

12.15 hrs.

## ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

[English]

## Twenty-first and Twenty-Second Reports

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI (Bhubaneswar): Sir, I beg to present the following Reports (Hindi and English versions) of Estimates Committee :

- (i) Twenty-first Report on Action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the Eighty-fourth Report of the Committee (7th Lok Sabha) on the Ministry of Finance (Department of Economic Affairs)—Banking.
- (ii) Twentysecond Report on Action Taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the Eightyninth Report of the Committee (7th Lok Sabha) on the Ministry of Finance (Department of Revenue)—Central Board of Excise and Customs.

12.16 hrs.

## PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

[English]

## Twenty-fourth Report

SHRI RAJMANGAL PANDEY (Deoria) : Sir, I beg to present the Twenty-fourth Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Public Accounts Committee relating to delay in setting up of repair/overhaul facilities for a certain helicopter.

12.17 hrs

## COMMITTEE ON THE WELFARE OF SCHEDULED CASTES AND SCHEDULED TRIBES

[English]

## Fifth and Eighth Reports

SHRI K. D. SULTANPURI (Simla) : Sir, I beg to present the following Action Taken Reports (Hindi and English versions) of the Committee on the Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes :—

- (i) Fifth Report on Action Taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the Fiftysixth Report of the Committee (Seventh Lok Sabha) on the Ministry of Commerce (Department of Textiles)-Reservations for, and Employment of, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in National Textiles Corporation Limited with Special reference to National Textiles Corporation (West Bengal, Assam, Bihar and Orissa) Limited.
- (ii) Eighth Report on Action Taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the Fifty-third Report of the Committee (Seventh Lok Sabha) on the Ministry of Energy (Department of Petroleum)-Reservations for, and Employment of, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Indian Oil Corporation Limited (Marketing Division and Refineries and Pipelines Division).

12.19 hrs

## STATEMENT RE AMOUNTS OUTSTANDING FOR PADDY PURCHASED BY FOOD CORPORATION OF INDIA FROM FARMERS IN PUNJAB AND HARYANA

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO) :

[Shri K.P. Singh Deo]

Mr. Speaker, Sir, on 12th December, 1985 an Hon. Member of this House, Shri Balwant Singh Ramoowalia, while raising a matter under rule 377 had stated, *inter-alia*, that "farmers in Punjab and Haryana have not been paid their amount for paddy purchased by Food Corporation of India. All this paddy was purchased by Food Corporation of India through commission agents. In many cases a period of 25 days to one month has lapsed. Number of farmers who have not been paid their dues is in thousands and the amount exceeds Rs. 150 crores.

The matter has been examined. The total purchase of paddy made from Punjab was to the tune of 18.69 lakh tonnes and valued at Rs. 274 crores. Of this, payments by FCI have already been made for Rs. 265 crores. All these payments are made to arhathiyas as per the existing laws in Punjab. The practice is the same in Haryana. Payment of the outstanding amount of Rs. 9 crores has been withheld from the arhathiyas of Punjab pending settlement of final bills because a number of them have yet to render accounts for the gunny bags advanced to them by the FCI for packing paddy. Under the general instructions, payments are made by the FCI to arhathiyas within 2-3 days of presentation of bills by them. For this purpose, 35 pay Offices for preparation of cheques and 140 bank branches for encashment of cheques issued to arhathiyas, are operating. These are linked to the mandis or purchase centres allotted to the FCI.

So far as Haryana is concerned, the total paddy purchased was 33486 MT valued at Rs. 4.79 crores and the payments so far made were to a tune of Rs. 4.71 crores. The balance which remains unpaid is Rs. 8 lakhs only and this is expected to be cleared very soon.

In deference to the wishes of the Members of Parliament to abolish intermediaries and to bring to an end the exploitation of the farmers by the arhathiyas and to end the resultant corruption that

emanates out of it, both the Department of Food and the FCI, have urged the Governments of Punjab and Haryana to abolish arhathiya system so that payments could be made directly to farmers. The arhathiya system is prevalent only in the States of Punjab and Haryana while it has been abolished in the rest of the country. However, despite our repeated requests to the Government of Punjab as also to the Government of Haryana, this system still continues. It is a common experience that, after receiving the money from the FCI, the arhathiyas keep the amount for two to three months and this causes great hardship to the farmers. I would, therefore, request the Hon. Members of this House from Punjab and Haryana to convince their State Governments to abolish the arhathiya system. I have already stated on the floor of this House that the Government is against any intermediaries functioning between the farmers and the FCI and this can be better achieved if farmers are encouraged to come and sell their foodgrains directly to the FCI or its agencies instead of coming through the arhathiyas. In that event such malpractices as delayed payments to the farmers can be eliminated altogether.

I would conclude by saying that the amount of money outstanding is not as big as Rs. 150 crores as stated by the Hon. Member. It is only Rs. 9 crores and this cannot be treated as non-payment to the farmers since it is being withheld as security for gunny bags advanced to the arhathiyas which remain to be accounted for. As regards Haryana, there is not much of a problem. It is for the State Governments to prevail upon the arhathiyas to ensure that they do not hold on to the money that is due to the farmers. We have drawn the attention of both the State Governments to take immediate remedial measures to ensure that the farmers are not put to any difficulty.