

**Shri Kidwai:** Wherever there has been a rise in the price of foodgrains the demand for rise in wages is very natural.

**Shri T. N. Singh:** Has any attempt been made by Government to correlate the higher cost of living with the wage level?

**Shri Kidwai:** So far as the organized labour is concerned in most places this is so.

**Shri Dabhi:** May I know whether in Bombay State the issue price of cereals has increased by 47 per cent?

**Shri Kidwai:** In Bombay it is 47.6 per cent.

**Shri Thanu Pillai:** May I know whether wheat has not been taken even before the stoppage of subsidy in Madras?

**Shri Kidwai:** In Madras State there is some wheat which the Government has now declared as surplus.

**Shri Thanu Pillai:** Is it a fact that because of non-taking of this wheat it became rotten and when it was distributed, it was made much fuss of by some parties that we are giving rotten wheat to the people?

**Shri Kidwai:** I am not aware of this, but I can accept the hon. Member's statement.

**Shri K. G. Deshmukh:** In how many states *satyagraha* was offered on the stoppage of this subsidy?

**Shri Kidwai:** I think it was offered in only one state and that is Bombay.

**Shri T. N. Singh:** Are the Government aware of the fact that this year procurement has been lower so far in almost every State as compared with the previous year. As a result of the further lowering of prices, do Government expect the procurement target to be reached?

**Shri Kidwai:** This information is quite contrary. In most of the *mandis* in Northern India more grain is being brought for procurement than Government can cope with.

#### FERTILISERS DEAL

\*527. **Shri K. Subrahmanyam:** Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state whether Government have ordered a fresh enquiry into the purchase, handling, forward-

ing and distribution of fertilisers from July 1, 1946 on the basis of the findings of Mr. Justice G. S. Rajadhyaksha of the Bombay High Court?

**The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Kidwai):** On the basis of the findings of Mr. Justice G. S. Rajadhyaksha, Government has ordered Police investigations.

**Shri K. Subrahmanyam:** May I know what are the exact reasons for ordering a fresh enquiry?

**Shri Kidwai:** It is not a fresh enquiry. Justice Rajadhyaksha found that it is a Police case and the case has been handed over to the Police.

**Shri K. Subrahmanyam:** Is it true that certain officers involved in the above scandal are being transferred to other Ministries?

**Shri Kidwai:** The enquiry report is still confidential. As every Member of the House is aware certain officers have been arrested pending a prosecution.

**Shri K. Subrahmanyam:** What is the amount involved in the scandal?

**Shri Kidwai:** It is differently estimated. In one case it is about Rs. 86 lakhs and the other is a guess work as to what would have been the cost if the order had been placed at a certain time and this is Rs. 68 lakhs or less.

#### MAHARAJA OF MANIPUR (ALLOWANCES)

\*528. **Shri L. J. Singh:** (a) Will the Minister of States be pleased to state what was the monthly allowance of the present Maharajah of Manipur before integration of the State with the Government of India?

(b) What is the present allowance enjoyed by the Maharajah?

**The Minister of Home Affairs and States (Dr. Katju):** (a) Rupees one lakh and sixty thousand per annum (Rs. 1,60,000).

(b) Rupees three lakhs per annum (Rs. 3,00,000) but this is inclusive of the allowances to be paid to the relatives of the Ruler, expenditure on certain armed guards, and the maintenance of palaces etc.

**Shri L. J. Singh:** May I know what is the annual average income of Manipur State?

**Dr. Katju:** I can give you a guess, but I am not quite sure of the figure.

**Shri L. J. Singh:** May I know whether the Maharaja is drawing his allowance from the Government of India's exchequer or from the State exchequer?

**Dr. Katju:** The Privy Purse is paid in the first instance by the Government of India.

### Short Notice Question and Answer

#### FOOD SCARCITY IN WEST BENGAL

**Shri B. K. Das:** Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of Government has been drawn to the distress in several districts of West Bengal due to scarcity of food;

(b) what are the areas affected and what is the condition prevailing there;

(c) what is the price of rice in these areas; and

(d) what steps have been taken to alleviate the distress?

**The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Kidwai):** (a) and (b). Yes. Distress is prevailing in the Sunderban area and in the Basirhat sub-division of the 24-Parganas. During the last two years the crops have failed owing to drought or floods and the purchasing power of the people has been reduced.

(c) The wholesale open market price of rice in these areas is reported to be Rs. 43 per maund.

(d) A statement giving the required information is placed on the Table of the House.

#### STATEMENT

The details of measures sanctioned by the West Bengal Government for the alleviation of distress in scarcity areas are:—

Nature of relief	Amount sanctioned
(1) Agricultural Loans	2,50,000
(2) Land Improvement Loans	68,550
(3) Crop Loans	5,07,900
(4) Gratuitous Relief	1,20,000
(5) Loans to Artisans	700
(6) Test Works	60,554

The Government of West Bengal are distributing 7,160 lbs. of milk powder and 531 lbs. of multipurpose food to needy persons, they are also distributing 10,000 pieces of cloth, blankets and children's garments.

Arrangements have been made for distribution of gratuitous relief among old and infirm women and children. Test Works have been started at convenient centres to provide employment to the able-bodied. Broken rice has been sent to the distressed areas to be sold by special shops at As. -/3/9 per seer through a chain of local dealers near the sites of Test Works. Relief to able-bodied distressed Women is being organised in the shape of paddy husking by 'dhenkies' in certain areas. Milk, garments for children and cloth are also being distributed among distressed people.

**Shri B. K. Das:** With reference to part (c) of the question, the hon. Minister has said that it is Rs. 43. Is it the average price that is given or the maximum?

**Shri Kidwai:** It is reported to be black-market price which it is difficult to ascertain.

**Shri B. K. Das:** Regarding the relief measures that have been taken, may I know whether any cheap grain shops have been opened in that area, and what is the number of such shops?

**Shri Kidwai:** The information that was available has been supplied in the statement. I may inform the hon. Member that I am going there to see what further help can be given. I will discuss this matter with the State Government of West Bengal.

**Shri B. K. Das:** May I know whether modified rationing has also been introduced in that area?

**Shri Kidwai:** I have no information. In this statement it is said:

"Arrangements have been made for distribution of gratuitous relief among old and infirm women and children. Test works have been started at convenient centres to provide employment to the able-bodied. Broken rice has been sent to the distressed areas to be sold by special shops at As. -/3/9 per seer through a chain of local dealers near the sites of Test works. Relief to the able-bodied distressed women is being organised in the shape of paddy husking etc..."