

(b) to (d) Question does not arise.

Rise of Foodgrain Prices in Orissa

*1340. **Shri Surendranath Dwivedy:** Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of Government has been drawn to the recent rise in prices of foodgrains particularly of rice in Orissa and acute shortage of supply at some places;

(b) whether the Central Government have ascertained facts regarding this abnormal situation; and

(c) what steps, if any, have been taken in the matter?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Shinde): (a) to (c). There has been some rise in prices of rice in Orissa and it has been ascertained from the State Government that in some parts of coastal districts of Cuttack, Balasore and Phulbani the market supplies have been somewhat short of the demand. The State Government are moving to these areas stocks of rice available with them in the surplus districts, and distribution of rice through retail shops in these areas of coastal districts is being liberalized.

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy: Is it not a fact that rice sells at Rs. 2 per seer in these areas, and this is due to the fact that most of the rice and paddy is exported to West Bengal on account of the food zone, resulting in shortage of supply and increase in prices?

The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Food (Shri A. M. Thomas): There has been some rise in the price of rice, to the extent of about Rs. 4 per maund as compared to what was existing towards the beginning of this year. But this rise is, to a certain extent, a corrective, because after the formation of the Zone and after the bumper crop in West Bengal, there has been a fall to an extent which we did not really want. In fact, the State Government

is rushing stocks to areas where prices are high. It has got about 15,000 odd tons of rice in its possession. Fair price shops have been opened in these areas and distribution is made.

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy: Is it a fact that people want paddy but there is no stock of paddy with the State Government? If so, are the Government of India going to give them paddy?

Shri A. M. Thomas: It is not correct. The stock of 15,423 tons includes paddy also.

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy: How much of it is paddy and how much rice and what is the shortage?

Shri A. M. Thomas: A substantial quantity is in paddy.

Cultivation of Sea-Island Cotton

*1341. **Shri Warrior:**
Shri Indrajit Gupta:

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

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to abandon all schemes to encourage cultivation of Sea-Island cotton; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (Dr. Ram Subhag Singh): (a) No.

(b) Does not arise.

Shri Warrior: Is it a fact that the field staff engaged in Sea-Island cotton cultivation has been served with notice of discharge and the entire staff is now without job?

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: No, it is not correct. In Kerala, the cultivation of Sea-Island cotton is not proving so successful. Therefore, it is planned to extend this scheme to other States where it can be successfully grown.

Shri Warrior: May I know whether Government have ascertained the