

**Shri Maheswar Nalk:** In view of the congestion, may I know whether there is any obstacle for entry into the docks?

**Shri Bhagwat:** Silting? For that usually done. For some time, it was not possible because four dredgers were sent for annual survey and overhauling. That difficulty will not be there.

**Mr. Speaker:** Question hour is over. Short noticequestion.

#### SHORT NOTICE QUESTION

12 hrs.

#### Price of Rice in West Bengal

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S.N. Q. } **Shri P. R. Chakraverti:**  
 No. 2. } **Shri Sudhansu Das:**  
 } **Shri Subodh Hansda:**  
 } **Shri S. C. Samanta:**  
 } **Shri B. K. Das:**  
 } **Shri M. L. Dwivedi:**  
 } **Shrimati Renu Chakravartty:**  
 } **Shri P. K. Deo:**  
 } **Shri P. K. Ghosh:**  
 } **Shri Dinen Bhattacharya:**

Will the Minister of **Food and Agriculture** be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been an abnormal rise in price of rice in West Bengal exceeding by Rs. 5/- per maund the price in the corresponding period last year;

(b) whether it is a fact that this year's production of Aman rice has gone down by nearly 9 lac tons as compared to 1961 production; and

(c) what steps have been taken by the Union Government in ensuring prompt supply of rice and wheat to West Bengal to bring down the prices?

**The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, (Shri A. M. Thomas):** (a): The prices of rice in West Bengal this year are higher as compared to last year.

(b) According to present indications, the production of rice in West Bengal this year will be less than that of last year by about 3 to 4 lakh tons.

(c) The West Bengal Government have been assured of adequate supply of rice from Central stocks during the current year in addition to whatever quantities of rice and paddy are moved to West Bengal from Orissa on trade account and are brought from border areas in Nepal as part of traditional border trade. The distribution of wheat has also been liberalized and the State Government have been told that the Government of India would be prepared to supply from Central stocks whatever quantity of wheat they may require for distribution in the State.

**Shri P. R. Chakraverti:** With a view to alleviating the sufferings of the people, have the Government started fair price shops and if so, at what price are wheat and rice being supplied?

**Shri A. M. Thomas:** In West Bengal, there are as many as 11,072 fair-price shops. We are supplying wheat at the rate of Rs. 14 per maund and common rice at the rate of Rs. 16 per maund.

**Shri P. R. Chakraverti:** Has the Government devised any scheme for introducing rationing in the near future?

**Shri A. M. Thomas:** I do not think there is any necessity for introducing rationing there.

**Shri Subodh Hansda:** In view of the constant shortage of rice in West Bengal, may I know whether the Government's attention has been drawn to the fact that there is large potential for small irrigation schemes and whether any special fund is allotted to the Government of West Bengal for this purpose to increase production?

**Shri A. M. Thomas:** The shortage in West Bengal, according to me, has, to a certain extent been exaggerated. There has been some difficulty in the eastern rice zone consisting of Orissa and West Bengal. The position in West Bengal would be affected by the position in Orissa. Unfortunately, this year, there has been considerable loss in foodgrains due to drought in three districts adjoining West Bengal so that the normal flow on trade account to West Bengal has, to a certain extent, been affected. Apart from that, there has been a levy introduced by the Orissa Government, paddy 40 per cent and rice 25 per cent. Procurement prices are also enhanced. These factors also have to some extent affected the supplies to West Bengal. But the House must bear in mind that it is not proper to compare the production in the current year with the production in 1961. In 1961 there has been an increase in production in West Bengal to the extent of 1.2 million tons as compared with the previous year which was an abnormal year as far as West Bengal is concerned. Even this year, it is expected that the production would come to about 4.3 million tons to 4.4 million tons, and that itself is somewhat more than the production in 1959-60 which was to a certain extent a normal year.

**Shri S. C. Samanta:** The hon. Deputy Minister has said that in the eastern region, Orissa may not be able to supply some rice this year. May I know whether the Madhya Pradesh Government which has surplus rice, both parboiled and broken, which was being supplied to West Bengal through trade channels has now informed the West Bengal Government that it will not be able to supply rice, and if so, whether the Central Government will look into it?

**Shri A. M. Thomas:** It was not any substantial quantity; it was broken rice, and the quantity was of the order of 5000 or 10,000 tons, and that was all. But we are supplying to West Bengal from the Central stocks. Having regard to the present situation

we have told them that we shall supply to the extent of 1½ lakhs tons of rice besides any quantity of wheat that they may require.

Even with regard to the shortage of three to four lakhs tons, the marketable surplus would be only one-third of that, so that we need not get unduly worried about the short-fall as far as the consumer prices are concerned. We are constantly in touch with the State Governments of Orissa and West Bengal, and taking every step to ease the situation. The House would be interested to know that during the last five or six weeks, the prices have not gone up but are remaining steady, and the latest indication is that there is some small decline also in West Bengal.

**Shrimati Renu Chakravarty:** In view of the fact that the hon. Minister denies that there is a shortage of 9 lakhs tons which is the figure given by the State Chief Minister, and in view also of the fact that it is clear that the prices have shot up because of private trade, may I know the reason why Government have refused to go in for State trading in rice whether it be in a bumper year or in a lean year, since there is a chronic rise in prices and also shortage of rice in West Bengal?

**Shri A. M. Thomas:** We have a bitter experience of having resorted to State trading previously; in a deficit State we should be very careful in the matter of resorting to procurement. Even the difficulties of West Bengal have been partly due to the procurement that is being carried on in Orissa, to the extent of 20 per cent and 40 per cent in the case of rice and paddy respectively, so that the normal flow of trade on trade account to West Bengal has been affected considerably. We have taken up the matter with the Orissa Government and we have assured the Orissa Government that we shall make available to them whatever quantities of rice may be necessary for supply through fair price shops, so that the

normal trade flow to West Bengal need not be affected.

**Shri P. K. Deo:** In this regard, I may draw your attention to a news item which has appeared in *The Statesman* of today, which says that:

"A General Secretary of the Congress Parliamentary Party accused the Orissa Government of profiteering by selling at Rs. 35 per maund rice acquired at half that rate."

May I know whether this matter is going to be enquired into by the Government of India so that the Orissa Government does not make excess profit, taking advantage of the shortage in West Bengal even though they are in the same region?

**Mr. Speaker:** It is a suggestion for action.

**Shri A. M. Thomas:** I do not know what statement the hon. Member is referring to. Our information is that the Orissa Government....

**Mr. Speaker:** It is a suggestion for action.

श्री म० ला० द्विवेदी : माननीय मंत्री जी ने कहा है कि चावल का उत्पादन काम होने की वजह से वहां पर मूल्यों में बढ़ती हुई है। मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि सरकार ऐसा प्रबन्ध क्यों नहीं करती है कि यदि वहां उत्पादन कम हुआ है, तो दूसरी जगहों से चावल पहुंचा करके चावल के मूल्यों को न बढ़ने दिया जाये ?

**Mr. Speaker:** That is a suggestion for action.

#### WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

##### Hybrids of Bajra and Jowar

\*250. **Shri Surendra Pal Singh:** Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture

be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian Research Institute has been carrying on experiments for some time past on producing suitable hybrids of Bajra and Jowar seeds; and

(b) if so, what has been the outcome of those experiments?

**The Minister of State in the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (Dr. Ram Subhag Singh):** (a) Yes. Experiments are underway at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi, under an All-India Coordinated Programme sponsored by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research on the breeding of suitable hybrids of jowar and bajra.

(b) 21 hybrids of jowar and 10 hybrids of bajra were tried all over India during 1962. Among these 4 of jowar and 6 of bajra have given considerably greater yield than the varieties presently under cultivation in the country. In bajra, an improved variety evolved by selection from material imported from Ghana in Africa has already been released for cultivation.

##### Committee on Panchayat Resources

\*253. **Dr. L. M. Singhvi:** Will the Minister of Community Development and Cooperation be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Committee on Panchayat Resources has submitted its report;

(b) if so, the main recommendations thereof; and

(c) if not, the progress made so far by the Committee?

**The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Community Development and Cooperation (Shri Syam Dhar Misra):**

(a) No.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The Team has so far made an "on-the-spot study" in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Mysore and Madras.