

RE. MILO IMPORTED FROM U.S.A.

SHRI S. N. BANERJEE (Kanpur): Sir, with your permission, I want to raise a very important matter. The other day, we discussed in this House, and there was a Call Attention Notice, a very serious matter about mixing of dhatura seeds in milo purchased from U.S.A. Today, we read in the Patriot.

"Government to buy more milo from U.S.

The Government will go ahead with the purchase of about 300,000 tonnes of milo still to be bought from the US out of about 400,000 tonnes contracted for, notwithstanding the detection of dhatura seeds in them, reports, UNI.

The Political Affairs Committee of the Union Cabinet which discussed the issue on Wednesday decided to honour the contract."

Sir, it was admitted that there was dhatura mixed in it.

When all the sections of the House, when all the Members irrespective of their political affiliations, the other day, felt concerned about the purchase of milo from USA, the hon. Minister, Shri F. A. Ahmed, wanted to justify it. Now, we find, even the Political Affairs Committee of the Cabinet has decided to purchase another 300,000 tonnes of milo because there is a contract and they want to honour it. The Political Affairs Committee has not got more powers than the powers of this House.

I would request you to ask the Minister to make a statement. Shri Shinde is here. I want an assurance from him that this will not be purchased as long as it is not discussed in Parliament. We are all opposed to it. They cannot purchase it to honour the contract at the cost of the people. There must be some shady deal. We have to unearth the shady deal. It should not be allowed to be purchased.

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SHRI BHOGENDRA JHA (Jainagar): The Minister should make a statement on it.... (Interruptions).

MR. SPEAKER: Don't be impatient. There is also another hon. Member who has given notice on the same subject.

Shri Shyamnandan Mishra.

SHRI SHYAMNANDAN MISHRA (Begusarai): Two issues arise out of the report which has appeared in the newspapers today. If the Government has taken a decision to continue the import of the milo which is mixed with dhatura, then it is quite obvious that the Government is now admitting the responsibility for having entered into a contract with the full knowledge of the quality of the seed. That was what the spokesman of the U.S. Government had said last week. Now it, as they euphemistically say, they have to honour the contract and so on, they have also to realise the fact that they would be injuring the health and lives of millions.

The second point which arises out of this is that the Government, last time, had assured us that they would fully go into this matter and make a statement in the House. We have waited for more than ten days, but no statement has come from the Government on this subject. This has, therefore, caused us a great deal of concern and anxiety.

MR. SPEAKER: Will the Minister be able to make a statement just now or will he make it later on?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ANNASAHAB P. SHINDE): We shall make a statement later on. But what Mr. Banerjee says is not correct. (Interruptions).