

[Shri Bhanu Pratap Singh]

port operation we purchase a large quantity of rice. The hon. Member is ignoring Haryana, Punjab and West U.P., which have produced so much that we can feed the public distribution system without any difficulty. There is so much of over-production that the producers bring their produce to the Government purchase centres, and they are being helped by giving the support price.

SHRI SHYAMAPRASANNA BHAT-TACHARYYA (Uluberia): Our experience is that West Bengal is constantly a deficit State in rice production mainly because it is producing a large quantity of jute in place of rice. It is our sad experience that whenever free movement of rice is allowed in our State, the price rises steeply. No pious hope or goodwill on the part of Government can save the position. Only the rationing system can save our State, because we are a deficit State. While our industrial areas have more purchasing capacity, the poor people living in the rural areas have very little purchasing capacity. So, the only solution is rationing, where even the poorest of the poor can get rice at a reasonable price. In order to save the State from the clutches of big hoarders and stockists, there should be State trading throughout the country. The new Government of the left of West Bengal is fully alive to the situation. I would appeal to you to arrange for the supply of 11 essential commodities at a uniform price throughout the country, so that we can feel that we are in one country and no trouble is possible. Whenever things are left in the hands of the traders, as Government has no control, they can manipulate everything. They manipulate even the State Trading Corporation by supplying bad rice to them and taking away the good rice from the open market.

I come from Calcutta. For a few days parboiled rice was not available in the city, and bad rice was supplied

in the rationed areas. Even in Delhi it was the case.

So, I request the Minister to consider the problem of the deficit areas deeply from a long range point of view. Then he will see that things are not so simple as he thinks. I appeal to him not to be complacent, thinking that everything is going on well. That is dangerous. He must be very cautious, and he must understand the situation not only of the deficit areas, but of the rural poor.

SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH: We have no great adherence or regard or love for any system. What serves the need of the people we are prepared to do always. We are watching the situation and as and when any occasion arises, we will take corrective measures. That I have already said. If any serious situation is brought to our notice, we will certainly take all possible steps to ameliorate the condition.

Distribution in West Bengal or any other State is the responsibility of the State Government. We are prepared to co-operate with them. If rice of the desired quality, is not available in Calcutta, perhaps that is due to the cordoning off of that area. Otherwise, perhaps good rice could reach there.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE (SEVENTEENTH REPORT)

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN (Idukki): I beg to present the Seventeenth Report of the Public Accounts Committee on Export of Bicycles and Bicycle Components during 1970's relating to the Ministry of Commerce.
