

tion activities was the subject matter of a national seminar held recently at New Delhi. The various recommendations made at this seminar relating to the necessity of a Central legislation and various protective measures to be provided under this Central legislation are under consideration.

### **Cooperative Ownership in Urban Areas**

285. SHRI B. RAJARAVI VARMA: Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government contemplate to encourage co-operative ownership in urban areas so as to provide shelter to the masses; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b). Government is encouraging Cooperative Housing in urban areas by providing finance through various housing finance organisations like Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO), National Housing Bank (NHB), LIC etc. The National Housing Cooperative Federation (NCHF) is also helping in the setting up apex level housing cooperatives in the States/UTs and is extending technical support and training facilities to strengthen the Cooperative Movement. Many State Governments allot land at reasonable rates to cooperatives formed by different income groups. Special attention is given to cooperative formed by the poor and disadvantaged groups.

The NHB has announced refinance schemes applicable to cooperative housing societies and has also issued guidelines for provision of financial assistance to cooperative housing and finance societies through banks or housing finance institutions for land development and shelter projects.

### **Working of Public Distribution System**

286. SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Punjab, Haryana and Delhi Chambers of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI) has conducted a study on the working of the Fair Price Shops and Public Distribution System;

(b) if so, the findings and recommendations thereof; and

(c) the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI NATHU RAM MIRDHA): (a) and (b). According to available information, the Punjab, Haryana and Delhi Chambers of Commerce & Industry (PHDCCI) conducted a study on Agricultural Price Policy in India, the report of which inter-alia contains reference to the Public Distribution System (PDS). The main findings in the report regarding PDS in the context of Agricultural Price Policy from the consumers' point of view are that Public Distribution System has not been very effective, it is restricted primarily to urban centres, large section of the poor people are outside its purview and even those who are covered do not necessarily get the benefit of issue prices. Quotas are not lifted because of the poor quality of food-grains and irregular supply by the Food Corporation of India. PDS has thus failed to serve its objectives but the burden on the exchequer is increasing.

(c) Although an indepth examination of the study report has not been made its conclusions appear to be based on inadequate appreciation of the role of PDS and are, therefore, misleading. While there may be inadequacies in an operation of the magnitude of PDS covering the entire country through as many as over 3.5 lakhs fair