

LOK SABHA

Monday, September 5, 1960/Bhadra  
14, 1882 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of  
the Clock.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Purchase of Rice from Thailand

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- Shri Rameshwar Tantia:
- Shri A. M. Tariq:
- Shrimati Ila Palchoudhuri:
- Shri Raghunath Singh:
- Shrimati Maftida Ahmed:
- Shri Ajit Singh Sarhadi:
- Shri Bishwanath Roy:
- Shri Achar:
- Shri Assar:
- \*1049. { Shri P. C. Borooah:
- Dr. Ram Subhag Singh:
- Shri Arjun Singh  
Bhadauria:
- Shri N. R. Muniswamy:
- Shri Tridib Kumar  
Chaudhuri:
- Shri Tangamani:
- Shri Hem Barua:
- Kumari M. Vedakumari:

Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India Government have entered into an agreement with the Government of Thailand for buying Thai rice on a barter basis;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the amount of foreign exchange expected to be saved thereby?

The Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri M. V. Krishnappa):

(a) to (c). Negotiations for the pur-

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chase of Thai rice are still in progress. No agreement has been entered into so far.

Shri Rameshwar Tantia: May I know whether it is a fact that we bought rice from America at a higher price than we could have bought from Burma or Thailand, and also whether the Burma Government or the Thai Government protested to us that the deal was made without referring to the quotations from them?

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri S. K. Patil): No, there is no truth in that. We have not bought rice from America at any higher price. That is the first point. Secondly, therefore, there is no protest from Thailand that the price was higher or anything of that sort.

Mr. Speaker: Is it competent for any Government to protest against our purchases? I do not know.

Shri Tangamani: May I know whether in entering into an agreement with Thailand, we shall pay the same price which we are now paying to Burma as per the agreement of September, 1959, for 1½ lakhs tons

Shri S. K. Patil: We do not discuss the prices in the public, because we have got to do the deal. But the point is that unless it is favourable to us, we do not buy. Luckily, the Thai prices are very good just now, and that is why we are negotiating.

Shri Tyagi: Would it be a barter deal or shall we have to make payments?

Shri S. K. Patil: The first 25,000 tons that we may buy, which is a part of this negotiation, will be by paying exchange, which will be of the order of about Rs. 1 crore, but the second 25,000 tons would be on barter.

**Shrimati Ila Palchoudhuri:** Is it a fact that Thailand is thinking of protesting to the next council meeting of the SEATO against this deal in Washington?

**Shri S. K. Patil:** As you, Sir, very rightly remarked, it is not a kind of protest simply because a nation cannot purchase from somebody but buys somewhere else; but it may grumble; it may show a kind of sullenness. And we do not want our neighbours to be sullen or grumbling. Therefore, we are seeing that there is no cause for that sullenness or grumbling.

**Dr. Ram Subhag Singh:** May I know whether the attention of Government has been drawn towards a statement by the Thai Ambassador here regarding the rice deal, and whether Government have taken any action to see, as the hon. Minister has said just now, that they will not allow any grumble to grow? May I also know whether the causes underlying such a statement have now been removed?

**Shri S. K. Patil:** Yes, we have removed the causes; before the grumble becomes a rumble, we just stop it, and we have been exactly doing the same thing now.

**Shri N. R. Muniswamy:** May I know whether it is not a fact that this agreement with the Government of Thailand was entered into long after the deal with the U.S.A. with a view to give some support with regard to the protest that they made when we had entered into an agreement with the U.S.A.?

**Shri S. K. Patil:** There is absolutely no reason to believe that, because the negotiations have been going on. For the last seven years, we have not bought anything from Thailand because the prices were high, and, therefore, there was no question of buying anything. Just now, the prices have gone down, and they compare favourably with the prices in the international market. That is why we have been having these negotiations. They were begun even before this

American deal was signed, and they are continuing now.

**Shri Hem Barua:** May I know whether it is a fact that our foreign exchange difficulty was brought to the notice of the Thai Government by the Food and Agriculture Minister on his way back, and if so, whether the Thai Government have assured us of their help in a constructive way?

**Shri S. K. Patil:** The Thai Government, after this Indo-American deal was signed, was kind enough to invite me to Thailand, and I had a talk with their Ministers, and particularly, with their Prime Minister, and I did press the point about our foreign exchange; but I think Thailand is also in similar difficulties about foreign exchange. Therefore, it is a kind of a negotiation between two countries equally hard pressed for foreign exchange.

**Shri Raghunath Singh:** May I know whether the rice will be imported in Indian ships?

**Shri S. K. Patil:** There is no difference between rice, wheat or any other thing, so far as the Indian ships are concerned. If Indian shipping is available, I think it shall be our plain duty to have that in preference to anything else.

**Shri Jaipal Singh:** With reference to the barter deal, may I know whether it will take the same pattern as when we bought rice from Burma, that is to say, where in the past Burma has been buying Ceylon tea, but they have been borrowing money from us? Hereafter, will the picture be different? Will it be a barter deal, namely they will buy our tea and we shall take their rice?

**Shri S. K. Patil:** So far as Burma is concerned, most of the rice that we buy from Burma is for foreign exchange, that is, about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  lakhs tons. We did negotiate for  $1\frac{1}{2}$  lakh tons in addition, which was for barter. But the original  $3\frac{1}{2}$  lakh tons was for foreign exchange. The first five-year agreement with them is almost coming

to an end and the second five-year agreement will have to be entered into. But looking to the difficulties of Burma in regard to foreign exchange, we possibly have to continue the same pattern, so far as the basic quota of 3½ lakhs tons is concerned, and for the rest of it, it would be a barter.

**Dr. Ram Subhag Singh:** May I know the average quantity of rice which India has been importing from Thailand, and also the quantity of rice for which this barter negotiation is going on?

**Shri S. K. Patil:** As I said earlier, from 1953, we did not import anything from Thailand, because the prices were high. Just now also, we have not yet imported anything. Negotiations are going on for the purchase of 25,000 tons by paying foreign exchange, as I have said already in reply to Shri Tyagi's question, and for the purchase of another 25,000 tons next year by barter. Barring that, we have not taken anything from Thailand.

We only take rice from Burma to the tune of 3½ lakh tons by paying foreign exchange, and 1½ lakhs tons on barter. Just now, we are having a deal with Egypt also for 100,000 tons of rice in addition to the deal with Thailand.

**श्री रा. स० तिवारी :** क्या मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से जान सकता हूँ कि चावलों की कीमत के एवज में वह किन किन वस्तुओं को भारत से देंगे, अर्थात् चावलों की जो कीमत होगी उसको किन किन वस्तुओं को देकर पूरी करेंगे ?

**श्री स० क० पाटिल :** हाँ, दस, बीस चीजें ऐसी हैं जो कि भारत दे सकता है जैसे जूट, टी, कौफी और मैनूफैक्चर्ड मशीन गुड्स हैं ।

**Shri D. C. Sharma:** May I know whether the hon. Minister has received any opinions from the rice-consuming public of India about the quality of the rice which we have imported from

all these different countries, and if so, the nature of those opinions?

**Shri S. K. Patil:** I do not think we have received any opinion. We generally do not ask for opinion, but if a thing is bad, opinions come without even being asked for. I do not think any such opinion has come that the rice from any of the countries mentioned is bad.

#### A.II. Advertisements

\*1050. **Shri A. M. Tariq:** Will the Minister of Transport and Communications be pleased to state:

(a) whether Air India International Corporation have brought out certain pamphlet in which Indian nationals have been ridiculed in various types of sketches drawn in the pamphlet; and

(b) whether Government propose to stop printing of such pamphlets?

**The Deputy Minister of Civil Aviation (Shri Mohiuddin):** (a) It is presumed that the reference is to a pamphlet called "Foolishly Yours" published by the Air India International Corporation. The Corporation's publicity campaigns have been given a light humorous touch through caricatures and humorous descriptions. The Management have reported that the pamphlet is written in jest and in it, good-natured fun is made of everyone including the Corporation itself, its Chairman and staff, passengers and the public both Indian and foreign. This pamphlet was brought out many years ago. It has been continued because of its sustained popularity among passengers, Indian and foreign.

(b) Does not arise.

**Shri A. M. Tariq:** I have got this pamphlet. Last time when the Boeing services were started, at that time this was distributed. I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister to page 24. It is shown that some stolen cutlery etc. were being recovered from the pocket of Indian passenger. I would like to know whether it is not