

Regarding the support prices fixed by the Central Government for Copra.

MR. SPEAKER: I want to complete all the names in the list. Please cooperate with me. I will call all the names.

...(Interruptions)

PROF. A.K. PREMAJAM (BADAGARA): Sir, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak.

Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the support prices fixed by the Central Government for copra.

As per the statement made by the hon. Minister yesterday, the support price has been fixed at Rs.3,250 per quintal for ordinary copra and at Rs.3,500 per quintal for ball copra, which is far below the reasonable demand made by the Government of Kerala and the coconut farmers. The Government of Kerala and the coconut farmers had requested that it should be fixed at Rs.4,100 and Rs.4,300 respectively. The cost of production of one coconut is coming up to Rs.5.38 and it is on the basis of this, the Government of Kerala and also the coconut farmers had requested to fix the support price at Rs.4,100 per quintal for ordinary copra and at Rs.4,300 per quintal for ball copra.

Sir, if you analyse the price rise of various other articles and fixing of the support price for copra during the last 10 years, it would be seen that the support price of wheat, rice and barley etc. had gone up by 147 per cent, the support price of cereals had gone up by 136 per cent, the support price of sugarcane had gone up by 129 per cent and the support price of other oilseeds had gone up by 102 per cent, whereas copra is given an increase of only 94 per cent.

I would like to draw the attention of the august House to another point and that is, generally the support price fixed is higher than the price recommended by the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices, but in the case of copra alone it is far below the recommendation made by the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices. This is a blatant disregard and discrimination shown by the Government of India towards the people of Kerala. I would also like to submit that the sufferings of the farmers of Kerala have been on the increase because of the policy of the Government of India. So, I protest against this and I urge upon the Government to reconsider this decision and fix the support price for copra, as demanded by the Government of Kerala and the coconut farmers....(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Govindan and Shri Sudheeran also have given notices to speak on the same subject. They can associate themselves with the hon. Member, Prof. Premajam.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Murthy, you can also associate yourself with Prof. Premajam.

...(Interruptions)

PROF. A.K. PREMAJAM : Sir, this is a great injustice meted out to the people of Kerala....(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Please take your seats.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: This is not proper. There are other Members who also want to raise various matters. I will call everybody, one-by-one. If you do not cooperate with the Chair, it is impossible to accommodate all the Members who have given notice.

...(Interruptions)

PROF. A.K. PREMAJAM : Sir, I would request you to kindly instruct the Government to reconsider the decision in this regard. This is the only major cash crop of Kerala. This is breaking the backbone of the State's economy and especially with the rise in prices of all the essential commodities, the farmers will starve. ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Yesterday, the hon. Minister made a statement in the House. Today also he replied to one of the supplementary questions. Please take your seat now.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Please cooperate with the Chair.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA (PONNANI): Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Government has to review its decision regarding the support price for copra....(*Interruptions*)

PROF. UMMAREDDY VENKATESHWARLU (TENALI): Mr. Speaker, Sir, the coconut growers in Andhra Pradesh also are facing the same situation. It is essential to raise the support price to Rs.4,100 per quintal for ordinary copra and Rs.4,300 per quintal for ball copra, as demanded by the hon. Member, Prof. Premajam. So, we also associate ourselves with the demand made by Prof. Premajam. We request the Government that the price revision should be done immediately. Otherwise, lakhs of coconut farmers will face very serious problems. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: I have called Shri Govindan and Shri Sudheeran. You can also associate with Prof. Premajam.

...(*Interruptions*)