

PROCUREMENT OF FOODGRAINS IN ASSAM

*245. **Shri R. K. Chaudhury:** Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state the present policy of the Government of India in the matter of:—

- (i) procurement by the Government of Assam of rice and paddy in the State itself;
- (ii) free movement of rice and paddy within the State; and
- (iii) supply of imported foodstuffs such as sugar, flour, salt and *atta* in urban and rural areas?

The Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri M. V. Krishnappa):

(i) and (ii). The policy of the Assam Government in regard to procurement of rice and paddy, as approved by the Government of India, is one of the maximization of internal availabilities, through a system of procurement best adapted to local conditions. In accordance with this, Assam has a system of monopoly procurement with restrictions on inter-district movements from and into rationed areas.

(iii) Sugar has been derationed since second half of May, 1952. Consumers can now buy sugar from the open market. Salt has also been derationed and maximum retail sale prices have been fixed by Government for different areas. *Atta* is issued as a part of the daily ration. Flour is issued by Government on a liberal scale to individual consumers, factories, bakeries, establishments etc. subject to availability. Distribution of flour and *atta* is made through licensed dealers in rationed areas and through selected retailers in rural areas.

Shri R. K. Chaudhury: May I know if the old system of procurement of rice is still continuing in Assam, that is to say, the paddy is purchased by the Government and then distributed among the people?

Shri M. V. Krishnappa: Throughout Assam the monopoly procurement system exists, but in the *thanas* bordering Pakistan procurement is done by means of a direct levy on the producer.

Shri R. K. Chaudhury: Is it a fact that the rice sells at a lower price in the market than the rationed and controlled rice?

Shri M. V. Krishnappa: According to the present indications rice is being sold in the open market in many places in India much below the issue price in the ration shops. It is a good sign.

Shri R. K. Chaudhury: Is it a fact that the restrictions on inter-district movements in Assam have been removed?

Shri M. V. Krishnappa: No. The Assam Government have sent us a proposal to enlarge the area and to include the contiguous areas even beyond a district. We have sent a Central officer to study the question and the matter is still under consideration.

Shri R. K. Chaudhury: Is it a fact that within the district itself there is restriction on the movement of rice?

Shri M. V. Krishnappa: We are not aware of it. But according to the monopoly procurement system both inter-district movement and internal movement are restricted.

Shri R. K. Chaudhury: Is it a fact that this restriction has acted very adversely on the class of people comprising Government servants, poor teachers and others who cannot purchase the paddy when it is harvested and who have to wait and pay higher prices?

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Kidwai): I can appreciate it by the experience in other States; free movement will help in lowering down of prices.

Shri Sarmah: Is it a fact that by the time the *atta* reaches the consumer in Assam it is so stale that it is almost unfit for human consumption?

Shri Kidwai: Maybe. At some places this may be the case.

Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava: If food prices in the free market are less than what the controlled prices are, does it not constitute a position in which decontrol should have full play?

Shri M. V. Krishnappa: It is a temporary phase. For some time it will be like that and again prices will shoot up after some time. We must be very careful and cautious about this.

Shri Sarmah: What are the places in Assam where *atta* reaches the consumer in fairly good condition?

Shri Kidwai: We have not received any complaint. For the first time the hon. Member has voiced the complaint. And I think the Assam Government should take care of it.

Shri Sarmah: If I understood the hon. Minister right, he said that generous ration is given in respect of flour. What is the quantity of flour rationed for each individual?

Shri M. V. Krishnappa: I have not got the figures here. If the hon. Member is interested I am prepared to give him those figures.

Shri Sarmah: Then, what was the basis of his statement that it is given in generous quantity?

Shri Kidwai: It is the Assam Government that has supplied this information. And whatever the Assam Government considers generous is generous, because they have informed us of this.

Shri R. K. Chaudhury: What is the measure of generosity of the Government of India so far as Assam is concerned?

Shri Kidwai: I think the hon. Member, who comes from Assam, should know better whether what the Government calls generous is generous or is not generous.

CANCER

*246. **Sardar A. S. Saigal:** (a) Will the Minister of Health be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the International Cancer Research Commission was of the view that present knowledge on Cancer was not "adequate enough"?

(b) Do Government propose to examine the points suggested by Dr. V. R. Khanolkar, President of the Commission?

The Minister of Health (Rajkumari Amrit Kaur): (a) It is a fact that many problems regarding the etiology of cancer have not yet been solved.

(b) The proceedings of the Conference have not yet been received by Government. The points raised at the Conference will of course be examined.

Shri V. P. Nayar: May I know whether any separate research is being carried on under the auspices of the Government of India for finding out the real causes of cancer?

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur: Yes, Sir, the Government of India has now got the Cancer Research Institute in Bombay under its control, and research is being carried on there.

Shri V. P. Nayar: By how long does Government expect that research in this direction will bear fruit?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: What is this question? Research is endless as far as we have been able to see.

Shri V. P. Nayar: To find out the actual causes.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: It goes on all over the world. In Canada there is a research institute. All that I wish to point out is that such questions do not serve any purpose. Research is infinite, and in various parts of the world such research is being made. They will benefit by one another's researches. Therefore it is not confined to this country alone.

Sardar A. S. Saigal: There was a Conference on Cancer Research Commission, about its proceedings, I asked the question.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: That is all right. But what is the question?

Sardar A. S. Saigal: I have no supplementaries to make.

MOBILE POST OFFICES

*247. **Shri Gidwani:** (a) Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state whether final proposals for two mobile post offices in Bombay have been sent to Government for sanction?

(b) If so, has the necessary sanction been granted?

The Deputy Minister of Communications (Shri Raj Bahadur): (a) Yes.

(b) Not yet. The matter is still under examination.

Shri Gidwani: How long it will take?

Shri Raj Bahadur: This is a question of rather general application. We have got to expand facilities for mobile post offices. In large towns which have a population of more than five lakhs, we are trying to design a mobile post office van which may afford all necessary facilities and conveniences of a post office.

Shri Gidwani: May I know in how many places this scheme is worked out?

Shri Raj Bahadur: Four places.

Shri Gidwani: Which are those places?

Shri Raj Bahadur: It has been answered a number of times—Madras, Nagpur, Delhi and Kanpur.

TELEPHONE SYSTEM IN BOMBAY

*248. **Shri Gidwani:** (a) Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state whether it is a fact that there is a great demand for new telephone connections in the city of Bombay?

(b) Is there any scope for expanding the service?