

# Wheat to India Decision Is Due

(See Drew Pearson and JPH columns on Pg. 4)

By Spencer Davis

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WASHINGTON (AP) — President Johnson is expected to make a decision soon on the touchy question of wheat shipments to India.

Informed sources said the decision won't come until Johnson receives a direct report from Rep. William B. Poague, D-Tex., who is in line to become chairman of the House Agriculture Committee when Congress reconvenes.

Poague was accompanied by Rep. Bob Dole, R-Kas., and Sen. Jack Miller, R-Iowa. They are expected to return from India this week.

There were strong indications, meanwhile, that the United States will make additional grain available to India on an emergency basis within the next few days.

Wheat shipments will end next month under an existing agreement. A stopgap arrangement must be adopted by Jan. 1, officials said, if a break in wheat shipments is to be avoided.

Johnson and secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman discussed the question Monday at the President's Texas ranch. Freeman told newsmen later he did not think it was unreasonable to expect other nations to match American contributions to meet India's pressing hunger problem. American shipments totaled about 9 million tons in 1966 compared with 2 million from other countries.

## Indian Envoy Called

Johnson summoned India's Ambassador B. K. Nehru to the White House Friday to discuss the situation, particularly what efforts India has taken to help itself and obtain aid from other countries. The Indian envoy told

newsmen after the meeting that his mouth had been sealed by the President and he could say nothing.

Secretary of State Dean Rusk talked with his Indian counterpart, M. C. Chagla, about the food emergency while flying to the NATO meeting last week.

It takes six to eight weeks for grain to be delivered to India. In this case it must be funneled into the port of Calcutta which is closest to the drought stricken provinces of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.

With contributions of up to 150,000 tons from Canada, 150,000 tons from Australia and about 100,000 tons coming from the United States, India will receive roughly 400,000 tons in January. Indian officials fear a crisis in February because of the time required to distribute the grain after it reaches Indian

ports.

Last August India requested an additional 2 million tons of grain. The United States has followed a policy that called for continuing food shipments based on the understanding that India would continue to take the necessary steps to improve its own agricultural performance as rapidly as possible.

This was the situation in early December when Johnson, without public explanation, withheld his approval of the 2 million ton emergency shipment.

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