

LOK SABHA DEBATES

5737

LOK SABHA

Thursday, March 12, 1959/Phalgun
21, 1880 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the
Clock

[MR SPEAKER in the Chair]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

State Trading in Foodgrains ✓

+

Shri Keshava:
Shri Rajendra Singh:
Shri Ram Krishan Gupta:
Shri Rameshwar Tantia:
Shri S. M. Banerjee:
Shri Tangamani:
Shri A. K. Gopalan:
Shri Vajpayee:
Shri Shree Narayan Das:
Shri Vasudevan Nair:
Shri Vidya Charan Shukla:
Shri Kistaiya:
Shri Raghunath Singh:
Shrimati Renu
Chakravartty:
Shri Supakar:
Shri Naval Prabhakar:
Shri Bhakt Darshan:
Shri Narasimhan:
Shri Pangarkar:
Dr. Ram Subhag Singh:
Shrimati Parvathi Krishnan:
Shri Mahanty:
Pandit D. N. Tiwary:
Shri Parulekar:
Shri Jadhav:
Shri D. C. Sharma:
Shri N. E. Munisamy:
Shri Mohan Swarup:
Shri Hem Raj:
Shri Anrobindo Ghosal:
Shri Assar:
Qasi Matin:
Shri Bimal Ghose:
Sardar Iqbal Singh:
Shrimati Ila Palchoudhuri:
Shri Siddananjappa:
Shri Daljit Singh:
Shri Ajit Singh Sarhadi:

*1146

5738

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

(a) whether the scheme for state trading in foodgrains has been finalised,

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether dealers in foodgrains, throughout the country, have protested against the introduction of this scheme, and

(d) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

The Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri A. M. Thomas): (a) Not yet, Sir

(b) Does not arise

(c) and (d) Many representations have been received from the trade interests against the introduction of the scheme but the Government will have to decide what is in the larger interests of the country

Shri Keshava: May we know if it is contemplated to consider the working of this institution on a no-loss no-profit basis or like any other commercial concern?

Shri A. M. Thomas: Our principal idea is to work it on a no-loss no-profit basis. Perhaps we may have to subsidise some quantities that are distributed to fair price shops

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri A. P. Jain): With your permission, may I add, this is one of the matters which is under consideration. It will form part of the scheme. We cannot say anything definite about it at the moment.

Shrimati Ila Palchoudhuri: May I know, when this scheme comes into being, what the Government contemplate doing, so that the hardships of the people in getting foodgrains at the moment may be mitigated?

Shri A. P. Jain: The hon. lady Member may have a little patience. When the scheme comes before the House, she will find that these things are provided.

Shri Rameshwar Tantia: May I know whether this scheme will be entrusted to the State Trading Corporation or a new Corporation will be formed for handling this?

Shri A. P. Jain: The hon. Member should not expect me to forecast the details of the scheme.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: May I know what positive steps are being taken to mobilise all sections to support the scheme and counteract the offensive launched by some sections of the people?

Shri A. P. Jain: The most effective step is to prepare a sound scheme which may be workable. Of course, we are also counteracting the propaganda by propaganda.

Shri Tangamani: May I know whether the Government has seen press reports about the statement by the Madras Minister that a kind of scheme is being contemplated in Madras State itself? I would like to know whether they will encourage separate schemes being introduced in different States without waiting for finalisation of the scheme by the Centre?

Shri A. P. Jain: No. There is going to be one scheme of State Trading for the whole of the country. Maybe, there may be certain variations in the case of certain States in details.

Shri Vidya Charan Shukla: May I know what is the meaning of wholesale trade that is put by the Government? What quantity approximately does it represent?

Shri A. P. Jain: I can give some idea of what we mean by 'wholesale' now. Of course, it will be for the scheme to give a definition of 'wholesale' for the purpose of the scheme. A wholesaler today means one who keeps a certain quantity of foodgrains at a time. In some States it means 50

maunds and in other States it means 100 maunds. It also means that he must deal in certain quantities, generally 10 maunds or more at a time.

Shri Shree Narayan Das: May I know whether the hon. Minister will place the details of the scheme on the Table of the House as also the financial implications of the scheme so that Members of Parliament may be able to express their opinion?

Shri A. P. Jain: Surely, when the scheme is finalised, I will put it before the House for discussion.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: This scheme was announced in November, 1958, and the hon. Minister himself admitted just now that the most effective way of controlling the prices is the prompt finalisation of this scheme. Assuming that he knows all these things, may I know why the finalisation of the scheme is being kept in abeyance?

Shri A. P. Jain: I would like to give an idea of what we have done. The National Development Council took the decision about the end of November. Then a group of officers representing the Ministry of Finance, the Planning Commission, the Reserve Bank of India, the State Bank of India and the Food and Agriculture Ministry was appointed to work out a paper on State trading. That paper was ready by the first week of January, when it was put before the Cabinet. The Cabinet directed that it may be sent to the State Governments for their comments. These comments have been received. Final touches are being given to the scheme which will be submitted to the Cabinet. After the Cabinet takes a decision, it will be put before the House.

Shri Thirumala Rao: Is it a fact that long before the scheme is thought out in detail and finalised, an announcement has been made by the Government that they want to have State Trading in foodgrains and large quantities of grains have gone underground bringing about a spurt in the prices of foodgrains?

Shri A. P. Jain: The principle was accepted and the details are being worked now. One of the effects of the announcement may have been that some traders may have tried to conceal stocks

Shri Braj Raj Singh: May I know

Mr. Speaker: Shri Vajpayee There are 25 names here Shri Braj Raj Singh's name is not here

Shri Braj Raj Singh: This is a very important matter

Shri Vajpayee: The Asoka Mehta Enquiry Committee recommended for socialisation of trade in foodgrains and that recommendation was not accepted by the Government at that time May I know what new developments have occurred that have necessitated the decision of socialisation of foodgrains trade now?

Shri A. P. Jain: The course of history of this matter is known to the hon Member as to every one else He knows that the decision was taken later

Shri D. C. Sharma: May I know if the Government is going to introduce any changes so far as procurement of foodgrains is concerned and whether it will be in force both at the Centre as well as the State levels?

Shri A. M. Thomas: As the hon House is aware the operations for the purchase of foodgrains by the Government have now been intensified Procurement is done on behalf of the Central Government, and the States themselves on their own account are also procuring

Shri Joachim Alva: What led the Government to take this step? Is it not the systematic exploitation of the population of India by the grain dealers, traders, wholesale merchants at blackmarket rates and the suffering of the population in the Towns and in the countryside?

Mr. Speaker: The hon Member has made a speech

Shri Joachim Alva: I want to know what led the Government to take this step

Shri A. P. Jain: Surely that was one of the considerations

Shri Vasudevan Nair: It was reported that in the month of December the Kerala Chief Minister met the Prime Minister as well as the Food Minister and had a talk about the difficulties of the Kerala State Then it was reported that the Prime Minister assured the Kerala Chief Minister that within a month or two we will be having State Trading and the difficulties will be met May I know whether in view of the fact that State Trading is not going to come in the near future, the Central Government will meet the present difficulties of the Kerala State?

Shri A. P. Jain: We are trying to solve the difficulties of the Kerala Government as best as we can As regards the details of what the Prime Minister said and what discussion took place, I do not think that all that the hon Member thinks was part of the discussion

श्री बजराम सिंह: यह स्टेट ट्रेडिंग की स्कीम चालू होने से पहले क्या वह निश्चय कर लिया जायेगा कि जो गला किसान द्वारा लाया जाता है और दुकानदार का जब दिया जायेगा तो स बीच से दो रुपये प्रति मन के हिसाब से कभी भी भाव में कोई अंतर नहीं रहेगा ?

श्री अ० प्र० जैन: वह तो बहुत तफसील की बात है। स्कीम बनेगी तो उममें भी शायद इनकी तफसील की बात न हो। जब काम चालू होगा तो यह बहुत सारी बातें हैं होंगी।

Shri Narasimhan: Has the Finance Commission commented on the State Trading during previous occasion as to the losses, and may I know whether the comments will be remembered while devising the scheme?

Shri A. P. Jain: We will make every effort to see that there is no loss We should not expect there would be any loss

Several Hon Members rose—

Mr. Speaker: Hon Members will take this up in the Food debate I have allowed a sufficient number of questions. Next question.

✓ Shri Braj Raj Singh: Half an hour debate, Sir. It will help the Government.

✓ Mr. Speaker: Yes.

Location of Second Shipyard

+
 *1147. { Shri S. C. Samanta:
 Shri Subodh Hansda:
 Shrimati Mafida Ahmed:
 Shri Subbiah Ambalam:
 Shri Vidya Charan Shukla:
 Shri Mohammed Imam:
 Shri D C Sharma:
 Shri Vasudevan Nair:

Will the Minister of Transport and Communications be pleased to refer to the reply given to Starred Question No 428 on the 1st December, 1958 and state

(a) whether the High Level Committee appointed to examine the report of the British Shipyard Mission regarding the location of second shipyard has since finalised its work,

(b) if so, the recommendations of the Committee,

(c) the place finally selected, and

(d) the estimated cost of the project and foreign exchange requirements?

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Communications (Shri Raj Bahadur): (a) Not yet. I understand the Committee is still engaged in examining certain technical points which have to be investigated before a site can be finally selected.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Shri Vidya Charan Shukla: May I know

Mr. Speaker: Shri S C Samanta, hon Members will look into the list of the names

Shri S. C. Samanta: May I know whether the note on the recommendation of the British Shipyard Mission has been issued by the West Bengal Government and may I know whether the Government have received it and handed it over to this high-powered committee?

Shri Raj Bahadur: There are certain press reports to that effect on which I made enquiries in the Ministry. So far, I do not think we have received a formal note from the West Bengal Government. As and when we receive it, we shall inform them of it.

Shri S. C. Samanta: Is it not a fact that this mission put great emphasis on the availability of skilled labour and civil engineering works nearabout the proposed site?

Shri Raj Bahadur: It is not only these two factors that are there, but there are many other factors too, which have to be taken into account by the mission. It was on the basis of all these factors that the Mission has said that there is no site available which was ideally suited for the location of a shipyard but out of the five sites which they have mentioned in their report in their opinion, Cochin offers by far the weightiest advantages.

Shri Vidya Charan Shukla: The hon Minister while replying to a supplementary question on this question on 16th August, 1958, said that two meetings had already been held of the committee, and the question was likely to be decided at the next meeting. May I know the reasons why the decision is being delayed?

Shri Raj Bahadur: There are certain very important technical matters, for example, the civil engineering aspect of the site, the location of the existing bridges, the site vis-a-vis the defence installations, the cost involved on account of any modifications that might be needed. The consideration and examination of all these matters does take time. It was only as late as the 19th of February that the committee had its last meeting.