

Title: Regarding problems faced by coconut growers and enhance the support price of ball copra and other copras.

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA (MAVELIKARA): Sir, I would like to raise an issue concerning all the Southern States of the country. In the last Session of this august House, where all the hon. Members of Parliament, irrespective of party affiliations, have raised the issue of coconut growers.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: My constituency is also dependent on them.

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA : All the Southern States are affected. The steep fall in the coconut price has created a very serious situation almost in all the Southern States. Unfortunately, yesterday, the response of the Agriculture Minister, has created a lot of misunderstanding among the people. Sir, the copra procurement, based on the instructions of the Central Government, has not taken place properly.

Now, the procurement of copra is not at all taking place in our State and other southern States. Due to lower import duty on edible oil, an indiscriminate import is taking place in the country. Because of that, the price of coconut has gone down. The import of coconut nuts from Sri Lanka and other places has created a very serious situation. Now, in Bangalore and other places, we are getting a coconut nuts for a rupee. Because of that, the coconut growers in the southern parts of the country have been seriously affected. I would, therefore, request the Central Government, through you, that there should, at least, be 300 per cent import duty on edible oil, for example, palm oil sub standard Palmolin has been imported from Malaysia and other countries. It has been reported in the newspapers that the palm oil, which has been imported, is also affecting the health of the people in our country because of its lower quality. There should be a ban on import of coconuts nuts because that is affecting the interests of coconut growers adversely.

The support price of ball copra and other copras should be enhanced. When it was fixed last year, the State Governments of Kerala, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh also raised their objections on this. So, my request to the Government is to review the support price which was declared in the last year.

The Government should give directions to NAFED and other agencies to procure more quantities of copra.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: NAFED also.

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA : Only then, the situation would improve.

Now, in Kerala, especially in the northern parts of Kerala, a mass movement has already been started against 'Coca Cola' and other soft drinks.. There is a mass movement entering across party line. The large number of people are also coming out.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I am also affected.

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA : I would like to remind the Government that if the situation continues, it will become a law and order problem and nobody can stop this. So, I request the hon. Minister of Parliamentary Affairs to respond to this and also request the Minister of Agriculture to give some kind of protection to the coconut farmers in the southern parts of the country.....(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Our lifeline depends on that.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I allow all the Members who are from the coconut growing areas, that is, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Lakshadweep as well.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now, you are not interested.

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Sir, I appreciate the feelings expressed by the Members from the different States which produce coconut and more especially by you because you, being Deputy-Speaker, hardly get a chance to express the problems of your constituency. So, this is the only way one can do it. I can only say that we really appreciate the problems. He has raised many issues which I cannot respond in a Zero Hour - not being concerned Minister. But I think, the issues concern with about three Ministries, that is, Agriculture, Finance and Commerce. I will write to these three Ministers about whatever has been told by all the Members here.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Why do you not ask the MPs from coconut-growing States to call a meeting?

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: I will ask the Minister of Agriculture to call a meeting.

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA : I think, the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs can call a meeting. He can invite the other Ministers.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: No, no.

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: No, no. Why should we double the efforts? I would ask the Minister of Agriculture.
...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI P.H. PANDIYAN : Sir, we have discussed it already. The Minister of Agriculture called a meeting in Mr. Speaker's Chamber. We all attended it.

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA : The Minister of Commerce could also be invited.

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: It is as good as an order for us. So, I will ask the Minister of Agriculture in this session, that is, at the earliest, that he should call a meeting of the MPs from the coconut-growing constituencies and listen to their grievances, and try to sort out the problems. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Andamans is a coconut growing area.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The other concerned Ministers can also come.