

" in case the Govt. extends the benefit of excise duty concessions to a specified industry/ industries on the condition that the prices of the product will be reduced to the extent concessions given and in case the industry does not pass on the benefits, it becomes a case of restrictive Trade Practice of manipulation of prices and action could be taken against them under MRTTP Act".

(e) and (f) The findings would be forwarded to all the concerned Ministries as soon as they are received from the BICP.

Prices of Essential commodities

*39. SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE :

SHRI PHOOL CHAND VERMA :

Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is tremendous increase in prices of most of the essential commodities particularly vegetables, cereals etc. in the recent past all over the country; and

(b) if so, the facts thereof and the steps taken by the Government to control them?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI BUTA SINGH) : (a) A statement showing percentage variation in the Wholesale Price Indices of essential commodities including cereals and vegetables is attached.

(b) The availability of most of the essential commodities like sugar, foodgrains, edible oils, etc. is comfortable. The upward pressure on the prices of pulses like arhar, etc. is on account of existing gap between the demand and supply, their stagnant production for several years and their limited availability in the international market. The rise in the prices of vegetables is purely on account of poor arrivals of vegetables in the lean supply season. As far as cereals like rice and wheat are concerned, adequate buffer stocks are available and the same are being supplied through the Public Distribution System at subsidised prices. The Food Corporation of India has also stepped up its open market sale operations of rice and wheat in selected centres. In the case of pulses, apart from taking certain long-term measures to increase the production of pulses in the country, other steps taken by the Government to contain the rise in prices of pulses include placing pulses under open General Licence for imports, reduction of customs duty on import of pulses from 10% to 5% etc. The important items like rice wheat, sugar, palmolein, kerosene and softcoke are being supplied to the consumers through PDS at a price lower than the market prices.

STATEMENT

Percentage variation in the WPI of essential commodities during the week ending 8.7.95 over different periods.

| Commodities | Over 1 week | Over 2 weeks | Over 1 month | Over 3 months | Over 6 months |
|----------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| Cereals | -0.1 | Steady | +0.7 | +1.0 | +1.8 |
| a) Rice | -0.1 | Steady | +0.4 | + 3.3 | +4.8 |
| b) Wheat | +0.1 | -0.5 | +0.1 | -4.1 | -6.9 |
| Jowar | +0.2 | +1.0 | +4.3 | +6.9 | +14.7 |
| Bajra | -0.5 | +1.8 | +3.0 | Steady | +13.8 |
| Gram | +0.2 | steady | -1.2 | -10.0 | -26.8 |
| Arhar | + 1.4 | +0.8 | + 10.5 | + 20.7 | +45.8 |
| Sugar | +0.2 | +0.7 | +0.9 | +0.8 | steady |
| Vanaspati | steady | steady | steady | +0.1 | +4.3 |
| Groundnut oil | +0.3 | +0.8 | +1.0 | +1.8 | +18.4 |
| Mustard oil | +3.6 | +3.8 | +1.9 | -6.2 | -5.4 |
| Vegetables | +2.7 | +2.2 | +5.4 | +32.2 | +58.3 |
| Tea | -1.3 | -1.3 | +6.6 | +40.5 | +9.3 |
| Salt | +7.0 | +22.0 | +29.0 | +35.5 | +47.1 |