

[Shri S. M. Banerjee]

being on strike, you asked the Minister to make a statement. As the strike is still continuing, why could the Minister not send Shri Raghunath Reddy to Hardwar to settle the dispute?

SHRI K. N. PANDEY: Does the Minister want the strike to continue? Otherwise, why does he not initiate talks to settle the strike?

STATEMENT RE : SUGARCANE SITUATION IN U. P. AND BIHAR

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (SHRI JAGJIWAN RAM): I beg to lay on the Table a statement regarding Sugarcane situation in U. P. and Bihar.

Statement

In view of the substantial increase in the area under sugarcane this year, Government had anticipated early in the season that it would be necessary for the sugar mills to prolong their working season to be able to crush all available cane in their factory areas. To enable them to do so, Government had announced in October, 1969 the grant of a rebate of Rs. 8/- per quintal in excise duty on all sugar produced by the factories during 1969-70 season in excess of 105% of that produced during 1968-69. In addition, the Government of Uttar Pradesh announced a remission of 25 paise per quintal in the purchase tax on cane bought by sugar factories in excess of 05% of last year's purchases, the remission being available only to those factories which had started crushing on or before 15th November, 1969. In addition, the State Government announced a substantial liberalisation of its policy regarding licensing of power crushers in the reserved areas of sugar factories.

Some doubts were recently expressed that the entire cane available in the factory areas may not be crushed by the sugar factories before they close down. All the sugar producing States were, therefore, addressed to ascertain the position and to emphasize on them the importance and urgency of taking all necessary measures to ensure that the available cane in the factory areas was crushed before they close down. The

Government of U. P. have intimated that in order to provide a further incentive to the mills to crush all the available cane, they have announced total remission of purchase tax on cane bought by sugar mills after 15th May, 1970. They have also intimated that most of the factories in western and central U. P., where the problem of excess cane is more acute, will continue crushing operations in June and some even into July. The State Government are keeping a close watch on the situation and cane is being diverted from one area to another from time to time as necessary. So far diversion and re-adjustments have been arranged in respect of 60 lakh quintals of cane and further diversion will be made as and when necessary and possible.

As regards Bihar, the State Government have intimated that the Cane Department has been taking necessary action to ensure that all sugarcane available in the reserved areas of the factories is crushed before they close down and that none of it is likely to be left uncrushed at the end of the current season. 24 out of the 26 factories that worked during the current season have already closed down after crushing the entire cane in their areas.

STATEMENT RE : SCARCITY CONDITIONS IN CERTAIN PARTS OF BIHAR AND RAJASTHAN

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (SHRI JAGJIWAN RAM): I beg to lay on the Table a statement on the famine conditions in certain parts of Bihar and Rajasthan.

Statement

The Government of Bihar have intimated that scarcity conditions prevail in the Dharbanga District and large parts of the Districts of Champaran, Purnea, Saharsa and Singhbhum; these districts have been declared as scarcity-affected areas. About a crore of the State's population has been reportedly stricken by a drought-induced scarcity. Relief measures have been undertaken to provide employment. A detailed report on the extent and severity of scarcity conditions prevailing in the State, and the relief measures undertaken, has not yet been received, however, from the State Government. On receipt of the report, the question of grant of Central financial assistance will be