदय यह बतायेंगे कि जिस तरह कि उद्योगों के सामानों के दाम निश्चित किए जाते हैं उसी तरह से किसानों के खेत जोताई, सिंचाई, बीज, खाद और उसके श्रम की लागत को देख कर उस का काम निश्चित करने के लिए प्रोग्राम आप बना रहे हैं ?

SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE : Actually this question does not come under the purview of the main Question, but may I say that these factors are taken into consideration by the Agricultural Prices Commission while making recommendations to the Government of India.

श्री श्रीचन्द गोयल : अध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि पिछले बजट के समय से जबकि हमारे फाइनेंस मिनिस्टर ने यह कोशिश की है कि डेफिसिट फाइनान्सिंग को चेक करें और इस हेतु उन्होंने स्टेट्स के केन्द्र से धन लेखे में काफी रुकावटें लगायी हैं और यद्यपि खरीफ फसल भी काफी अच्छी हुई है और अगली रबी फसल भी अच्छी होने वाली है, इसके बावजूद भी इन चीजों की प्राइसेज कम नहीं हो रही हैं तो क्या गवर्नमेंट इस मामले को एग्जामिन करायेगी कि बम्पर क्राप होने के बावजूद और डेफिसिट फाइनेंसिंग को चेक करने के बावजूद यह प्राइसेज क्यों बढ़ती जा रही हैं, कहाँ जा कर रुकेंगी ? इतनी फेवरेबल कंडीशंस के होते भी हम इन को चेक क्यों नहीं कर पा रहे हैं ?

**SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE :** As a result of good crop prospects, there is an apparent tendency of prices going down. In fact, during the last 22 days between the 28th October and the 18th November, the cereal price index has shown a decline of 3.4 per cent as against a rise of 3.7 per cent during the corresponding period in 1966.

The second very important factor is that the trend of market arrivals is so encouraging, and the market arrivals are almost 40 per cent higher as compared to the figure during the corresponding period of last year. In some States, the increase has been very high. For instance, in Madhya Pradesh, the market arrivals in October have been higher by 600 per cent; in Madras, they have been higher by 240 per cent, and even in Kerala they have been higher by 114 per cent, and in West Bengal also they have been higher by 60 per cent. There is a very healthy tendency in the economy, especially of the foodgrains prices getting down to a lower level.

**श्री महाराज सिंह भारती :** अध्यक्ष महोदय, मंत्री जी ने फसल की तुलना कर के हिसाब बताने की कोशिश की है। सवाल तो फसल से बहुत बड़ा है। ऐसा तो अक्सर हो जाता है। मैं यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या यह सच है कि भारत सरकार इस देश में जितना खाद बनाने के लिए सामान उपलब्ध था, गन्दागी उपलब्ध थी, न उसका खाद बना पायी और जो हमारे यहाँ हड्डियाँ फासफोरस के लिए उपयुक्त थीं, पी-2 ओ-5 खाद के लिए वह भी हम एक्सपोर्ट करते रहे, जो खली थी खाद के लिए वह भी एक्सपोर्ट करते रहे, और हालांकि अन्दर पानी बहुत उपलब्ध था लेकिन उसको हमने प्रायः रीटि नहीं दी, बिजली केवल 4 प्रतिशत देते रहे, तो क्या यह सही नहीं है कि हम ने सिंचाई और खाद की जो इतनी बड़ी उपेक्षा की है, उसकी वजह से पैदावार घट कर चीजों के दाम बढ़े हैं ?

**SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE :** This question is different from the main question, but I may say that the prices

had risen mainly because of severe drought conditions and steep fall in the production of agricultural commodities during the last two years.

**SHRI M. S. MURTI :** What has happened to the proposal to start a consumer commodity corporation very shortly ?

**SHRI RANGA :** Another corporation ?

**SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE :** That is not under contemplation at the moment.

**SHRI S. KANDAPPAN :** May I know whether Government are aware that the blanket powers which the Central Government have to control and regulate the prices of consumer commodities have created problems for the States in the matter of regulation of prices of certain consumer goods like oil and sugar, and if so, what steps they have taken to help the State Governments in this regard ?

**SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE :** Actually, the prices of most of these commodities are controlled under the Essential Commodities Act, and the necessary powers have been delegated to the State Governments to take effective steps for checking prices. But as I have mentioned, due to various other difficulties and various adverse trends in the economy, the prices had gone up steeply during the last few years, and there is no denying that fact.

**SHRIMATI SHARDA MUKERJEE :** In the past, the procurement policy had resulted in getting not even 5 per cent of the total production in the country. In view of the fact that there are now very good crop prospects and the food production is going to be 95 million tonnes, may I know the Government's estimate in regard to procurement of foodgrains for the current year ?

**SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE :** We expect to procure about 7 to 8 million tonnes. That is the broad estimate indicated by the Agricultural Prices Commission. At the Chief Ministers' Conference also this matter came up, and it was broadly suggested that it would

be possible to procure about 6 to 7 million tonnes.

**SHRI S. M. BANERJEE :** It has now become an admitted fact that the Government have miserably failed to hold the price-line or at least check further rise in prices. It is a fact or has it been brought to the notice of the hon. Minister that the retail prices of all commodities are much higher than the wholesale prices? Have adequate steps been taken to check the rise in prices by bringing forward some sort of legislation imposing deterrent punishment on blackmarketeers and hoarders?

**SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE :** Very stringent provisions are already there. A bill is also before Parliament to make the provisions still more stringent.

As far as the difference between the whole-sale and retail prices is concerned, this difference is there even in normal periods. But as far as foodgrains are concerned, for instance, as a result of formal and informal rationing, about 240 million people are covered and foodgrains are made available at a reasonable price to a large section of the population. Similarly certain other commodities are controlled ....

**SHRI S. M. BANERJEE :** I am saying that it is not available in the open market.

**SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE :** In the open market, the disparity between wholesale and retail price is there. But I quite agree with the hon. Member that in the case of certain commodities, the disparity is much more than the reasonable level.

**श्री साधोराम शर्मा :** क्या मंत्री साहब को मालूम है कि हरियाणा के अन्दर जिस वक्त फसल आई वहाँ पर गेहूँ का भाव 100 रु० क्विंटल था और इसी भाव पर वहाँ प्रोक्वोरमेंट की गई थी, जबकि आज उसी गेहूँ का भाव 80 रु० क्विंटल है। शायद यह पहला मौका था कि फसल पर भाव ज्यादा हो और उस के बाद भाव गिर जाय। आज भी वहाँ पर

जमींदारों के पास काफी गेहूँ है, मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि उस को निकालने के लिये क्या स्टैप्स गवर्नमेंट लेने जा रही है?

**SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE :** The Government of India are not responsible for inflating the prices, as has been alleged by the hon. Member. In fact, procurement prices have been prevailing in various States and these were announced in consultation with the Central Government. Foodgrains which were available in various States were procured; in some States, where effective machinery is in operation, it has gone on well; in others where the farmers continue to hold their stocks, some lacunae were there; the farmers did not sale in the expectation that they would get higher prices later.

**SHRI RANGA :** The facts revealed by my hon. friend do not strengthen his own optimism that the prices are coming down in a very healthy manner. He only said that in the last 22 days the prices have come down by 3.5 per cent whereas arrivals in the markets have gone up from 50 to 60 per cent from State to State. How is it that the arrivals are 50 per cent more than last year but the downward trend only indicates a figure of 3.5 per cent? May I know whether they have increased the number of fair price shops or are maintaining the existing fair price shops in all the places properly? Are any steps being taken to open more fair price shops to make available larger quantities of foodgrains in the drought-affected areas as also the cyclone—and flood-hit areas in the north as well as in the south, specially Orissa State?

**SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE :** What I said was that that the market arrivals have been more by about 40 per cent. In some cases, it has gone even upto 600 per cent. It has varied between 40 and 600 per cent. It will take some times before the full impact of the arrivals on the price level becomes felt. This may happen in a month or two and it is not expected immediately in the post-harvest period. It will take some time.

As regards opening fair price shops, we have opened a large number of fair price shops all over the country. The number at present is 1,53,000. If in a locality there are some special difficulties, that can be taken into consideration, by the concerned State Government and more fair price shops can be opened. But the Government of India's policy at the moment is not to increase the number of fair price shops.

**SHRI RANGA :** In the drought-affected areas ?

**THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (SHRI JAGJIWAN RAM) :** In drought affected areas, it is for the State Governments concerned to start relief operations. What I have done is that we have allotted gift wheat or gift maize, to State Governments for free distribution in the drought-affected areas among the poorer sections of society.

**SHRI RANGA :** Was anything done in Orissa and Bihar ?

**SHRI JAGJIWAN RAM :** Yes, I have allotted gift wheat and maize to all these areas.

**SHRI K. SURYANARAYANA :** In view of the difficulties that have arisen in checking prices and also in preventing malpractices in the crop of food-grains and other essential consumer goods, will the Government consider organising producer-cum-consumer co-operative societies in place of the present co-operative consumer stores which are not very useful to the ordinary man especially in the rural areas ?

**SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE :** Government is giving every positive help in regard to the organisation of co-operative consumer stores all over the country, and there is no lack of policy support from the Government, even monetary support is there, and we wish people come forward voluntarily to organise more co-operative societies in cities as well as in the rural areas, so that the needs of the consumers are met.

**SHRI K. SURYANARAYANA :** Not only consumers, but producer-cum-consumer societies.

**श्री प्रकाशवीर शास्त्री :** श्रीमन्, क्या खाद्य मंत्री श्री जगजीवन राम को अभी हाल में कोई इस प्रकार का शिष्ट मण्डल मिला था, जिन्होंने उन का ध्यान इस ओर आकर्षित किया था कि उपभोक्ता वस्तुओं में, जैसे दालों के मूल्यों में वृद्धि का कारण विशेषकर सीमावर्ती प्रदेशों में जो दालें जाती हैं, वे चोरी से दूसरे देशों में भेज दी जाती हैं? यदि हां, तो इस की रोकथाम के लिये सरकार क्या व्यवस्था कर रही है ?

**श्री जगजीवन राम :** इसकी कोई सूचना हम को किसी राज्य सरकार के पास से नहीं आई है। लेकिन राज्य सरकारों से बराबर सतर्कता बरतने के लिये कहा जाता ताकि स्मर्गलिंग न होने पावे।

**श्री प्रकाशवीर शास्त्री :** आज ही के पत्रों में निकला है कि मध्य प्रदेश का शिष्ट मंडल आपसे मिला है।

**श्री जगजीवन राम :** वे तो व्यापारी लोग मिले थे और मिलते रहते हैं। उनकी एकही आवाज होती है कि मूवमेंट की रुकावट को दूर कर दिया जाय और मैं उनसे कहता कि वह मैं अभी नहीं कर सकता हूँ।

**श्री प्रकाशवीर शास्त्री :** कर दीजिये।

**श्री जगजीवन राम :** नहीं, अभी नहीं कर सकता हूँ। लूट मचाने के लिये कैसे कर दूँ।

**SHRI HEM BARUA :** On a previous occasion I remember the hon. Deputy Prime Minister said ..

**SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE :** He is not here.

**SHRI HEM BARUA :** Unfortunately he is not here, but Mr. Jagjiwan Ram is here. The hon. Deputy Prime Minister then made a statement to the effect that he would never allow the prices of consumer goods or other goods to go up and would take steps to check rising prices, an assurance that raised high hopes in the minds of the people, the consumers. In that context, may I know whether our hon. Minister

would be in a position to enlighten us about the steps taken by his Deputy Prime Minister to check prices in this country because in spite of his assurance, prices are rising beyond the purchasing capacity of the poor man, the common man ?

**SHRI JAGJIWAN RAM :** By and large the prices of foodgrains have their reaction on the prices of manufactured commodities. With good prospects of crop, a lower trend is noticeable in foodgrain prices, when the main harvest has still to come in and arrive in the market. There is no doubt that there will be an appreciable fall in the prices of foodgrains, and it will have its effect on the prices of other commodities.

**SHRI NAMBIAR :** Is it wishful thinking ?

**SHRI JAGJIWAN RAM :** It is real thinking.

**SHRI HEM BARUA :** He has not replied to my question. He is indulging in pious hopes that because of the good harvest prices may fall. I was interested in knowing the steps that Government have taken in the light of the assurance given by the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Morarji Desai.

**SHRI JAGJIWAN RAM :** One important step that has been taken is the amendment of the Essential Commodities Act which is coming before the House.

**MR. SPEAKER :** We are having a food debate, he is giving us some time. We have spent 20 minutes, and still so many people are there. If you want to continue this, I do not mind.

**SHRI AMRIT NAHATA :** On the question of foodgrain prices, in view of the conflicting interests of the urban population and the rural population, the policy of cheap foodgrains has been to greatest disincentive to the production of more foodgrains in our country. I would like also to point out to the hon. Minister that if an increase in food production leads to a proportionate fall in prices, then the primary producer

stands where he is. The only contribution to the rising prices is that which is added by the middlemen which may be avoided, because that is not....

**MR. SPEAKER :** We are not discussing anything; please put your question.

**SHRI AMRIT NAHATA :** I want an assurance that the policy of cheap foodgrains is not continued. (*Interruption*)

**MR. SPEAKER :** We are not discussing all those questions now. Next question.

श्री शिवचन्द्र झा : मैं प्रार्थना करता हूँ कि प्रश्न सं० 325 को भी साथ ही ले लिया जाय ।

**MR. SPEAKER :** Yes.

F.A.O. CONFERENCE

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\*302. **SHRI SHIVA CHANDRA JHA :**

**SHRI MAYAVAN :**

Will the Minister of FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that he attended the Conference of F.A.O. in Rome; and

(b) if so, the subjects discussed at the Conference ?

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION (SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE) :** (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Besides other formal items, the following important subjects were discussed at the Conference :—

- (i) F.A.O.'s Food Production Resources Programme;
- (ii) Indicative World Plan for Agricultural Development;
- (iii) Review of the F.A.O.'s General Structure;