

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYA: She will not get the chance to reply.

MR. CHAIRMAN: She will get it next time.

SHRI P. RAJAGOPAL NAIDU: I am moving the resolution, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You cannot do it like this. The earlier business has not been completed. The Minister has to continue his speech. Now we will have the Half-an-Hour Discussion.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: You have now said that his resolution will not lapse, but will be taken up the next day; but Direction 9A will apply only if it is in the same session. Will it come during this session?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It will come on the last day of the session. Now we will have the Half-an-Hour Discussion. Mr. R. K. Dawn

17.35 hrs.

HALF-AN-HOUR DISCUSSION

PROCUREMENT PRICES OF PADDY AND JUTE

***SHRI RAJ KRISHNA DAWN** (Burdwan): Mr. Chairman, Sir, in my Unstarred Question No. 2168 dated 31st July 1978 I had asked: "Whether the prices of the basic items required for agriculture such as fertilizers, labourers, chemicals, pesticides, oil cakes, seeds, pump sets etc. and prices of essential commodities required by the farmers have increased manifold compared to the prescribed procurement price of paddy and jute"? In reply to this the hon. Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation had said: "During the last 12 months prices of some inputs mentioned by the hon. Member have increased and those of some other remained steady or declined." Those items whose prices have declined have been given in the reply. It is seen that price of lubricating oil has fallen.

Lubricating oil is a item which is very little used by the farmers. I do not know whether the hon. Minister uses lubricating oil in his car or not but I can say that the prices of this item has fallen only because it is extensively adulterated almost 50 per cent of the supply is adulterated. The price of fertilizers has been stated to have fallen but the fall is to the extent of 1.4 per cent only. But, Sir, the black marketeers have caused rise in its available price to the extent of almost 20 per cent. Where is the benefit to the farmers? Fertilizers are not readily available, at least in the case of West Bengal I can confidently say that any kinds of chemical fertilizers are not available there. You say that price of fertilizers have fallen but the farmers just cannot get fertilizers. The fall in prices is totally inconsistent with its availability. Then it has been stated that prices of insecticides/pesticides have fallen to the extent of 0.7 percent. But the prices of those insecticides have fallen which are produced in the large multinational factories. The adulterated chemicals that are produced at Sonapur in the 24-Parganas are going on unchecked. The Government has not made any efforts to prohibit its production or confiscate the adulterated stuff. Through these adulterated pesticides not only the produce is getting damaged, but it is also harming the whole nation and the Government is keeping its eyes closed inspite of this fact being brought to their notice several times. The hon. Minister has said in that context that they have opened a laboratory to see that pesticides and chemicals are not adulterated. They have allotted a sum of Rs. 7-1/2 lakhs to the West Bengal Government for this purpose this year, to find out whether adulteration is being done by the adulterators which will be detected by this laboratory. Sir, the hon. Minister in reply to a question No. 1020 asked on 24th July said, the question was: "Whether Government are aware of the black marketing in fertilizers in West Bengal?"

*The original speech was delivered in Bengali.

In his reply the hon. Minister has clearly stated that the West Bengal Government have reported that 113 police cases were started during the rabi crop of 1977-78. In 1978 up till now 67 cases have already been started for black marketing in fertilizers. This shows that the Government are very well aware that black marketing in fertilizers exist and the poor farmers do not get fertilizers at the stipulated price. Pesticides are adulterated and the use of these pesticides are causing untold harm to the crops and the farmers did not get good quality pesticides. In reply to another Question No. 1108 on 24th July it was stated wherein it was asked: "Whether Government are aware of the adulterated pesticides?" The answer given to this as seen from the papers I have collected from you is, "Some complaints alleging adulteration of pesticides have been received by the Government." You have clearly admitted that. Black marketing report has been received by you. Complaints about adulteration in pesticides have been received by you but no action has been taken by the State Government or the Central Government as yet. So I am telling the Minister that he claims that prices have fallen but this fall in prices have no consistency with the availability of right quality goods in the market. In reply to another Question No. 1931 dated 28th July 1978, Shri Mohan Dharia, Minister of Commerce and Civil Supplies said, the question was: "Whether in view of the tremendous rise in prices of daily use commodities e.g. wheat, rice, edible oils, soap, cycle tyres, pulses and others, Government have drawn in a programme for effective control of the price index by forming super markets at various places and thereby supply goods at competitive prices. In reply, the Minister clearly stated that they are very much worried about the urban population but they are not worried about the rural people. The Government are really concerned about the city folks, what will the people of Delhi, Bombay,

Calcutta, Madras, Lucknow, Kanpur eat? That is their main worry. They are not worried about the poor villagers. The Government says at all places that they will not be able to start any cooperatives in the rural areas for the village people. But at the time of procuring paddy at a cheap rate from the villagers we have seen many State Government roaming about in the rural areas with armed police men. But when the question comes of starting fair price shops for the village people the Government says that they are unable to do that. In these circumstances I do not think that this Government has any right to forcibly snatch away paddy and other foodgrains from the villagers at a cheap price. Another question No. 744 was asked of the Health Minister on 20th July, wherein it was asked: "Is there any proposal under the consideration of the Government to reserve a fixed quota and number of scholarships in medical colleges for the rural students as part of solution of the above problem? The problem was that doctors were unwilling to go to the rural areas. No physicians were ready to go to the rural areas. There also the Government replied in the negative and said that they were unable to take any such steps for the benefit of the rural people. In reply to another question you will see that who is fixing the price of foodgrains and other agricultural produce? The prices are being fixed by the Agricultural Prices Commission. Whom are you consulting in this matter? I do not know whether any consultation is held with the actual farmers. Within the last few months the prices of cycles have been increased by 10 per cent. This is the only means of transport for the poor village people of West Bengal. The price of this essential article for the village people was increased so heavily at one stroke. The Government could not check that. The price of fertilizers, pesticides and all other essential inputs are going up every day. In economics it is said

[Shri Raj Krishna Dawn]

that if the price of cereals are low then the price of all other commodities also remain low. But the experience of the last few years have shown that although the price of wheat, rice etc. have remained low the price of other commodities have gone up considerably. In reply to another Question No. 3322, it has been asked whether Government are aware of the fact that at present our country is suffering from shortage of fodder and other cattle feed. Oil cake is not available and it is being sent to foreign countries. Sir a pair of bullocks cost Rs. 4000. The price of oil cake was Rs. 2.30 a K.G. A pair of bullocks require a minimum of 4 K.G. oil cake to remain fit. That means farmer has to spend Rs. 12 per day for the purchase of oil cake for one pair of bullocks. Is it possible for him to afford this feed after selling his paddy at controlled rates? Because of want of oil cakes a pair of bullocks that can normally give efficient service for ten years are becoming weak and gives only two years' service. This is a terrible blow on the poor farmers. On the one hand the Government is unable to provide oil cake at reasonable price to our own farmers and on the other they are boasting that they have earned a foreign exchange through their export. This earning of foreign exchange after sucking the blood of our poor peasants is not at all praiseworthy. The Minister has said that in the Government farm the cost of paddy comes to Rs. 79.38 but the procurement price of paddy for the farmers is only Rs. 77. The Government admits that their cost of production is 79.38 but the procurement price is fixed even lower than this. From the cost of production of the farmer in one acre of land, it has been seen that he cannot carry on at less than Rs. 130 a quintal. Merely recovering cost of his inputs is not enough for the farmers. From the sale of his produce he has to meet the cost of his clothing, medical expenses, education for his chil-

dren, and expenses on other necessities of life. Every item of his needs he has to get from the price he gets from the sale of his produce only. He has to construct his living shelter from the produce of his land. Therefore merely recovery of his cost of production is not at all enough. He has to be paid a price substantially higher than the cost of production so that he may meet all other requirements of his life which are becoming costlier day by day. This report of the Committee on Public Undertakings says, the cost of production of jute per acre for the study as a whole which turn out to be Rs. 377.34 per quintal. This was the costing i.e. production cost. But the Government has fixed the price at Rs. 145 which is Rs. 200 less than the cost of production. This year they have raised the price to Rs. 150. But in their own Committee Report it is said that the cost of production comes to Rs. 377.34. The Government also admits that farmers should get profit of 30 per cent if we add that percentage to the cost of production then the price comes to Rs. 447.64 per quintal. Therefore, for jute the minimum price should be fixed by the Government Rs. 400 per quintal. This is absolute minimum. And for paddy the minimum price fixed by the Government should be Rs. 130.

In the case of wheat you have stated in your reply that no subsidy is granted for wheat. But the selling price of wheat is subsidised. When a man eats bread he is eating at subsidised price. The Government is bearing a part of his cost. But for a rice eating person there is no subsidy in any manner. A rice eating person has to bear the entire cost of rice that he is taking. The Government does not bear any percentage of his cost. This double standard policy is being followed by the Government for a very long time. It is not at all fair to follow this double standard. I will again urge upon the hon. Minister to review the price of jute and fix it at the level suggested above so that our poor farmers may survive reasonably.

If this is not done then the rural masses who brought you to power with great hopes and aspirations will start repenting today. I will therefore once again urge upon the Government to carry out proper surveys and fix the price of jute at Rs. 400 a quintal and the price of paddy Rs. 130 a quintal at least.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I would request hon. Members to co-operate. After all, in a half-hour discussion, if you take more than half the time, 17 minutes, for the initial speech, what happens? The normal practice is that at the most 10 minutes are taken by the hon. Member who makes a short speech. Some norm has to be followed. A short speech does not mean you go on making a long speech.

THE MINISTER AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION (SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA): I am glad that the hon. Member has raised this discussion and tried to make some points. He has mentioned many questions regarding which has not given notice, even questions relating to Mr. Dharja etc., which probably are not relevant. In the notice that he has given, he has stated:

"I want to raise a discussion on the following points arising out of the answer given to Unstarred Question ...

(1) The answer has not been specific in regard to the prices of some inputs. The Minister has evaded a reply.

(2) It requires elucidation by showing that the farmers are selling their produce at higher prices in the open market; on the other hand, they sell their produce at the time of harvesting.

(3) The prices are lower in the market than the procurement prices."

These are the three matters raised by my hon. friend in the notice. Now he has argued on many other questions also. I will try to take up some of them.

He has also agreed that the prices of some of the fertilisers and pesticides have gone down, but he says they have gone down because of adulteration. That is the objection raised. I may tell the hon. Member that a conscious decision was taken for reducing fertiliser prices. The price of Urea 46 per cent in February, 1977 was Rs. 1650 per tonne. Then in October, 1977 it was reduced to Rs. 1550—a reduction of Rs. 100 per tonne.

Similarly, regarding pesticides I would mention that Melathion formulation, which was Rs. 160.98 for 5 litres was reduced to Rs. 156.96; Dust Melathion 25 kg. was reduced from Rs. 87.44 to Rs. 83.22. The reduction was made in December, 1977. Melathion formulation 50 per cent 5 litres was reduced from Rs. 32.50 to Rs. 28.50. BHC formulation for one tonne was reduced from Rs. 3,800 to Rs. 3,600—a reduction of Rs. 200 per tonne. Similarly, for a pack of 50 kg. in drums it was reduced from Rs. 4,650 to Rs. 4,400—a reduction of Rs. 250.

SHRI RAJ KRISHNA DAWN: No fertiliser is available. You go and see.

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA: We can supply fertilisers. That is a different question altogether. Kindly inform me what type of fertiliser is not available, we will try to make arrangements for supply of the fertilisers required.

Similarly, regarding other items also the price differential was specifically mentioned.

While answering the question, it has been very specifically mentioned that price reductions on such and

[Shri Surjit Singh Barnala]

such articles has been made. My hon. friend was mentioning that the price of oil cake has gone up very high. In fact, it has come down by 17.2 per cent. (Interruptions) This is the information with me. Coming to machinery, power-driven pumps are very much in need in all the States, including West Bengal, and there the reduction is 1.5 per cent. In the case of manufactured products the reduction is 2.7 per cent. In the case of fertilizers, it is 1.4 per cent. He was mentioning lubricating oil—it is needed for tractors—as well as diesel, which are very much in demand by the agriculturists. We have calculated for each of these items and given complete information regarding the reduction in the price of each item.

Coming to paddy and jute, I may mention that the prices prevailing in the market are higher than the procurement price. The procurement price for coarse variety of paddy for 1977-78 was Rs. 77 as against Rs. 74 last year. The corresponding procurement prices for rice were Rs. 123 and Rs. 118.

SHRI P. RAJAGOPAL NAIDU: No-body is buying paddy there.

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA: These cannot be wrong figures. Then where is the paddy going? We had purchased whatever paddy was available at Rs. 77 through the FCI and other governmental agencies. The procurement price of rice was Rs. 121 in 1975-76. Its market price had been Rs. 144 from October to December, from April to June it was Rs. 145. Thus, in the later period it had gone up. In Haryana, the procurement price of rice was Rs. 127 in 1975-76. From October to December the market price was Rs. 180. Then from January to March it was Rs. 161. The figures with me show that the prices in the later part go up.

I have also got figures of arrivals in the market. The entire paddy does not come to the market at one time. Some paddy comes in the first quarter, some in the second quarter and so on. The farmer retains a portion of the paddy with him and sells it only later. Only in Punjab and Haryana most of the paddy comes to the market in the first quarter; they have perforce to bring it to the market, because they have to utilize the space for other varieties of crops.

In Bihar, in the first quarter in 1976-77, only 34 per cent of the paddy had come to the market. In Gujarat 37 per cent of the paddy had arrived in the first quarter; in Karnataka the figure was 31 per cent. In West Bengal, in the first quarter, from October to December, 23.2 per cent had arrived in the market in 1976-77. Even in the second quarter, 33 per cent had arrived, in the third quarter—21.3 per cent and in the last quarter—22.5 arrived in the market. This was the trend of arrivals in the market.

Similarly, I may mention about jute arrivals. Now the support price for jute has been fixed for 1978-79 at Rs. 161 in Orissa, Rs. 157 in Bihar, Rs. 150 in Assam, Rs. 150 in Tripura and so on. But the prevailing prices in the market are generally higher. For example, in Tripura from July to September, 1977-78, it was Rs. 177.30, in Orissa it was Rs. 162 and in Bihar—Rs. 178.9 in the first quarter; in West Bengal in 1977-78, it was Rs. 220.29 in the first quarter, Rs. 225 in the second quarter and again Rs. 225 in the third quarter and so on. Because the maximum price has been fixed at Rs. 225, after that it prevailed at that. This is the trend of prices. My hon. friend has mentioned that it should be priced at Rs. 400. This, to my mind, is not a realistic price, because at that price...

SHRI RAJ KRISHNA DAWN: Your Public Undertakings Committee have

examined the matter and their recommendations are there.

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA: A Government Committee has gone into the matter....

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYA: What is the arrangement for purchasing jute at the price you are saying from the cultivators? There is no arrangement.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You cannot turn this into a question hour. Is it the pleasure of the House to extend the time for this discussion by some more time?

(Interruptions)

SHRI KRISHNA CHANDRA HALDER: Till the discussion is over.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It has never been like this. Normally, when half-an-hour discussion is there, we finish that; it does not take much time. We hardly take.... (Interruptions) I am pleading your case to the House. (Interruptions) If the hon. Members agree, we can extend the time by another ten minutes and finish it, provided the hon. Members who are going to put questions also cooperate. (Interruptions).

श्री उपसेन (देवरिया) : समापति महोदय, छः बजने वाला है और 6-05 पर जनता पार्टी की मीटिंग होने वाली है। कृपया टाइम बढ़ा दें।

MR. CHAIRMAN: I am in the hands of the House. The extension of time can be only with the concurrence of all. (Interruptions).

SHRI K. LAKKAPPA: We want to put questions. Our names have been duly ballotted. (Interruptions)

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR (SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA): We are not concerned with what hon. Lakkappa has to say on the extension. We are not in favour of extending the time.

MR. CHIRMAN: I am concerned with every hon. Member. I just request that we should try to find some way out. I would request the hon. Minister that we may sit for another ten minutes and finish the discussion. I would request the hon. Members to cooperate and they should not go on putting long questions.

SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA: We can extend the time by five minutes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let us try to finish within ten minutes.

SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA: This is not fair.

18.00 hrs.

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA: My hon. friend was saying that the Government committee had reported that the price should be Rs. 400 per quintal. No Government committee has reported that.

श्री लखन लाल कपूर : क्या पब्लिक वरल्डर-टेक्निकल कमेटी ने जूट की कास्ट प्राइस के बारे में कोई रिपोर्ट दी है? अब यह कौन-सी गवर्नमेंट की एजेंसी है जिसने कि जूट की कास्ट प्राइस के बारे में पता लगाया है? कमेटी की रिपोर्ट सत्य है या भारत सरकार की यह एजेंसी सत्य है?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No please. This is not the correct way. It will not be replied to. This is the way you waste the time of the House.

श्री सुरजीत सिंह बरनाला : मैं धन्यवाद करता हूँ कि ऐसा किसी कमेटी ने रिकमण्ड नहीं किया है कि चार सौ रुपये प्राइस होनी चाहिए। यह प्राइस रियलिस्टिक नहीं है। चार सौ रुपये प्राइस ने कर के 15-16 रुपये का एक बेग बनेगा जो कि किसान ने खरीदना है। इतना महंगा बेग वह कैसे डालने के लिए, चावल डालने के लिए नहीं खरीद सकेगा। यह अनरियलिस्टिक प्राइस है और हमारी गवर्नमेंट की किसी कमेटी ने यह रिपोर्ट नहीं दी है।

बाकी उन्होंने व्हीट सप्लाय की बारे में कहा। व्हीट सप्लाय पर तो कई बचाव चर्चा हो चुकी है।

SHRI KRISHNA CHANDRA HALDER: I want to put a straight question. Before that, I want to say that

[Shri Krishna Chandra Halder]

the share-croppers, small and marginal farmers are compelled to sell their paddy, jute and sugarcane below the procurement price because of their poverty. In many areas, in West Bengal, Bihar and other States and in the southern States also, there are distress sales. Again, the farmers have to purchase essential commodities and articles at a much higher rate than what is fixed by the Government. In the answer given by the hon. Minister to the original Question, he has mentioned the prices. It is really paper prices. If you go to the market, you do not get the things at those prices.

In view of all these facts, may I know whether the Government will fix the prices in such a manner that the share-croppers, small and marginal farmers can be saved from their miseries? I want a categorical answer from the hon. Minister whether the Government will fix the minimum price of paddy at Rs. 100 per quintal and the maximum price at Rs. 150 per quintal and the minimum price of jute at Rs. 350 per quintal and the maximum price at Rs. 400 per quintal and whether the Government is going to purchase paddy and jute directly from the growers.

SHRI K. LAKKAPPA: I am putting a question only in regard to the procurement price of paddy and rice. The other points have been raised by my hon. friend, Shri K. C. Halder, from West Bengal. So, I will not touch them.

A discriminatory attitude has been shown by the Government in this regard. As per budget estimates, the amounts of subsidy on rice, wheat and coarse grains in respect of supplies for public distribution are: for wheat Rs. 23.39 per quintal, for rice Rs. 0.04 only per quintal and for coarse grains Rs. 13.24 per quintal. Therefore, even in the southern States, there is a lot of discrimination as compared to northern States. Three Chief Ministers of southern States who met re-

cently have come to the conclusion that a discriminatory attitude has been noted out by the Central Government in the matter of fixing the price so far as paddy is concerned. Fixing of subsidy and fixing of procurement price for paddy will be done in the month of September. Members of Parliament have already urged that no discrimination should be shown. I would like to know what is the reaction of the Government, whether they would see the deliberations and conclusions of the Chief Ministers of the southern States and also of the Members of Parliament in respect of the discriminatory attitude shown so far as the southern States are concerned, whether they would stop this sort of discrimination and give more subsidy to rice-growing areas.

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA:

So far as fixing of the prices is concerned, the main advisory agency is the Agricultural Prices Commission, and they take into consideration the conditions of all the farmers and the cost of production—by all the farmers, not only the small and marginal farmers and the agricultural labour. All these are taken into consideration and then they recommend the price. After that, it goes to the Government, and the Government approves or modifies; then it is finalised.

So far as jute is concerned, jute is not my subject; we are only concerned with production; Mr. Mohan Dharia is concerned with the rest of it.

So far as paddy is concerned, we are willing to purchase paddy from the growers, from the field itself. We have made arrangements through the State agencies and through the FCI to purchase paddy from the source so that the farmers get the maximum price for their produce. We are fixing the support price.

So far as the question of discrimination is concerned, as I have mentioned earlier, there is no subsidy for

wheat, there is no subsidy for rice, so far. Therefore, there is no question of discrimination between south and north, between wheat and rice.

18.08 hrs.

BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

TWENTY-SECOND REPORT

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMEN-
TARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR
(SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA): Sir, I
beg to present the Twenty-Second

Report of the Business Advisory Com-
mittee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The House stands
adjourned till 11-00 A.M. tomorrow.

18.09 hrs.

[The Lok Sabha then adjourned till
Eleven of the Clock on Saturday,
August 12, 1978/Sravana 21, 1900
(Saka)].