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Title: Need to set up a procurement centre for coconut and kopra (dried coconuts) in Theni Parliamentary Constituency in Tamil Nadu.

SHRI J.M. AARON RASHID (THENI): Sir, I thank you very much for this opportunity. I would like to raise an important matter related to the problem of coconut producing farmers' of my constituency.

Sir, in my constituency, there are between 5,000 and 10,000 small and medium coconut growers with anywhere between 10 acres of land each and up to hundred acres of land. As all of us are aware, they are facing a lot of problems. The usage of coconut is there in the place of worship; it is used as medicine; and it is used as hair oil. But, today, coconut farmers are in very serious problem and they are struggling to survive for themselves due to frustration over the minimum prices offered for their produce. They are given Rs. 3 or Rs. 5 per coconut. Water availability is also very scarce for them for their produce. Earlier, the coconuts were very big in size, but due to water shortage it has become very small in size.

Diseases like Eurofit Mite, yellow leaves disease, and coconut water disease are affecting the coconut trees. The State Government is also providing some subsidy on pesticides, which is not sufficient for them. So, kindly increase the subsidy on pesticides.

Another problem is that the coconut plucking workers ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have to mention only one point.

SHRI J.M. AARON RASHID : Sir, another problem is that the coconut plucking workers are demanding Rs. 15 to Rs. 20 per tree for plucking the coconuts, and a coconut is sold for only Rs. 3 or Rs. 5 only. Then how can they survive?

My humble request to the Government of India is to setup a direct procurement centre for coconuts as well as *kopra* through the Coconut Board. They have to fix a price for it. The Central Government is also to give additional subsidy or increase the subsidy on pesticides and on automation of coconut plucking. In Kerala and Coimbatore areas, they have automatic coconut plucking machines ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is all right. You have already mentioned all that you wanted to convey here.

SHRI J.M. AARON RASHID : Sir, I only want to mention a couple of lines more.

If you give them this subsidy, then they can come out of the clutches of climbers of coconut trees. Coconut growers have to be given adequate compensation for the loss in felling of these leaves. Coconuts are becoming very small due to water shortage. The Government should give subsidy for drip irrigation system. ...(*Interruptions*)

Lastly, tree dogs are climbing on the trees and eating the coconuts when they are tender. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: The next speaker is Shri Bishnu Pada Ray.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have already mentioned that you want a procurement centre. So, that point is over.

SHRI J.M. AARON RASHID : Sir, I only want to mention one more line.

Some methods should be adopted to prevent these dogs from climbing on these trees and spoiling the yield. The Government should come forward to help the coconut growers in the form of subsidy.

SHRI BISHNU PADA RAY (ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS): Sir, I actually had my assembly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, you have two minutes and you have to be brief while speaking.