

arbitrarily, with the result that medicines are not available to the people easily and at cheap prices. penicillin which costs 35 paise per vial is being sold in the market at Rs. 3.25. Therefore, I would like to know whether efforts would be made to slash down the heavy profits in order to fulfil the basic objective of IDPL? Will the prices be brought down by doing away with the Commission?

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Are you in a position to reply?

DR. CHINTA MOHAN: Sir, we can give the competitive rates and prices. It is very difficult to reduce the prices because, as you know, Sir, the cost of production is high.....(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Srikanta Jena.....

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRIDAU DAYAL JOSHI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, Analgin costs 2.5 paise and Penicillin 35 paise to IDPL, but one vial of Penicillin is being sold at Rs. 3.25. It is gross injustice. May I know the reasons for keeping the price so high when the cost is so low?

[English]

SHRI SRIKANTA JENA: Sir, I would like to know from the Minister that the IDPL being a public undertaking and when the public undertaking is supplying medicines to a Government organisation and to different State Governments, why the agents are being appointed and the commissions are being paid. The State Governments' policy is to purchase from IDPL, the Government of India's policy is to purchase directly from the IDPL, and the price is fixed. Then in between why the agents have been appointed any why the commission was paid? This was debated in this House and the hon. Minister, in the Ninth Lok Sabha, had said that the Chairman of the IDPL deliberately appointed

some agents with the connivance of the political authority and this has to be cancelled. I would like to know from the Minister whether he is going to pursue the same political authority which was sanctioned to the Chairman that the agents should be continued.

DR. CHINTA MOHAN: Sir, there is a cut-throat competition in the market and there are number of private sector units and number of public sector units which are producing drugs. To get some orders, institutional agents are appointed. If there is any specific reference from the hon. Member which institutional agency is doing fraud, we are ready to cancel it.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: Sir, I want to confine myself to this particular question. The agent was appointed in violation of the agreement that was finalised and commission was also paid. That is clear. So, why is this particular case for supply of medicine for National Malaria Eradication Programme the appointment of agent was required any why the commission was paid?

MR. SPEAKER: He has replied just now.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: No Sir. He has not replied to this question. How can agents be appointed for supply of medicines when there are sales representatives? Why in this particular case, to supply medicine for National Malaria Eradication Programme, agent was appointed? I want to know whether it was a violation of the agreement or not.

DR. CHINTA MOHAN: The agent was appointed in 1989-90; not by this Government. (Interruptions)

#### Price rise after Budget

+  
\*590. SHRI SUDHIR GIRI:  
SHRI K. THULASIAH VAN-  
DAYAR:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the rise in the prices of essential commodities during each of the last six months and in the month after presentation of the general budget;

(b) the steps proposed to be taken to contain the price-rise; and

(c) the measures being taken to improve the public distribution system to help the weaker sections of the people?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KAMALUD-DIN AHMED): (a) to (c). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

#### STATEMENT

(a) A statement showing the month-wise percentage variation in the Wholesale Price Indices of essential commodities during each of the last six months and after presentation of the general budget 1991-92 upto 10.8.1991 is given in Annexure.

(b) The present Government attaches the highest priority to contain price rise within reasonable limits. Efforts are being made to restrain the growth in money supply, effect economy in Government expenditure, ensure better supply and demand management of 'Sensitive commodities', strengthening and streamlining of Public Distribution System, strict action against hoarders and profiteers and provision of incentives for higher production in the medium term. With a view to monitoring the prices of essential

commodities and ensuring their supply, the Government have constituted a Cabinet Committee on Prices under the Chairmanship of the Union Finance Minister. It is expected that all these measures will have a desirable effect on containing the rising trends in the prices within reasonable limits.

(c) As an effective instrument of distributive justice, the public distribution system has played a positive role in helping the poor strata of the society in recent years. On one hand it has helped in the moderation of the price rise of the key essential commodities such as rice, wheat, sugar and kerosene etc. on the other, through the Public Distribution network, the Government has strived to ensure the availability of these essential commodities in the areas predominantly inhabited by the poor consumers at an affordable price. The Public Distribution System is being improved further to make it reach more effectively to the segments of our population which remain still vulnerable and living in far-flung areas, hilly areas, desert, drought prone areas, tribal areas, slums, jhuggis and those living below the poverty line. The important ingredients of the improved Public Distribution System include easy access to fair price shops, efforts towards door step delivery of PDS commodities at Fair Price Shops and supply of additional items through PDS outlets. The State Governments have been requested to ensure that the essential commodities regularly reach to the genuine ration card holders especially in the rural areas and strict watch be kept to avoid hoarding and diversion of essential commodities.

## STATEMENT

*Month-wise percentage variation in the Wholesale Price Indices of selected essential commodities during the last six months and post budget period*

|       | Feb. 91 | Mar. 91 | April, 91 | May, 91 | June, 91 | July, 91 | 10.8 91<br>20.7.91<br>(Post Budget period) |
|-------|---------|---------|-----------|---------|----------|----------|--|
|       | 1       | 2       | 3         | 4       | 5        | 6        | 7  |
| Rice  | + 1.8   | - 0.3   | + 0.5     | + 1.3   | + 1.9    | + 2.0    | + 3.6                                      |
| Wheat | + 5.4   | - 3.0   | - 11.8    | - 7.2   | + 0.8    | + 0.8    | + 5.3                                      |
| Jowar | + 5.5   | + 3.8   | + 0.1     | + 1.3   | + 3.6    | + 3.0    | + 6.5                                      |
| Bajra | + 5.6   | - 0.4   | + 4.9     | + 3.1   | - 1.7    | + 2.9    | - 4.2                                      |
| Gram  | + 0.4   | - 5.7   | - 0.4     | + 0.8   | + 0.2    | - 1.1    | + 0.1                                      |
| Arhar | + 5.4   | - 4.8   | - 1.4     | + 4.3   | + 6.8    | + 3.2    | + 2.9                                      |
| Moong | + 0.7   | + 0.4   | + 2.1     | - 0.4   | + 2.3    | - 0.5    | + 1.4                                      |
| Masur | + 4.4   | 12.9    | - 3.5     | - 3.2   | + 3.5    | + 5.0    | + 2.6                                      |
| Urad  | + 3.6   | + 1.1   | - 1.2     | + 1.2   | + 1.5    | + 4.0    | + 1.9                                      |

|                | Feb. 91 | Mar. 91 | April, 91 | May, 91 | June, 91 | July, 91 | 10.8.91<br>20.7.91<br>(Post Budget period) |
|----------------|---------|---------|-----------|---------|----------|----------|--|
|                | 1       | 2       | 3         | 4       | 5        | 6        | 7  |
| Potatoes       | -13.2   | -1.5    | +11.9     | +22.5   | +12.9    | +9.5     | +5.0                                       |
| Onions         | -17.8   | -35.7   | -8.4      | -3.2    | +4.1     | +6.5     | +12.6                                      |
| Milk           | +2.5    | +1.7    | +2.4      | +1.3    | +0.8     | +2.3     | -0.1                                       |
| Fish           | -1.4    | -4.3    | -1.5      | +5.7    | +17.5    | +3.4     | -2.3                                       |
| Mutton         | +1.3    | +5.1    | +0.5      | +1.2    | +0.2     | +0.1     | Steady                                     |
| Chillies (dry) | +19.5   | +14.4   | +8.9      | +2.4    | +10.2    | +17.3    | +9.8                                       |
| Tea            | -5.1    | -15.2   | -6.5      | +4.0    | -0.9     | +10.1    | +9.8                                       |
| Coke           | Steady  | Steady  | Steady    | Steady  | Steady   | Steady   | Steady                                     |
| Kerosene       | Steady  | Steady  | Steady    | Steady  | Steady   | -2.5     | -9.9                                       |
| Atta           | +0.4    | -2.7    | +2.0      | +0.2    | +0.4     | Steady   | Steady                                     |
| Sugar          | +0.8    | -1.0    | +0.2      | +1.3    | +1.5     | +3.2     | +9.2                                       |

|                         | Feb. 91 | Mar. 91 | April, 91 | May, 91 | June, 91 | July, 91 | 10.8.91<br>20.7.91<br>(Post Budget period) |
|-------------------------|---------|---------|-----------|---------|----------|----------|--|
|                         | 1       | 2       | 3         | 4       | 5        | 6        | 7  |
| Salt                    | + 1.3   | - 0.1   | + 1.1     | + 1.9   | + 1.1    | + 2.4    | - 0.4                                      |
| Vanaspati               | + 5.6   | - 2.3   | - 1.3     | + 0.6   | + 2.4    | + 0.6    | + 0.6                                      |
| Mustard Oil             | + 3.1   | - 13.1  | - 3.7     | - 0.2   | + 1.9    | + 4.3    | + 7.6                                      |
| Coconut Oil             | + 3.8   | - 3.4   | - 0.2     | - 1.1   | + 7.0    | - 1.0    | + 1.2                                      |
| Groundnut Oil           | - 4.9   | - 4.0   | + 0.1     | + 3.1   | + 0.9    | + 2.0    | + 2.9                                      |
| Cotton Cloth<br>(Mills) | + 1.2   | + 1.9   | + 2.3     | + 0.9   | + 2.9    | + 2.4    | + 0.4                                      |
| Laundry Soap            | Steady  | + 1.2   | Steady    | + 3.2   | + 0.2    | + 4.7    | + 1.1                                      |
| Safety Matches          | Steady  | Steady  | Steady    | Steady  | Steady   | Steady   | Steady                                     |
| Gur                     | - 3.0   | + 2.6   | + 0.8     | + 4.8   | + 9.4    | + 1.0    | + 2.2                                      |
| All Commodities         | + 1.1   | + 0.1   | + 0.5     | + 1.0   | + 0.9    | + 1.8    | + 3.1                                      |

**SHRI SUDHIR GIRI:** Sir, after the presentation of the General Budget, the prices of almost all items of essential commodities and goods consumed by the common man have gone up, although the Finance Minister, in his Budget speech, promised repeatedly to keep the prices under control to the advantage of the common people. In this background, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister, the specific causes for the price hike after the presentation of the General Budget and what are the specific measures adopted to reduce the prices of other items?

**SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED:** Sir, it is true that in spite of our efforts to contain the prices, we have not been able to totally control it so far. The prices of essential commodities, no doubt, are going up. They have gone up, barring in certain commodities. Our efforts are going on to see that these prices are contained.

**SHRI SUDHIR GIRI:** Sir, I have not got the answer properly. What are the specific steps the Government had taken to contain the price rise of those items which are supplied to the common people?

**SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED:** Sir, efforts are being made to restrain the growth in money supply, effect economy in the Government expenditure, ensure better supply and demand management of "sensitive commodities", streamlining of public distribution system. (*Interruptions*)

I am coming to you. Strict action against hoarders and profiteers and provision of incentives for higher production..... (*Interruptions*) We have started these efforts. (*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

**SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, it would have been better had this question been put to the hon. Minister of Finance. The difficulties are arising because the question is being put to the hon. prime Minister. Sir, just see the phraseology that has been used in the statement laid on the Table:

[*English*]

"The present Government attaches the highest priority".....

[*Translation*]

What was the need to say the present Government? Are we putting the question to the past Government. Now I would like to have a small clarification.

[*English*]

It is mentioned here, "The present Government attaches the highest priority to contain price rise within reasonable limits". Sir, I would like the Minister to define what are the reasonable limits so far as prices are concerned. Let him define it.

**SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED:** Sir, the reasonable limit would be the cost of production and the management expenditure.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** What is that? (*Interruptions*)

**SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED:** For any commodity the reasonable price would be the cost of production plus the management expenditure. (*Interruptions*)

**SHRI DIGVIJAYA SINGH:** Hon. Speaker, Sir, the Congress Election Manifesto promises to bring back the prices prevalent in July 1990. Has the hon. Prime Minister taken into account the prices prevalent in July 1990 and has he compared the prices prevalent today?

**SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED:** Yes, Sir. There has been an increase, a very big increase, in the prices available in July 1990 and now. We are making all efforts to see that these prices come down and we are able to roll it back as we had promised. (*Interruptions*)

**SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE:** Sir, he has not answered the question raised by Shri Vajpayee properly. (*Interruptions*)

**MR. SPEAKER:** It should be your question, not Mr. Vajpayee's question.

**SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE:** I am underlining why he has not answered. He is an honoured colleague of mine. If you cannot protect him, let me do it. (*Interruptions*)

Sir, the question was, 'the price rise within reasonable limits', not the exact price. So what Price rise do you consider 'reasonable'? That was the question, not how you arrive at that price. Try to answer that which I have repeated on his behalf.

My own question is: What is the rise in the Consumer Price Index on an annual basis?

Part (b) is that the Consumer Price Index is both in terms of industrial workers and in terms of agricultural labourers, and it has been said, as you have mentioned, that you wanted to roll back according to manifesto to July 1990 prices. Since then what is the price rise instead of the roll back? The third part is....

**MR. SPEAKER:** No, no.

(*Interruptions*)

**SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE:** I know that there is objection to third question, but there is no objection if I say 'part (c)'.

**MR. SPEAKER:** No, no, please.

(*Interruptions*)

**SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE:** I would like to know, in view of the uncontrolled rise in prices, whether the Government intends to take over the wholesale trade in certain commodities of poor man's consumption like Jowar etc.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Last part of the question is too big a policy matter and it need not be replied.

**SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED:** Sir, the hon. Member has asked for the inflation rate during the last one year.

**SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE:** What inflation rate do you consider reasonable?

**SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED:** Sir, it is very difficult to say the reasonable rate of inflation. The annual rate of inflation measured in terms of point-to-point variation in the wholesale price index was 13.7 per cent on 10.8.1991 which was much higher than 8 per cent in the corresponding period of last year. Now the rate of inflation during the current financial year, from 30.3.1991 to 10.8.1991 has been estimated as 6.8 per cent compared to that of 5.3 per cent during the corresponding period in the last year.

**SHRI BHUWAN CHANDRA KHAN-DURI:** Sir, I want to point out to the hon. Minister that the quantity and quality of grain being supplied by the Food Corporation of India are atrocious. The grains contain sand, stones and lumps of earth. The grain in a 100 kg bag is as low as 92 kg including the sand and stones. Is the hon. Minister aware of this scandal in FCI, and if so, what is being done to stop this malpractice?

**SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED:** If there is any specific instance of the bad quality of rice and wheat, of course that can be brought to our notice and we will enquire into it. The FCI is supposed to supply the fair average quality rice and wheat and if there is any commodity which falls short of these standards, then the State Governments concerned can reject it.

**SHRI BHUWAN CHANDRA KHAN-DURI:** Sir, I have seen this happening in my constituency Garhwal.

**SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, the public distribution system is actually meant for the most vulnerable sections of the society. But unfortunately the position is that the poorest of the poor are not able to avail of the benefits for the simple

reason that the rules formulated are such that the basic requirement is that of a permanent address. A pavement dweller who does not have the wherewithal to have a shelter over his head is also denied the benefit of the public distribution system and always the apology offered by the Central Government is that it is for the State Government to do the needful. I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to what steps he is going to take to ensure that all the State Governments formulate a policy where even the people who do not have a house and live on Pavements also get the benefit of the public distribution system.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The main question is about the price rise and not about the public distribution system.

**SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL:** Sir, the last part of the question pertains to public distribution system.

**MR. SPEAKER:** If the Minister likes to reply, he can do so.

**SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED:** Sir, for the information of the hon. House, I would like to say that a meeting of the Advisory Council of the public distribution system was held recently in Delhi. All the Chief Ministers and the Civil Supplies Ministers of the States had attended that meeting. All the relevant questions were discussed in that meeting and we are coming with a detailed programme and that is being chalked out for strengthening the public distribution system.

So far as the specific question of the hon. Member is concerned, there is no doubt that this difficulty is there in Delhi because the distribution part is left to the State Administration and here in Delhi it is left to the Union Territory Administration. This difficulty is there, of course, which has been brought to our notice. We have discussed that also. For the jhuggi-jhopri dwellers particularly and, the mobile construction labourers and other labourers, we do not have their addresses. For them also, some method is being evolved so that they can get at least

some ration cards whereby they can get this ration temporarily at least.

[*Translation*]

**SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, earlier also I had asked a question on prices not once but twice reminding the Government of the manifesto of the Congress Party in which they had promised to roll back the prices to 1990 level within 100 days. On being asked as to when and how the Government was going to fulfil the promise, I was told that 100 days deadline was not yet over. Perhaps, the hon. Prime Minister had also used similar words saying that we should wait for 100 days to be completed. Mr. Speaker, Sir, the statement laid on the Table of the House says:

[*English*]

"The present Government attaches highest importance to contain price rise."

Not to hold the prices, but to contain price rise.

[*Translation*]

It appears that price rise has crossed not only the double digit, it is far more than that. I am saying so, because the price index has risen by 3.1 per cent within 20 days of the presentation of the Budget. Keeping in view the conditionalities of the I.M.F. and the built in inflationary items in the Budget, I would like to know the extent to which the Government expects the prices to rise? Secondly, by using the words "present Government", does the Government mean that it has finally bid good-bye to this manifesto?

**SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member is well aware of the reality and the conditions prevailing in the country. I think he knows the position better than us. Our efforts to roll back prices still continue. It is our earnest endeavour irrespective of whether we succeed or fail.....(*Interruptions*) ..... I have already said that everybody is well aware of



the position prevailing in the country with regard to prices. Our efforts still continue. Attempts are made to increase prices by means of creating maximum artificial scarcity, but it is our endeavour to curb the price rise. It is a fact that we have made sincere efforts. We have done exercise on 10-11 essential items, reference to which has been made in the manifesto and this exercise still continues. We have achieved success in many areas, but we have not been able to roll back the prices of all these commodities at the same time. In this connection, I would like to mention that excise duty on kerosene has been reduced following the presentation of Budget and it has resulted in fall in the price of kerosene.

**SHRI BRISHIN PATEL:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, people living in cities get two kilograms of wheat and rice per adult under the Public Distribution System whereas the people in rural areas get as low as two *Chhantank*, four *Chhatank* of wheat and rice. I would like to know from the Government, through you, whether there is any proposal to remove this disparity?

**SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED:** It is for the State Governments to decide for themselves as to how much quantity per adult or per family they want to distribute under the P.D.S. I do not know as to which State the hon. Member is referring to. I can reply with reference to a particular State.

**SHRI BRISHIN PATEL:** Please tell me about Bihar.

**SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED:** The hon. Member is asking about Bihar.....(*Interruptions*) Bihar State was allotted its full quota, but I am constrained to point out that even though allocation from the Centre was full, yet the Government of Bihar did not lift its full allotted quota of wheat and rice, as a result of which ..... (*Interruptions*)

**SHRI BRISHIN PATEL:** This is nothing new. This has been going on since the time

their party was in power in the State.....(*Interruptions*)

**MR. SPEAKER:** Not like this.

**SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED:** If he wants the figures specifically relating to the allocation made to Bihar Vis-a-Vis State's demand.....(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

**MR. SPEAKER:** He is not asking for that. But in your reply you have answered very properly.

[*Translation*]

**KUMARI UMA BHARTI:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to ask a supplementary question, but let me tell you that the moment you interrupt me, I become nervous. Please give me some time as my question is related with it. I want to ask a question on the basis of the figures that have been furnished in reply to this question. Even a slight rise in prices badly affects the people especially those living in rural areas. My question is in three parts. First, what is the ratio of fair price shops in urban and rural areas? Second, how many villages in the country do not have the facility of fair price shops? Third, keeping in view the fact that most of the small farmers, marginal farmers and landless labourers are Harijans-Adivasis in rural areas, whether Government propose to open fair price shops for them?

[*English*]

**MR. SPEAKER:** It is a good question.

[*Translation*]

**SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED:** There are more than five lakh villages in the country. The total number of fair price shops in the country at present is 3 lakhs and 62 or 70 thousand. This is a fact that all the villages do not have fair price shops. All these things were considered in the recently held meeting of the Public Distribution Council and

some directions were given. One month's time has been given for these directions to be implemented. Most of the poor live in thrust areas—Adivasi areas, desert areas and hilly areas. A survey has been ordered to find out as to how many fair price shops are required to be opened to bring these areas under the cover of Public Distribution System so that additional outlets could be opened for the benefit of these categories of people. As regards the total number of fair price shops, these are 3 lakhs 72 thousand shops in the country, of which 90 thousand or approx. one lakh shops are in urban areas.

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: It is in the ratio of 1:2.

SHRI INDERJIT: Sir, the hon. Minister has said a little while ago that according to him the reasonable limits of prices would be the prices of cost of production plus the management cost. Do I understand that in his scheme of things there is no provision for profit or return? Secondly, is the hon. Minister willing to associate monitoring committees with fair price shops, monitoring committees consisting mainly of house-wives to ensure both fair price and reasonable price as also reasonable quality?

SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED: Sir, in fact this is one point where we have tried our best to find a way to monitor the whole system. But as on today the responsibility of the distribution is totally lying with the State Administration. We are trying to find a way to monitor the whole working of the Public Distribution System and perhaps we may come to some understanding.

[*Translation*]

SHRI RABI RAY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is a question which is agitating the minds of crores of people. The common man does not take as much interest in other issues as in the price rise. The hon. Minister has said in his reply that the Government has not succeeded in rolling back the prices despite best efforts. I would like to know from the hon.

Minister whether he is aware of the fact that hoarders have a big hand in raising prices? During the last few months, the prices have risen abnormally high. Has the Government felt the need for involving the Essential Commodities Act against the hoarders who work against Government's efforts to bring down the prices of essential commodities? Has the Government thought in terms of nabbing and putting behind bars the hoarders who are responsible for rise in prices?

SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED: To a large extent, action under the Essential Commodities Act.....

SHRI RABI RAY: My first question is whether hoarders are responsible for price rise?

MR. SPEAKER: It also relates to supply.

SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED: Hoarders create artificial scarcity in the economy which leads to price rise. There cannot be two opinions about that. The required action under the law against the hoarder has been taken. I am happy to tell that according to the information that is available with me, 84,420 raids were conducted throughout the country till 31st July, 1991.....

SHRI MADAN LAL KHURANA: Only 84,000?

MR. SPEAKER: Let the hon. Minister give the information. Let him complete first.

SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED: 3152 people have been arrested. The number of people prosecuted is 3226 and cases have been filled against them, and out of them 141 have been punished.

[*English*]

Value of goods confiscated was of the order of Rs. 1,446.16 lakhs.

SHRI MUKUL BALKRISHNA WASNIK: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I welcome the reply given

by the hon. Minister where he has categorically stated that the present Government attaches top priority to contain the price rise. It is a great sigh of relief. But on the other hand, there is tremendous price rise. In the light of the reply given by the hon. Minister, I would like to know from the hon. Prime Minister whether the Cabinet Committee, which has been constituted under the chairmanship of the hon. finance Minister to prepare measures to check the price rise, has submitted its recommendations. If it has submitted, what are the recommendations made? And if the recommendations have not been submitted, I would like to know from the hon. Minister, by what time this Cabinet Committee has to submit its recommendations.

SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED: In fact, the Cabinet Committee on Prices has met number of times. This Committee takes the overall picture of the commodities and the tendency of the prices and the measures that are required to contain those prices. Number of commodities have been discussed in this Price Committee. Incidentally, I am also a Member of that Committee. I can tell you that we have discussed about the number of commodities, and as I said just now, the price trend has also been taken note of. We are thinking of various measures to contain these prices.

[*Translation*]

SHRI MOHAMMAD YUNUS SALEEM: Mr. Speaker, Sir, vegetables are the most important items among the necessities of life. In our country, whatever the prices are paid by the consumers for these items like onions etc. even one eighth of it is not going to the producers. If the producer sells a commodity at the rate of Rs. 150 per kg it goes up to Rs. 10 when it reaches the consumer because a number of middlemen are there between the producer and the consumer. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether there is any scheme or programme to enable the farmer to reach the consumer directly as prevalent in other countries.

[*English*]

The markets are organized in such a manner that the producers bring their products and the consumer directly goes and purchases the commodities from the producer.

[*Translation*]

Is there any such scheme and if not why the attempts are not made to launch such a scheme to check the prices of vegetables, especially in big cities where the prices of vegetables are spiralling.

SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED: Sir, the opinion expressed in this regard is true beyond doubt. It is a fact that the producer does not get the adequate price of his commodity and its price goes up while on its way to the consumer, with the result the consumer faces a heavy loss. Nobody can object to or deny this fact that the middleman take advantage of the situation. It is also correct to say that the prices of the vegetables are going up day by day and the attempts would be made to improve the situation. The most effective step in this regard is to develop the co-operatives and this work can be done through co-operative organisations. But it is a very unfortunate situation that though we have co-operative Movement in our country, yet we are not able to get the proper benefit out of it. I am still optimistic and feel that the cooperative movement will become stronger in our country. And the day it will be stronger, attempts would be made to improve the condition of producers.

[*English*]

Mr. SPEAKER: This question need not be replied. I have gone to the other question.

[*Translation*]

SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we are very sorry to state that whenever, we raise our hands to speak, you do not

allow us to speak. It is an important question. We are new comers.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down now. You have been a Minister in the Maharashtra Government. You should understand that this cannot be allowed in the House.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Meghe, please take your seat. You have been a Minister and you should understand this. I have allowed half an hour to this question.

[Translation]

SHRI DATTA MEGHE: You are not allowing us to speak. You always rebuke us.

[English]

Mr. Speaker You do not understand. That is why, I have to talk to you. Please take your seat now.

[Translation]

SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Then what for have we come here? We are leaving

MR. SPEAKER: You may go.

11.44 hrs.

*At this stage, Shri Datta Meghe left the House*

[English]

SHRI RAM NAIK: He had been a Minister for Civil Supplies.

MR. SPEAKER: That is why, he is going. I gave half an hour to this question. Now next question.

### AIR Station At Jabalpur

\*591. SHRI SHRAVAN KUMAR PATEL: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the proposed 200 K.W. radio station of Jabalpur has started functioning;

(b) if not, the reasons therefor;

(c) the action proposed for speeding up the implementation of the above project;

(d) whether there is any proposal to use the existing 20 KW transmitter at Jabalpur for the Vividh Bharati Commercial services;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the time by which such transmissions are likely to start?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (KUMARI GIRIJA VYAS): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.

(d) to (f). No, Sir, Apart from the fact that frequency clearance for simultaneous operation of 200 KW MW and 20 KW MW transmitters at Jabalpur is not available, the latter transmitter has practically outlived its useful life.

SHRI SHRAVAN KUMAR PATEL: Concerning (d), (e) and (f) parts of the answer of the hon. Minister, I would like to know regarding frequency clearance for simultaneous operation of 200 KW MW and 20 KW MW transmitters at Jabalpur. I would like to know whether the Government will make efforts to obtain frequency clearance for this purpose.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): The frequency clearance is given by the International Telecommunication