

I call upon the Government to discuss the issue with the Union concerned before implementing their decision.

(viii) **Installation of T.V. Station Birpur, Bihar.**

DR. G. S. RAJHANS (Jhanjharpur) : Birpur is a very important place on Indo-Nepal border. The people of Birpur (Saharsa) and of neighbouring areas have been demanding the installation of a TV Station here.

It is really unfortunate that whereas smaller and less important places in the country have been provided with TV Station, Birpur's case has always been ignored.

If a TV station is set up at Birpur, it will have a very healthy effect on Indo-Nepal relations since a large number of Nepalese population who live on the other side of the border, will like to see Indian programmes. It is, therefore, requested that the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting may set up a TV station at Birpur as early as possible.

13.33. hrs.

DEMANDS FOR GRANTS
 (GENERAL), 1985-86—Contd.

[English]

Ministry of Food and Civil Supplies
 — Contd.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : We will now take up discussion on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Food and Civil Supplies.

SHRI CHINTAMANI JENA (Balasore) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I rise to support the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Food and Civil Supplies and I also oppose all the cut motions moved in this House. I must congratulate our Hon. Minister for Food and Supplies for bringing about a decline in the Wholesale Price Index to the extent of 4.1 per cent by August 1984 and also a further decline to the tune of 7.5 per cent by December 1984. There was also a fall of about 5.1 per cent, compared to the index a

year ago. The index for wheat in December 1984 was lower by 3.8 per cent compared to that in the corresponding period of the previous year. It was possible due to the record production of wheat, rice and other cereals and also because of easy open-market availability. I must congratulate the present Minister for Food and Civil Supplies because he was the then Agriculture Minister and during his time only, the food production could be improved.

I am grateful to our Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Ji that he has given the portfolio of Food and Civil Supplies to the present Minister perhaps after taking into account the fact that he as the Minister of Agriculture, had produced sufficient foodgrains for the country, making it self-sufficient in food. In his present capacity, he can distribute the foodgrains so produced, in a proper manner to our people.

The Ministry also deserves praise for bringing about a record procurement of 17.7 million foodgrains, surpassing the previous figure of 15.51 million tonnes of foodgrains procured from the 1982-83 crop. As on 16th March 1985, a quantity of 8.5 million tonnes of rice could be procured, which is an all-time high. Similarly, the procurement of wheat from the 1983-84 crop has touched a new high at 9.30 million tonnes, surpassing the earlier record of 8.29 million tonnes out of the 1982-83 crop.

The covered storage capacity available with the FCI stood at 9.26 million tonnes, which is not adequate to store the foodgrains. Even though the general warehousing facilities are provided to some extent, they are not adequate to cover the entire foodgrains produced. I would, therefore, request the Hon. Minister to look to this aspect on a priority basis, so that more general warehousing facilities are made available to the growers.

Even though 17 Save grain Teams operated to motivate farmers to adopt scientific storage godown practices, and to educate the farmers on this issue, they have had very little impact on the farmers in our country side. The Hon. Minister may kindly make necessary arrangements by which the farmers may have their own storage godowns, by taking loans from the nationalized and coope-

rative banks at a lesser rate of interest. Marginal and small farmers need to be given loans for their own storage godowns, at a subsidised rate. At least 25% of these loans may be sanctioned to the farmers in the form of a subsidy. This will help the farmers not to dispose of the produce at least those which are not perishable but to store them for some days, so that they may not have to sell them at less than the support prices fixed by Government.

I must congratulate the Hon. Minister for the fact that the food and vegetable processing industries are gaining momentum. But many of them are running at loss. So, the Hon. Minister may kindly look into that aspect. It is true that due to the drought condition in sugarcane-growing areas, the production of sugar cane has come down to 59.16 lakh tonnes, as against 82.32 lakh tonnes in the year 1982-83. But with much regret I would like to mention that the sugar content of the imported sugar from Brazil is much less which I had noticed in the 1st week of March when I was in Bhubaneswar. The sugar bought from Brazil was distributed through the fair price shops. Truly speaking, I myself felt about it. Of course, the Hon. Minister has contradicted it today morning in reply to a supplementary question. I would only request him to send that sugar for examination in a laboratory and see which is correct, because I had contacted on the very day the Regional Manager of the FCI at Bhubaneswar. I have also told him to send that sugar for laboratory test. It has only one-third of the sugar content of our indigenous sugar.

I would like to congratulate the Hon. Minister for increasing the price of paddy and rice in the year 1984-85 and asking the State Government to procure paddy, rice and wheat at least at the support price announced by the Government of India. In this connection I would like to suggest that the price of all foodgrains should be fixed before the cultivation starts, before the year of the cultivation starts, the price should be fixed and announced so that the farmers may take a decision as to how much area of their land, will be covered by that particular crop.

The government is providing many hundred crores as subsidy to the FCI to meet the difference between the procurement price

and issue price. In the year 1983-84, Rs. 835 crores was provided as subsidy to the FCI on foodgrains transaction; and also in 1984-85, Rs. 850 crores have been provided and for the current year 1985-86, Rs. 11 crores are provided. But what is happening is that the foodgrains especially wheat and rice are supplied to the retail centres through their storage agents and they are all inferior quality; I must not say all but many of those are of inferior quality; and in almost all commodities, whether rice or wheat or sugar, there is a shortage ranging from one kg to 3 and 4 kg; and ultimately the poor retailers and the consumers who are mainly from down-trodden masses are the sufferers. In this connection, I would like to point out the findings of the study undertaken by the Programme Evaluation Organisation of the Planning Commission. It says that the deficiencies of the public distribution system were due to certain inadequacies in its operational aspects and lack of coordination. Irregular supplies and poor quality of products were identified as major reasons for people not drawing ration regularly.

13.44 hrs.

[SHRI SOMNATH RATH *in the chair*]

This is a very alarming situation. I would draw the attention of the Hon. Minister and request him to look to it personally and check this shortage in weights of foodgrains supplied by the F.C.I. may not be there and the quality is as per the certified items.

The Committee has suggested several steps to improve the public distribution system including a dual price formula, regular supply of items, improvement in quality of selling items, improvement in quality also by selling items in sealed bags instead of loose and having advance planning for storage and movement of goods.

The Committee in their findings also stated that necessary steps should be taken to ensure that the weighing of commodities at the issue points is fair and correct.

Before concluding, as you are already ringing the bell, I would mention one more point.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have taken

fifteen minutes, five minutes more than allotted.

AN HON. MEMBER : Because Orissa is a backward State.

SHRI CHINTAMANI JENA : I would like to draw the attention of the Hon. Minister to the ban on starting the mini flour mills in the rural areas. In States like Orissa where the foodgrains like wheat are grown in a large scale, especially in the districts which have been declared as 'no industry' districts like Balasore if there are some entrepreneurs who come forward to start these mini flour mills that ban order should be lifted from those places in 'No Industry' district. In addition to it, I would like to draw the attention of the Hon. Minister to the fact that in Orissa they are not supplying cement properly. I am not going to give the figures because you are not allowing me more time. The State Government, have repeatedly written to the Hon. Minister, but the cement of the required quantity is not provided to the State by the Centre and all the development works in the States have been hampered to a large extent.

With these words I conclude.

[*Translation*]

SHRI SYED MASUDAL HOSSAIN (Murshidabad) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, The house is discussing the demands for grants of the Ministry of Food and Civil Supplies. My friends from the other side have said that food production has increased. Yes, It is correct that food production has increased now in comparison to the production earlier but it has not increased to the desired extent. You are not to blame for this. You would say that it is the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture. It is your responsibility to have co-ordination with the Ministry of Railways and the Ministry of Petroleum. You have not taken the steps which you should have taken for increasing the food production. There should have been radical land reforms. As a matter of fact, if there is proper utilisation of land, and water, fertilisers and remunerative prices are assured to the farmers, the food production would certainly increase. When we travel from Delhi to Calcutta, we find that thousands of hec-

tares of land on both sides of railway line are lying uncultivated for want of irrigation facilities.

It is a fact that you have not been able to increase the food production in the country to the desired extent. We agree that food production has increased and side by side the procurement of foodgrains has also increased. In addition to it you should also monitor the activities of your Ministry after the procurement of foodgrains. I would like to place before you the figures of last year. I have with me a newspaper cutting which says that 30,000 bags of paddy were destroyed in Ludhiana. The main reason for this loss is the defective system of storage of foodgrains under "cover and bin" system which has not been changed till date. It has also been mentioned in the report that this year 3 million tonnes of wheat would have to be stored under camp system. If the procurement and storage work is handed over to the Panchayat's and necessary funds are provided to them, they can handle the storage of foodgrains in a better way than F.C.I.

F.C.I. procures foodgrains in my district also. According to a report, godowns of F.C.I. at Behrampur and Dayanagar are in dilapidated condition and even then the foodgrains are being stored there. As a result the foodgrains are damaged and you have to bear a huge loss. There are thousands of godowns throughout the country, in which the foodgrains are still being stored, though these godowns are in a dilapidated condition. There is mention about this in your report also. A photo deputed the "Camp system" has been shown in this report. If you look at the photo carefully, you will find that the foodgrains are lying in the open and they are not being fully protected. I would, therefore like to suggest that first of all good storage facilities should be provided for storage of foodgrains.

So far as the question of giving remunerative prices to the farmers is concerned you have fixed the price of the common variety of paddy at Rs. 137 per quintal which means that your support price will be Rs. 137. If I say something here about West Bengal, your only reply will be that the State is always making some demand. But it is a fact that the procurement in West

Bengal this year is not much and this is because the Jute growers have been given only Rs. 100 or Rs. 1,200 per quintal as procurement price. The farmers do not want to switch over to paddy from Jute and when the production of paddy will fall, so will your procurement. Still, West Bengal gives you maximum quantity of Jute and you should see to it that it gets the maximum quantity of rice. West Bengal also gives tea, and therefore, you should give full attention to it.

So far as the question of sugarcane growers is concerned, it is true that the production of sugar has declined a little this year. If you take into consideration the support price which cane growers get, it is only Rs. 14 per quintal, whereas firewood costs more than Rs. 40 per quintal. You have fixed a price of only Rs. 14 per quintal for the crop which the farmer raises by putting in hard work. This year's report is that the mill owners owe a huge amount of arrears to the farmers.

If we are to save sugarcane from being burnt this year in U.P., attention will have to be paid to this question. Unless you set matters right the farmer will not get a remunerative price and this present situation will persist. One year the production will go up but it will decline in the subsequent year. If the farmers get a higher price this year, the production goes up the next year, but when the production goes up, he does not get a reasonable price.

About edible oils, I want to say that at present the shortage of edible oils stands at 15 lakh tonnes. You have not paid attention to the production of edible oil so far and at the same time you have improved animal fallow which is used by the factories on a large scale. I do not know and what varieties were imported any from which countries. But the people continued to say that it beef fallow. Since you have stopped its import, it has resulted in shortage of edible oil. You have also cut the quota of my state will have to pay attention to the supply of edible oil and pulses.

At the same time, you should also pay attention to the production of barley. Perhaps, after five years you will not get barley.

The production of barley is successively declining every year. The farmer is not getting his remunerative price.

One of the points in your 20-Point Programme is to open a fair price shop in each village. You can yourself see that you have raised the price of rationed sugar, rice and wheat many times ever since your 20-Point Programme came into operation. You have raised the price of sugar, wheat and rice, but your promise of opening a fair price shop in each village has not yet been fulfilled. This is not an allegation, but your party Member, Shri Ram Pyare Panika had himself said the day before yesterday that the people in that area had to go for a distance of 2 to 3 miles to fetch rations. The programme of opening fair price shops in each village has not succeeded so far. Instead of your providing foodgrains at cheap rates, the prices are increasing day by day. If you do not provide subsidy on foodgrains, it will be very difficult for the rural poor to pull on.

There is yet another point in the 20-Point Programme which relates to the generation of employment for the rural people. You say that the Janata Government made a mess of everything during its rule that is correct. But some work was done under the 'Food for Work Programme' during the Janata rule, the man-days had increased and due to despatch of wheat from the central pool, the prices went up. What steps did you take after this price-rise? You talked about employment generation, but if you go through your own report you will find that you provided foodgrains under E.G.S., F.W., N.R.E.P., R.L.E.G.P. In 1981 it was 2.45 lakh tonnes; in 1982 it was 71,000 tonnes; in 1983 1.01 lakh tonnes and in 1984 only 96,000 tonnes.

14.00 hrs.

You had started the employment generation programme for the rural landless labourers and farmers, but this 20-Point Programme has remained confined to paper only and you have not been able to provide employment so far.

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (RAO BIRENDRA SINGH): You tell this to Sardar Buta Singh.

SHRI SAYED MASUDAL HOSSAIN :

My request is that this year when production and procurement both have risen, you re-start the 'Food for Work Programme' more vigorously, so that the rural farmers and labourers could get jobs and the rural people could benefit therefrom.

In view of the increased foodgrains production this year, you are re-introducing the open General Licenee System. You have permitted the private traders to purchase wheat and you have also removed the restrictions on its inter-state movement and thus they are free to transport it to other states and sell it there. But, I am sorry to say that you do not give permission to a deficit state to make purchases of wheat and rice from the surplus State to meet its requirements. You are permitting the private traders or *banias*, but not the State Government.

Our experience of last year shows that the Government of West Bengal tried to purchase more foodgrains from Punjab, but the permission was not given. You have kept it open for a *bania*; that is not fair. Similar facilities should also be given to the State Governments, so as to enable them to make up their deficiency from other States.

I have to say a few words about F.C.I. also, on the basis of my experience in my own State. Much has been said in this House about F.C.I., long discussions have also been held in the consultative committee. You make allotment from the Centre, but they remain only on paper and the commodities do not reach the States.

F.C.I. has drawn its employees from different departments on deputation. You have not taken any common decision in this regard and owing to this there is a great resentment in them and consequently they resort to strike. In this connection, my suggestion is that you take a right decision in this regard. The employees who have come on deputation from the other departments should be absorbed there as early as possible.

A lot of discrimination is being made in the case of my State in the matter of supplies. You will have to think about that also. I do not know what quality of wheat and rice you supply. Complaints to this effect have been

made a number of times, but there has been no improvement in this regard. We have been seeing for quite some time that the quality of foodgrains supplied is very poor, You will have to think over it.

There is no coordination in railway movement. If we bring it to your notice, you will say that the rakes are not available. If we ask the Railway Minister to provide rakes he will say that coal is not available and if we approach the Minister of coal and ask why coal is not being supplied, he will say that the wagons have not been supplied.

This is all a vicious circle. You should try to set it right. If regular supplies are maintained, you will not receive complaint from any State.

At the same time, you should try to raise the allocation of edible oil. The bottleneck in the movement of F.C.I. foodgrains in an old problem of our State. You say that you allot foodgrains but the off-take is not there. In this connection, a question was raised in this House by Maharashtra. The reply was the same that allocation had been made but that the off-take was not there. It is for you to ensure the off-take also. The off-take is not done by the State Government. If there are no goods in the godowns, it is difficult to have any off-take. Last year, such an incident happened in West Bengal. There was a complaint in West Bengal about off-take and our complaint was that you were not making proper supplies to West Bengal, but in two districts Malda and Birbhum, the supplies were all right because both of your Ministers belonged to those districts. That is why the supplies did reach those godowns. The supplies to these two places are regular whereas the supplies to other places are not normal.

Tripura is a very backward and tiny State. There is shortage of foodgrains and edible oils there. Repeated requests have been made by the State Government to you. You please look into that. Perhaps, you have received a telegram. You pay attention towards that and send them the supplies.

With these words, I oppose these demands... (*Interruptions*) What else we can do? You are not going to accept our suggestions. Had you accepted our suggestions

we would have certainly supported these Demands.

*SHRI V.S. VIJAYARAGHAVAN (Palghat) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I rise to support the demands of this Ministry. This Ministry under the leadership of an efficient person like Rao Birender Singh is functioning effectively and satisfactorily. I congratulate him for the good work he is doing. During the last three decades of independence India has through our five year plans achieved great success in agriculture. The late Panditji, Indiraji and now Rajivji deserve to be congratulated for the correct policy that has been followed with regard to agriculture.

Sir, we have today reached a stage of self-sufficiency in the matter of food. This is in no small measure due to the effective programmes undertaken by the Govt. for increasing agricultural production by using high-yielding varieties of seeds, use of fertilizers etc. In this context I want to congratulate the Government for its decision to reconstitute the agricultural prices commission with more representatives of farmers on it. I hope this Commission will adopt a more realistic approach towards the prices of agricultural produce.

The Ministry's report says that this year we have been able to procure 17.17 million tons of foodgrains. It was only 15.51 million tons last year. This year that is to say upto 16th March 1985 we have been able to procure 8.53 million tons. This is a great achievement.

Sir, this Ministry has the primary responsibility for maintaining the public distribution system which is an important item in the 20-point programme.

In this context I would like to bring to the notice of Government certain problems concerning the public distribution system in Kerala. The public distribution system has been acclaimed by everybody. Kerala is deficient in food and we have to depend upon the Centre to meet 60% of our food requirements. There is a complaint that we are not

getting foodgrains to meet our requirements. Kerala needs 2.10 lakhs tons of rice per month at the rate of 320 grams per adult per day. But we are getting only 1.10 lakh tons of rice from the Centre. From 1977 June to November 1981 Centre had been supplying 1.35 lakh tons of rice but this was reduced later. The Government of Kerala has requested that the Centre should allot atleast 1.35 lakh tons rice every month. But it has not been accepted by the Central Government. As I said Kerala produces only 40% of its requirement of food. But it produces cash crops which earn valuable foreign exchange. Therefore it is the responsibility of the Centre to meet fully Kerala's requirement of food.

There is a widespread complaint about the quality of the rice that is supplied to Kerala through FCI. It is of inferior quality and the Kerala house wives call it "iron rice" It is hard to cook and is not liked by the people of Kerala. Therefore, Kerala should be allotted boiled rice which is the only rice that is liked by the people there.

The Kerala Civil Supplies Corporation is paying a very vital role in the public distribution system in the State. It has many problems. Unless the Civil Supplies Corporation is strengthened the public distribution system cannot function effectively. It is the responsibility of the State Government to provide infrastructural facilities for public distribution and provide the essential items through it. The Central Government gives subsidy and other assistance to its agencies like FCI, STC etc. but the State Civil Supplies Corporation does not get any assistance from the Centre. In this connection I want to say that the Kerala Civil Supplies Corporation has submitted a scheme of Rs. 12 crores for constructing godowns arranging transport etc. I would request the Government to provide the necessary funds to this Corporation.

The Kerala's Civil Supplies Corporation has requested permission to buy rice from surplus States like Andhra. The present policy of the Centre is not to allow the State Civil Corporation to procure rice from the surplus States. At the same time private traders are being allowed to procure from these States. I would request the Government

*The speech was originally delivered in Malayalam.

to allow the Kerala Civil Supplies Corporation also to procure rice from Andhra. It may be allowed to procure at least one lakh tons of rice every year.

Finally I will deal with one more point and that is with regard to the margin allowed in transporting levy sugar from the mills. The Kerala Civil Supplies Corporation is the authorised agency for lifting levy sugar from the mills. Normally the allotment of sugar for Kerala is made by the fag end of the previous month. Therefore, it has to be lifted in a hurry lest the State might lose the quota. The Corporation incurs a expenditure of Rs. 15 to 19 per quintal on transportation. The Centre has allowed only Rs. 9.70. The Corporation is lifting 11000 tons of sugar every month and thus incurs an annual loss of Rs. one crore. Therefore, I would request the Government to raise this margin to Rs. 19 and thus save the Corporation from recurring losses.

Once again I support the demand and conclude my speech.

SHRI KAMLA PRASAD RAWAT (Barabanki) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, while supporting the demands for grants of the Ministry of Food and Civil Supplies, I would like to draw the attention of the Hon. Minister to a few points.

First of all, I would draw his attention to the distribution system. Government intend to distribute essential commodities in the remote villages to benefit the poor but the persons engaged in this work indulge in malpractices. The licences are issued to people of disrepute. I would like to request Government to put a ban on the issue of licences to such people. Those who are involved in such cases or who indulge in fraudulent activities and have a bad reputation, should not be issued licences at any cost. Government had introduced the Janata Cloth scheme but it is not reaching the poor farmers and labourers. This scheme remains confined only to the cities. I would also like to point out that the foodgrains are packed in gunny bags and are taken to the district head quarters for weighment and there the bags are under weighed. You should keep a strict vigil on it too.

The potato production was good this time in our area, but its sale was not good. Therefore, potato is rotting there. I would request you to provide cold storage facilities in U.P. so that potato could be stored there. More than 17 lakh tonnes of potatoes were produced in Barabanki this year. I would therefore, request you to set up a factory there to use potatoes as raw material.

I would also like to draw your attention towards the problem of fertilisers. You have made big achievements such as construction of canals, generation of electricity etc. I would request that more tube wells should be installed. If the problem of fertiliser is solved, then the food problem can be solved to a great extent. The farmers do not get urea in time. If Government take all these arrangements in their own hand it would bear good results.

In 1982, there was distribution of mini-kits which helped in boosting the production. At some places the mini-kits were of bad quality. The farmers who had their land put in hard work tilling did not get even a single grain as there was no crop. Therefore I request that the mini-kits that are distributed should be of good quality. There is need for more improvement.

With these words, I conclude and thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak.

[English]

SHRI ANANTA PRASAD SETHI (Bhadrak) : Mr. Chairman, I support the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Food and Civil Supplies.

At the outset, I congratulate the Hon. Minister and also the Ministry for their magnificent management of food economy in our country.

No doubt, the food situation in the country during 1984-85 remained comfortable and foodgrain production in the year 1983-84 also reached an all-time peak level of 151.54 million metric tonnes which speaks of the victory of our popular Government.

I have the privilege to say something and to draw the attention of our Hon. Minister

to the support price which should be given at reasonable rate while purchasing the average and the fair quality foodgrains from the small and marginal farmers and to the need to open a large number of fair price shops in the rural areas where the SC, ST and other backward people reside because these people are exploited in the villages by the shopkeepers. The Hon. Minister should take note of this and mete out justice to these people in regard to their getting rice at reasonable price.

Much discussion has already taken place regarding food and civil supplies. Now, I would like to draw the attention of the Hon. Minister to the difficulties faced by the State Government of Orissa in regard to the allocation of cement, kerosene, rice and also cooking gas.

In case of cement, the allocation of Central levy cement from Centre is of the order of 67,800 metric tonnes per quarter which is very much short of the requirement of the State Government of Orissa. This shortage of the cement ultimately hampers the developmental work undertaken by our State Government.

I would like to draw the attention of the Hon. Minister to this shortage and request him to allocate more cement quota, at least one lakh tonnes per quarter, to the State Government of Orissa which will be beneficial to the State. The State Government of Orissa has also recently made this suggestion to the Central Government to enhance the quotas of cement and I hope that this will be done.

In case of allotment of cement, there is a difficulty faced in regard to the lifting of cement. As per the present practice, the release orders of the rate contract parties of Orissa are issued by the Regional Cement Controller, Calcutta and it is causing serious difficulties in getting the orders in time. This is resulting in lapses of most of their quotas for each quarter to the embarrassment of the State Government of Orissa.

I would like to draw the attention of the Hon. Minister and would request him to take up this matter with the Regional Cement Controller, Calcutta to see that this difficulty is removed.

It would be better if the Central Government could allow the State Government to issue re-validation as well as release orders to the rate contract parties which would ultimately facilitate smooth lifting of the cement allocation.

In spite of the repeated instructions issued by the Regional Cement Controller to the cement factories for providing at least 30% of the supply to the State Government in the shape of portland cement, the factories concerned never paid attention to the instructions. So, I would request the Hon. Minister to give directions to the cement factory for supplying ordinary portland cement to the State Government as per its requirement to meet the commitment of construction activities under the long life-span schemes.

In Orissa some areas have been affected by drought recently, on account of which the pressure on the public distribution system for the supply of rice has been gradually mounting up. The pressure is likely to increase furthermore in the coming months. In order to keep the rising market price of rice under check, it is necessary that adequate quantities of rice be channelised through the public distribution system. In view of this, I would request the Hon. Minister to take the initiative for increasing the monthly allocation quota to the State upto 50,000 metric tonnes.

As far as supply of cooking gas is concerned, Orissa solely depends on the two depots of Hindustan Petroleum Corporation at Visakhapatnam and Duliajan. The supply of gas from Duliajan is not regular and as a result, lapses occur very often. I would like to utilise this opportunity to request the Hon. Minister of Petroleum and Chemicals to make the entire allocation to the State from Visakhapatnam. Also the Ministry should make all arrangements regarding implementation of the proposed bottling plant of Hindustan Petroleum Corporation with a capacity of 2,500 metric tonnes per year in the State of Orissa without fail.

In Orissa, kerosene is widely used for lighting and cooking purposes due to poor facilities of electrification. The present allocation of kerosene to the State is 8,930 metric tonnes which is like a pigmy against its Himalayan requirement. Since serious incon-

venience is being faced in the State due to the insignificant nature of the State's Kerosene quota, I would request the Hon. Minister to take quick measures for the enhancement of the allocation.

With these words, I support the Demands for Grants relating to the Ministry of Food and Civil Supplies.

SHRI V. S. KRISHNA IYER (Bangalore South) : Sir, we are discussing today one of the vital departments of the Government. It is really a happy augury that we have a very able, dedicated and practical man at the helm of affairs.

According to the latest Report, it is a fact that the food position is a bit comfortable now. We have had a record production during 1984-85. There were heavy market arrivals, record procurement and high levels of stocks also. My Hon. Friends have mentioned various figures. I do not want to go in detail. I would like to mention only one or two figures. The procurement of wheat was about 93 lakh tonnes in March 1985 as against 83 lakh tonnes achieved during 1983-84. Similarly, rice procurement, which was 63 lakh tonnes in 1983-84, was 83 lakh tonnes in March, 1985. Ofcourse, the stock position is very comfortable.

Coming to the public distribution system, in 1983 about 16.21 million tonnes were distributed through the public distribution system, but in 1984 due to record production and availability of stock it came down to 13.42 million tonnes.

The buffer stock position also has been comfortable.

Now I will come to the point. The whole thing is comfortable. I would like, however, to bring to the notice of the Government and also the entire House one point. Though the picture is rosy and the food position is comfortable, how many people are eating twice a day? Now the purchasing power of the common man, the poor people has decreased to a great extent. Of course, I do not hold the Food Ministry responsible for it. But we have to see the reality on the whole. The Government of India must look into the whole

thing because we are not able to lift the people who are living below the poverty line. Though we have plenty of food people cannot purchase it. They do not have the money required. Realising many State Governments have launched various schemes. Coming to the southern State, you may be aware that the Andhra Pradesh Government has been selling rice at Rs. 2 kg and even our Karnataka Government also have recently decided that they should sell rice at Rs. 2 per kg from 1st of November. The Tamil Nadu Government has got their popular mid-day meal scheme for poor school-going children.

So I would like the House to know that though the food position is very comfortable, many people are not in a position to purchase food articles. What is it that we have to do? That we have to think. That is that we have to lift the people who live below the poverty line. Already the Government of India is subsidising to the extent of Rs. 1100 crores. The State Government are also subsidising. Even if we give rice at Rs. 2 per kg many of the people will not be in a position to purchase.

Another point mentioned in the report is that the wholesale prices have remained steady during the last year. I admit it has been steady to some extent but the prices of many of the essential articles are going up and for which the Government is responsible. Say, for example, what about sugar? Very recently they have enhanced the rate of sugar by 40 paise. What is that poor man's article-kerosene? Kerosene rates after the recent budget have gone up by 16 paise per litre. The proper person whom we should ask about the price rise is the housewife. I made a calculation about it very recently after the introduction of Central General Budget and the railway budget. The increase of expenditure in a ordinary middle class family having a fixed income is Rs. 100 per month. I am not exaggerating. I have worked it out only a few days ago.

You say that the prices have been stable. But it is not a fact. When there is a record production, it should show decreasing tendencies. It is not there. Even in regard to wheat or rice the prices have not gone down. Of course, the increase has been marginal in rice and wheat. But in regard to other essential

articles, say *toor dhal*, etc. even in Delhi the price rise has been steep. Of course, in regard to edible oil, we have been importing edible oil. So far as edible oil is concerned, our country is not self-sufficient. We are dependent mainly on imported edible oils. So we should do something to see that we produce enough edible oil which is a very necessary ingredient for every family. Why not the government give sufficient encouragement? Groundnut is grown in plenty and they should give all encouragement for edible oil.

So the report regarding price rise I do not accept. It is not correct because there has been a price rise of almost all the articles—except in the case of 1 or 2 articles.

Coming to production costs and the sale price, you have given some figures. You say that the economic cost of wheat and rice—you have mentioned in your report the cost of sale comprising production cost, procurement incidence etc.—for wheat it is Rs. 188.42 and for rice it is Rs. 240.72, distribution cost you have stated is Rs. 41.04 per quintal and total economic cost is Rs. 229.46 and Rs. 281.76 and sale realisation for wheat is Rs. 172 and for rice it is Rs. 245. So the gross subsidy that the Government of India gives is Rs. 57.46 for wheat and Rs. 56.9 for rice per quintal. Out of this subsidy Rs. 41.04 is the pool distribution cost and this is where I want the Government to look in to the matter. For every quintal of rice or wheat you have been spending Rs. 41.04 as pool distribution cost. This is on the high side. You are paying only Rs. 137 to the grower for paddy. These overhead charges are on the high side and we must be able to reduce it. For every kilo 41 paise is supposed to be the extra pool cost. This should be reduced.

Now, I would like to draw the attention of the Government to fixing of prices of wheat, paddy and sugarcane. We have got Agricultural Prices Commission but the rates fixed by the APC are never in favour of the grower. Although I belong to urban area yet many of the friends who come from rural areas tell us about the difficulties of growing paddy, wheat and sugar. We must give attractive prices to the growers. We should take into consideration the labour they have to invest; the cost of the fertilisers, etc. All

these should be taken into consideration. I have a feeling that the rates fixed by the APC are not reasonable. Many States have been requesting the Government of India that they should be consulted before finalising the prices of wheat and rice but the Government of India has not been consulting the State Governments.

Now, a word about kerosene oil. Kerosene is a fuel of the common man. Here I would like to say that State Governments must also see that kerosene is supplied only to the domestic users. What is happening is that a lot of kerosene goes to industry. It should be stopped. Many of the people like auto-rikshawallahs mix diesel oil with kerosene. Then more than 50 per cent of kerosene is going in blackmarket. It should be prevented.

Lastly, Sir, a word about Essential Commodities Act. You must see that the State Government enforce it strictly. Although we have got more than 3 lakh fair price shops yet blackmarketing and hoarding is going on. Stringent punishment should be given for hoarding, blackmarketing and adulteration but, I find, most of the State Governments are observing more in breach this Essential Commodities Act. Many of them are not enforcing them. The Central Government must see to it that they enforce the provisions of the Essential Commodities Act and the Adulteration Act. They should be very strictly enforced.

Lastly, I would like to make an appeal on behalf of the Karnataka Government. The Karnataka Government has been requesting you about this repeatedly. You have got enough food stock now. Karnataka State is one of the few States which is contributing to the Central Pool. The Karnataka Government has made an appeal for the supply of 40,000 tonnes of rice per month whereas it is getting only 25,000 tonnes of rice now. Since you have got enough stocks please see that this quantity of 40,000 tonnes of rice requested by the Karnataka Government is made available to them. Now that the State Government is committed to supply rice at Rs. 2 per k. g. to the weaker sections, I request that the extra quantity may be allotted to them.

Lastly I wish to submit that the Karnataka Government was getting the Palmolin Oil

through three ports, namely, Mangalore, Bombay and Madras. Now the State Trading Corporation wants to deliver only through Mangalore. It will be very uneconomical for the State Government. So, I request that it may be distributed through all the three ports, as had been done before.

With these words, I do hope that the food position will continue to be comfortable in the future also,

[Translation]

DR. G. S. RAJHANS (Jhanjharpur) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, earlier also I have touched some points in this august House. The points I raise here are practical. I do not believe in making long speeches. The attendance in the House shows how much the people are interested in the Food and Civil Supplies Ministry ... (*Interruptions*). What is the importance of foodgrains? Just to speak in this House and be satisfied? That will not do. You come with me to the villages. I would show you that there are thousands of such people as do not get even one square meal a day. You may boast of record procurement of foodgrains or record production and other programmes but the poor farmer in the village who does not get food to eat even once a day, is not concerned with these figures. You may say that the prices of commodities have fallen, but I can take you to the market and you can go to any shop and see for yourself whether the prices have come down or not. The prices have not fallen. The people are being crushed. The rich are becoming richer and healthier. This House is the most powerful House in the country. You have to consider whether we should indulge in rhetorics or work for the upliftment of the poor. We should impress upon the people that we would be able to make available to them goods at cheaper rates. You have mentioned in your report that you have made provision of Rs. 1,365 crores for food. But you have allocated only Rs. 19 crores for Civil Supplies. Out of this, Rs. 1,183 crores will be spent on food corporation. On the Central Warehousing Corporation which is the best managed Corporation, only Rs. 352 crores are being spent. I am doing a little research these days. Even otherwise, I am a student of Economics. I was surprised to see that though people criticise the public sector

strongly, there is a corporation like the Central Warehousing Corporation in our country which with a humble beginning has earned good profit and whose efficiency is between 95 per cent to 97 per cent. I congratulate the Hon. Minister, and the Management on this but I will go into details a little later.

As compared to the capital employed, the percentage of gross profit of this Corporation was 12 per cent in 1978-79 which later on increased to 18 per cent which is creditable for any Public Sector Undertaking. It is not a small thing. I believe in frankness and calling a spade a spade. Where Government deserve a pat, I shall definitely do so and when it is the turn to criticise, I shall criticise because my very name is 'Rajhans' i.e., Royal Swan. 'Rajhans' sifts the true from the false ... (*Interruptions*). Yes, please, I come from Mansarovar and that is why I see the truth as it is and sift it from falsehood.

You publicise daily on the Radio and T. V. that cardboard carton should not be weighed along with the confectionaries and that the carton does not form part of the confectionaries, but I want to say that there is hardly a single shop in Delhi where the carton is not weighed along with the confectionaries. Thus the expenditure incurred on such publicity goes waste and your Radio and T.V. day in and day out go on unnecessarily publicising that legal action would be taken against the defaulting shopkeepers. I want to know against how many such shopkeepers you have taken action. You go to any sweetmeat shop, the shopkeeper will invariably weigh the carton with the sweets. If you ask him why he is weighing both things together, he would always reply either to buy that as it was or otherwise go away. Therefore, I am submitting that we should enact only such laws as can be implemented. If you publicise these things, you should also ensure that these are followed.

Government have fixed the support price of many commodities but the State Governments are not allowing this to be implemented. Regarding fair price shops also, you may calculate how many people are taking advantage of this facility. If you look at the figures, you will find that their number is very less. We are all aware that when ever we go to a ration shop we find that sugar

is not available. No body knows where the sugar disappears overnight. The person who gets a licence for a fair price shop considers himself a privileged person of the society and becomes rich overnight. I want that our Government should pay more attention towards fair price shops because if these shops are not run properly, we shall not succeed in achieving our target and the poor and weaker sections of society cannot be benefited. My suggestion is that the department concerned should start some mobile shops because in our country there are certain places from where during rains the people cannot go to far off places to fetch rations. In these areas, mobile ration shops should supply rations to the people so that the people may be benefited. In addition, two or three things more I would like to say. On page numbers 2 and 3 of the Report of this Department, a very good thing has been said that our fruit and vegetable industry will be provided with facilities. During the Assembly elections, the Hon. Minister had gone to my constituency. He must have seen for himself that in spite of lakhs of mango trees, I would not say crores, in that area, what sort of difficulties the farmers there are facing. The mango of Mithila is not only famous in the country ; it is famous the world over. Therefore, you should set up a fruit processing industry there. These industries should not be confined to Silchar and Bhagalpur only, though I am myself a resident of Bhagalpur. These should be set up in the Mithila area also where lakhs of tonnes of mangoes go waste. There you can set up these industries with much ease because power can be available from Kati Power House and mango is very cheap there. Lakhs of people will get employment there. As people have got employment in Silchar and Bhagalpur, the people in Mithila also will be much benefited if a mango processing unit could be set up there.

I have to submit two or three things more. Modern Industries are bottling Double Seven (77) cold drink. This cold drink is of the same type as the Government in 1977. You can supply 'Rasika' in place of '77'. Mangoes and mango pulp can be brought from Mithila. It will be so cheap that you would like to supply the same to the whole of the country at cheap rates. I have many things to say but you have rung the bell. Regarding the Central Warehousing

Corporation, I want to say that Siiri Daga did not see eye to eye with you regarding this Corporation. This Corporation has done a good job. All the facilities are available here at Pragati Maidan ; all export requirements are met here, customs clearance is given and quality control is also exercised here. I would like to suggest that such dry ports should be set up in other parts of the country also. I would like to suggest that more godowns of the Central Warehousing Corporation should be set up not only here but in foreign countries also.

I was much surprised to know that the Warehousing Corporation has no godowns in Jammu & Kashmir. Either there is some flaw in the Act or something else is there. Warehouses should be set up in Jammu & Kashmir also. I am prepared to say in this House that the performance of these Warehouses is very good.

In the end, I would like to say that we shall have to think seriously to see that foodgrains are made available to the poor. Our speeches that there are plenty of foodgrains in the country and these are available at cheap rates will not serve the purpose. Most of the people in the country are poor and foodgrains should be made available to them. We should also ensure the nutrition value of the food or the eatables made available to them. What will be the use of taking such food by which even people of a very young age look like old men ? If you want to keep the people of the country healthy, the country should be made a Welfare State in the real sense. Sir, with this I conclude.

[English]

SHRI G. S. BASAVARAJ (Tumkur) :
Mr. Chairman, Sir, I wish to say a few words on the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Food and Civil Supplies. I am really happy that Food and Civil Supplies has become an independent portfolio. I am sure that the dynamism of our Hon. Minister would reflect in the widening of the public distribution system in the country, which is vital for the poor people. Our Hon. Minister has got an independent charge and he has to manage the affairs of the Food Corporation of India, which is entrusted with the procurement of foodgrains for the Central Pool. Many members have spoken about the mis-

management of the FCI and its affairs. But any how, the annual subsidy that is being given is Rs. 8.50 crores. This is not sufficient if we want to give remunerative prices to the farmers. When I speak about remunerative prices to the agriculturists, it is my duty to emphasize the need for a higher price to paddy. Government of India is now going to pay Rs. 152/- per quintal for wheat; and at the same time Rs. 137 to Rs. 145 per quintal, for paddy. This is a great injustice being done to the farmers of South India in general and in particular to the farmers of Karnataka who are mainly cultivating paddy.

I learn that the Karnataka Government has recommended perhaps Rs. 160/- per quintal for paddy. Even this is not sufficient. Taking into account the cost of all the inputs necessary for cultivating paddy, the cost price per quintal will not be less than Rs. 180/-. Hence I request the Hon. Minister that Government should fix the price at least as Rs. 200/- per quintal, for paddy. Only then the paddy cultivators will be encouraged to continue paddy cultivation, without switching over to the cultivation of cash crops. Otherwise, definitely the farmers will give up the paddy crop. And once again this country may face food problem.

Now about the fixing of agricultural prices by the Agricultural Prices Commission. I would like to know whether there is any real agriculturist in the Price Commission. By their whims and fancies, they fix the prices, and thus hit the agriculturists. Day by day, due to severe drought and the raising of the rates for all the infrastructural materials, agriculturists are suffering. Hence I suggest that in the Agricultural Prices Commission, there should be at least two agriculturists. While doing so, the prices of agricultural commodities will have to be fixed, treating agriculture as an industry. Then there will be an effective coordination in the procurement of foodgrains, after giving remunerative prices to the farmers.

In 1984-85, a substantial amount has been allocated for implementing the 20-point programme. Under the 20 point programme, there is a wide scope for opening of more fair price shops for strengthening the public distribution system. I have to point out that the public distribution system is effective only in urban areas, and not in rural parts.

The Karnataka Chief Minister, Mr. Ramakrishna Hegde has proclaimed from housetops that his Government is implementing the 20-point programme more effectively than in any other State. I would like to say that due to prejudices, the existing fair price shops have been cancelled, because they were run by Congress workers. The public distribution system is bad in Karnataka now. I request the Hon. Minister to intervene in the affairs of the State. I hope this situation will be rectified early.

I request that for every 1,000 of population, one fair price shop should be provided. I would also tell the Hon. Minister that the policy of doing procurement under the levy system is at present hurting the agriculturists. In Karnataka, the merchants are collecting levy at mill points, and also in the market yards, where the ryots' commodities are brought for milling and selling respectively. Actually, the agriculturists are being swindled by merchants, and also officials. Hence I request that this type of procurement under the levy system should be avoided. In lieu of this, Government should make purchases only in the open markets.

I also suggest that in the rural parts, proper distribution should be made through fair price shops. I also urge that it is really unfortunate that those who feed the nation are not really fed. Their essential demands can be met only by opening more fair price shops in the rural parts. When you are providing facilities, and adding so many luxuries for people living in urban areas, you must consider the aspirations of the villagers who require their essential commodities at a fair price.

I hope the Minister will chalk out programmes to eradicate all these irregularities, I urge that proper facilities must be provided. The Food Corporation of India must construct its own godowns. We are losing nearly 10% to 12% of foodgrains due to lack of storage facilities. Drastic steps should be taken to stop this loss.

15.00 hrs.

My constituency, Tumkur, is known for the main export of foodgrains and other commodities to the neighbouring States.

There is no proper storage facility available at Tumkur. I request the Hon. Minister to instruct F.C.I. to get a godowns constructed in Tumkur (Karnataka).

Coming to my State, Karnataka, I would say it is severely affected by drought. The Centre has also sent a team to study about the situation and a report is being submitted. Anyhow, I request the Minister to give substantial quota to the Government of Karnataka. When Congress Government was in Karnataka, there was surplus food. But under the present regime, even though they got surplus in 1983-84, they had diverted the surplus quantity to other States without informing the Centre. By that the ruling party added several crores of rupees to their coffers. It is most unfortunate that even in Karnataka the ruling people have minted money we were originally a surplus State, but by improper planning and mal-administration of Shri Ramakrishna Hedge's Government has made it as a deficit State. Hence I request the Government that the people of Karnataka should not be penalised. I request the Minister to give instructions to the State Government to utilize the fund properly. Under NREP, it is most unfortunate that in Karnataka the foodgrains have been diverted to various items. For example, under NREP, the State has diverted the funds and grains to people in charge of their election propaganda during last Assembly elections. I would therefore request that the Minister should instruct the State Government to utilise the funds properly meant for the NREP programme and that food grains should be distributed properly. I would like to suggest that there must be a high level committee in the district blocks headed by the concerned M.P. to regulate or watch the distribution part and the performance of NREP programme and also other centrally sponsored programmes.

The imported oil should be distributed only through fair price depots and cooperatives but it should not be given directly to private sugarcane growers. These growers are also suffering and they should be paid at least Rs. 300/- per tonne.

Regarding fruits and vegetables, in our country, only a small portion of this is being preserved. The rest is wasted. But this preservation method should be increased all

over the country by proper processing. The important processed items like frozen vegetables, and dehydrated fruits should be exported to the foreign countries on large scale.

In order to avoid hardship to horticulturists and consumers at every taluk level horticultural cooperative societies are to be installed and these societies will have to handle all these jobs.

In my area, large quantities of mango, guava, tomato, *sapota* and vegetables are being grown and they must be encouraged and cold storage facility should be created. I request that one fruit juice concentration plant is to be installed at Tumkur. With this, I support the Demands for Grants of this Ministry.

SHRI T. BASHEER (Chirayinkil) : I rise to support the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Food & Civil Supplies. The Ministry of Food & Civil Supplies is entrusted with a very basic responsibility. Food is the most important need of the people and supply of the food is the primary responsibility of any government.

I congratulate the Minister and the Department for the efficient management of the food situation in the country but I wish to take this opportunity to extend our gratitude actually to the agriculturists and the agricultural workers in this country who toil round the year to produce food for the entire population of this country.

The food production has reached an all-time record of 151.54 million tonnes during 1983-84 and actually in the last four years we have witnessed record production. Our farmers and farm workers deserve congratulations and our policy-makers in this country also deserve congratulations.

A vast majority of the people in this country is poor. Their purchasing capacity is very low. In such a country everybody will agree with me that the public distribution system needs to be improved. We have talked much about the public distribution system and under the 20-Point programme the coverage of the public distribution is sought to be

expanded by opening new fair price shops to cater to the needs of the weaker sections of the society and especially the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. But I am sorry to say that the achievement in this field is not up to expectations, considering the magnitude of the problem.

I had gone through the report. I found that during 1982-83 only 14,199 new fairprice shops were opened. I am sure that nobody will claim that this is an achievement. So, I would like to state that the Government has to go a long way. Government should have a well-knit public distribution system all over the country especially in the rural areas. I would like to take this opportunity to suggest that our target should be one fairprice shop for every one thousand persons, at the maximum.

I would also like to stress the role of mobile fairprice shops. That is an important thing. Now, the entire burden of developing the required infrastructure falls upon the State Government. While Central assistance is available to various agencies like the Food Corporation there is no such central assistance for the state agencies. I would plead that the Central Government must provide adequate funds for developing the infrastructure which is very important for public distribution system in the country.

The Kerala State Civil Supplies Corporation with its area of operation covering the whole of Kerala, possesses rented godowns at all district and taluq headquarters. Under it more than 1600 fair price shops operate. At least a sum of Rs. 10 crores would be required to construct permanent godowns in the State. Another Rs. 2 crores would be required for better transport facilities. So, I request the Hon. Minister to provide adequate funds for developing the infrastructure of the Kerala State Civil Supplies Corporation for the public distribution system in the State.

I wish to confine myself to certain important needs of our State. Kerala is a deficit State. The Hon. Minister know it well. While the State's requirement is 32 lakh tonnes, the production is only 12 lakh tonnes. The present monthly allocation of rice from the central pool is only 1.10 lakh tonnes per month. There was a marginal

increase by 10,000 tonnes per month between July, 1984 and October, 1984. Then it has been stopped. The present allotment of rice is not adequate for the public distribution system in Kerala. As per the rationing order of the State, the allotment is 320 gram of rice per adult per day and half of it for minors. Thus the monthly requirement comes to 2.10 lakh tonnes. But the Kerala Government is pleading for only 1.35 lakh tonnes, the quantity it was receiving till November, 1981. The Central Government reduced the allocation due to fall in internal production and procurement. But since the production as also the procurement have gone up in the country, there is no justification at all for not increasing the quota for the State. In fact, in my State the demand has been increasing over the years. But still the Government of Kerala has limited its request to restoration of 1.35 lakh tonnes. But it is a matter of anguish that even this request has not been acceded to by the Government of India. Kerala is a producer of cash crops like cardamom, coconut, tea, etc. We earn a lot of foreign exchange for the country. In addition, thousands of Keralites working in the Gulf States have been contributing a lot to the foreign exchange of the country. So, I would stress that Government has a responsibility to allocate sufficient rice for the State. We have in Kerala a well-knit network for public distribution and the State's rationing system is the best of its kind in the country. The Kerala State Civil Supplies Corporation supplies rice and other essential commodities at subsidised rates to genuine consumers on the identity of ration cards. This is an important anti-inflationary measure adopted by the Government of Kerala. The Kerala State Civil Supplies Corporation have been exerting a moderate influence on the open market price of rice by its distribution system:

The Kerala State Civil Supplies Corporation now plans to purchase one lakh tonnes of rice from Andhra Pradesh. At present the Government of India is not allowing the State Civil Supplies Corporation and similar other public agencies to purchase rice from surplus States. The paradox is that the Government allows private agencies to purchase rice from the surplus States but the public agencies do not have that right. So, I request the Hon. Minister that necessary permission may be given to the State Civil Supplies Corporation to purchase rice from

the open market in Andhra Pradesh.

Last, but not the least, is that the Hon. Minister may be knowing that there are lot of complaints about the poor quality of rice supplied by FCI to the Kerala State. There was a lot of hue and cry in the Kerala Legislative Assembly also and this issue is agitating the minds of the people of Kerala. I hope that the Minister has given consideration to this issue because as my Hon. friend Shri Vijayaraghavan said, the Punjab rice is coming to Kerala. I donot understand the logic behind this because Andhra Pradesh is a nearby State to Kerala. Government of India and the FCI will earn more if Andhra rice is allotted to Kerala. But I do not understand the logic why they are allowing the Punjab rice to go to Kerala, thereby wasting so much money on transport. I hope, the Hon. Minister has looked into this matter and has already made adequate arrangements to allot Andhra rice to Kerala. I must congratulate him for that. I will not take much time of the House. There are so many issues like kerosene problem etc., as have been mentioned by me Hon. friend, but I will not go into all those. I request the Hon. Minister to allot more rice, more kerosens and more cement to the poor State of Kerala.

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY (Midnapore) : Sir, while we are taking part in this debate, today's Indian Express has stated that famine-like situation is existing in Madhya Pradesh and thousands of poor farmers and tribal labour have started migrating from the State. So, this is the paradox of capitalism. There is definitely enough food in this country, but it is also a fact that the purchasing power of the large number of our people is so low that it is beyond their reach and naturally they have to run helter-skelter. This thing has to be probed and remedied. This is my first point. My second point is that we have been demanding, why not 14 essential items like rice, wheat, pulses, edible oils, ordinary clothing, cheap soap, etc. be supplied throughout the length and breadth of this country at a particular price. If we can get diesel and petrol at a particular price throughout the country, if we can get post-cards and other material at a particular price throughout the country, why the Government of India dodges to implement this scheme? The Government of India says that

it has to pay a heavy subsidy for this. This subsidy is necessary for feeding the poor people. If the Government of Andhra can give rice to the low-income group people at Rs. 2/- a kilogram—for the last two and a half years they are giving—I do not why our Government of India cannot do it. So, I would request through you, the Government of India that they should take it up; and if subsidy has to be paid from the Government Fund for this, that will be a subsidy which is worth spending and it would not go in vain and our poor people will be getting assured benefit from this.

The third point which I want to make—and which many of our friends have stated from both sides—is about the quality of materials supplied through our ration shops. Sometimes the people question us in what field, in what district, in what State good quality of wheat and rice is produced. Perhaps I do not know. So, this has to be looked into. Why is the quality generally bad? It is not bad always. Some times we do get good quality also. To give a blanket complaint that every time we get a bad quality is not correct. But most of the time how is it that FCI can procure such quality of wheat and rice? When there are Government agencies to check qualities, these things should be looked into and checked.

The FCI is a very big organisation and is a very essential organisation. This organisation has to be properly geared to meet the purpose for which it has been set up. There is terrible corruption in many points of FCI. Only today there was an unstarred question stating whether the storage/transit loss in FCI upto 1 per cent is written off at regional level and is not intimated to the regional office and the Headquarters? The reply of the Government was that they inform. But the fantastic amount is written off. It is not the amount of loss in transit. It is only the amount of loss through transit which is written off. And what is that? In 1981-82, it was 5.21 lakh metric tonnes, in 1982-83 it was 6.64 lakh metric tonnes and in 1983-84 it was 6.52 metric tonnes. We are a poor country. Our people suffer from paucity of food. Our Harijans, Adivasis and tribals run helter-skelter for food. Some say 52 per cent, some say 42 per cent and some say 44

per cent of our people live below poverty line. When such is the case, I urge upon the Government to take action. Why should such things be allowed to continue in FCI? Suppose there are strong people to support these corrupt practices in the FCI, then the Government should be strong enough to deal with these things.

I would beg to submit that 10 per cent of the production of food is lost due to poor storage. The Government must come out with sufficient storage facilities to protect our food. Even rats are eating 10 million tonnes of our food a year, when our people are starving. The Sixth Plan allocated Rs. 259 crores to make a storage capacity of 7.6 metric tonnes. National grid were to complete 3.5 metric tonnes; cooperative sector were to make 2 metric tonnes, but; I want to know from the Government what is the actual achievement in this regard.

It is a matter of great satisfaction that we have increased the production of wheat and rice. Definitely it is a good thing. But production of pulses and oil seeds, is stagnant. I would like to know what steps have the Government taken to increase their production because in our country even today, excepting some small number of people, the protein which the common people take, they get from pulses. Therefore, production of pulses should be increased and effective steps should be taken in this regard. And effective steps should be taken.

Many of my colleagues have talked regarding remunerative prices. This year our Hon. Minister should know how the people in U.P. are going to suffer. Already the farmers of Bengal have suffered in the matter of potato. Our farmers had to sell potato at a prices of Rs. 28 or Rs. 30 per quintal. And you are seeing the same thing here also. If sufficient cold storage has not been provided, then every year the potato growers will be affected and every year we will be raising this issue on the floor of Parliament. So, the Government must allocate enough funds so that we can have sufficient storages in the public sector.

The last but one point I want to make is that throughout India supply of sub-standard materials through many agencies and

Shops is made. You buy a soap, you buy oil or some other goods, almost everything is sub-standard. I do not know what the ISI is doing. I suggest that the Government must make it compulsory that all these materials must have to get the certificate from the ISI and if anything is found to be sub-standard, then there should be adequate punishment. This Government which has been helping the industrial houses must punish them if they are found to cheat the people.

My last point is regarding cement. I hope perhaps the Hon. Minister may help in this regard. There are two types of cement - Portland cement and Stag cement. Stag cement, the ingredients of which come from iron mills, costs much less. There is a big difference between the cost of production of Stag cement and that of Portland cement, but both the varieties are sold at the same price in the market. I would suggest that Government should make special arrangements to procure Stag cement. If need be, there should be coordination with other Departments. Stag cement should be produced in the public sector and should be made available to the common people at a lesser price.

With these words I beg to submit that our Minister should be good enough to deal with corruption in his Department and in the matter of dealing with corruption he will get the support from all of us.

SHRI VIJAY N. PATIL (Erandol) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I rise to support the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Food and Civil Supplies.

Sir, I do not agree with the point made by Mr. Choubey that if Andhra Government can supply rice at Rs. 2/-per kilo, why can't other State Governments do it and why can't the Central Government also do it? I do not want to go into the political gimmicks, but if something is done at the cost of other development and economic prosperity in favour of one State at the cost of other States, it is not good in the larger interests of that State also. Of course, I agree that the poor people should get food and other essential commodities at reasonably low prices. The quality should also be good, but when we demand that the quality of the foodgrains

should be good in the fair price shops, we forget that at the time of procurement, we have to take the affected grains or poor quality grains also from the farmers sometimes. That is forced sometimes on the FCI. That is what my experience is. Some months ago, in my State there was rainfall at the time of maturity of the zowar grain. The result was that it turned blackish and the procurement agencies had to buy it. Last year there was heavy rain in Haryana and Punjab at the time of harvesting of wheat and when such type of affected grain is procured and processed, after some time when there is a complaint, these stocks are declared as unfit for human consumption. I would like to suggest to the Minister that if there is a compulsion to procure such materials—if it is procured in the beginning itself—they should be declared as unfit for human consumption, instead of sending the materials to market or fair price shops, getting Complaints from there and then declaring them as unfit. It is because by that time, lot of money is wasted in the process of storing, transportation and other things.

A number of godowns for storing of foodgrains and other commodities are concentrated in some particular areas. In this regard, if one agency godown-at-one-station policy is adopted, the godowns will be well distributed. Otherwise what we see is, in a particular town, there are godowns of Central Warehousing Corporation, godowns of Food Corporation of India, godowns of State Warehousing Corporation and in other areas, there are no godowns. We have the scheme for small godowns of 200 tonnes or 500 tonnes capacity in rural areas. For these godowns, I will suggest that the subsidy component should be increased so that the agency will be able to construct more number of godowns.

We are still importing oilseeds in a larger measure. At the same time, we are promoting the cultivation of oilseeds within the country. In States like Madhya Pradesh, soyabeans cultivation and in Gujarat groundnut is encouraged. There is lot of scope for some more groundnut cultivation in Maharashtra also where more attention can be given and the import worth crores of rupees can be avoided and foreign exchanges can be saved.

My Hon. friends here have suggested about having a fair price shop where there is a population of one thousand or more. I also agree with their suggestion. But I would like to make one point that whenever there is a fair price shop in a small area or remote area or tribal area, the percentage of commission of the shopkeeper or the society which is maintaining the shop should be more. It is because they have to take the essential commodities to from longer distance and the number of purchasers or cardholders will also be less. If the percentage of commission for small fair price shopkeepers in remote areas is increased, it will be a little bit profitable to them also and black marketing can be prevented or at least minimised.

I am glad that about 1,90,000 raids were conducted throughout the country and many of the culprits doing black-marketing in the commodities supplied through fair price shops were punished. The result is that the public distribution system is improving day by day. It is heartening to note that the number of fair price shops has increased to 3.05 lakhs. If we adopt the criterion of one fair price shop per one thousand population they will be more in number.

The losses in transit and other losses are mounting to more than Rs. 100 crores in the Food Corporation of India. Efforts should be made to reduce these losses and the over-stocking—which we have been in this Corporation—should also be looked into. There are more than 10,000 people working in the Corporation. Of course, there is unemployment problem in our country. But it should not be at the cost of the consumers. It is a good thing that the consumer protection movement has started. The consumers are made aware of their rights, how the prices are fixed, what should be the prices of commodities and other things. Media are also taken help of by consumer/producer cooperative movements.

Lastly, I would like to point out that through MFIL the Government has proposed to start two fruit processing units, one at Silchar and the other at Bhagalpur. I would also suggest to the Hon. Minister that one fruit processing unit for oranges should be started at Nagpur where sometimes oranges worth crores of rupees produced by the farmers are wasted.

With these suggestions I conclude and I thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak on these Demands. I support the Demands.

[Translation]

SHRI K. J. ABBASI (Domariaganj) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am grateful to you for allowing me to speak. I rise to support the Demands for Grants in respect of the Ministry of Food and Civil Supplies. First of all, I would like to say that Government have played a very big role in achieving self-sufficiency in the matter of food. We remember the time when the farmers did not know how to increase their production. Government set up blocks for teaching new methods. When the block employees used to go to farmers to sell seeds to them, they were not willing to purchase the seeds and sow them. Such type of difficulties were encountered in our efforts to increase the food production. They were asked to earmark half a bigha of land to us for sowing the seeds and showing them whether there were beneficial or not. Gradually they came to know the utility and value of new seeds. Now they are sowing these improved varieties of seeds and are increasing their production. The farmers has achieved success in this new venture. I would like to congratulate the farmer and Government for this. But we fail to appreciate the difficulties faced by the farmer. His crop is sometimes destroyed in floods. Still he does not lose hope but works ceaselessly to produce more. He deserves congratulations for this. On the other hand, our Government have failed to do the required justice unto the farmer. You may ask what it is you neither increase the price nor do anything else. Still he bears all these things. When he offers his foodgrains for procurement he has to face great difficulty. Sometimes, they say that the bags are not there, sometimes they say that the foodgrains are not good. The bania keeps on seeing all these things. When the farmer is fedup after waiting for one or two days, he sells his foodgrains to the "bania". Some measures will have to be taken to check this thing. I would like to point out to the Minister that this is the most important question. You have increased the price by five rupees. Do not increase the price but see to it that the foodgrains are procured at the price fixed by you. You

have set up centres, but all these are on paper only. The required attention was not paid towards it even at the time of elections and centres were also not set up. During the elections, I tried my best to get the centres opened, but I could not get succeed. The wheat crop is stated to be good. I am fully sure that if you take some strong steps, the poor farmers will not have to sell his produce at a lesser price. Otherwise, you will get foodgrains not from the farmer direct but through the 'bania'. The farmer is not going to forgive you for the fraud committed on him in this way. It is the biggest problem. Now let us have a look at distribution system. I know the position prevailing in my district. Previously, the rich persons used to purchase all the sugar and kerosene oil and then used to sell them in the black market. There was no check on this. Later on, when a hue and cry was made, it was handed over to co-operatives. Co-operatives always experience shortage of funds and they are not able to bring the goods in time. The result is that corruption is increasing. Some arrangements have now been made by Government. Some work has been entrusted to co-operatives and some to the private traders. Now, they have started issuing licences and the work has been entrusted to fair price shops. I would like to give a suggestion in the connection. Government want to bring about socialism in the true sense because they have done a lot of work in this direction. No either government has done no much in this direction. We are anxious that socialism should be brought about in the country. Our Congress Party has maintained contacts with the farmers. It is very much concerned about their interests and it has always worked in their interest. Government should set up consumer stores in the villages also as they have done in the cities. You may not reduce the prices, but it is very necessary to set up consumer stores in the villages. The twenty-point programme includes the opening of more and more fair price shops in the villages. These fair price shops and consumer stores should be opened there. However, we have not been fully successful in providing help to the poor and weaker sections of society under this programme. Hence, I would like to say that fair price shops should be opened in villages also as has been done in the cities so that the rural people are also benefited by this programme for which they are entitled also.

Of course, the persons not belonging to the weaker sections are also entitled to get goods at cheap rates. I do not say that you reduce prices for the rural folk but the prices should be reasonable. In the cities, you have set up super bazars, co-operative stores and consumer stores, but in the rural areas there is no such thing. You should formulate a scheme for setting up consumer stores in each village. You should provide financial help to them also. They should themselves purchase goods and should have storage capacity with them. The consumers should also be made members of these stores.

An Hon. Member has said one thing more here. You should make arrangements to ensure that all the 14 essential commodities are made available in these consumer stores. These commodities should be sold at prices fixed by you and these prices should be reasonable. The people belonging to other sections of society will get goods at reasonable prices, the farmers and the poor people will be supplied with foodgrains through fair price shops. If you want that the rural people should not go to city markets for everything, such arrangements are necessary You have rung the bell so quickly. I want to submit some more things.

It is the talk of the day every where and it is commendable also that you have conducted 1,85,048 raids throughout the country and arrested 6,780 persons, 3,952 persons were prosecuted and punishment has been awarded to a total of 726 persons. These figures relate to the year 1984. I would like to draw your attention towards one thing. We are happy to know that 1,85,084 raids were conducted but the fact that only 726 persons were awarded punishment proves that raids had been conducted only for taking money. It means that the raid was conducted and money had been taken. I want that if somebody escapes from punishment after the raid, the officers should be held guilty for this and they should be awarded punishment for acquitting the person after taking money from him. We fail to understand why a person should escape arrest after raid. Either the officer, who acquitted him, has taken money from him, or the case has been hushed up in order to save him. There can be no other reason for this. If anybody goes scot-free after the raid, the entire responsibility

should be that of the officer who conducted the raid. ... (*Interruptions*)... It is also true that we are also guilty of this to some extent. So many raids were conducted, but only 726 persons were awarded punishment. It is also not clear on how many of them only fine was imposed, how many of them were awarded imprisonment of only one hour and how many were awarded imprisonment for longer period. This is not clear from the Annual Report also. I desire that you should pay attention towards it. However, the steps taken by you and the new schemes formulated by you in order to improve the situation are commendable.

Now, I would like to say a few words regarding sugar. You might have observed that during the year 1982-83 the total production of sugar in the country was 82.32 lakh tonnes whereas it had come down to 59.16 lakh tonnes during 1983-84. You have given many reasons for low production, but the main reason is that the cane growers do not get remunerative prices. There are heavy arrears as has also been stated by one of our learned friends. You should pay attention towards it. I know the position about Uttar Pradesh only and not about other states.

In Uttar Pradesh the farmers do not get their sugarcane dues. Their dues are in arrears. The farmers experience great difficulties in selling their sugarcane to sugar mills. There is no doubt that you have increased the price slightly. In the Janata regime, sugarcane was burnt. During the Janata time it had appeared in the press that more sugarcane was not to be produced as there had been no further requirement of sugar. I have got the newspaper in which this had appeared. I do not consider it necessary to read it. It was in the newspaper that there had been enough sugar and there was no need to grow more sugarcane. You had increased its price from about Rs. 5 to Rs. 20. You need not increase the price, but you should provide facilities. The existing sugarcane crushing machines installed in the factories do not help in greater production of sugar. These machines are obsolete ones. The mill owners do not install modern machines. So, you should take over these mills and install modern machines there.

I have to say many things, but the time

is short. Lastly, I would like to say that their this budget has resulted in price-rise. You can verify it from those, who purchase goods themselves. Their budget has increased by Rs. 50 to Rs. 100 per month. Sugar, which was available at Rs. 5 a kg. is now available at Rs. 6.40 a kg. Milk is available at Rs. 1.70 as against Rs. 1.40. Bread has disappeared from the market. It is not available. Vanaspati ghee is available at Rs. 17.10 as against Rs. 16.15. The price of mustard oil has increased considerably. Similarly, the price of kerosene oil has also increased. Pulses, which were available at Rs. 7 a kg. are now priced at Rs. 8 a kg. So, you have to check the price-rise. Prices of some items have increased whereas the prices of certain other items have been deliberately pushed up. It is the responsibility of our Government to have a control on prices which have been deliberately increased. I hope that you will check the price-rise with an iron hand.

With these words I would like to congratulate you that now our country does not depend on others in the matter of foodgrains. Now we are not dependent on others. We have got so much stock of foodgrains with us that if Government acts carefully, we shall be able to export foodgrains. The increase in the production of foodgrains is due to the efforts made by the farmer. You should pay more attention towards him. With these words I congratulate you and conclude my speech.

***SHRI R. ANNA NAMBI (Pollachi) :**
Hon. Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am grateful to you for giving me this opportunity to say a few words on the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Food and Civil Supplies for 1985-86 on behalf of my party the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam.

At the outset I would say that the effective management of food economy alone will give stability to economic growth in agriculture-predominated country like India. I have to commend the laudable work being done by the Food Corporation of India in managing the food economy. I take pride in saying that this Corporation was set up by Shri C.

*The speech was originally delivered in Tamil.

Subramaniam when he was Food and Agriculture Minister and that he hailed from my place Coimbatore. Today the Food Corporation of India has grown into an important limb of the economy of the country. It is doing signal service to the country. The F.C.I. procures foodgrains from agriculturists and stores them in warehouses. This gives not only price stability for the farmers but also acts as insurance in a bad agricultural year. I have to mention here that the F.C.I. is engaging intermediaries for procuring foodgrains from the farmers. These intermediaries cheat both the F.C.I. and the farmers. I demand that the F.C.I. should directly through its officers procure foodgrains from the farmers and eliminate for ever the intermediaries.

There is heavy loss of foodgrains while they are being transported from fields to warehouses. The total transportation loss is reported to be of the order of 10%. It means that several hundreds of lakhs of rupees worth foodgrains are lost in transportation. I suggest that effective steps must be taken for containing this transportation loss. Again, in warehouses the annual loss of foodgrains on account of rodents is several crores of rupees. It is said that 20% of foodgrains is destroyed by rats every year. This kind of loss is national loss and it must be avoided at any cost. The F.C.I. has not got adequate storage space. Every year several hundreds of crores of rupees are paid as warehousing charges to private people who own such warehouses. I suggest that more funds should be allotted to F.C.I. for construction of warehouses.

The common people of the country get their essential commodities through fair price shops. As on 1.4.1984 3,05,000 fair price shops were in existence, according to the Annual Report of the Ministry. India is a country villages with 5.6 lakhs of villages where 80% of our population lives. I do not think that 80% of these fairprice shops are located in rural areas. I demand that more fairprice shops should be opened in rural areas. The public distribution system has been given an important place in 20-point programme. This has to be strengthened for the good of the people at large.

Sir, I am afraid that the Adulteration Act is not being implemented effectively. Even

in fairprice shops there is adulteration in essential commodities. I demand that stringent punishment should be awarded to the employees of fairprice shops who indulge in adulteration of essential commodities. The Adulteration Act must be enforced with vigour and verve.

The cultivation of pulses in Tamil Nadu is limited and hence all the requirement of pulses has to come from northern States. Tamil Nadu frequently faces shortage in pulses, the consequence of which is soaring price of pulses. This, I understand, is due to non-allocation of wagons for the transportation of pulses from northern States to Tamil Nadu and other Southern States. The Hon. Railway Minister was here some time ago. I request the Hon. Minister of Food to have effective coordination with the Railway Minister and ensure the transportation of pulses to Tamil Nadu and other Southern States. The staple food in Tamil Nadu is pulses and hence pulses must be made available to the people at reasonable prices.

The Indian Standards Institution, under the charge of this Ministry, is implementing the Certification Marks scheme for ensuring quality goods. Unfortunately this Institute lacks in adequate laboratory facilities for checking the samples. I demand that more money should be allocated to ISI for having better laboratory facilities so that the Certification Marks scheme can be implemented effectively for ensuring quality goods.

You will agree with me, Sir, when I say that the States like Tamil Nadu, which are victims of the vagaries of weather, should have substantial stocks of foodgrains. Drought is a recurring phenomenon in Tamil Nadu. When the Government wants more allocation of rice from Central Pool, the Minister will immediately advise that the people of the State should change their food habits. They should take wheat and reduce the consumption of rice. I have to say that the people of Tamil Nadu, are slowly trying to consume more wheat. But the climatic conditions compel them to take to rice. I would say that more rice should be allotted to States whether it be Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Assam, Orissa or Karnataka—which are afflicted by natural calamities like flood and drought. For emergency requirement, stocks of foodgrains should be there in such States

susceptible to natural calamities. Recently Tamil Nadu was the victim of a vicious cyclone which destroyed standing paddy crop on several thousands of acres. The Government of Tamil Nadu wanted immediately 80,000 tonnes of rice, but the Centre supplied 10,000 in the first instance and again another 10,000 tonnes. How do you expect the State to rush succour to the cyclone afflicted people who have lost all their meagre belongings? As I stated earlier, I demand that the Central Ministry of Food should rush foodgrains to State afflicted by such natural calamities, whether it is Tamil Nadu or Karnataka or for that matter any State in India. There should be no reservation in such emergencies. I am sure that our Hon. Food Minister will implement this suggestion forthwith.

With these words I conclude my speech.

SHRI MOOL CHAND DAGA (Pali) :
Mr. Chairman, Sir, in the first instance, I would like to draw the attention of the Hon. Minister towards page No. 28 of the report :—

[English]

“As the capacity of the roller flour milling industry in the country was in excess of requirements there was complete ban on the establishment of new mills or on the expansion of existing ones. After a brief period of relaxation from June 1979 to May 1980, the ban has continued. This policy was also continued during the year under report. The total number of flour mills in the country as on 31.12.1984 was 456 with an annual capacity of 8.9 million tonnes.”

[Translation]

All the mills are supplied with their requirement of wheat at a fixed price. In my view the policy of supplying wheat to 456 flour mills at subsidised rates should be reviewed by government. Why are these mills supplied with wheat at that rate? I would like to know the price of the flour prepared from such wheat. Has the price of any flour been fixed by Government? You have made arrangement for the supply of full requirement of wheat to flour mills, but you have

no control on the price of the flour which would be prepared from such wheat. After all, who is going to be benefited by the procurement of wheat by you? The purpose behind procurement is to make the foodgrains available to the poor at fair prices. I do not understand the logic behind supplying procured wheat to 456 flour mills and there after permitting them to sell the flour at any price which they like. I would like to know the expenditure incurred in the procurement of wheat. I am unable to understand the policy of supplying wheat to flour mills. The policy in this regard should, therefore, be reconsidered.

In addition to this, I would like to mention one more point. You have made a statement that guidelines have been prescribed for the supply of rations under the 20-Point Programme to the poor living in far flung villages in the hilly areas, inaccessible areas and desert areas. But I would like to submit to you that you have never reviewed the work done by more than three lakhs of fair price shops. We are not satisfied with the figures supplied by you. The rationed commodities are not being made available in the far flung villages in an honest manner. I have with me *Nav Bharat Times* of 11th December, 1984 in which it has been reported that the wheat which should have been supplied to the consumers through fair price shops is sold in the open market and the edible oil to be supplied as rationed commodity through the fair price shops, disappears from the fair price shops and is freely available in the open market. This is the situation that prevails at present.

On one occasion, the Hon. Minister had himself admitted in his statement that controlled cloth and Janta cloth was not available to the people. It is sold through other shops which earn profit. The people do not get dhotis or saris. Your Textiles Ministry had first asked the Textile mills to manufacture a certain proportion of cloth as controlled cloth and later on it asked the N.T.C. mills to manufacture controlled cloth. But even the N.T.C. failed to produce controlled cloth as it has been running at a loss. In this way the people will not be able to get controlled cloth. You have said that 2,70,000 fair price shops are functioning in the country and shops have been opened even in the corners of Orissa and Rajasthan. But I

would like to tell you that rationed commodities are not available there and Kerosene is also not available.

I would also like to know the points through which rationed wheat passes. I would like to know how wheat is supplied through middlemen and how cloth is distributed. You have rung the bell, but your bell would also seal their fate. Before the people get a commodity, it passes through many channels. First of all, a rationed commodity is stored in the central warehouses, then it goes to the State Warehouses and there after it goes to the tehsildar and then tehsildar distributes it to the dealers. Have you ever given thought to it?

You have set up many corporations on which a huge expenditure is incurred. When one Member asks another Member what he replies he is a chairman. Another Member says that he is the chairman of a State Warehousing Corporation. "Are you from U.P.?" "Yes, I am chairman in U.P." In this way there are many white elephants. So many chairmen have been appointed. Many corporations have been set up.

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY (Midnapore): All these corporations are *corporations*.

SHRI MOOL CHAND DAGA: In this way cloth passes through five hands and only then it reaches the consumer. In the meantime the cloth is spoiled and the prices rise very much.

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (RAO BIRENDRA SINGH): Yes, cloth is spoiled.

SHRI MOOL CHAND DAGA: Not only cloth is spoiled, quality cloth is not available to the consumers. Dealers earn profits through dishonest means. People do not get dhotis and saris. What is the NAFED. It is a malady which you are tolerating. Lakhs of ruples are bungled in the Super Bazar. Wherever you want to keep white elephants, you keep such white elephants. I was going through the list of your societies—A.P. State Federation Ltd., Hyderabad; Rajasthan Co-operative Consumer Society; Marketing Societies—I want to know

why so many societies have been set up.

So far as Kerosene is concerned, nobody wants to sell Kerosene. The dealer gets only empty tin—as profit. When you reply to this point, I know you will say that distribution is the responsibility of the States. Not only Kerosene, but none of the other items included in the list such as exercise books, slate and other essential items also are available to the people. You have said that advisory Committees would be set up at the taluka level, district level and State level, but I have never heard about taluka level committee. Cement is also not available. You have framed many guidelines, but no guideline is being followed. Where have you arranged mobile units? There might be some mobile units in U.P., but there is no such unit in Haryana. Why do you frame such programmes? Your officers formulate point by point programmes giving point No. 1, 2, 3, 4 to various items, but not even a single point is implemented. Fair price shops are not working properly. Neither exercise books nor text books and paper are available at controlled rates. You should make a review of the scheme and find out the reasons why this scheme is not being implemented properly.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is not the Government's fault that fair price shops are not functioning properly. As a matter of fact, the co-operative societies which run these shops do not have sufficient funds and as a result these societies are unable to purchase items for the shops. Your tehsildar and the District Food and Civil Supplies officer take advantage of the situation and the middlemen earn huge profits at the cost of the poor and the backward people who do not get any benefit at all.

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL VYAS (Bhilwara): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I rise to support the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Food and Civil Supplies. First of all, I would like to say that the Hon. Minister had done a commendable job when he was Agriculture Minister and as a result our food production had increased, but the system of procurement of foodgrains is very defective. I would like to know the steps taken by Government to improve this system. Last time also I had

said that there were not adequate storage facilities for storing the foodgrains procured by Government and as a result the foodgrains were kept in the open and at the railway station and thus the foodgrains got damaged. The foodgrains get damaged due to rains and become unfit for human consumption causing loss to the tune of crores of rupees. I would like to know the steps taken to increase the storage capacity or whether you are going slow in this direction.

It has been mentioned in your report that 22 million tonnes of foodgrains are lying in your stock at present. Now, a huge quantity of foodgrains would be further procured by Government, I would like to know the storage arrangements made by Government to store the same. You have allowed the private traders to export the foodgrains this year. On the one hand we say that the foodgrains trade should be nationalised and no other agency except government should be allowed to handle the foodgrains trade but on the other hand when foodgrains production has increased, you have allowed the private traders to report it. Is it proper on your part?

Since, at present you do not have storage capacity, you do not have funds either and you do not have any alternative arrangement, you have allowed some slackness to creep in, but have you ever thought how harmful this slackness will prove for our procurement policy and the storage of foodgrains in future? You should re-consider it and if at all exports are to be made, it should be done by the Government. Others should not be given such right. These middlemen make profits using all the methods at their disposal. They send inferior goods to other countries, which brings a bad name to our country. They strike a deal for one quality but send goods of an inferior quality. You might remember that rice was exported to foreign countries. The deal was struck for basmati rice, but parmal rice was sent instead which brought a very bad name to our country. You should reconsider it, this policy is not in our country's interest.

There is a big difference between your procurement price and the distribution price. Why do you not make this difference as much less as possible? Today, a trader is doing business at four rupees per quintal as

margin of profit but in your case this margin is Rs. 40 to 45 per quintal. Thus, your commodities reach the consumers at a very high rate. If these intervening irregularities are removed, a lot of improvement can be made. There is a vast scope for improvement in it, which you must do.

My second submission is about fair price shops. You have opened 3.5 lakh fair price shops throughout the country. As Shri Daga has said, you have opened such a large number of shops but so far as the distribution part is concerned, you are unable to make all the commodities available to the people. I may tell you about my own constituency. The people have not received sugar for the last three months there. The sugar has not reached there for the last three months. In the villages, neither wheat nor edible oil nor cloth is available at fair price shops. Only sugar is distributed there and if even that sugar is not available there for 3 to 4 months, what is the use of these fair price shops? Therefore, you should take steps to improve this system. You have got so much of stock of sugar, but, in spite of that if the sugar is not available to the people, this is not proper.

The same is the case with edible oil. Shri Daga has also spoken about it and so do I that nowhere in the villages is edible oil available at fair price shops. That edible oil is sold in the market at a higher price and it is not available to the consumer at the fair price shops at the price fixed for it. You should also make proper arrangement for this so that edible oil is made available to the people at subsidized rates.

Similar is the case of cloth. Earlier also, it had been stated that controlled cloth had not been made available to the people in the rural areas. Your N. T. C. has incurred a loss of Rs. 500 crores. What are the reasons behind this loss? The cloth that it produces should reach the people. We are prepared to bear the burden of such a huge loss of Rs. 500 crores to the country if the cloth reaches the people in the villages at cheap rates and the labourers get their wages. This loss can be borne if cloth at cheap rate is made available to the people throughout the country, but the management there is not proper and the middlemen are earning undue profit, as a result of which, the N. T. C. has incurred a

loss of Rs. 500 crore. You should make efforts to improve the management of N. T. C. so that the people could get cloth at a cheap rate.

Similarly, many Hon. friends have said that there are 14 such items which should be distributed through Government. At present, you are handling the distribution of five items and even these five items are not made available to the rural people. Therefore, you should take steps to improve this distribution system. There are 5 to 6 metropolitan cities in our country. At least you should make such arrangement in these metropolitan cities that the rationed items are available to the people without any difficulty. The fair price shops supply wheat and rice in equal quantity but that too is not available. Non-rice eaters are also given 50 per cent rice and 50 per cent wheat. What I want to say is that the people who do not eat rice should be given the full quota of wheat and the people who eat rice should be given the full quota of rice. It is very necessary to make proper arrangement in this regard and you should improve this arrangement in the metropolitan cities.

I have to make a submission about cooperative societies in particular. The condition of cooperative Societies is very bad. They do not have funds, as a result of which they are unable to supply all the essential commodities to the people. You try to issue 14 items from big companies through them. How can these cooperative societies buy all these items without finances? You have not made arrangements so far to provide them with finances, as a result of which these cooperative Societies cannot make available all these items. Therefore, there is a dire need to make proper arrangements to provide finances to the cooperative societies so that they could buy all the articles and make them available to the people.

My second point is about vegetable oil. You import edible oil from foreign countries and supply it to the vanaspati ghee mills. The people do not get vanaspati ghee even at the price which you fix thereafter. The mill owners charge a high price for ghee from the people. Why do you supply them imported edible oil at subsidized rates on which so much of foreign exchange is spent when they do not adhere to your directions? You

should stop this practice and should make such an arrangement under which vanaspati ghee could be made available to the people at a cheap rate. You should take over the Vanaspati ghee mills on the same lines as you have nationalized the food industry so that the distribution of vanaspati ghee could go on smoothly.

There is one point about my own constituency. There is a place named Mandalgarh is my constituency. The State Government have sent their recommendation to you for the setting up of a vanaspati ghee mill there. Groundnuts and other things are available there in abundance. Steps should be taken to set-up a vanaspati ghee mill in that area at the earliest so that vanaspati ghee could be made available to more and more people.

With these words, I support these demands.

[English]

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE (Panskura) : I have risen on a very specific point. I do not know whether the Hon. Minister is aware that in the Capital, Delhi, we are buying seem at Rs. 10 a k.g., brinjal at Rs. 10 a k.g. and drumstick at Rs. 16 per kg. I have no time to illustrate other items. There is a tremendous hike in prices of vegetables and this has put the poor and middle class people in great jeopardy. I draw your attention to these items and want some concrete steps to be taken about them.

You give us rice. I do not want to quarrel about its quality. I have no time. I will make a specific request. Earlier, an arrangement was made that you will give us paddy and in our rice mills over there, we will make it into parmal rice; that was very much in the interest of our State and your good name also because our people are accustomed to parmal rice.

Then we have a lot of people unemployed who can be employed in the rice mills. So, from both these points of view, I request you to reconsider the present position and help our State and help your own Department also winning a better goodwill from us.

In my constituency, there are a large number of FCI godowns and also a number

of rice mills. I find there that, over the last 2-3 years, new gunny bags at the rate of Rs. 6-8 were given by the FCI. Now, some of the rice mills requested that let these gunny bags now be taken for paying our levy rice. At the moment, the market price for the new gunny bags would be Rs. 15/-; that it self is costing the FCI extra Rs. 11 lakhs. I do not understand why these old-not very old-practically new gunny bags which are lying in the FCI godowns and the rice mills godowns could not be taken for delivery of these and this money will be saved.

Since this is a huge organisation, there must be various points like this. I believe there are various ways of avoiding wastage in your Department which you will please try and also root out corruption which is there in the various FCI godowns. I hope you will consider the various points raised by me.

SHRI PIYUS TIRAKY (Alipurduar) : I should like to draw the attention of the Hon. Minister to one great difficulty which we are facing. We have grown enough food for the country, but the question is only supply of good food for the people in the country. The difficulty is that the growers are not getting remunerative prices and the consumers are also paying high prices. They are required to pay much more than what is expected of them. In between there are a number of middlemen. Those middlemen are eating everything in our country and because of them the country is suffering. So, the Government should try to eliminate these middlemen because they have no consideration for the nation at large. Foodgrain is the lifeline of the entire nation and foodgrains should be available to the people all over the country.

Children are drinking milk. But what kind of milk? We do not get pure milk. We ask for pure milk, but there is adulteration in everything, even in edible oils. In rice we get stones in a good number. A housewife has to check them thoroughly before she prepares the food for the children. The people who are manning the distribution centres should be given proper training and they must be taught to cultivate a sense of nationhood. On account of them, lot of damage is being done, the foodgrains may be adulterated and it may result in the spread of

diseases. So, unscrupulous persons should not be given this job. There must be a three months' or four months' training before the distribution is assigned to them. This is my demand.

I want to make a particular submission here about the godowns of F.C.I. There is a lot of wastage in carrying the foodgrains from those godowns. I suggest that every block must have one godown. That will save a lot of money and also the people of that locality can be taken care of. There should also be facilities for cold storage. At several places farmers are producing some perishable goods but they are suffering for want of facilities for cold storage. In Bhutan and in Bengal we produce a large quantity of apples and Pine apples. There should be food processing industries in those areas so that we can get good food and fruits and also distribute them all over India or even to the outside world.

We are getting subsidised rice and atta but I also want the tea industry to be given proper protection so that the workers who are now ill paid get good wages and the growing unemployment can be checked. Also I want the subsidiary industries to be encouraged.

I want the distribution of essential commodities like edible oils, dals wheat and rice, washing soap, janata cloth, kerosene oil, tea, sugar, salt, books and papers and other articles needed by school children to be streamlined. This should be immediately supplied to the tea gardens of North Bengal. If the distribution system is not well organised and the people who are manning it do not have the nation's interest at heart, then growing more food in any quantity will not help the situation. In that situation you will fail, your Government will fail and in general Indian people will lose longevity and Indian people will be weak in strength.

With these words, I request the Government to do the needful.

[Transiation]

*SHRI V. KRISHNA RAO (Chikkahallapura) : Hon. Chairman, Sir, I take great

pleasure in welcoming the demands for grants pertaining to the Ministry of Food and Civil Supplies. While supporting the demands I would like to give some important suggestions for the kind consideration of the Hon. Minister.

As I had mentioned in my previous speech on the Ministry of Irrigation and Power, there was a time before independence when our country was importing foodgrains from foreign countries. After independence our country has entered into a new era of self-sufficiency. Our country is not only self-sufficient in foodgrains but also exporting them to several foreign countries. Of course, this remarkable progress is the result of the devoted services and sound planning by our former Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri and Smt. Indira Gandhi. The credit goes to our young Prime Minister Shri Rajivji who has given an impetus to such progressive steps.

It is crystal clear that we have sufficient foodgrains. But the simple question before this august House is whether the foodgrains are distributed properly or not. I am sorry to say that the answer is in the negative. It is the small farmers who sweat throughout the day and produce foodgrains. The Food Corporation of India procures foodgrains from the farmers, stores and distributes. But, unfortunately the foodgrains are not reaching poor masses especially those who are below poverty line. The irony is that those who are feeding the country are not fed properly. There are many reasons for this. Public distribution system has failed in its objective. This system is working well in the urban areas but in the rural areas it has gone away. Various essential items like sugar, edible oils, rice, wheat, kerosene oil etc. are not reaching the remote corners of the country. The poor farmer is not getting the benefit of the above items. Neither the depots nor the cooperative societies have taken the responsibility of supplying the essential items in the villages. Even at the Government level there is no proper distribution system of quotas. They adopt different systems to allot quotas to rural and urban areas. The cities are fortunate to get their full share. But the villages are getting

* The speech was originally delivered in Kannada.

about 1/10th only of the actual quota. They get their quota once in three or four months. There is a vast difference between villages and cities in respect of allotting foodgrains. Therefore I urge the Hon. Minister to set, right this imbalance and to help our poor people.

My constituency, Chikkaballapura, is popular for the production of good variety of potato. This constituency is supplying potato not only to the whole of Karnataka State but also to various other States of our country. Infact, potatoes from this place are being exported to many foreign countries also. But I regret to state that we not have storage facilities. There are no godowns to store even the export quality potato. I request that proper arrangements of godowns may be made immediately to avoid colossal wastage.

As I had stated earlier, the cooperative sugar factory at Gowribidanur is closed for the last two years. Production of two lakh tonnes of sugar in a year has come to a halt. Lay off has been declared and thousands of workers are in the streets. There is scarcity of water and 800 to 1000 families are struggling for their livelihood. I plead with the Hon. Minister to instruct the Government of Karnataka to make immediate arrangements to reopen the factory.

The most important point that I want to highlight is the prices given by the Food Corporation of India. There is no correlation between the prices of industrial goods and agricultural produce. While fixing the prices of agricultural produce it is very essential to look into the cost of inputs. All other fields like industry are flourishing with profits. But agriculture is lagging behind and the economic condition of the farmer is deteriorating day by day. The procurement price of paddy should be increased. Similarly the price given for sugar cane should also be enhanced. The farmer has to spend at least three thousand rupees to produce about thirty tonnes of sugarcane in one acre. At present the farmer is getting only 200 rupees per tonne. This may kindly be enhanced upto Rs. 300. The Govt. should treat agriculture also as an industry.

It will not be wrong if I say that cement-

is not at all reaching the villages. A small farmer has to wait for about eight months if he has to get 5 bags of cement for repairing his small house. If a villager is in need of 100 bags of cement for construction of a house, he has to wait at least for three to four years. On the other hand there is no shortage of crment for constructing multi-storeyed buildings in the cities,

16.38 hrs.

[MR DEPUTR SPEAKER *in the chair*]

Even kerosene oil is not available properly to the poor farmer. Many times he has to pay at least three rupees per litre. It is high time that Govt. should made proper arrangements for the distribution of important commodities like kerosene oil, sugar, cement etc. There should not be any disparity between urban and rural areas while allotting the quota. The public distribution system should be uniform in supplying essential commodities to one and all throughout the country.

More than 10% of the foodgrains go waste as there are no storage facilities especially in rural areas. Urgent arrangements have to be made for setting up godowns in villages and to save the precious foodgrains. I congratulate the Hon. Minister for this efforts to improve the distribution system. I thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak and with these words I conclude my speech.

SHRI R. P. SUMAN (Akbarpur) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am grateful to you for giving me an opportunity to speak on such an important subject. Sir, I rise to support the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Food and Civil Supplies.

Sir, there are no two opinions on it that our present agricultural and food policy are so good that they have enabled our country to be self-sufficient in foodgrains and for this our Government and the Food Ministry deserve congratulations. Sir, these statistics speak for themselves that our production, whether it is wheat or rice, has considerably increased. If you take the current crop-year rice production rose by 60 lakh tonnes and wheat production by 23.6 tonnes. Apart

from it, just see that the foodgrains production during the year 1983-84 has reached 1515.4 tonnes which is a record. If we compare it with last year's figures, an increase of 17 per cent has been registered. It shows that our management of agriculture is very good and that our Hon. Minister is doing his work conscientiously and is discharging his duty efficiently so far as our food and agricultural policy is concerned.

Sir, so far as the question of support price is concerned, I would like to submit to the Hon. Minister that this is very good and the arrangements made by him have also been good but, I would specifically like to draw the attention of Hon. Minister for a minute to the complaints being received from the rural areas about the trade, and the Government agencies through whom wheat is being purchased. Sir, so much bungling is taking place in these agencies that whatever wheat is brought by the farmer in the market, is not being purchased but is returned to the farmer on one pretext or the other. But when the same wheat is offered by the trader—the *banian*—then it is bought forth with. Sir, in this way the farmer is being exploited and he is helpless. He toils in the field to produce foodgrains but when he brings them in the market for selling, then he is exploited. This is his condition. So, I would like to draw the attention of Hon. Minister towards this matter and request him to ensure that only those agencies make purchases from the farmers which are already engaged in this work and the purchases should not be allowed to be made by the intermediaries so that the farmer may be saved from exploitation.

Sir, it is a matter of pleasure that you were kind enough to enhance the support price of wheat and paddy, but I would like to make a submission that this may be reviewed further and the farmers should be paid a price for his produce keeping in view the cost of production so as to save him from exploitation. The farmers feel distressed on their being exploited. Such an arrangement should be made in which there is no room for the farmer to make any sort of complaint.

Sir, I would like to make one more submission. In the report submitted to us, it has been mentioned clearly that the committees for the monitoring of the public distribution

system at the district, block and tehsil levels are looking after the entire work. I would like to say that this is only on paper and there is no truth in it. There is no monitoring committee at the blocks and tehsils levels. At the district level also the committees consist of officers only and no importance is given to the representatives of the people in it. No meeting is called but only on paper it is mentioned that the meeting has been held. It has been wrongly mentioned in the report that the work is going on under the supervision of the Committees. The Hon. Minister *should* get the matter investigated. Where there is no monitoring committee in existence it should be formed there and where it is already functioning its work should be streamlined and the lacunae removed.

Previously in the rural area, only sugar was supplied through the public distribution system. This work was done through quota-holders. We used to say that they were not supplying sugar properly. But when we closely saw the difficulty being faced by them, we found that after drawing their quota of sugar from the godowns and selling it in the market they used to earn a profit of Rs. 1.18 plus an empty gunny bag per quintal. When you fix a ceiling and say that a quota-holder can earn only a profit of Rs. 1.18 plus an empty gunny bag, per quintal of sugar then definitely he would resort to under hand dealings and in this way corruption would spread. So it is necessary that such an arrangement should be made by which they would not have to take recourse to corrupt practices.

Now, a new arrangement has been made to sell sugar through the cooperative societies. Previously there was some control on the sugar quota-holders but these societies are free from it. After being drawn from the godowns, more than half of this sugar is diverted elsewhere before it reaches the centres of distribution and there is no check on this.

My constituency is Faizabad, Uttar Pradesh. There some action was taken in this matter. A pargana officer had taken action against a quota-holder of a Cooperative society and issued him an order in this regard. He refused to obey the order. The pargana officer informed the District Magistrate regarding this. The District Magistrate

investigated into the matter and later on suspended him. You will be surprised to know that the A.R. wrote a strong letter to the District Magistrate in this connection and told him that he had no right to suspend their staff. There is no control on such matters and the whole quantity of sugar is being sold in the black-market. The policy of Government in respect of supplying sugar to the common man is not proving to be a success.

Kerosene oil is not available in the interior parts of the villages. The poor Juggi-Jhompri dwellers have to pay Rs. 4 to 5 more in the black market for whatever little is available there. On the one hand they have to sell their wheat or paddy at lower rates and on the other hand when they go to the market to purchase kerosene oil, they have to buy it in the black market. This situation becomes unbearable for them, tears roll down their eyes and they feel terribly distressed, but there is no one to listen to their woes. There should be such fool proof arrangement under which the black marketing in the kerosene oil could also be checked.

It is a matter of great pleasure that it has been mentioned in the report that new licences will be issued for setting up of more sugar mills. The Hon. Minister and his Ministry deserve congratulations for it. Previously, during the Janata regime, between 1977 and 1980, issuing new licences was discontinued. But after 1980, the matter was again reviewed by our Government and our Government have formulated a policy to issue new licences.

I would like to make a submission that the Central Government had given a licence to a sugar mill of my reserved area Akbarpur in Uttar Pradesh in 1974-75. The name of the mill is The Kisan Sahkari Cheeni Mills Limited, Akbarpur, Faizabad. An office of the mill was opened and it functioned for two years and the share capital of about Rs. 20 lakhs of the farmers is lying as deposit till today. In the meantime, Janata Party came to power at the Centre and it cancelled the licence of the mill. The State Government have again forwarded the case with their recommendation to the Ministry for action. As the Central Government have adopted a liberal policy with regard

to issuing of new licences for sugar mills, I would like to say that this may be looked into, and taking into consideration the acute problem being faced by the sugarcane producers, this sugar mill may again be issued licence so that the problem of the farmers of that area may be solved.

You have laid down some conditions for issuing licences to new sugar mills. The new mill should be thirty kilometers from the existing unit and it should be in the cooperative sector. This sugar mill fulfils these conditions. So I would like to request you that this mill may again be granted a licence so that it may start functioning.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, as you are ringing the bell, I would not take much time. The Ministry of Food is doing a commendable job but I would like to draw your attention to the fact that the Harijans, Adivasis, members of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, who have remained backward for a thousand years, are being neglected even today. There are no two opinions about it that Government are paying attention towards it ceaselessly but your Ministry is not doing its work properly. I would like to cite an example on the basis of a Report of the F.C.I. submitted by you. As per the Report, out of the reservation quota prescribed, upto 1st January 1985, in group A scheduled castes 4.82 per cent and scheduled tribes 3.61 per cent, in temporary posts, scheduled castes 12.40 per cent, scheduled tribes 4.65 per cent, and in group B scheduled castes 10.93 per cent, scheduled tribes 1.09 per cent in temporary posts, scheduled castes 17.42 per cent, scheduled tribes 2.79 per cent posts have been filled up. Similarly in group C, scheduled castes 18.24 per cent, scheduled tribes 0.48 per cent, in temporary posts, scheduled castes 17.53 per cent, scheduled tribes 5.05 per cent posts have been filled up. This shows that in your reservation policy, sufficient attention is not being paid towards Harijans, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

I am particularly drawing your attention towards it because these people have been victims of red-tapism from the very beginning at the hands of your department and officers. Even today excesses are being committed on Harijans. As shown in the figures given by you, in group 'D' in which perma-

ment and temporary appointments have been made the labour force engaged in clearing operations of grains which include women also have been included in the figures. But in group A, B, C, you have not filled the reservation quota. In this way they are not being meted out justice. The Hon. Minister should tell us when he will consider the matter and do justice unto them. In this context, I recollect some couplets—

“Aah ko chaheeye ik umra asar
 hone tak,

Kaun jeeta hai tere zulf ke sar hone
 tak,

Hamne mana keh tagaful na Karoge
 lekin,

Khanak ho jaenge hum tum ko khabar
 hone tak”.

If you pursue the present policy, nobody will be able to say when these people are going to be benefited. You should bring about an end to this exploration which is going on and fill up the reservation quota so that there is no scope left for any more complaint.

All facts regarding rice mills have been mentioned in the Report. The eastern region of Uttar Pradesh which is very backward area includes Faizabad also. Tanda tehsil in Faizabad falls in my constituency. At present, the district has been made the unit for Central subsidy. According to that scheme the Central Government grant subsidy to the rice mills which are set up there. I have come to know two days ago that Tanda tehsil, which is a backward area has not been included in the scheme and hence the people of that tehsil have been deprived of the benefits of that scheme. This has happened as the District and not the Tehsil has been taken as a unit for Central subsidy. I would request Government to reconsider the whole issue and implement the scheme in Tanda Tehsil so that this area may also develop.

With these words I congratulate your Ministry and support the demands. Further, I would like to submit that you should see whether the policy formulated by you is being implemented properly or not so that there is no scope for any complaints. When we go

to the villages, the people there ask for the report. After reading the report they praise it, but when they quote figures, we are put to shame. So it is necessary that what ever policy you formulate, that should be implemented in right earnest so that the people may not get an opportunity to say that although you have formulated a sound policy, yet it is not being implemented properly. I would, therefore, like to request the Hon. Minister to look into these matters particularly. He should get the policies implemented properly and put a check on the bureaucracy which is not allowing the policies to be implemented properly.

I would like to make one more submission. In the budget, imports on some essential items have been levied upto two or four paise but on the contrary in the villages, their prices have been increased not by two or four paise only but by two to four rupees. You should come with a heavy hand to stop this loot and also conduct raids and arrest the traders indulging in black-marketing. Strict action should be taken against them to ensure proper implementation of the policies of Government.

SHRI LALITESHWAR SHAHI (Muzaffarpur): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to submit only two or three points with regard to the Demands placed before the House. All the people know that the prices of sugar are rising these days. What is the mystery behind it? At present, the crushing season is in full swing and the last factory would close its operation in July and when crushing would be over in July, there would be a stock of one million tonnes of free sale sugar. Last year, 3,80,000 tonnes of sugar continued to be released for free sale every month. But when the release of free sale sugar was reduced, naturally, the people looked towards the stock and thought that if the stock declined, the prices would rise. The demand for sugar is met by the release of both the free-sale as well the levy sugar and if the quota of one category is reduced, it would affect the price of the other category. That is why the prices are rising.

So far as the Food Corporation of India is concerned, I would like to narrate one incident. Last year, I was participating in an international conference and when I told them that there was an undertaking in

our country which procured surplus foodgrains and supplied them as and when the need arose, they liked this idea very much and one of the participants asked why such an arrangement was not made for the entire world whereby the surplus foodgrains could be procured and thereafter supplied in these areas where there was demand. This is a very good idea, but perhaps its implementation would not be so easy.

You will find that in our country the production of wheat increased after we started fixing its support price, because the farmers felt that whatever be their produce, that would be purchased by Government. Our Supply Minister was Agriculture Minister earlier. I would like to express my thanks to him as the prices fixed during the last few years due to his efforts had benefited the farmers and had also helped in increasing the production of foodgrains. Today we have a stock of 22 million tonnes. But, in my view, we have reached a stage where, in place of the subsidy of Rs. 1100 crores that we are giving, we would have to think of making some permanent arrangement with other countries so as to maintain our procurement at the present level. Politics is also playing a role in the matter of food today. The countries supplying foodgrains take political advantage of the situation. It appears that we would have to import petroleum and fertilisers from other countries even now. It would, therefore, be better if we increase our food production and make some long-term arrangement with other countries. It would be better for the farmers also.

17.00 hrs.

I would like to bring one more point to the notice of the Hon. Minister and that is the heavy establishment cost of the Food Corporation of India. Rs. 45 per quintal are spent by the Food Corporation of India on storage and again Rs. 42 are spent by the State Food Corporation and thereafter the food grains are supplied to the small dealers for distribution. Thus, the prices are increased by Rs. 87 to Rs. 90 by the two corporations. The farmers are paid a price of Rs. 150 per quintal. You should look into this matter, to reduce the expenses. The farmers are paid Rs. 150 per quintal and Rs. 90 are spent on transportation and storage. It appears to be excessive expenditure and Government also gives subsidy.

During the year 1976-77, the Food Corporation of India had made efforts to augment the storage capacity. A number of food storage godowns were opened in the private sector also, for which the world Bank had provided the assistance and the State Bank had provided loan at 11 per cent interest, repayable in nine years. If any such scheme is launched, it would be a very good thing. The Food Corporation incurs more expenditure in its scheme than that incurred by private godowns. At present there is a stock of 22 millions tonnes of foodgrains, most of which is lying in the open. If they are kept in warehouses, the foodgrains would remain in good condition. Keeping in view the interest of the country, the storage capacity should be increased, regularly every year so that the storage capacity of food grains could also be increased. It is also necessary that descriptive be brought about in the Food Corporation of India. You should consider the measures through which it could be brought about. Only those persons who deal with it can give you the true, picture of the Food Corporation of India.

So far as kerosene oil is concerned, the prices of the kerosene oil supplied from Dum Dum, and from Barauni and from the Mathura refinery differ. When there is so much variation in the prices of kerosene oil, how can the consumer come to know from which place the kerosene has been supplied? You have to consider this aspect as well. In addition, is it proper that the village shopkeepers should be given so much quota that they are not able to transport it in their bullock carts and the entire quota is thus sold during transit?

I would like to say one more thing about storage. There are many cold storages in the country. Some cold storages were constructed earlier and some of them have been erected later on and some of them are being constructed even now. The cold storages which are being constructed at present involve heavy cost. As more money is spent on their construction, more storage charges are realised for them. As a result, the old warehouses also charge more money. You should look towards this aspect also. The cold storages are insured. Their equipment, building, machines and every thing belonging to cold storage are insured, but the agricultural products stored therein are not insured, could

such an arrangement not be made under which the potato kept in the cold storage could also be insured, for which 50 paise could be realised extra as cold storage charges? In this way, a fund could be created for providing compensation to the farmers for their farm products which are damaged due to non-availability of power. As there is no arrangement for getting compensation, the farmers feel difficulties. Such an arrangement should, therefore, be made whereby the farmers could get compensation for their agricultural products in case of damage to them.

I would like to draw the attention of the Hon. Minister towards one more point. Just now an Hon. Member, Smt. Geeta Mukherjee, had said that even if vegetables were sold at the rate of Rs. 5/ or Rs. 8/ per kilo the farmer did not get more than one to one and a half rupee per kilo. All the profit is pocketed by the middlemen. The vegetables are sold at a price which is fixed by the middlemen, but the farmer does not get any profit. It is also necessary that some action should be taken in this regard.

With these suggestion, I support these Demands for Grants and request the Hon. Minister that he should take action on the points to which I have drawn his attention.

17.06 hrs.

STATEMENT-RE : INCIDENT AT
 AMRITSAR ON 19th APRIL, 1985.

[English]

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS
 (Shri S.B. CHAVAN) : Sir, it is with a deep sense of sorrow and anguish that I have to inform this House regarding the attempt made on the life of Shri R.L. Bhatia, Ex. Member of Parliament, at his residence at Amritsar, on 19th April, 1985, at about 8.45 A.M. resulting in serious injuries to him and the death of another person namely Shri Virendra Kumar, who had come to meet him. According to details received from the Government of Punjab, two un-identified Sikh youths fired at Shri R.L. Bhatia and at Shri Virendra

Kumar. Shri Bhatia received three bullet injuries on the left jaw, right side of the neck and on the back of the right shoulder. He was removed to the hospital where he was operated upon. He is now reported to be out of danger. Shri Virendra Kumar who received bullet injuries succumbed to his injuries. The culprits after committing the crime managed to escape. Immediately on receiving information about this incident senior Police Officers rushed to the site of the incident and organised intensive combing operations for apprehending the culprits. These efforts are being pursued vigorously. About 70 persons have been rounded up for interrogation.

2. It is unfortunate that Shri Bhatia who was provided with a gunman for his personal security since 27th April, 1984, returned the gunman on 4th December, 1984, informing that he did not need his services.

3. As the Hon'ble Members are aware that Government has accorded the highest priority to the maintenance of law and order to check the terrorist activities in Punjab and also to find a solution to the problem. As, against 827 violent incidents during the first half of 1984 resulting in the death of 360 persons, there were 427 such incidents during the second half of 1984, in which 77 persons lost their lives. During the current year upto 19.4.1985 there were 135 violent incidents in which 11 persons died. As a result of the constant endeavour of the authorities to further check such activities in the State, over 1700 extremists were arrested in criminal cases from January 1984 to March, 1985.

4. It is unfortunate that after the releases of Akali leaders, some of them have chosen to indulge in intemperate statements. These statements have certainly not helped in advancement towards normalcy in Punjab. There have also been disturbing reports regarding the propaganda being carried out by Ragis and religious preachers at congregations organised in religious places in the State.

5. The Government shares the concern of the Hon'ble Members about the activities of extremists. The Government has already announced the holding of a Judicial Inquiry into the allegations with regard to the incidents of organised violence in Delhi following