

(a) whether it is a fact that the monthly quota of sugar has been fixed as one kilo per head for urban areas and 125 grams per head for the rural areas; and

(b) if so, the reasons for this disparity in the distribution?

The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (Shri D. R. Chavan): (a) and (b). The mode and scale of distribution of sugar, if the distribution is on cards, is determined by the State Governments, after taking into consideration local conditions and circumstances. The scale of distribution varies from State to State and even from district to district in some States.

12 hrs.

RE: CALLING ATTENTION NOTICES

PROPRIETY OF STATEMENTS BEING MADE OUTSIDE ON MATTERS FORMING SUBJECT —MATTER OF CALLING ATTENTION NOTICES

Shri Swell (Assam-Autonomous Districts): Mr. Speaker, before you take up any item I would like to seek your guidance on a point that relates to the proceedings of the House. Yesterday I tabled a notice, calling the attention of the Government to the reported entry of a fugitive person

Mr. Speaker: May I point out . . .

Shri Swell: Please hear me.

Mr. Speaker: That is exactly what I am asking him to do.

Shri Swell: I am not questioning your authority to reject or keep pending any notice given by us. But today morning it has come out in the papers that a spokesman of the External Affairs Ministry has already gone to the press on this question in which he has repudiated the allega-

tions made by the Bhutanese officials. He has given the background leading to the present situation. Now my point of order is this.

Mr. Speaker: Probably he will be satisfied if he just listens to a couple of words from me. Yesterday I kept it under consideration. Now, in view of what has appeared in the papers, I have admitted it today and that would be taken up. Therefore, there is nothing to take it up now.

Shri Swell: Now, my point of order is this.

Mr. Speaker: How does a point of order arise on that?

Shri Swell: Please allow me only one sentence. 24 hours have passed since I have given that notice. Government could have come before this House with a statement before going to the press. Now my point is whether it is not disrespect to this House that Government has gone to the press before it has come before the House.

Mr. Speaker: My decision is that there is no disrespect shown to the House in this matter if some officer has given his reactions. That is not a statement of, I should say, very great importance. I have already admitted the notice and an official statement would be coming soon.

Shri Harish Chandra Mathur (Jalore): It is not a point of order but it is certainly a question of the privilege of the House. When the House is in session and you are seized of a particular matter, how can an officer of the External Affairs Ministry go and make a statement in respect of something which is pending before the House and about which a statement is to be made on the floor of the House?

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members should not be so touchy in this matter. If some news item has appeared in the papers and it is found necessary that at least a brief contradiction should be made, saying that what is alleged in that news item is wrong,

what is the harm? That should be done at the earliest possible opportunity. The detailed statement would of course be made in the House. We have already established a convention or practice that all policy statements must be made inside Parliament if the House is in session. Moreover, special consideration should have been given to this fact that already a calling attention notice was pending and so the House was considering it. I do agree with the hon. Members in that respect. But I do not agree with the view that if an immediate contradiction is required, even then it must wait till we have the time to take it up here in the House.

Some hon. Members rose—

Mr. Speaker: Not so many at a time. Let the first point of order be finished. I have already noted those who have risen in their seats. I will give them time, but only one at a time. Let me first hear Shri Mathur.

Shri Ranga (Chittoor): If only Government had been a little more careful all this would not have arisen.

Shri Harish Chandra Mathur: Sir, you have been good enough to concede the point which we have raised. You have, however, stated that it is a brief statement and the External Affairs Ministry could not wait. I wonder why the statement could not have been made here yesterday itself. The minister could have very well come forward with a statement. They knew very well that a statement had to be made to dispel certain misgivings which have been created by the statements of certain people. In the light of the calling attention notice which had been referred to the Ministry, it was the duty of the Ministry to have come forward with a statement in the House itself. Then, all this could have been avoided.

Shri Nath Pai (Rajapur): Mr. Speaker, my submission is more or less on the lines on which it has been made by my hon. friend, Shri Mathur. You have been kind enough to admit

our motion on a matter which is worrying everybody. It is a not a party matter; the whole House is concerned at the statement made by the fugitive Bhutanese officials. If the officer of the External Affairs Ministry was in possession of the information, which was given to the press to clear up the position, the Minister would also have been in possession of the same information, which could have been easily given to the House. You have admitted our notice and it is not being answered because they want to collect the information. How to reconcile this claim that they want to collect the information and, therefore, my notice cannot be answered in the House with this statement made? All the points covered in my notice have already been dealt with. I do not take it in the limited sphere of encroachment; but what exactly does the Government try or want to follow?

Shri D. C. Sharma (Gurdaspur): I beg to submit very respectfully that somehow the impression is gaining ground in the country that these officials are making policy statements when they are not to do so. Take the case of the atomic energy official. He made a statement about the manufacture of atomic weapons. Now this official has made some statement. I want to ask if this Government is being run by officials (*Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear*) or by the Ministers or by the Lok Sabha or the Rajya Sabha. Who is running this Government? When these officials are making such great official statements, who is running this Government? (*Interruption*).

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. Shri Azad.

Shri Bhagwat Jha Azad (Bhagalpur): Mr. Speaker, Sir,..... (*Interruption*).

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. Is the simultaneous talking also one of the programmes here? When one hon. Member has been called, the others

[Mr. Speaker]

should at least show this courtesy that they listen to him.

Shri Bhagwat Jha Azad: I would like to emphasize and reinforce the statement just now made by my hon. friend. You have already said in this House that when we are on such important matters and when we draw your attention to it and you are good enough either to keep it pending or to admit it, it is not desirable for the Government officials to come up with a statement. Just now you have qualified it by saying that it is true that the Government should not make it but if it is necessary to contradict it a brief statement may be given. May I submit that in this particular case there was nothing so important that the Government should not have waited for another 12 or 15 hours? The House adjourned yesterday at 5 o'clock before which they could have made a statement; but if they could not, there was nothing serious between 5 P.M. yesterday and 11 A.M. today which could lead the Government to make this statement. The disrespect shown to this House has been taken note of. But this qualification of yours will give to the officials a very big handle by which they will use indiscriminately and do it. Therefore it would be good if your ruling is definite and is binding upon the Government and the Government should know that when the House is in session and we draw your attention to something, they should not make such statements.

Shri Hem Barua (Gauhati): I just want to submit one thing.

Mr. Speaker: The feeling is now well known.

Shri Nath Pai: They are not moved by this.

Shri Kapur Singh (Ludhiana): That is the trouble.

Shri Hem Barua: As far as I know there was jubilation yesterday in cer-

tain quarters of the External Affairs Ministry and these people were very happy. They used these words that the House was sleeping and did not try to pinpoint this abnormal situation in Bhutan. From the statement made by this official yesterday it can be deduced that there is some sort of a conspiracy somewhere to by-pass the House whenever an occasion arises.

Shri D. C. Sharma: No, no.

Shri Hem Barua: Because we did not take up this matter yesterday the External Affairs Ministry has come out with a very long and elaborate statement because they were very happy and that is why they said that the House was sleeping. This tendency is a very wrong and a very bad tendency, that is, to try to put us into a very tight corner. I submit it for your consideration.

Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath (Hoshangabad): On a point of clarification with regard to the observation—I will not call it a ruling—which you made earlier that it was a certain officer of the Government of the Ministry who made the statement. I am inclined to the view that if the observation that you made is carried to its logical conclusion, it will go to the root of the matter, to the root of the fundamental tenets of parliamentary democracy. I believe in the set-up that we are functioning under, the parliamentary democratic set-up, every Ministry is responsible for the statement or the action of every officer functioning in that Ministry, and it is the Minister who is held responsible for the action or the statement made by the officer concerned. Therefore, I would earnestly urge you to reconsider this matter and hold that any action or any statement made by any officer in the Government is a statement emanating from the Government unless and until there is a contradiction thereof by the Minister in the House. (*Interruptions*).

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. Mr. Kamath has said what he wanted to say.

Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath: He should be called to order. Why should I only be (Interruption).

Shri A. P. Sharma (Buxar): I only supported Mr. Kamath.

Shri Bhagwat Jha Azad: He was only supporting Mr. Kamath.

Mr. Speaker: Unsolicited support, of course, would have that reaction. Why should he give that support? Shri Bade. Does he want to say anything new? So many Members have spoken and have said the same thing.

Shri Bade (Khargone): I quite agree with Mr. Nath Pai. I want to add this that when a Calling Attention notice is submitted to you, you always send it on to the Minister and the Minister is in possession of the fact that the Calling Attention notice is pending in the House. Why then make a statement like this? That means the officer must have made the statement with the consent of the Minister. It is a question of the breach of privilege of the House.

Mr. Speaker: Would the Minister like to say anything?

The Minister of Home Affairs (Shri Nanda): If you direct me to do so, I might say something.

Mr. Speaker: There is one thing that I might bring to the notice of the Minister before he says anything, because he must know the facts. So far as these points of order are concerned, I have said already that if the House is in session and some important statement, particularly when it is a policy statement, is to be made, then certainly it should be made inside the House and not outside. But we cannot exclude the possibility of some occasion arising when it becomes necessary that an immediate statement be made. Therefore,

it is to be qualified by that sentence always and if my qualification has been objected to, there I cannot agree. (interruption).

Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath: We did not object to that. The Minister is responsible. (Interruption).

Mr. Speaker: Will they kindly listen to me now?

Now, the second thing in this particular case is, of course, the fact that a Calling Attention notice was pending. I had sent it on to the Ministry—and I have to—to find out whether they have any information or whether they can disclose it immediately or they want to a little time because I want to avoid waste of time. First I call them in the morning and sometimes they say that they have no information and that they will collect it and that some time be given, and they might give the information next day. In order to avoid any delay or unnecessary waste of time, I usually send these notices to the Ministry. Now, this notice had been sent to the Ministry and the Ministry was in possession of those facts that a notice had been given. With that fact, of course, with them, if it was very necessary to make a statement, then that statement should have been made here. (Interruption).

That, of course, is a fact which must be considered and in future some precaution must be taken in that regard. So far as admission by me is concerned, I can now disclose to the House that I sent it on to the Ministry for information and I did not get any information till this morning....

Some Hon. Members: Shame, shame.

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. Where is the question of any shame? (Interruptions) They should have patience to hear me.

Shri Bade: It is a question of shame.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Bade should sit down. (*Interruption*). Since I did not get any information, and I thought that the matter was important, therefore, without waiting further, I admitted it this morning. That was what I could do. But I would request hon. Ministers just to take care to see that when information on such an important matter is asked for, and when the Ministers or their Ministries also do consider that it is an important matter on which a statement must be made immediately, more attention is paid to the notices that have been given here, and the very information could have been given here later in the day, if not in the morning.

Shri Nanda: The manner in which you have laid down the procedure and the words that you have spoken now are totally unexceptionable; you have put the thing very clearly and it should be adhered to faithfully and carefully.

As regards the facts of the present case, I am not conversant with them. You know, Sir, that I just was coming along, and I did not know that there was a calling attention notice coming up later on and I did not know what might be raised here.

But to my mind it is very clear also that there could not be any intention on the part of anybody to flout either the convention of the House or...

Shri Raghunath Singh (Varanasi): There is no question of intention here. (*Interruptions*).

Shri Nanda: Would the hon. Members be better pleased if there was such an intention? There is no intention. But if there has been any breach, certainly that is regrettable.

As for the facts concerning this matter, I would have them looked into, and the necessary explanation will be forthcoming for the information of the House. The conventions

of the House and the Directions of the Speaker should be and will be observed, and if anything has happened which has made for this difficulty, I would submit that it will be avoided in the future.

As for the other observations made, I do not think that I need deal with them. We, the officers and the Government and the Parliament and the Ministers, all of us are running the Government.

Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath: I am sorry, Sir, that you have not been pleased to answer the point that I had raised, namely whether a Minister is or is not responsible and accountable for the statements and actions of the officers of his Ministry?

Shri Nanda: He is responsible.

Mr. Speaker: I have said that he is responsible.

Shri Nanda: That responsibility is not denied.

12.17 hrs.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

STATEMENT REGARDING RISE IN WHEAT PRICES IN DELHI

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri C. Subramaniam): I beg to lay on the Table a statement regarding rise in the prices of wheat in Delhi. [*Placed in Library. See No. LT—3563/64.*]

INDIAN AIRCRAFT (THIRD AMENDMENT) RULES

The Minister of Transport (Shri Raj Bahadur): On behalf of Shri Kanungo, I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Indian Aircraft (Third Amendment) Rules, 1964, published in Notification No. GSR 1655 dated the 21st November, 1964, under section 14A of the Aircraft Act, 1934, together with an explanatory note. [*Placed in Library. See No. LT—3564/64.*]