

[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 JAGJWAN 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 JAGJWAN 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

considered, and a Central Team will be deputed to assess the situation in the State, if necessary.

As the House is aware, scarcity conditions persist in the Western parts of Rajasthan. During the current year, a population of 72.34 lakhs, spread over 10,873 villages in 21 districts of the State, is in the grip of scarcity. The State Government have declared famine in four western districts of the State, and scarcity in other districts affected by the drought.

Large-scale relief works have been undertaken in Rajasthan to provide employment for the able-bodied persons among the stricken population. The number of persons employed on relief works has mounted from 1.81 lakhs in October, 1969 to 5.99 lakhs in April, 1970. A section of the labour force so employed is working on the Rajasthan Canal Project. 16,175 persons are in receipt of gratuitous relief.

The State Government have also introduced a Special Gratuitous Relief Scheme under which each member of a family is given a loan-cum-grant of Rs. 12.50 p. m. This scheme covers a population of 12.08 lakhs of beneficiaries in the three districts of Bikaner, Barmer and Jaisalmer, and large parts of Jodhpur district.

Elaborate arrangements for supply of drinking water have been taken in hand. The State Government have pressed into service a fleet of 50 four-wheel driven truck-borne tankers which serve about 520 villages. 62 tube-wells have been commissioned so far, and 60 reservoirs have been constructed near the tube-wells to facilitate distribution of drinking water. 15,000 wells have been deepened, and about 955 villages have been brought under a scheme under which drawal of water is subsidised.

Migration of cattle assumed large dimensions this year. About 8 lakh head of cattle migrated to the neighbouring States of Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Punjab in search of pasture. Of this, 1.45 lakh head of cattle were taken to the forest areas within the State. The State Government set up 271 migration depots, and supplied free fodder at the rate of 4 kgs. per head of cattle and half kg. of wheat flour to each cattle breeder accompanying the cattle free of cost. It is estimated that nearly 1.50 lakh persons accompanied migrating cattle. Veterinary services were rendered at migration depots.

4.65 lakh quintals of fodder have been procured by the State Government and distributed through the network of 296 fodder depots. The State Government have also helped voluntary agencies to organise and maintain cattle camps, and have helped with a grant of 65 paise per head of cattle per day at these camps. Preventive health measures have been undertaken and the epidemic situation is under control.

Since January 1969, the Centre has released 4,12,000 tonnes of foodgrains for Rajasthan, which includes 1,00,000 tonnes of milo, 72,000 tonnes of maize and 20,000 tonnes of jowar. Following the removal of zonal restrictions, substantial quantities of foodgrains have been moved into the western parts of Rajasthan through the channels of private trade. Prices have remained generally steady.

The Centre released Rs. 53.50 crores by way of assistance to the Rajasthan Government during 1969-70. A Central Team visited Rajasthan in the first week of this month to assess the situation and recommend the ceiling on expenditure to be incurred over the relief measures during the current financial year. The Team's recommendations will be finalised shortly.

The Government of Rajasthan have undertaken, with the assistance of the Centre, measures to alleviate the distress caused by drought this year. The situation is under control.

STATEMENT RE : ADMISSIBILITY OF HOUSE RENT ALLOWANCE TO CENTRAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE
MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI P. C.
SETHI) : I beg to lay on the Table a copy
of the statement regarding admissibility of
House Rent Allowance to Central Govern-
ment employees.

Statement

Consequent on the treatment of a part of Dearness Allowance of the Central Government employees, as pay, from 1.1.68, such 'Dearness Pay' also counts for the determination of the pay ceiling of Rs. 500/- p.m. fixed for the admissibility of House