

based on soil and crop requirements.

[Translation]

SHRI MOHANBHAI PATEL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has stated in his reply that the committee has not submitted its report so far; but the Committee, in view of its terms of reference, is of great importance to the farmers and the country, because we have different types of soil in our country and production of our fertilizers is not planned according to the requirements of the soil, e.g., which fertilizer when used in a particular soil will yield a good crop or whether a smaller doze of fertilizer will yield a good crop. I want to know from the hon. Minister whether recommendations of the experts are taken into consideration in the matter of production of fertilizers in the country? If so, when and by whom these recommendations were made? If the production is not based on the recommendations, the reasons why our attention has not been drawn to such recommendations so far?

[English]

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : The hon. Member is asking for product pattern. There are certain product patterns like *barabatis* etc. and these product patterns are always approved by the Ministry of Agriculture. Unless they are approved by the Ministry, they cannot manufacture, they cannot mix it. Before giving approval, the Agriculture Ministry examines the status of the land, the requirement of the nutrients, which are the nutrients required in a particular type of soil, the crops they are taking up—all these factors are taken into consideration. For a particular crop, a particular type of nutrients is required. Accordingly, the proportion is fixed. And if that proportion is according to the pattern of cropping and to the nutrients required by the soil, it is approved by the Agriculture Ministry.

[Translation]

SHRI MOHANBHAI PATEL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, The hon. Minister might

have been of the view that the product pattern of the fertilizers was not good and it was because of this that the committee was constituted.

[English]

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : The hon. Member has misunderstood the position. The committee is for fixing the price of combined fertilizers. It is not for proposing the combinations. The combinations are already there; but they have only to suggest the prices, taking into consideration the cost-benefit ratio.

SHRI MOHANBHAI PATEL : *rose*

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Nothing doing. Now next question No. 108. Dr. Vijaya Ram Rao and Mr. Manik Reddy are not there. Question No. 109, Mr. Lakshman Mallick is also not there. Now Question 110. Shri Sharad Dighe.

Of take of wheat from Public Distribution System

*110. **SHRI SHARAD DIGHE :** Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that during January and August, 1985 the offtake of wheat from the public distribution system (PDS) was only 1.84 million tonnes although the allocation was 5.3 million tonnes; and

(b) if so, the reasons thereof and the remedial measures taken by Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO) : (a) The offtake of wheat from the public distribution system from Central Pool during January to August, 1985, was 1.63 million tonnes as against allotment of 5.35 million tonnes.

(b) The low offtake of wheat from the public distribution system is mainly due to good production of wheat and consequential easy open market availability.

The State Government have been advised to streamline the public distribution system so as to take in more wheat, and even to issue wheat to the cardholders through the fair price shops without any ceiling on quantity upto 31st March, 1986. It has also been decided to distribute foodgrains, mostly wheat, at specially subsidized rates to the people living in the tribal areas and other vulnerable sections of the society.

SHRI SHARAD DIGHE : While giving the reasons for the slow off-take of wheat, the hon. Minister has stated, in (b) of the reply, that it is mainly due to good production of wheat and consequential easy open market availability. So, this is the main reason. What are the other reasons ?

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO : In fact, this is the primary reason, as I find it.

SHRI SHARAD DIGHE : Is it true that it is necessary to strengthen and expand the public distribution system, by opening new fair price shops wherever necessary, to provide easy access to the consumers. Is this the main reason for this slow off-take of wheat ?

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO : The hon. Member is right. The public distribution system has also been expanded to other areas. But apart from that, wheat is being sold by FCI at Rs. 175/- a quintal. The roller flour mills have also been given 25% more. These are some of the reasons, other than the primary reason for the low off-take in the P.D.S.

SHRI SHARAD DIGHE : My question is whether it is necessary to open more fair price shops.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO : This is the scheme announced by the Finance Minister on the 19th viz, that we are

going to expand and augment the PDS specially where there are tribal areas in the ITDPs, the MADA areas and other remote areas where there are stress conditions and, therefore, we are in touch with State Government and we have also discussions with them; and we are going to expand it during the Seventh Five Year Plan Period.

[*Translation*]

SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL : I want to know from the hon. Minister whether it is a fact that the quality of wheat distributed through the Fair Price Shops is very poor and it is due to this reason that the people prefer to buy wheat from the open market instead of buying it from the Fair Price Shops ?

[*English*]

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO : It not true.

SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL : The quality for wheat is very bad.

SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO : It is not true.

[*Translation*]

SHRIMATI USHA THAKKAR : I appreciate that 12 kilograms of wheat is being supplied, but I want that the arrangement which will be in force till March, 1986 should be extended upto November, 1986 in Gujarat because of the drought conditions prevailing in the State. When there is enough availability of wheat, I would like to give a suggestion that the ration card-holders should be allowed to draw whatever quantity of wheat they want and this should be done particularly in the case of Gujarat. I want to know what Government propose to do in this regard ?

[*English*]

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO : The hon. lady member did not hear the statement. Those who have ration cards, they can take unlimited quantity of wheat, as much as possible.

SHRIMATI PREMALABAI CHAVAN: The fact is that people are getting bad quality of wheat at the fair price shops. For example, that type of wheat had been shown in Parliament also. So, is there any new arrangement to check all those things and see that instead of increasing the fair price shops, they should check wheat properly? Will the Minister do something for that?

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO : The hon. member knows very well that the public distribution system is entirely and wholly the responsibility of the State Government. Therefore, just before the session of Parliament, we had a meeting of the Food and Civil Supplies Ministries. We had impressed upon them the need for strict monitoring and taking punitive and deterrent action against those who are dealing with illegal trade practices and unfair practices, to make an omnibus suggestion that wheat is bad and rice is bad is not proper if there are any specific instances, we shall look into them and request the State Government to take whatever preventing action that is possible, according to the Essential Commodities Act.

SHRI R.L. BHATIA : The flour mills are generally located in big cities like Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta and other big towns. There is a Milling Control order under which the mills draw wheat. In view of the fact that there is a low off-take of wheat, will the Minister consider removing that Milling Control order so that new units come up in areas where there are no mills and off-take of wheat may grow?

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO : This is a suggestion which bears examination. But I would like to say that it is not true that most of the fair price shops are in the urban areas. During the Calling Attention, I had given figures where 80 percent of them are in the rural areas.

DR. V. VENKATESH : I want to ask a question about the public distribution system itself, because people are suffering without food and so many people are dying in our country. The

public distribution system is not taken up effectively because some of the farmers who are growing paddy, their paddy is burnt in their fields because they are not getting a proper price. Will the hon. Minister take up the public distribution system very seriously and purchase things and then distribute them through out the country to prevent starvation deaths?

MR. SPEAKER : It is a problem of plenty, not of shortage.

SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO : First of all, I thank the member for lending his voice for the strengthening of the public distribution system. But, I would like to mention that no starvation death has been reported to the Government of India.

DR. V. VENKATESH : What about the drought affected areas, particularly in my constituency, Kolar?

SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO : As far as public distribution system to be expanded to cover every area, specially the distress area is concerned, the Prime Minister has given us the directive.

This is exactly what the Prime Minister has said.

MR. SPEAKER : There are enough of cereals lying in the godowns.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO : He has made a policy statement in the National Development Council meeting. It is consequent to that that the Finance Minister has come up with the scheme under which we are going to the State Government. Our officials have left today to hold discussions with the State Government so that the public distribution system as well as the LAMP system which is prevalent in the ITDC blocks and the tribal areas are strengthened. Wherever they do not exist the Central Government is going to help and supplement the agencies of the State Governments, so that there will be no distress areas.