INDIAN DELEGATION'S REPORT ON CHINA VISIT

The Indian Delegation which visited China in July—September 1956 to study agrarian cooperatives has expressed the view that cooperative farming is necessary in India from economic as well as social considerations.

The delegation has recommended a demonstration programme of about 10,000 cooperative farming societies, one for every group of 50 villages, within the next four years, to be followed by a nation-wide programme when both the leadership and the people have gained greater experience in the movement.

The delegation has laid the greatest emphasis on two safeguards against any infringement of democratic principles. In giving effect to the programme of agrarian cooperatives, it says, the principle of voluntariness should be scrupulously adhered to and there should be no coercion of any kind in indulging farmers to join the co-operatives and a person should be free to leave a cooperative at the end of a season.

Two of the six members of the delegation have in a minute of dissent stated that the picture of agrarian cooperatives in China, painted by the other members was very different from what they themselves had seen. In viewing developments in foreign countries, they have warned against ignoring the background of the political systems of those countries and the means they adopt to achieve their objectives.

POWER DRIVEN JOWAR THRESHER

Dr. R. M. Bhagwat, a progressive farmer of Akola (Berar) has designed a power driven Jowar Thresher. The machine consists of 2 wooden rollers which rotate on a circular platform. This platform is prepared out of perforated steels having 7/32" diameter perforations. A 3/4 H.P. electric motor is used for giving power to the machine. The diameter of rollers is 18" and thickness 9". The rollers revolve round the vertical shaft at the rate of 38 revolutions per minute. By means of counter-shaft, pulleys and belts the revolutions of the electric motor are reduced to 38 revolutions per minute. A winnowing fan is provided for winnowing the threshed material. It is estimated that the cost of this machine will be about Rs. 800 and experiments conducted by Dr. Bhagwat indicate that the average cost of threshing one bag of Jowar comes to 64 Naye Paise.

Efforts are being made by Dr. Bhagwat to improve this machine further. He pleads that such a machine will be very useful to the cultivators in the Jowar growing tracts of Deccan.

In Parliament

PRODUCTION OF FOODGRAINS

Shri A. P. Jain Union Food and Agriculture Minister told the Rajya Sabha that the total increase in the production of foodgrains (cereals and pulses) during 1956-57 over that of 1955-56 was likely to be over 1·4 million tons. He said that the final estimate of production of rice in India during 1956-57 the first year of the Second Plan—showed an increase of 1·3 million tons over 1955-56.

FOOD PRICES

The Food Minister, told the Lok Sabha the steps taken by the Government to stem the rising trends in the prices of food grains. These were :

(1) Distribution of wheat and rice from Government stocks through a large number of fair price shops.

(2) Regulation of advances of banks against stocks of foodgrains.

(3) Cordoning off of certain large consuming areas like Bombay city so far as wheat was concerned so that they were prevented from making a heavy draw on the internal markets, their requirements being met entirely by the Government.

SEA-ISLAND COTTON SCHEME

The Government of India have sanctioned a co-ordinated scheme for the production of Sea-Island Cotton in the States of Kerala, Mysore and Assam, for a period of 5 years, beginning May 1957. This information was given on May 23 by Shri A. M. Thomas, Deputy Minister for Food and Agriculture.

The objects of the scheme which will cost Rs. 6 lakhs are :

(1) To survey areas suitable for cultivation of Sea-Island Cotton in the three States.

(2) To cultivate Sea-Island variety "Andrews" in an area of 3 lakh acres to produce about 2·25 lakh bales of staple cotton.

(3) To improve the fibre strength and ginning percentage of "Andrews" by selection and make the cotton more remunerative and suitable for spinning 80's counts.

(4) To conduct agronomic research to improve the yield and quality of "Andrews" in all the three States.

(5) To arrange for ginning and marketing of the produce.

ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES BILL

The Lok Sabha had passed the Essential Commodities (Amendments) Bill in the last month. The Bill vested powers in the Government to check rise in prices of foodgrains and discourage hoarding.

Moving the Bill Shri A. P. Jain, Minister for Food and Agriculture said that it gave special powers to the Government to requisition, by notification foodgrains hoarded by big stockists and fix the price in any locality.

He said that it was not the Government's intention to touch the small trader or the small farmer. It was to check hoarding by the large stockists who were hoarding considerable quantities of foodgrains with a view to making profit from the rise in prices.

Crop Estimates

Gram

The All-India First Estimate of Gram for 1956-57 puts the current year's area under the crop at 22,937,00 acres. This shows an increase of 668,000 acres in area during the current year as compared to last year.

Wheat And Barley

The All-India First Estimate of Rabi-Cereals (wheat and barley) for 1956-57, puts the current year's area at 38,772,000 acres. This shows an increase of 2,757,000 acres in area as compared to last year.

Linseed

The All-India Second Estimate of linseed puts the current year's area at 3,052,000 acres. This shows an increase of 287,000 acres of area over last year.

Imports

Burmese Rice

Five lakh tons of rice had been imported from Burma since the signing of the Indo-Burma Rice Agreement until the middle of the month of May.

Indo-U. S. Pact

The Commodities received upto April 30, 1957 under the Agricultural Commodities Agreement which India had entered into with U.S.A. last year are as follows :

	Quantity	Value (C & F) Lakhs of Mds.
Wheat	7,41,000 tons	3,079
Rice	1,33,000 tons	1,088
Cotton	88,149 Bales of 480 lb. each	749