

LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Wednesday, February 24, 1999/Phalguna 5, 1920 (Saka)

*The Lok Sabha met at
Eleven of the Clock*

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

[English]

...(Interruptions)

DR. SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY : Sir, question No. 32 is very important in the national interest. Maybe, we should take up question No. 32 first. It is about extradition of Shri Prabhakaran. The Congress Party seems to have forgotten about it.

MR. SPEAKER : Let us take up question No. 21.

11.0½ hrs.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Crop Insurance Scheme

*21. SHRI M. SELVARASU : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) the details of funds allocated by the Union Government for implementation of the Crop Insurance Scheme during 1996-97;

(b) the funds actually utilized for this purpose so far;

(c) whether the Government propose to compensate the paddy cultivators whose crops were destroyed by natural calamities like floods in the year 1996-97;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) to (e) A statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

(a) and (b) An outlay of Rs. 11043.00 lakh was made during 1996-97 for implementation of Comprehensive Crop Insurance Scheme. Against this, the Government released funds to the extent of Rs. 11042.00 lakh.

(c) and (d) Indemnity claims to the tune of Rs. 15032.32 lakh arising due to failure of paddy crop as a result of natural calamities during 1996-97 have already been settled. State-wise details of claims settled are enclosed as annexure.

(e) Does not arise.

Annexure

State	Claims Paid (Rs. in Lakhs)
Andhra Pradesh	6666.11
A & N Islands	0.01
Assam	1.99
Bihar	161.94
Goa	0.06
Gujarat	202.46
Karnataka	406.04
Kerala	202.40
Madhya Pradesh	914.46
Maharashtra	499.93
Meghalaya	1.48
Orissa	4449.21
Pondicherry	4.79
Tamil Nadu	1406.48
West Bengal	114.96
Total	15032.32

SHRI M. SELVARASU : Sir, during the period of the United Front Government, the implementation of the Comprehensive Crop Insurance Scheme for the years 1996-97 and 1997-98 has taken place. Under the Scheme, the premium was collected from the farmers by the cooperative and nationalised banks. The farmers have paid the premium to the cooperative and nationalised banks which, in turn, have sent it to the insurance companies. But till now, the insurance claims have not been settled to the farmers. This is the present situation. So, I would like to know from the Government of India whether any action has been taken by the Ministry of Agriculture.

SHRI SOMPAL : Sir, under the Comprehensive Crop Insurance Scheme, the hon. Member is right when he observes that the premium has been paid only by the loanee farmers who have taken loans upto Rs. 10,000 and, after that, the claims are filed by the States. As the information has been provided, the claims have been settled to the tune of Rs. 15,032.32 lakh during 1997-98. Now, there is no claim pending; all the claims which had been settled with the States have already been paid.

SHRI M. SELVARASU : Due to delay in implementation of the Scheme by the Government of India during the years 1996-97 and 1997-98, the cooperative loans taken by the farmers have grown in terms of interest on capital and penal

interest. It is a burden on the farmers. So, I would like to know whether the Government of India has any proposal to write off the cooperative loans.

SHRI SOMPAL : This question is on claims for insurance. The hon. Member wants to know about the write off loans. This is not within the ambit of the question(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : It is an important question and I will allow you all.

SHRI N. JANARDHANA REDDY : Sir, this Government has assumed the Office in April last, that is, one year ago. I do not know whether it is a good omen or a bad omen, but the moment they assumed the Office, the East Coast, Calcutta, and the Western Coast, Gujarat, have been lashed with cyclone. We can call the hon. Minister as an Academic-Agriculture Minister. Shri Sompal has assured the House that the Comprehensive Crop Insurance Scheme would be modified and that he would come before us within two or three months. It is already one year now and we do not know as to what has happened. He has assured that it would be for non-loanee also, it would be for all crops, the unit would be changed and the premium would be technically fixed.

Sir, he has also assured that the indemnity system will be changed. What are the salient features of this modified Comprehensive Crop Insurance Scheme by adopting which the House may be benefited and the country may be benefited? In this regard which way the Government is thinking? Just like in the General Insurance, are the private contract people also being introduced in this Scheme? What about the premium of marginal and small farmers? These are the things about which naturally the people are interested to know. So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister about the salient features of this modified Comprehensive Crop Insurance Scheme.

SHRI SOMPAL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member Shri Reddy is right in observing that we had undertaken to come out with a modified Crop Insurance Scheme. Consultations with the Insurance Division of the Economic Affairs Ministry, Finance Ministry, General Insurance Corporation of India and with various agencies and also with States have already been undertaken. A Workshop to discuss the subject in detail was held in New Delhi on 12th December, 1998.

Then, a small Group comprising NABARD, the Reserve Bank of India, National Sample Survey Organisation, Indian Banks Association, General Insurance Corporation, Department of Agriculture Cooperation and Insurance Division of Economic Affairs had been constituted. This Group has recommended that the proposed modified Crop Insurance Scheme may have some features which were not available under the present CCIS or ECIS.

The features proposed are that it should cover all farmers—both loanee farmers and non-loanee farmers.

The scheme be available for implementation to all the States and Union Territories in the country.

The level of indemnity, that is, 60 per cent, 80 per cent and 90 per cent, should be decided by the implementing States.

The scheme should be voluntary in the States as well as Union Territories. Whichever States or Union Territories want, they can have it.

Then, it will identify two components. One is the loanee component of farmers. For loanees, it will be made compulsory and for non-loanees, it will be kept optional or voluntary.

Then, in addition to the crop covered under the CCIS, all such crops such as commercial crops, horticulture crops should also be covered but only for those about which the crop data is available. For the other crops to be covered in future, the data would be generated and created.

Then, in order to have reflection of realism, it will be based on the premium paid by the farmers.

So, far as the marginal and small farmers are concerned, they will be asked to pay a concessional charge and the difference will be borne by the State and the Central Government.

Then, to administer the scheme, a separate Corporation is sought to be set up a subsidiary of the General Insurance Corporation of India, and this is being included in the Ninth Plan proposal.

Then, the NCCIS will be of multi-feral scheme, and it will include all calamities including localised feral such as hail-storm landslide.

However, loans arising out of the war and nuclear risks and malicious doings will be excluded.

As I said, a separate implementing agency is just sought to be set up. This premium will be dependent on the risks which a crop or the area runs. It will be decided in consultation with the States and these agencies. Fifty per cent of the premium for the marginal and small farmers will be shared in the ratio of 1:1 between the States and the Centre, and the management of expenses of implementation of the scheme will be decided in consultation with the Government and the States.

So, there are the basic modalities. But there are a number of other details which for want of them, I would not like to go into....(Interruptions)

SHRI N. JANARDHANA REDDY : But it is already one year over now. When are you going to implement it ? ..(Interruptions)

SHRI T.R. BAALU : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister Shri Sompalji has just now said that the premium for the marginal and small farmers will be shared in the ratio of the 1:1 between the States and the Centre. I want to know what the ratio is between the States and the Centre as far as the risk factor is involved.

The second point is, in the United Front Government the ratio was 88:20. It was good for investment for the premium as well as risk capital. The hon. Minister has said that there is a proposal to establish an Insurance Corporation separately for the purpose of crop insurance and that it will be included in the Ninth Plan. The Ninth Plan has not been finalised as yet, it seems. Till such time, what is the *modus operandi* to see that crop insurance is given to the agriculturist?

SHRI SOMPAL : The new scheme is being proposed to be made available from kharif, 1999 onwards and till then CCIS will be in operation.

[Translation]

SHRI BHAJAN LAL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Government is going to modify this crop insurance scheme at present, you will modify it. I would like to know from the hon'ble Minister whether it will cover the individual farmers? At present some percentage of compensation is given to every block for their losses under your scheme. You belong to a farmer's family and I also belong to the same. Therefore, I would like to urge upon you that the farmers should be covered individually under this modified scheme. If they will be covered then what will be the premium? I would like to know only these two points from the hon'ble Minister.

SHRI SOMPAL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon'ble Bhajan Lal Ji is a farmer, there is no doubt in it. He has been the Chief Minister of a very important State i.e. Haryana for the last several years which plays an important role in agriculture. He has suggested that the farmer should be provided compensation by considering him as a unit, it is a matter of consideration. So far as your comment on the earlier scheme is concerned, the assessment of their average production, whether it is on Panchayat Land or block level or taluka level, is being done through crop cutting experiment. The States have been given relaxations to consider either a block or taluka or village as a unit.

SHRI BHAJAN LAL : A village should be considered as a unit.

SHRI SOMPAL : First, let me conclude my point, it may satisfy you. I am saying that ultimately which should be considered as a unit, it all depends upon the administrative capacity and the resources of the States. We want that a village should be taken as a unit. And for compensation, a farmer will be considered as a unit and his premium will be taken from him.

SHRI BHAJAN LAL : What will be the amount of premium?

SHRI SOMPAL : I have already said that the premium will be decided according to the crop and the area.

SHRI LALU PRASAD : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am not asking any question. Shri Bhajan Lal ji is a leader of farmers. He

has ploughed but since when the hon'ble Minister became a farmer? He has never ploughed.

[English]

SHRI P. SANKARAN : The devastating floods which took place last year destroyed the standing crops including cash crops and plantation crops of Kerala. I want to know whether the Government will give an assurance in this House that plantation of crops and crops of Kerala will be covered by crop insurance.

SHRI SOMPAL : I have already said that for the time being the horticultural crops and plantation crops are not covered and in the insurance scheme, that is, the modified crop insurance scheme we do propose to cover horticultural crops, but only those crops in respect of which the data are available. In respect of which the data are not available, we will try to generate the data so that in future we can cover them as soon as possible. For the time being, I cannot say.

SHRI P. SANKARAN : Data are available for all the crops in Kerala.

SHRI SOMPAL : Ultimately the idea is to cover all the crops. But the constraint is that data are not available and if the data are not available, we will see that data are collected.

SHRI P. SANKARAN : I understand the State Government has given the data regarding the crops.

SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT : Mr. Speaker, Sir, in reply to the question the hon'ble Minister has stated that an amount of Rs. 15032.32 lakh was allocated to 15 States but it was not stated that what was the demand made by the different States to the Central Government and the amount allocated to those States by the Government. Since Madhya Pradesh has suffered maximum losses, the State Government had demanded more allocation than others but they were allocated only Rs. 914.46 lakhs.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : It is already available in the statement that the Minister has given. You may go through the statement.

[Translation]

SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am asking the same point because the hon'ble Minister has not given information about the demand made by the States. I would like to know the details about the amount sought and allocations actually made. If the hon'ble Minister is unable to give details State-wise, he can tell the total only and he should provide the details regarding Madhya Pradesh separately.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Minister, would you like to say something?

[Translation]

SHRI LAKSHMAN SINGH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the amount, which has been allocated, is ridiculous. The Prime Minister had visited Madhya Pradesh and we had urged upon him.

SHRI SOMPAL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, as the hon'ble Mem-

ber has said, the details of the indemnity amount have been given in this statement. When these claims are settled, all these claims are settled down by the General Insurance Corporation and the States and definitely there is some difference in them. This detail is not available now but the details, which have been given, are already in the statement.

[Translation]

Scheme for Crop Protection

*22 + SHRI RAMPAL SINGH :

SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have formulated any scheme to implement the "crop protection" programme effectively to increase the production;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the quantum of production likely to be increased on account of implementation of the Crop Protection Scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) Various scheme are being implemented for crop protection by the Central and State Governments. The Government of India are implementing the following five Central Sector Schemes as a measure of crop protection:

- i) Integrated Pest Management.
- ii) Locust Control and Research.
- iii) Implementation of Insecticides Act, 1968.
- iv) Expansion of Plant Quarantine Facilities in India; and
- v) Training in Plant Protection.

The main plank of Government's policy on crop protection is Integrated Pest Management (IPM) which inter-alia includes adoption of cultural and mechanical practices, conservation and augmentation of biological control agents, use of neem based pesticides as well as other biopesticides and judicious use of chemical pesticides. The IPM is being implemented by the Central and State Governments under various crop based schemes to reduce the use of chemical pesticides in the crop protection programme. Funds are also released to the State Governments for setting up of biocontrol laboratories and strengthening of State Pesticides Testing Laboratories under the above schemes.

(c) Losses in production are caused by pests and diseases which vary from crop to crop. Protection of crops from pests and diseases is, therefore, an obvious way of increasing production.

SHRI RAMPAL SINGH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, this year all the crops have been damaged due to pests and diseases. The paddy crop in eastern districts of Uttar Pradesh which was remained safe in the outer portion of the fields, has been completely destroyed due to this disease. The pesticides were used but were of no use. Whether any provision is being made by the government to provide compensation to those farmers whose crops have been damaged? Whether the Government will tell us the details of the farmers crops damaged due to this disease this year and the loss of amount thereof?

SHRI SOMPAL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon'ble Member have asked about the losses to the crops caused by the diseases, pests and other things. So far as the compensation is concerned, some amount is provided for it through comprehensive Crop Insurance Scheme or National Calamity Relief Fund. So far as its detail is concerned, it is not available now. Regarding its protection, the Government does constant efforts to provide integrated pest management facility, better quality of pesticides and parasites to the farmers, training to the instructors and conduct surveillance.

SHRI RAMPAL SINGH : Will the hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the provisions made by the Government in every districts to ensure availability of agro-scientists services so as to prevent the crops from the diseases. If so, what was the outcome?

SHRI SOMPAL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, in this regard, about 26 Agriculture Universities, 1 Central University and 261 Agro-Science Centres are working in the country under Indian Council for Agricultural Research where few projects and other research centres are available. Some States have also made provisions for it. Every state has its crop pesticides control department and the Union Government provides services of scientists to the farmers through it.

SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the efforts are being made by the ICAR to prevent the crops from the diseases, but we are not able to prevent them with the use of pesticides for the last ten years. Will the hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons for non-implementation of the suggestions or recommendations made by the scientists of ICAR so far and the names of the States which have actually followed your instructions to implement them.

SHRI SOMPAL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is a general question. I have said that several measures have been taken to prevent the crops from damages caused by these pests and diseases and agricultural scientists play an important role therein. Whatever research make or develop technical technology, they provide it to the farmers directly and through the States and for it, necessary directions are also given, assistance is also provided, central schemes as well as centrally sponsored scemes have also been implemented. The States also make provisions for it in this budget. The States are constantly consulted in this regard and in our view, their implementation is satisfactory.

SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI : My question is whether the State Governments are ready to accept the suggestions made by the agricultural scientists to the Governments?

SHRI SOMPAL : None of the States has denied its acceptance. All of them are agreed.