

body is high or low. All are equal. Everybody should stand before the law and get convicted if he has done a wrong thing.

(Interruptions)**

Mr. SPEAKER : No, not allowed.

(Interruptions)**

Mr. SPEAKER : It is all right. I do not support anybody.

(Interruptions)**

Mr. SPEAKER : It will not form part of the record.

Dr. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY : How do we know the happenings ? So, let the Home Minister make a statement. Without making a statement, how do we know ?

Mr. SPEAKER : Mr. Banatwalla.

(Interruptions)

Mr. SPEAKER : Not allowed. Please sit down.

SHRI KRISHNA CHANDRA HALDER : We are all walking out since the Home Minister is not making a statement.

Dr. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY : We are walking out.

12.07 hrs.

(At this stage, Shri Satyasadhan Chakrabarty, Shri Krishna Chandra Halder, Dr. Subramaniam Swamy and some other hon. Members left the House)

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Situation arising out of non-fixation of price of sugarcane by Government this year so far and non-payment dues to sugarcane growers by mill owners

SHRI G. M. BANTWALLA (Ponnani) ; I call the attention of the Minister of Food and Civil Supplies to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon :

“The situation arising out of non-fixation of price of sugarcane by the Government this year so far and non-payment of dues to the mill owners and action taken by the mill owners and action taken by the Government in the matter.”

THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRONICS AND IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI M. S. SANJEEVI RAO) : Please allow me, first of all, to thank the Hon'ble Members who have afforded an opportunity to make a Statement on matters about which they have shown an awareness equalled only by the importance that the Government attaches to it.

2. It appears that discussion on cane price arrears in the House is becoming a regular feature because, during the current year there has not been a Session when it was not taken up in the shape of a Calling Attention Motion in addition to a large number of Questions asked. But, I fully share the anxiety of the Members as a large number of cane growers are affected. Fortunately, we have come a long way since we discussed the matter first in February, 1983. As on 15. 10. 1983, out of a total cane price of Rs. 1528.5 crores payable for the 1982-83 season, the sugar mills have cleared about Rs. 1416.2 crores, thus leaving a balance of only Rs. 112.3 crores. The arrears constitute about 7.4 per cent of the total dues. In early February the dues stood at more than 30 per cent.

3. The arrears have been comparatively higher this year and the reasons for this I had explained earlier also. To recapitulate them, I might mention again that the 1981-82 season saw a record production of sugar at 84.3 lakh tonnes. During 1982-83 also the production has touched almost the same level. Such a situation is unprecedented in the sugar history of the country. With the background of large production in two consecutive years and the need for keeping the

price of sugar at a reasonable level, the mills had large stocks in hand as compared to earlier years. These would certainly tell upon the liquidity of the industry resulting in a slower pace of payments to cane growers.

12.14 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

4. The role of the Central Government in this matter is, strictly speaking, limited to monitoring the position of cane dues and issuing directions to the State Governments for ensuring expeditious clearance of the arrears. It is really for the State Governments, who have the necessary field organisations and requisite powers, to actually enforce cane price payments. I myself have addressed the Chief Ministers in the matter some time ago.

5. To assist the sugar industry, the Central Government on its part liberalised bank credit facilities to the mills, augmented the buffer stock of sugar, recently created, and granted an excise duty rebate. In addition, the Reserve Bank of India also changed the method of valuation of sugar stocks to the benefit of the industry. The prices of free sale sugar were also kept at reasonable levels through the mechanism of carefully regulated monthly releases. All these steps were meant to improve the liquidity of the industry to enable it to pay the cane price.

6. The Uttar Pradesh Government were also given a ways and means advance of Rs. 40 crores by the Government of India in the context of high cane price arrears in the State. Similarly, the Bihar Government were given an advance of Rs. 5.00 crores.

7. All these steps thus resulted in bringing down the arrears to the present level which cannot be termed unsatisfactory in an overall view of the situation.

8. As regards the Centrally managed sugar factories, a decision, as is already well known to the House, was taken to not only pay the State-

advised cane prices and clear the cane price arrears for the 1982-83 season but also to clear the arrears for the earlier seasons as well. With this end in view, loans worth about Rs. 6 crores have already been given to the mills. Further loans of about Rs. 140 lakhs would also be made available to clear the remaining arrears as soon as the supplementary demands, which became necessary as a consequence of Government's decision, are voted by the parliament.

9. As regards fixation of the statutory minimum prices of sugarcane payable by sugar factories during 1983-84 season it has been decided to fix these prices at Rs. 13.50 per quintal linked to a basic recovery of 8.5 per cent with proportionate premium for every 0.1 per cent increase in recovery. The decision about the cane prices had to be taken after consultation with the Agricultural Prices Commission and various interests involved like the associations of sugar producers and sugarcane growers and after consulting the Governments of sugarcane producing States/Union territories. The matter had to be gone into in greater detail in view of the present situation of the sugar industry.

SHRI K. MAYATHEVAR (Dindigul): Hon. Speaker has permitted me and allowed me to make a statement after the statement of the Minister is over.

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is all right. What do you want to say?

SHRI K. MAYATHEVAR: The meeting of the Heads of the Commonwealth Nations is going to be held from day after tomorrow in which the Hon. President of Sri Lanka is also participating as a Member. My party allegation is that genocide has been committed against Tamilnadu. So, 18 DMK Members and the Hon. Member and Janta Leader, Dr. Swamy, 19 Members of Parliament have applied to the Police and the Minister of Home Affairs.....

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : What has the House to do with that ?

SHRI K. MAYATHEVAR : For peaceful, non-violent, demonstration on the way. The Government is keeping quiet. You are talking about democracy and liberation in Pakistan.

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : You had your say. Mr. Banatwalla will now speak.

You are raising extraneous issue. That has nothing to do with the conduct of the House. Please sit down.

SHRI K. MAYATHEVAR : We seek your permission for 5 minutes. The Government is not allowing peaceful demonstration.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Mr. Banatwalla. Now we will come to the subject.

SHRI G. M. BANATWALLA : I welcome the declaration of the Hon. Minister to the effect that the Government is aware of the importance of this question of arrears of price and non-fixation of price of sugar cane. It is a welcome statement to make because this is a very important question which has been agitated in this House also so many times. However, I am constrained to remark that this awareness on the part of the Government and the performance of the Government in translating this awareness into practice leaves much to be desired. Indeed as far as the payment of arrears and other things are concerned, several steps have been taken. That is granted. But the magnitude of the problem remains.

Let us first take up this question of non fixation of price of sugar cane by the Government. There has been a considerable delay in the fixation of the statutory minimum prices for sugar cane growers. The season commences from the 10th day of October. Then an inordinate delay takes place in fixation of prices resulting in severe hardships and complications. The price ought to have been fixed well in advance

of the commencement of the season. I would like to know as to why this inordinate delay. What steps are being taken to see that such delays do not occur and hardships are not caused.

Now we are told that the price has been fixed at Rs. 13.50 per quintal. It is a ridiculously low price. It is this situation that leads to the phenomenon of State-advised prices. The price fixed hardly takes into account the cost of production. It is very unrealistic and it is such a step that leads to this phenomenon of the various State Governments themselves declaring the prices which results in complications in the management of the policy. Of course, the Government may be congratulated that the management of the sugar cane policy has not been so bad as to lead to the burning of sugar cane, a phenomenon which we have observed in the past, for which all credit may go to you. Even then we have to take into account that the statutory minimum prices are rather unrealistic. They do not reflect the cost of production. It is this which leads to the phenomenon of State-advised prices.

May I know from the Government what were the prices recommended by the Agricultural Prices Commission ? Is it or is it not a fact that even the Agricultural Prices Commission recommended a price of Rs. 16 whereas the Government has fixed a price of Rs. 13.50 ? The Government has advised the States to refrain from announcing their own prices. I understand that circular or advice has been given to the States.

SHRI K. MAYATHEVAR : Sir, I want to know whether there is quorum in the House because an important matter is being raised by the Hon. Member and the ruling party Members are disappearing from the House ?

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Are you pressing ?...He is not pressing.

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA : Sir, I was saying that the Government has advised the States to refrain from announcing its own prices. But I would like to know as to what has been the

response of the States? Whether the States have responded? Because we have this phenomenon as the Chief Minister of U.P. has already announced before fixation of minimum price that cane growers would not receive a lower price than last year. Therefore, it has been presumed by the growers and the industry and all that the prices would remain at 22.50 for the western and central region and Rs. 21.50 for the eastern region. So, my pointed questions are: When did the Government announce statutory minimum prices? Why was there delay? What was the price recommended by the Agricultural Prices Commission? What steps have the Government taken in view of the fact that the prices recommended by it are unrealistic and are bound to lead to once again to the phenomenon of State advised prices. Let this House know what efforts have been made by the government to bring about an inter-State consensus on sugarcane prices.

We have this question about the arrears of the prices to be paid to the growers. Government has claimed that the arrears constitutes about 7.4% of the total dues and are less than that of the last year. It is not the question of the amount of arrears on a particular date. To say that the arrears at the end of the season where 7.4 per cent is not the entire story. The fact remains that while 7.4 per cent itself may be leading to nearly Rs. 112.3 crores the position is that we have to take the situation throughout the year and not on a particular date—the closing date. The fact is that cane prices arrears have started right from the beginning of the season. Throughout we had this question of arrears mounting and mounting with the result it causes hardship to the cane growers. That is why we had the law and order situation and that is why in Shimoga nearly 2000 cane growers were lathi-charged and in Muzaffarnagar these growers asking for their dues had to face police repression, tear gas and so on and so forth.

Therefore, let this House not be told about the figures of balance at the close of the year but we should know

about the efforts at monitoring of the payment of the dues throughout the year.

The monitoring of the payment of dues as and when they occur leaves much to be desired.

On 15 January, 1982, I understand, the arrears were 23% of the total dues. On the same day this year (that is 15 January, 1983) the arrears were 35.6%. On 30 June, 1983, the arrears were about 9.7% whereas on the same day this year (that is on 30 June, 1983) the arrears were 13.7%.

Even the Government admits in its own statement that in early February; the dues stood at 30%.

Therefore, it is misleading to inform this House that the arrears at the close of the season were 7.5%. And this phenomenon of mounting arrears continued throughout the year causing great hardship to the farmers and leading even to the Law and Order situation.

So we would like to know from the Government what specific steps are being taken by them in order to improve the efficiency of the system of monitoring of the payment of dues which we feel, leaves much to be desired.

The problem of arrears is not confined only to the Private Sector. It applies equally to the mills in public sector and the cooperative sector.

Here, they have evolved certain guidelines. These guidelines are given by the Centre to the States. And these guidelines also speak about the 'Interest to be paid on the arrears'. I would like to have a categorical reply to this question as to whether the Centrally-run Sugar Mills also pay interest as stated in the Central guidelines to the States. When the Centre gives such guidelines to the States, at least the Centrally-run Mills also should follow these guidelines. So, I have raised this specific question as to whether the Central Government would themselves follow these guidelines about the payment of interest.

[Sri G. M. Banatwalla]

It is no use telling us that these Centrally-run Mill also have to work under the framework in the States. Central guidelines clearly lay down that this interest is to be paid on the arrears and we would like to know specifically from the Government as to whether the Govt. intends to see to it that the Centrally-run mills also pay this interest. What steps are being taken by them in order to see that these arrears are duly paid ?

Sir, in view of the paucity of time now, I would refer to only one thing, namely, the ways and means advances by the Government. We are told that M.P. and Bihar are given ways and means advances. 40 crores have been given to U.P. and 5 crores to Bihar.

Is it or is it not a fact that the Government of Andhra Pradesh asked for this help in the form of ways and means advances in order to pay the arrears to the cane-growers ?

Is it not a fact that they asked for 56 crores of rupees through these methods? Is it not also a fact that Government turned down the demand of the Andhra Pradesh Government, not paying the attention to the interest of the cane-growers ?

13.00 hrs.

I would like to ask you whether I should make an allegation of discrimination against the non-Congress-I Government. I do not know. But I feel I should make that allegation.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : You must have given it in writing.

SHRI G. M. BANATWALLA : I would like this Government to tell us as to how many States actually asked for the ways and means and how many requests have been complied with.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I am informed that the Hon. Minister will not be available in the afternoon. Therefore we will have to sit and complete the calling Attention before we break for lunch.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, the Hon. Member has put different dates about the outstanding arrears. It is true that in the beginning of the season the arrear is higher than at the close of the season because in the beginning sugar is procured and they are to be sold and then the arrears are cleared off. Therefore, in the beginning it so happens that the arrears mount up and as the season proceeds, gradually we find that the arrears come down and in the end of the season, by that time, whatever sugar is purchased and left unsold, they are left overs. The Hon. Members himself has quoted that out of Rs. 1528 crores, we have paid Rs. 1416 crores. You will find that the arrears is to the tune of Rs. 112.00 crores or so. It is 7.4% of the total dues. Now, in this due of Rs. 112.0 crores, the States which have not paid the outstanding are Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

The ways and means advance were paid to them to clear off the dues and they have cleared off the dues. Well, in the beginning they have a huge outstanding, even in the middle of the season also they have large outstandings. But as the season petered out, we will find that they used to clear off the dues. If you compare it with the last year's figure, it is slightly higher that is 10% which has been fixed. But that does not mean we will not take action.

Then the Hon. Member has asked whether monitoring is done with the field staff and the rules that are followed by the State Governments are in order. Now in regard to monitoring, we do it only by writing. But personally also we speak to them and tell them that the dues should be cleared. Therefore, so far as arrears are concerned, we have come to a small limit. In so far as the Central Government dues are concerned, we have paid off the dues to the tune of Rs. 22.17 crores. About Rs. 1.44 crores are still to be paid and we have asked the Parliament to give us in the form of Supplementary Grant and we will clear off the dues. The Hon. Member

has asked about the interest payment. To this I would submit that we are trying first to clear the main dues and then we will clear all the interests. Therefore, I would say that the position at the end of the season is not unsatisfactory, it is satisfactory. We have paid the dues and it is only about 7.4%.

SHRI G. M. BANATWALLA : You say that you will clear all the arrears first and then the interests. Your guidelines are that you have to pay both.

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD : What we are saying is that we have to take into consideration all the aspects.

We have to take into consideration the interests of the sugar industry as a whole, which consists of the cane growers, whose dues are to be paid, the consumers, who have to be supplied sugar at the minimum possible rate, and we have also see the viability of the industry. When we use such word, we mean that we try our best to follow the guidelines that have been laid down for the purpose. Since during the two-year period of glut, we could not pay them, and the hon. Members know that, and this question has been coming up in the House also quite frequently, the mounting arrears have put the industry in a difficulty with regard to the payment of main dues. That is why, when I use these words, I mean that we are trying our best first to clear the main dues and then we will come to the interest.

SHRI G. M. BANATWALLA : Is it your obligation or not to pay the interest ?

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD : Now, I come to the question of fixation of statutory price of Rs 13.50 per quintal. This has been done after consultations with the Agricultural Prices Commission, and the Hon. Member knows it very well. In fact, he has given the most thoughtful and detailed survey of the whole industry in his speech. Now, Agricultural Prices Commission had recommended Rs. 14/- plus Rs. 2/- for transportation per quintal. Last

year, it was recommended Rs. 13/- plus Rs. 2/- per quintal, and we fixed it at Rs. 13/- This time, we have fixed the statutory price at Rs. 13.50 per quintal. There is one thing that I would like to emphasise to the House. This statutory minimum price of Rs. 13.50 per quintal is firstly to reassure the farmers that during the time of over production as it happened in the last two years, they should not get less than the floor price. The other important object is the fixation of levy price for sugar. The Hon. Members will appreciate and agree with me that we have to do our best to keep the levy price to the minimum for the consumers. We have to take into consideration the farmers, who have to be paid their due price, and also the consumers to whom the sugar has to be supplied at the minimum possible price. The fixation of Rs. 13.50 per quintal as the statutory price has relevance for fixing levy price, which should be as far as possible minimum for the consumers. And second, at the time of period of glut, like the two-year period, the sugarcane should not be sold at less than the floor price. However, the State Government are paying much higher than the statutory price.

The Agricultural Prices Commission had calculated the cost of production in representative States like Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh. They have said that the cost of production in Maharashtra is Rs. 14.84 in Uttar Pradesh, it is Rs. 10.79 and in Andhra Pradesh, it is Rs. 14.04 per quintal. This has been calculated by the Agricultural Prices Commission as the cost of production.

AN HON. MEMBER : Only Rs. 14.04 per quintal in Andhra Pradesh ?

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD : Yes, it is as per APC's calculations.

What I want to emphasise is, it is the same Agricultural Prices Commission which has calculated the cost of production as also recommended price for payment to the farmers. In fact, the farmers are getting much more than the cost of production—I am sorry, I would say, more than the cost of production—

[Shri Bh^vgwat Jha Azad]

and the actual price paid by the State Governments is much more than the statutory price. And I have already explained, why statutory price has got a relevance in a glut period and also for fixing the levy price.

I think, this would suffice.

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : He asked about Andhra Pradesh; what is the position?

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD : As I said, the Finance Minister has given the ways and means advance. After all, the worst affected States have been the Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, where even today out of Rs. 112 crores and Rs. 96 crores are from these two States. Therefore, possibly funds have gone to help these States. Andhra Pradesh is doing well.

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : That means, if they want Central help, they must be in arrears.

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD : I did not say that.

SHRI BHIKU RAM JAIN (Chandni Chowk) : Sir, I would take only five minutes. Two or three points have already been touched. I would only speak in regard to one small point i. e. in my opinion the arrears not available to the farmers is as a result of the banking facility not being available to the producers. They have to carry large stocks and they have to carry stocks right from the beginning, the day when the sugar production starts and have to carry it all through the year. What arrangement has the Government made in regard to the availability of that fund so that the liquidity of the fund to the manufacturers is such that they are able to pay to the cane-growers ?

The second point is that India is producing a very large quantity of sugar now, as the Minister has said that during the last two years we had a bumper crop. Like the Oil Producing countries (OPEC), when they had a consortium they fixed the price and regulated their export, what arrangement is the Govern-

ment wanting to see that the export price of sugar is such that it will give us money and you are able to export more as you produce more. So, my question is do you in consultation with other sugar producing countries have that sort of a consortium as you witnessed in the case of the OPEC countries in regard to the oil export. If we do such a thing, we will be able to give a better price to our farmers. A farmer is necessarily not encouraged in growing cane except in Andhra Pradesh where the Minister said they would be getting Rs. 16 as against Rs. 4. I don't know, it is a huge profit. May be that is Rs. 14/- and not Rs. 4.04.

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD : Yes, it is Rs. 14.04 and not Rs. 4.04

SHRI BHIKU RAM JAIN : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, therefore, I wanted to say we have got to look to the farmer as far as the price factor is concerned. In this regard I have to suggest one thing. We are fixing price as Rs. 13.50 today, when the cane has already been grown. As far as cane growing season is concerned it is over. It is the season for producing sugar. So, I suggest why can't we fix the price when the cane growing season begins so that the farmer knows that he will get Rs. 13.50, not today when he has done the whole job. He did not know then that he would get Rs. 13.50. The Mill people know it today that the minimum price is fixed at Rs. 13.50, but we are talking in terms of the farmers. Therefore, I would suggest and request the Minister to examine whether it is possible that we announce the price in anticipation of the farmer coming in for growing it for the year. Now, Sir, the farmer has to wait for all the arrears that he gets. He does not know what price he is getting. Even if he gets Rs. 1/- a quintal or fifty paise a quintal—in UP you say they got seventyfive paise a quintal, he is not encouraged to grow cane. If he is not encouraged, barring Andhra Pradesh, I am afraid in UP and in Maharashtra it may create difficulties.

There is the third difficulty i.e. soil. The Maharashtra soil is better than the UP soil as far as cane growing is concerned because of the moisture. How do we take into account the various soils. Bihar soil is different from the UP soil and the Western UP soil is different from the Eastern UP soil. And likewise the Maharashtra soil is different because it is near the sea. Therefore, there should be some sort of encouragement to different growers in different areas. If you don't have that thing, then the growers in an area which does not have moisture in soil would not have that encouragement and he may grow something else which may be more beneficial to him. So, I would request the Hon. Minister to look that point also.

I have one small thing also to mention. Mills have to carry a large stock. Since the mills have to carry large stock and their liquidity is not good, they are not able to pay the arrears.

What arrangements is Government making to lift that stock from the mills so as to make the mills pay arrears to growers? The mills depend on the payment they receive from Government because you are the bulk purchasers, and the mills have to carry the inventories, for months together. Not only are the mills incurring interest, they are also holding the inventories. But at whose cost? Either at the cost of the consumer or that of the farmer.

You were talking about both the producer and the consumer the two extremes; but the cost is increasing because of your own actions, and due to the delay in paying the bills of the mills. On the other hand, you should pay damages to the mills for what you are wanting them to do. You are adding it into the cost of production. I suggest that Government should make arrangements like the ECI who buys agricultural produce from the farmer, and puts it into its own godown. That should be done in the case of sugar

also by Government, so that you can bring down the price of sugar.

Now about the export potential. The quality of Indian sugar being very good, Government should examine the question of export of sugar at a better price, like what the OPLC countries do, in consultation with other sugar-producing countries. This would result in better yield to the country. I request the Government to let me know what steps they are taking, so that the benefit may be available to the farmer.

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD :
About the first point, what we have done to improve the liquidity of the industry, to pay arrears, is this. We are making credit available through banks to the extent of 125%. (*Interruptions*) 'Now' means for some time now; not immediately now.

It is already being given to them. We have already increased it. Then the Finance Ministry has brought down i.e. reduced the bank margin from 25% to 17.5%. We have also allowed them a clean loan assistance exceeding Rs. 25 lakhs per unit, after this season, to make up for their machinery, other parts etc.

We have also requested—in this case we have requested; and in other cases it has already been done—that there should be deferred payment, or regularization of their previous loans. The Finance Ministry has already replaced the *ad valorem* duty by a fixed duty; and that has been of great help to the industry. In some individual cases, banks have also been asked to book into their liquidity, and give personal loans at the interest rate of 16% *ad valorem* or 16.58%. All these actions taken by the Central Government to help liquidity of the industry, have gone a long way to help the industry in clearing its arrears. That is why we find to-day that it is 17.4%.

The Hon. Member asked about export. It is known that sugar producing countries, especially the exporting countries have got their interna-

[Shri Bhagwat Jha Azad]

tional organization; and the price is fixed internationally by forces of supply and demand. We cannot influence it, in our favour. What we do is that in international conferences, along with others i.e., others like us, we try to do something. I must say that in the last conference we have succeeded in finding some people like us; we tried to get a larger quota for export at a price which could be a break-even for us. That is what we do in the case exports. It is not entirely in our hand. This is what we have done in the last conference. The conference will again be held in London, where we will try to find but, and to see that our export is increased, and that too at a break-even price.

SHRI BHIKU RAM JAIN : Why at break-even price? Why not at profit?

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD : I said 'break-even'. But if we can have it at profit, that will be the happiest thing to do, for us. At the international level, there are many types of countries whose interests quite differ from ours, as we are developing countries and developed countries. So, they want it at the lowest i.e. for our things to be exported. If we go in for the lowest we will be beaten. So, I said : at least at break-even. It does not exclude the possibility of doing it at a profit margin. If that is possible, it is good.

That is my reply to that question.

Now about the price in advance. That is very important question, not only for sugar, but for the production of other grains also.

It is not possible; we have tried it because cultivation problem and the post cultivation problem are such that it is very difficult for us to announce policy much earlier than the sowing season or near the sowing season. The hon. member has said about that price, statutory price to be fixed. This time, we are not that late because 15th November is the notified date for the crushing to start on 10th November,

15 days is the period which is given for the payment after the cane is delivered. So, from that point of view, we are not late. But, we feel that we will try our best to announce it a little earlier.

The hon. member said about different parts of the country and the payment; how do you take them into consideration? Different parts of the country have got different recoveries. That is why we have fixed statutory minimum linked with the recovery; and therefore as a recovery goes up, they get more and there are 16 zones in the country today. They have booked to soil accountings according to production and according to recovery and all that takes care of it.

You say that industries have to carry over the last stock. It is true. For the last two years, we have a good production and this year closing carry over is 46 lakh tonnes. We have increased the buffer stock from 5 lakh tonnes to 10 lakh tonnes. Their buffer stock will give them full 100 per cent carry over for hoarding also interest charge for the money that they invest for hoarding; and we are very conscious every month about it; in the previous month, we announced the relief and also open market relief and, therefore, that gives them not any delay but that gives them a chance to sell the sugar and get the price.

श्री राम विलास पासवान (हाजीपुर) :
उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं मंत्री महोदय को दो-तीन बातों के लिए धन्यवाद दूंगा। पिछली बार उन्होंने गन्ने के लिए प्राइस फिक्सेशन किया और धान के मूल्य का फिक्सेशन किया। अभी पिछले दिनों का 18 नवम्बर का दूसरे सदन का क्वेश्चन है, उसमें जो आंकड़े दिए गए हैं उसके मुताबिक भारत का स्थान हैक्टर टन्स में पांचवां है। यू एस ए का 88.8 टन पर हैक्टेयर है,

आस्ट्रेलिया का 78.2, साउथ अफ्रीका का 73.7, मेक्सिको का 65.7, इंडिया का 57.5, ब्राजील का 54.2, थाईलैंड का 53.1, फिलिपाइन्स का 49.2, क्यूबा का 43.8 और पाकिस्तान का 39.4 है। उसी सदन में जो मन्त्री महोदय ने जवाब दिया और जिसकी पुष्टि इन्होंने अपने जवाब में की है उसके मुताबिक जो प्राइवेट कम्पनियां हैं या प्राइवेट फैक्ट्रीज हैं उनके ऊपर 814 लाख बकाया है, जो पब्लिक सेक्टर की फैक्ट्रीज हैं उनके ऊपर 2526.93 लाख हैं और सेंट्रल गवर्नमेंट की जो फैक्ट्रीज हैं उनका बकाया 239.74 लाख है। कोआ-आपरेटिव का 1747.63 लाख है। यह 82-83 का बकाया है। 81-82 का यदि आप देखेंगे तो प्राइवेट फैक्ट्रीज पर 737.26, पब्लिक सेक्टर की फैक्ट्रीज पर 136.35, सेंट्रल गवर्नमेंट की फैक्ट्रीज 27.42 और कोआपरेटिव फैक्ट्रीज का 252.2 लाख बकाया है। अभी हमारे साथियों ने कुछ सवाल किए हैं। मैं दो-तीन व्यावहारिक चीजों की तरफ मंत्री महोदय का ध्यान खींचना चाहूंगा।

पहली बात तो यह है कि अभी तक आपकी फैक्ट्रीज पता नहीं खुली भी है या नहीं। 14 तारीख से उनको खुल जाना चाहिए था। उनके न खुलने की वजह से किसानों का एक तिहाई गन्ना 7-8 रुपये क्वींटल के भाव में ही बिक रहा है। 21 या 22 रुपए क्वींटल का जो भी भाव है, वह उचित है या नहीं, वह अलग बात है लेकिन वह भी सभी किसानों को नहीं मिल रहा है। जनता पार्टी के शासन काल में कहा गया था कि 45-50 रुपए क्वींटल के भाव पर तो लकड़ी बिक रही है लेकिन किसानों को गन्ने का भाव सिर्फ 22 रुपए ही मिल रहा है। जानवर जो भूसा खाते हैं

उसका भाव भी 28 रुपए क्वींटल है लेकिन किसानों को आम गन्ने का दाम साढ़े 21 या 22 रुपया ही देते हैं। आपकी फैक्ट्रियां न खुलने की वजह से उसको यह भाव भी नहीं मिल रहा है। उसको मजबूरन 7-8 रुपए क्वींटल के भाव पर अपना गन्ना बेचना पड़ रहा है। मैं एक तो यह जानना चाहूंगा क्या आपने कोई तिथि निश्चित की है कि प्रत्येक वर्ष उस तारीख तक फैक्ट्री को खुल ही जाना चाहिए। किसान को उस समय गेहूं की बुवाई करनी होती है और वह गन्ना काटकर गेहूं की बुवाई करता है।

दूसरी बात यह है कि आपने बताया है कि सरकार के जिम्मे 112 करोड़ किसानों का बकाया है लेकिन कुछ दिन पहले आपने राज्यसभा में प्रश्न सं० 40 के उत्तर में बताया था कि 1982-83 के मौसम में 30 9 82 तक किसानों को 126.18 करोड़ रुपया भुगतान करना शेष था।

श्री भागवत भा भ्राजाद : यह सितम्बर 1983 तक की फीगर्ज थीं।

श्री राम विलास पासवान : अब बकाए की राशि चाहे 126 करोड़ हो या 112 करोड़, मैं यह कहना चाहता हूँ कि सरकार का जो पैसा किसानों के ऊपर बाकी है उसके लिए तो किसानों को जेल भेजा जा रहा है, उनकी कुर्की की जा रही है लेकिन उसके विपरीत किसानों का जो पैसा सरकार के ऊपर बकाया है उसके लिए सरकार की कुर्की नहीं की जा रही है। जो भी कानून हो वह सभी के लिए बराबर होना चाहिए। यदि किसान पर सरकार का बकाया है, उसके लिए किसान को जेल भेजा जाता है तो जब सरकार के ऊपर किसान का बकाया हो तो सरकार को भी बन्द

[श्री रामनिवास पासवान]

करना चाहिए। कहा तो यह जाता है कि कानून सभी के लिए बराबर है लेकिन किसान को जेल भेजा जाए और सरकार मनमानी करती रहे—यह बात चल नहीं सकती है।

अभी हमारे साथी ने बतलाया है कि शुगरकेन कंट्रोल आर्डर 1966 में कहा गया है :

“Where a producer of sugar cane has failed to make payment for the sugar cane purchased within fourteen days of delivery he shall pay interest on the amount due at the rate of 15 per cent per annum for the period of such delay beyond 14 days.”

आप यह बतलाने की कृपा करें कि अभी तक आपने कितने लोगों से ब्याज वसूल किया है। जबसे देश आजाद हुआ है उसके बाद से लेकर अब तक क्या आप एक भी इंसटांस दे सकते हैं जब मिल मालिक से ब्याज वसूल किया गया हो? अगर आप वसूल नहीं करते हैं तो यह कानून किस लिए बनाया है? इससे तो यही साबित होता है कि सरकार मिल मालिकों का प्रोटेक्शन दे रही है।

I am asking new points.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I think you are mentioning calculation of interest by the co-operative department.

SHRI RAM VILAS PAWAN : There are four sectors, the Central Government, the State Governments, cooperatives etc.

एक नयी चीज इन्होंने और भी बनाई हुई है कि जो भी फेक्टरी खुलेगी गवर्नमेंट की वह एक निश्चित एरिया के अन्दर गन्ने की खरीद करेगी लेकिन हमारे श्री आर०

पी० यादव की जो कांस्टीट्यून्सी है उसमें एक बनमंकी मिल है परन्तु मिल-मालिक नेपाल से जाकर खरीदेगा, जिसकी वजह से किसान को अपने गन्ने को जलाना पड़ता है। इसीलिए मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से सिर्फ दो-तीन प्रश्न ही पूछना चाहता हूँ। सरकार क्या आज इस सदन में घोषणा करेगी कि जिस किसान की बकाया राशि सरकार के ऊपर है, उस किसान को आज से पकड़ा नहीं जाएगा, जब तक उसका पैसा भुगतान नहीं करवा देती है? क्या सरकार यह बताएगी कि अभी तक कितनी संस्थाओं से ब्याज के रूप में कितना पैसा वसूल किया गया है? क्या सरकार यह भी बतलाएगी कि प्रतिवर्ष कितनी तारीख को फैक्ट्रियाँ खुल जानी चाहिए और नहीं खुलने के क्या कारण हैं? क्या सरकार इस सदन में घोषणा करेगी, जहां तक मुझे जानकारी है पिछले साल भी सरकार ने इसी वक़्त घोषणा की थी, कि कितनी प्राइस आप गन्ना किसानों को देने जा रहे हैं? अन्तिम सवाल मेरा यह है कि अब तो जो हुआ, वह हुआ क्या सरकार आज भी यह कहने की स्थिति में है कि जो गन्ना किसानों से लिया जाएगा, उसका भुगतान साथ-साथ करवा देगी?

श्री भागवत भा आजाद : उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, पहला प्रश्न माननीय सदस्य का यह है कि विभिन्न मिलों के खुलने के सम्बन्ध में, इस सम्बन्ध में राज्य सरकारें मोनिटर करती हैं। लेकिन केन्द्रीय सरकार ने 15 नवम्बर खुलने की डेट रक्खी है। उसको नोटिफाई किया है। जैसा कि माननीय सदस्य ने पूछा है, उसके अनुसार 15 नवंबर तक 50 मिलें खुल चुकी हैं और इन मिलों ने क्रॉशिंग शुरू कर दी है। जैसा कि मैंने

बताया कुछ मिलें 10 तारीख को खुल गई हैं और उस हिसाब से उनको किसानों को 15 दिन में पेमेंट कर देना चाहिए और इसी के अनुसार 24 तारीख को उनको पेमेंट मिलना चाहिए था। माननीय सदस्य की यह बात भी सही है कि पिछले नवम्बर में गन्ने की कीमत की घोषणा की गई थी। मैं आज सदन में 13.50 रु० स्टैंचूटरी मिनिमम प्राइस की घोषणा कर रहा हूँ। जैसा कि इन्होंने कहा है कि कुछ गन्ना जलाया जाता है, तो खण्डसारी और गुड़ में भी तो गन्ना जाता है। मिल आज खुले या बाद में खुले, इन-एनी केस होता है। क्योंकि मिलें तो सम्पूर्ण गन्ने का सिर्फ 40 प्रतिशत ही पेरती हैं और बाकी साठ प्रतिशत गुड़ और खाण्डसारी को जाता ही है।

सबसे बड़ा प्रश्न माननीय सदस्य ने खुद के बारे में पूछा है। इसका उत्तर मैंने अभी एक माननीय सदस्य को दिया है, उस पर चित्त बसु साहब को भी बड़ा प्रेशर था। मैं यह कहना चाहता हूँ कि जो निर्धारित गाइड लाइन्स हैं, उसके खिलाफ हम कैसे कह सकते हैं। इसका तो प्रश्न ही नहीं उठता है। हम समय-समय पर राज्य सरकारों को कहते हैं, निर्देश देते हैं, लेकिन यह हमारी बदकिस्मती की बात है कि निर्देश बजाय इन्टरेन्ट पर पहले मूल पर ही देना पड़ता है। मूल इतना अधिक बाकी रहता है कि उसको दिलाने में बार-बार सर्कुलर भेजने में अधिक समय लग जाता है, जबकि यह उनका काम है। व्यक्तिगत रूप से कहने में और पत्र द्वारा कहने में मूल में ही इतना अधिक समय लग जाता है कि इन्टरेस्ट में दिलवा ही नहीं पाता हूँ अब मैं वह कोशिश करूँगा कि उनको इस बारे में कहूँ। केन्द्रीय सरकार के बारे में मैंने

बताया कि 22 करोड़ बकाया था और करीब-करीब 21 करोड़ कुछ लाख दे दिया है। हमारे पास 1 करोड़ 44 लाख बकाया है।

श्री राम विलास पासवान : इन्टरेस्ट सहित।

श्री भागवत भ्वा आजाद : नहीं, हमने भी इन्टरेस्ट नहीं दिया है।

श्री राम विलास पासवान : क्यों ?

श्री भागवत भ्वा आजाद : इसीलिए कि जो कानून पहले वाला बना है, वह सेन्टर पर भी लागू होता है। पहले हम कोशिश करते हैं कि उसको मूल दे दें, सूद के लिए बाद में कोशिश करेंगे। पहले हम मूल चुकाने की कोशिश कर रहे हैं। जैसा कि माननीय सदस्य ने पूछा कि अब तक कितना ब्याज लिया गया है, इस बारे में मेरे पास कोई आंकड़ा नहीं है। जैसी कि स्थिति है, मैं माननीय से छिपाना नहीं चाहता हूँ। जब अभी हम सूद नहीं दे पा रहे हैं, तो संभवतः शायद ही कोई केस होगा जिसमें कि ब्याज वसूल किया गया होगा। फिर भी मैं पता लगाऊँगा।

श्री राम विलास पासवान : कम से कम आज तो आप सदन में घोषणा कर दीजिए कि पेमेंट उनको साथ-साथ मिल जाएगा।

श्री भागवत भ्वा आजाद : हम बराबर कोशिश करते हैं, चाहते भी यही हैं। शुगर-कन्ट्रोल-आर्डर में भी दिया हुआ है कि किसानों को पेमेंट गन्ना देने के 14 दिन के अन्दर होना ही चाहिए। इस लिए 14 दिन ही क्यों, पहले दिन ही पेमेंट हो जाए, इसके लिये कोशिश करेंगे। आपको मालूम है, मैं यूटोपिया की बात नहीं कह सकता हूँ, जो

[श्री भगवत झा आजाद]

इण्डस्ट्री है उसमें इतना बाकी रह गया है। यह इसलिये हुआ कि स्टेट एंडवाइज्ड प्राइस और स्टेचूटरी मिनिमम प्राइस में बड़ा फर्क था, यदि 8.5 परसेन्ट रिकवरी के आधार पर जोड़ा जाय, तो यह 10 परसेन्ट रिकवरी से भी ज्यादा था। इस लिये न सरकारी मिलें दे पाई और न प्राइवेट दे पाई।

हम आशा करते हैं कि विभिन्न सरकारें इस दिशा में अपना आवश्यक कदम उठावेंगी और उनको यह पैसा जल्दी से जल्दी दिया जायेगा।

श्री राम विलास पासवान : आज जिस किसान पर आप का बकाया है उस को हथकड़ी लग रही है, उसके लिए अपनी सरकारों से कह कर रुकवाइये।

श्री भगवत झा आजाद : इसके लिए तो माननीय सदस्य विभिन्न प्रान्तीय सरकारों को कहें, क्योंकि आप स्वयं राज्यों के प्रतिनिधि हैं।

श्री राम विलास पासवान : पैसा आपके यहां बकाया है, हमारे यहां नहीं है, हम कैसे कहें ?

श्री भगवत झा आजाद : अपने बकाया के लिए हम जिम्मेदार हैं और उसको देने के लिए कोशिश कर रहे हैं। दूसरों के लिए आप अपनी स्टेट असम्बली में उठाइये।

SHRI M. RAM GOPAL REDDY (Nizambad) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Hon. Minister has made commendable efforts in reducing the arrears of sugar price. Now it stands at Rs. 112 crores. I want to know from the Hon. Minister whether he can give the break up of this figure so that we may know who are the guilty? Second

thing is that there is no sanctity for this price of Rs. 13.50 per quintal. Award the minimum of Rs. 18 per quintal. Earlier, the Agricultural price Commission had recommended Rs. 16 per quintal. In several items the Ministry has overruled the recommendation and fixed higher price...(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Ask somebody also to make this demand, not yourself.

SHRI CHITTA BASU : For certain other items, APC recommended lower price but the Government fixed higher price, why then in the particular case you have chosen the low price ?

SHRI M. RAM GOPAL REDDY : That may also be taken as part of my speech.

SHRI CHITTA BASU : That he can do, of course.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : But rules do not permit.

SHRI M. RAM GOPAL REDDY : Last year, the Government of Andhra Pradesh had fixed the price at Rs. 18.50 per quintal and did not ask for any money from the Central Government. Mr. Vijay Bhasker Reddy, the Andhra Chief Minister manage with his own finances. But this year unprecedented floods were there and the state has suffered too much. So, I request that at least Rs. 20 crores to Rs. 25 crores may be advanced to Andhra Pradesh also so that they may be advanced to the cane growers but the Minister should make are that this money goes to the cane growers and not elsewhere because that is dangerous. Our Chief Minister is not in the habit of spending money. Whatever grant has been given by the Central Government, he has not spent for flood relief and that is why he has lost very badly in the election.....(Interruptions)..... I am a promoter of the cooperative sugar factories. We show fair to the industry also. Sugar is produced in six months and it is sold in fifteen months. In two years what we have

produced is sufficient for three years' consumption. That includes exports also which are to the tune of 7 lakh tonnes. The Minister of Food and Civil Supplies is making efforts to export some more sugar in lieu of oil. I want to know whether he succeeded in that. If not, the Government should make serious efforts to export at least 20 lakh tonnes of sugar so that it may give some relief. If the Government is going to pay less price this year and does not increase the levy price, there is a danger that what during Janata time, the same may be repeated.

Again there will be shortage, the price will go to Rs. 10 to Rs. 12 per kg, as in the case of the Janata period, when we inherited that position. Then Madam Indira Gandhi took very imaginative steps and the production rose to 30 lakh tonnes in one year; then it increased to 65 lakh tonnes. This unprecedented increase must be maintained. It may happen that sometimes some famine may occur in some foreign country and we have to rush sugar there. We must remember that once we exported sugar and earned foreign exchange to the extent of Rs. 500 crores. That was the starting point for building up foreign exchange reserves but then came the oil crisis, which upset it. Now I want the Minister to keep some sugar ready so that in case there is any famine in any part of the world, we can rush sugar there. Last year there was a famine in Australia. I would like to know whether the Minister get any export quota for Australia.

The present price is uneconomic and unrealistic. The Minister should see that the factories also make some money. Now there are private factories, co-operative factories and Government factories. 95 per cent of the factories are incurring huge losses. I am afraid they may become sick soon. I do not think the Government have got the capacity to take over all the sick mills. So, the industry should be maintained at a profitable level and

the sugarcane grower should get a reasonable price.

If the consumer has got to pay a little more, he will not mind it. If he is paying Rs. 12 to 15 per kg., can he not pay for levy Rs. 4 more? Of course, I am displeasing the consumer, but I do not bother about it. Looking at from the longer perspective, the levy sugar must be made available to the consumer at Rs. 4 per kg. I do not know why the Government is afraid of the consumers.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The reason is they are more in number.

SHRI M. RAM GOPAL REDDY : The cane growers are also large in number. They are very effective and each farmer has 5 to 10 votes with him. Government should realise it. I would request the Minister to raise the levy price to at least Rs. 18 per quintal.

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD : The first question of the Hon. Member is about arrears. I would like to tell him that Rs. 112 crores are the arrears. Out of a total of Rs. 1,528 crores we have cleared Rs. 1,416 crores and now the balance is Rs. 112 crores. Out of this, about Rs. 60 crores are in UP, about Rs. 34 crores in Bihar and Rs. 18 crores for the rest of the country. So, these two States have got a major share in this.

PROF. N. G. RANGA (Guntur) : If the peasants are indebted to Government, will they not go to the court and will they not penalise the peasants? What penalty has been imposed by Government on the State Governments for their failure to pay our peasants?

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD : I had explained it in detail when Prof. Ranga was not here. It is one thing to go to the court to penalise them and it is another thing to make them pay. I cannot send the State Governments to jail, nobody can do that under the Constitution. They are the persons who have to monitor and make the payment.

[Shri Bhagwat Jha Azad]

About the price, as I have explained there is no sanctity attached to Rs. 13.50. But when there is a glut or over-production, the farmers should not get less than this price. Last year they did not get less than that; they got more.

The second important element is fixing the levy price. The Hon. Member said that we are afraid of the consumers. We are not afraid of either the consumers or the cane growers. We love them both.

In Government's heart interest of both the cane growers and consumers is there. Therefore, we have to keep them pleased. We want to give maximum to the cane growers. But at the same time we want to make available sugar to the consumer at the lowest price so that the consumer should also be happy, because consumers are also landless.

Keeping in mind the interest of both, we have to keep the levy price sugar and accordingly we leave some part in the open market also for the mill owners to pay and make up the loss in the levy. Therefore, this balance has to be maintained in a country like ours where we know that the majority strata of our population are such to whom you have to make the goods like sugar available at a cheaper price as far as possible.

So far as Andhra Pradesh Government ways and means advance is concerned, the matter is with the Ministry of Finance. They will take decision on this.

About the levy price, I must tell the hon. Member again, we will do our best keeping in mind the statutory price to keep the levy price as much cheap as possible, because it affects the entire population. Shri M. Ram Gopal Reddy should not hurry up to tell me. It does not mean that we would not keep the interest of the

farmer in mind. 13.50 is for 8.5 recovery. Therefore, the average all India recovery of 10% will lead to a price which will be much bigger than the cost of production as calculated by the Agricultural Price Commission. We hope the State Governments will keep in mind the price that they paid last year, the price that they will have to pay this year. All these considerations will be there.

About export—it is fixed under U. N. Agreement by the sugar exporting countries.

One thing has to be kept in mind. We try our best because we haven't got higher production, to have maximum quota for export. There is nothing like how much is sent to Australia and all that. But we will try in the International Conference to have maximum for export, more than what we have today.

I have dealt with the question of sick mills. I have already said what Government have done about liquidity of the sick mills. I have replied in detail. I have also explained the Central Government's efforts for the consumer.

13.47 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned for
Lunch till Fifty Minutes Past
Fourteen of the Clock.*

*The Lok Sabha then re-assembled
after Lunch at fifty-five minutes
past Fourteen of the Clock.*

[SHRI R. S. SPARROW in the Chair.]

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

- (i) Need to restore 'Border Special Pay' to Central Staff located in border areas of Uttarkhand in U.P.

SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA (Garhwal) : The Central Staff located in the