

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: The last question need not be replied.

SHRI K.C. LENKA: We are now switching over to air brake systems.

[Translation]

Earlier there was vacuum air brake system which is now being changed into this new brake system. The new brake system has less possibility of failures.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Please supply him the information as to how many accidents have taken place during 1993-94 because of brake power failure.

SHRI K.C. LENKA: I will supply it to him.

[Translation]

Imbalanced Use of Fertilizers

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*243. SHRI SOBHANADREESWARA RAO VADDE:
SHRI VILAS MUTTEMWAR:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Urvarkon ke asantuliit prayog se khadyanna utpadan mein bhari giravat ki ashanka" appearing in 'Rashtriya Sahara' (Delhi) dated January 12, 1994;

(b) if so, the facts thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto; and

(c) the steps taken so far by the Government to provide proper information to the farmers in this regard?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). The consumption of phosphatic and potassic fertilizers has declined following their decontrol resulting in widening of the NPK ratio. There has been no immediate adverse impact of foodgrain production. The Government is taking the following steps to mitigate the adverse effects in the long run:—

- (i) Continuation of the concession on price of phosphatic and potassic fertilisers during 1993-94;
- (ii) Increased procurement prices for important crops, thus making input and output relation-favourable to farmers;
- (iii) The balanced use of fertiliser is promoted through a special Central Sector Scheme. Use of Bio-fertiliser, organic manures and cheaper alternate sources of nutrients are advocated through country-wide farmers' Training Programmes.

[English]

SHRI SOBHANADREESWARA RAO VADDE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Government has admitted that the consumption of phosphatic and potassic fertilisers has declined and the prices of other fertilisers have also been decontrolled. The other day, the hon. Minister as well as the Prime Minister also

accepted that originally it used to be 4:2:1, which has become 14:4:1. But in this reply, the Government has said that no immediate adverse impact on food-grain production has taken place. Because of the most favourable climatic conditions in most parts of the country, it may be that much impact has not been felt, but we have imported three million tonnes of foodgrains this year. Among our farmers, 58 per cent are marginal farmers and 18 per cent are small farmers who do not have marketable surplus. It is they who are being primarily affected and who can be compensated by way of enhanced minimum support prices. So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister that instead of increasing the price of nitrogen fertiliser, will the Government take necessary steps to decrease the prices of phosphatic and potassic fertilisers which have created very adverse affect on the land use and the land fertility also?

SHRI ARVIND NETAM: Sir, as you know, the phosphatic and potassic fertilisers have been decontrolled. There is no control of the Government on these fertilisers, so it is very difficult to say how to control their prices. But incentive has been given to the farmers. As it is stated in the main reply, the minimum support price has been increased and a concession of Rs. 1,000 per tonne has been given on potassic and phosphatic fertilisers. Rs. 500 crores have been given to the States during the year 1992-93 for the small and marginal farmers. These are the steps that the Government has taken in this regard.

SHRI SOBHANADREESWARA RAO VADDE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, earlier a high-powered committee, namely, the G.V.K. Rao Committee had examined in depth this subject of increase in the prices of fertilisers and its likely impact on the

production of foodgrains. The Committee had recommended that the increase should be only between five to seven per cent at one time. But in respect of phosphatic and potassic fertilisers, the increase was around 100 per cent to more than 200 per cent. Just now the hon. Minister has stated that because of the decontrol, the prices have increased. Because you have withdrawn the subsidy on those fertilisers and because you have decontrolled them, the prices of these fertilisers have increased. Earlier, the commerce Minister had stated on the floor of the House that as per the Dunkel Draft, the subsidies in our country can be to the extent of Rs. 30,000 crore. But now you are giving only Rs. 500 crore subsidy on fertiliser. In view of this, will the Government take necessary steps to enhance the subsidy on fertiliser prices so that it will not have adverse affect on our production, as we need to increase our foodgrains production very badly?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR): Hon. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member has asked about the Rao Committee. But we had a Joint Parliamentary Committee and according to the recommendations of that Committee, decontrol of these fertilisers has taken place and also reduction of ten per cent in the urea price has been effected. We have seen decrease in the consumption of potassic as well as the phosphatic fertilisers. In the long term, we have to see that balance is kept as far as soil fertility is concerned and we are concerned about it. The impact will be in stages because potassic and phosphatic fertilisers do not go waste. They just remain there in the soil. Whatever amount is consumed, the rest is there in the soil. But it is not so in the case of nitrogen. So, it did not immediately decrease the crop production. Last year we had given an incentive of Rs. 1000 per tonne on

phosphate and potassic fertilisers and the same, I think, we shall continue.

As regards the small and marginal farmers also, the production has to go up and we shall like to have the production go up. Otherwise there is no panacea for any ill. I have seen it that if we give proper training and know-how the production can go up even in one acre and two acre holdings. I have seen it yesterday when I went to West Bengal and visited the Rajarampur area.

I visited the farmers there. The saline dams are put to use now with a minor irrigation and the applied sciences. One acre produces over 60 tonnes tomatoes and about 30 tonnes of paddy and that is how people are doing. We can do it everywhere if we have the energy and the determination to do that. It depends upon the leadership of the State.

MR. SPEAKER: It is a very good question. The thrust of the question is that there is imbalance in using different kinds of fertilisers. How can we do away with it? What can be done? I would expect the supplementaries to be in that direction.

SHRI UMRAO SINGH: Extensive use of urea has adversely affected the fertility of the soil. Is the Government aware of this fact and what steps the Government is going to take because the farmers generally go in for urea because it is cheaper and it is available. How is the Government going to solve this problem?

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: That is the thing to be done. We have to keep the balance and it is very essential. As a matter of fact, in the whole world now, the tendency is to come back to organic fertilisers and that is what we should also do. We have just about 70 KG (nutrients) per hectare use at this moment whereas

other people in the world have even 330 KG or 350 KG. Even Bangladesh has more than ours. But we will try to do something which will be conducive to better fertility of soil in future for the generations to come. We have taken some steps and I can enumerate them.

Strengthening of testing facility for soil, fertilizer, seed and water— for the State Governments to be financed fully by the Centre on this score (fully, cent per cent).

Demonstrations for micro nutrient deficiency in 60 identified districts in the country @ Rs. 500/- per hectare which we are going to give.

Compost making by medium sized municipalities in the country.

Twenty municipalities to be assisted @ Rs. 20 lakhs per municipality. This is taken up as an experiment.

Farmers training to be organised for efficient utilisation of organic manures and wastes.

We will give about Rs. 25,000 for each training consisting of 200 farmers. As many training camps can be held as possible.

Minimum of six such training camps to be conducted in each district in the country.

Special scheme of awards for organic farming and sustainable agriculture.

National and State level two best Panchayats and two best farmers to be selected and awarded. At State level, we will be giving for Best Panchayat Rs. 1 lakh and for second Best Panchayat Rs. 50,000. For best farmer Rs. 10,000 and

for second Best farmer Rs. 5,000/-. At National level, we will be giving for Best Panchayat Rs. 5 lakhs and for second Best Panchayat Rs. 2 lakhs and for Best Farmer Rs. 25,000/- and for second Best farmer Rs. 15,000/-.

For production of approximately 5,000 to 6,000 tonnes of bio-fertilizer by 1996-97, the Scheme for Development and Use of Bio-fertiliser provides for Rs. 13 lakhs as grant per bio-fertilizer production unit. 22 Units have been set up so far. We are going to give much more to this type of Programme so that in future the fertility of the soil is maintained and the farmers get much more.

[*Translation*]

SHRI MANJAY LAL: Ther Fertilizers are used impropotionately as the soil is not tested before using the fertilizers. Will the Government launch a scheme of soil testing on large scale to apprise the farmers of correct use of fertilizers.

MR. SPEAKER: It has already been told that the work is going on.

DR. P.R. GANGWAR: The consumption of potassic fertilizer by farmers has declined due to hike in its prices. The extensive use of urea has adversely affected the fertility of the soil of thousands of acres of land. Consequently, the crop of wheat on thousands of acres of land in my parliamentary constituency Pilibhit has been destroyed.

MR. SPEAKER: No it is not so. Please come to the question.

DR. P.R.GANGWAR: Just now hon. Minister has stated that training programmes have been launched in var-

ious areas. I would like to state that no such programme is going on in my area. I would like to know whether the Government contemplate to provide training at Panchayat level.

MR. SPEAKER: This has already been mentioned in the reply given. I think you have not listened it.

SHRI MOHAN SINGH (Deoria): Mr. Speaker, Sir, farmers invest 30 per cent on fertilisers whereas DAP, MOP and Urea have their distinct use. The point behind all this is that due to hike in prices of DAP and MOP farmers have used larger quantity of urea which has adversely affected the fertility of land. It was mainly due to these two factors—firstly, the rapid hike in prices of these two fertilisers and secondly, due to ignorance about the use of fertilisers. So, I would like to know from the Minister about the government's policy in this regard and efforts made for providing training to farmers and to check the prices of DAP and MOP.

MR. SPEAKER: The first question has already been replied. You may answer the second question if you want to do so.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Member should know that DAP and MOP is totally imported. We do not manufacture even a tonne of phosphate and potash in our country. It is very costly. Now, we have to find out its substitute and we are making efforts in this direction. It is not so that we do not have any information in this regard and I would like to tell one more thing that keeping in view its price hike the Government gave a subsidy of Rs. 756 crore on fertiliser last year and a grant of Rs. 500 crore to small and medium farmers for DAP and MOP. It was given to small and

medium farmers to provide them some relief. If the production of paddy is 20 tonne per acre and prices of paddy is raised Rs. 50 per quintal then the total amount becomes Rs. 1000/- and if cost of fertiliser is raised by Rs. 200 or Rs. 300 the farmer will get a net profit of Rs. 700. For all this agricultural development centres should be formed to educate farmers. We have not to take anything but to give them our hard earning and we should get our share. We seek your help and get it also.

SHRI VIJAY NAVAL PATIL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am glad to know that the Government are paying more attention towards organic fertiliser which contains micro-nutrine. In this respect cultivation of neem seed cake and algae would be required for gobar gas plant, potassium and phosphate. You have stated that an assistance of Rs. 25 lakh is being given to set up bio-technical unit, while thousands of crore rupees are being given as fertiliser subsidy. Such a meagre amount is being given to set up bio-technical units. Would you give a second thought to it?

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Patil it is about imbalanced application of fertiliser.

SHRI VIJAY NAVAL PATIL: If application of bio-fertiliser is increased, the micro-nutrine will reduce the imbalanced application of fertiliser in the soil. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he will consider any increase in the financial assistance in the amount of Rs. 25 lakh for setting up of bio-technical units.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the coat will be cut according to cloth and I will try my best in this regard.

Profit by Railways

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*244. SHRI MAHESH KANODIA:
SHRI RAM SINGH
KASHWAN:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been decline in the profit earned by the Railways during the last few years;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government have launched some schemes to increase the profit in the Railways; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI K.C.
LENKA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d). Some of the steps taken to improve the financial position of Railways include intensive marketing for less than train/wagon-load of traffic, plugging leakages of revenue, intensive utilisation of the rolling stock effecting economy in Working Expenses, energy conservation, etc.

[Translation]

SHRI MAHESH KANODIA: Hon. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister the amount of profit earned by Railways during the year 1991-92 and the percentage increase in the profit during 1992-93 as compared to 1991-92 alongwith the names of sources of additional profit.