

independently, keeping before themselves only the best interest of the country and nothing else.

Food Situation in Kerala

S.N.Q. No. 20. Shri V. P. Nayar: Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) whether an All Parties Conference in Trivandrum on 18th September, 1958 has requested the Government of India to supply at least 10,000 tons of rice to Kerala immediately;

(b) whether it is a fact that due to lack of supplies to fair price shops, rice prices have been going up in Kerala; and

(c) what steps the Government propose to take to meet the situation?

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri A. P. Jain): (a) Yes, a request to that effect has been received from the Food Minister of Kerala.

(b) There is no lack of supplies in the Southern Rice Zone. Although, of late, there has been some rise, the prices of rice in that zone are much lower than those prevailing in many parts of the country. The wholesale price of common rice in the Southern Zone including Kerala ranges between Rs. 19 and Rs. 21.50 per maund as against the prices of:—

	Rs.	Rs.
	per maund	
West Bengal	25.00	to 37.00
Bihar	24.25	to 27.50
Bombay	21.00	to 30.50
U.P.	21.50	to 24.50

2. Since the deficit of Kerala is more than covered by the surplus in the Southern Rice Zone, Kerala Government's requirements could be met by purchases within the Zone. It was decided that the Kerala Government would contribute Rs. 1 crore annually for subsidizing sale of rice. The Kerala Government have spent only a few lac of rupees and if there was any paucity of rice at the fair price shops, the State Government could buy and sell rice at subsidized rates.

3. Large scale movement of rice is taking place to Kerala on trade account. With the arrival of Kani crop in Kerala, Kurvai in Madras and Basangi in Andhra, the rice supply in the Southern Zone will improve further.

(c) The Food Minister of Kerala is today going to meet the Central Food Minister when the situation will be discussed.

Shri V. P. Nayar: May I know whether it is a fact that Kerala's purchase of rice has been confined to Andhra on the Government account and at present in the surplus districts of Andhra rice is available at prices far above the prices fixed by the Government of India so that it is almost impossible for the Government to purchase from those districts where there is surplus, notwithstanding the illegality of paying more price?

Shri A. P. Jain: The whole of the southern zone is open to the Kerala Government for making purchases of rice, and it is for them to have chosen the regions where they have to make purchases.

Shri V. P. Nayar: Are the Government of India aware that despite a recurring deficit to the extent of 50 per cent in Kerala the price of rice in Kerala is the lowest in India all these days and that that was due to the fair and proper distribution of the little quantity made available to that Government?

Shri A. P. Jain: Government have been a little more partial to Kerala in supplying the rice, and even today we are prepared to help to the extent possible.

Shri V. P. Nayar: The hon. Minister says that the Government of India have been a little more partial. May I know from him what is the total monthly average of rice supplied during the last six months as compared to the total monthly average in the six months before the last six months?

Shri A. P. Jain: The two figures are not comparable, because the zone had just been formed in the earlier six months. Now, the zone has become effective. So, it will not be proper to compare the two figures. Nonetheless, I could say that while Madras has been supplied no rice, Mysore has been supplied no rice during the recent months, Kerala has been supplied no less than 40,000 tons of rice. Besides we have advanced a loan of 24,400 tons to Kerala, out of which they have returned only 5,000 tons.

Shri A. K. Gopalan: May I know whether it is a fact that while according to the Central Government the surplus in Andhra is about 9 lakh tons, the Chief Minister of Andhra has said that according to him it is only 5 lakh to 6 lakh tons and that out of the 5 lakh to 6 lakhs, according to the Andhra Chief Minister, about 2½ lakhs have been taken by the Central Government from that zone?

Shri A. P. Jain: These are anybody's judgment and anybody's guesses, but the surplus of rice in Andhra is very heavy. Here, I may also add that large quantities of rice are transported from Tanjore to Kerala.

Shri A. K. Gopalan: The question was whether the Chief Minister of Andhra had definitely stated that they do not agree with the Central Government that it is 9 lakh tons. They have said that it is only 5 lakh to 6 lakh tons. I want to know whether there is any difference as far as the surplus is concerned between the Central Government and the Andhra Government.

Mr. Speaker: He said anybody is entitled to have a say.

Shri Nagi Reddy: May I know whether it is a fact that rice from Andhra is being illegally transported to Bombay and other places after procurement that has been made by the Central Government, and because of this particular reason of illegal transporta-

tion, there is not much rice available in Andhra at present?

Shri A. P. Jain: I am quite sure that there is plenty of rice available in the southern zone. As regards smuggling, it is true that sometime press reports have appeared about smuggling of rice from Andhra to other States. We wrote to the Chief Minister and he has taken strong measures to put down smuggling.

Shri Ranga: Is it not a fact that the Chief Minister of Andhra and the various organisations also in Andhra have complained to the Government of India that they have been keeping down the Andhra rice-price in order to subsidize Kerala?

Shri A. P. Jain: There has been an allegation to that effect.

Shri Thirumala Rao: Are the Government aware that the Kerala Government have appointed a one-man Commission consisting of a retired High Court Judge to enquire into the recent rice purchases by the Kerala Government in Andhra through their own agencies and, if so, may I know whether the Government have got the proceedings or the report of that Commission?

Shri A. P. Jain: The Central Government had had nothing to do with those purchases. Every Member of this House knows that there were certain serious types of allegations, and the Kerala Government have appointed a one-man Commission to look into them.

Shri Tyagi: I have two questions to put. One is this. May I know if the Kerala Government only recently reduced its food subsidy from Rs. 1½ crores to Rs. 1 crore this year and, if so, was the Central Government consulted, and did the Central Government agree to this and, if so, on what grounds?

Shri A. P. Jain: Before the re-organisation of the States, the Government of Travancore-Cochin used to give a subsidy of Rs. 1.5 crores.

Since the present Ministry came to power they have reduced it to Rs. 1 crore and they have also consulted us in the matter.

Shri Thana Pillai: The hon. Minister says that he was rather partial to Kerala. May I know whether this partiality is the outcome of the fear that a food agitation will be started in Kerala also as in U.P.?

Shri A. P. Jain: Food agitation is a bad thing. I want to avoid it. But, food agitation cannot compel me to do a particular thing.

Shri Tyagi: To what conclusion has the one-man Commission of Mr. Justice P. T. Raman Nair come in regard to the investigations where it was alleged that the Kerala Government allowed its agent-traders to purchase rice from Andhra at a price of Rs. 3-7-0 per maund while the prices there were possibly Rs. 2-8-0 per maund less?

Shri A. P. Jain: The fact of the matter is that the Kerala Government never consulted us about this deal. It is all their own affair. So far as I understand from newspapers, the Commission is enquiring and it has not come to any conclusion.

Shri Heda: May I know whether the Government is considering to give a better or fair price for the procurement of rice in Andhra especially in view of the fact that the Kerala State Government has given a far better price than the price fixed by the Central Government?

Shri A. P. Jain: Surely, any higher price paid by the Kerala Government cannot be any argument for the Centre raising its rate of procurement. The whole question of what will be the rates of procurement for the future is under consideration of the Government.

Shri V. P. Nayar: I want to know what the total stocks held by the Government of India in the Central godowns in Kerala are, and whether the Government of India will permit the

Kerala Government to purchase rice in view of its non-availability at controlled prices or at more than controlled prices from the four districts of Andhra?

Shri A. P. Jain: It is for the Kerala Government to buy wherever they like at market rates. So far as our stocks are concerned, I cannot give the figure. But, nonetheless, wherever our stocks may be, they are meant for the whole of India. If they happen to be located in a particular State, they are not necessarily available for that particular State.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Age Limits of Railway Ministerial Staff

*1650. **Shri S. L. Saksena:** Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to lay a statement showing:

(a) the different age limits for superannuation of Ministerial staff on State Railways; and

(b) the reasons for such differences?

The Deputy Minister of Railways (Shri Shah Nawaz Khan): (a) Under the extant rules the age of retirement of all Railway Servants is 55 years. However, a Ministerial Railway Servant who was appointed to permanent Government Service prior to 1.4.1938 might be required to retire at the age of 55 years, but may ordinarily be retained in service if he continues to be efficient and medically fit, upto 60 years.

(b) This is a condition of service applicable to Ministerial staff appointed to permanent service prior to 1.4.1938.

Facilities to Passengers in 'M.V. Andamans'

*1653. **Sardar A. S. Saigal:** Will the Minister of Transport and Communications be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of complaints are recorded by passengers in