

LOK SABHA

Wednesday, November 25, 1959/  
Agrahayana 4, 1881 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of  
the Clock.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair.]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Foodgrain Prices

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- \*271. { Shri Panigrahi:  
Shri Shree Narayan Das:  
Shri S. M. Banerjee:  
Shri D. C. Sharma:  
Shri Supakar:  
Shri Vasudevan Nair:  
Shri Warior:  
Shri Punnoose:

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

(a) what were the prevailing prices of important foodgrains in different parts of the country on the 31st October, 1959; and

(b) how do they compare with the prices of important foodgrains on the 31st October, 1958 and at the end of June, 1959?

**The Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri A. M. Thomas):** (a) and (b). A comparative statement showing the whole-sale market prices of important foodgrains in certain selected centres of the country as on 1st November, 1958, 26th/27th June, 1959 and 2nd November, 1959, is laid on the Table of the Sabha. [See Appendix I, annexure No. 83.]

**Shri Panigrahi:** What were the retail prices in places like Andhra, 269(Ai)LSD—1.

Orissa and West Bengal on these two dates?

**Shri A. M. Thomas:** Many of these are wholesale prices for 1 maund and above. Retail prices, of course, will be a little more. We have not got figures with regard to retail prices.

**Shri Panigrahi:** From the statement it is seen that the price has gone up in almost all the rice-producing areas like Andhra and West Bengal. What is the reason for prices going up from 26-7-1959 to 2-11-1959?

**Shri A. M. Thomas:** Taking India as a whole, the all-India price indices of foodgrains except in the case of jowar and ragi are appreciably lower than the prices which existed during this period last year. From the first week of November, the prices have shown a declining tendency. We hope they will show a further decline. With regard to wheat, the index is much lower than the index obtaining last year. With regard to some stations which have been mentioned in the south, of course, in the south rice prices are a little more than the prices last year.

**Shri S. M. Banerjee:** From the statement it appears that the picture is very encouraging. But I want to know whether it has been brought to the notice of the hon. Minister that the prices obtaining in the open market of wheat and rice are far more than the prices of wheat and rice in the fair-price shops? What steps are being taken to stabilise the prices in the open market also?

**Shri A. M. Thomas:** That is not quite correct. The prices we have now indicated are prices of common variety. Perhaps with regard to fine and super-fine varieties, the prices are higher.

With regard to the steps, the House knows we are distributing large quantities through fair-price shops. We should have distributed in the course of this year more than 4 million tons of wheat and rice, which is a substantial quantity.

**Shrimati Jayaben Shah:** May I know why the prices in Bombay State, especially Saurashtra, are so high compared to Punjab and other States?

**Shri A. M. Thomas:** Bombay is a deficit State. That is why I said that thought is being bestowed as to how to solve this problem of high disparity in prices between Madhya Pradesh and Bombay. Of course, there is that difference between the prices in Bombay and Madhya Pradesh.

**Sardar A. S. Saigal:** May I know how the prices have compared in Madhya Pradesh, Bombay and other States?

**Shri A. M. Thomas:** I have already said that the price of Madhya Pradesh rice is rather low compared to the prices obtaining in Bombay. In some cases, there is a difference of even 10 per cent. That is why we are taking necessary steps to see that this disparity does not exist.

**Mr. Speaker:** Let hon. Members look into the statement before putting questions. It is all contained in the statement.

**Shrimati Renuka Ray:** Has the Minister not seen the disparity between the prices in different parts of India? If it will be removed if the zonal system is done away with, are necessary steps going to be taken in this regard?

**The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri S. K. Patil):** We are glad to have this information.

**Shrimati Renuka Ray:** Are any steps being taken?

**Shri S. K. Patil:** Steps are being taken. We are doing our best to convince the people. Sometimes we find it difficult to convince them.

**Shri Supakar:** What steps Government are taking to make prices of foodgrains stable throughout the year?

**Shri A. M. Thomas:** The very object of buffer-stock operations is to maintain the prices of foodgrains at the same level throughout the year.

**Shri D. C. Sharma:** Is the Minister aware of the fact that there is a big gap between wholesale prices of these foodgrains and the retail prices and whether he has done anything to bridge the gap between the two?

**Shri A. M. Thomas:** It is not quite correct to say that there is a big gap. The retail prices are necessarily influenced by the wholesale prices. Of course, there may be some time lag. Suppose there is a decline in the wholesale prices; the impact may not be felt immediately on the retail prices. But sometime later the impact is really felt.

**Upper Sileru Hydro-Electric Project**

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- { Shri Panigrahi:
  - { Shri Raman:
  - { Shri D. V. Rao:
  - \*272. { Shri Nagi Reddy:
  - { Shri Vasudevan Nair:
  - { Shri Sanganna:
  - { Shri Madhusudan Rao:

Will the Minister of Irrigation and Power be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that an agreement has been signed recently between the two State Governments of Orissa and Andhra Pradesh for working out the Upper Sileru Hydro-Electric Project during the Second Five Year Plan period; and

(b) if so, whether a copy of this inter-State agreement will be laid on the Table?

**The Deputy Minister of Irrigation and Power (Shri Nathi):** (a) Yes, Sir.