

Representation from Forest Seamen Union, Andaman and Nicobar Islands

977. SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Master, Greasers, Firemen-cum-Laskar of the Forest Department (Andaman and Nicobar) are given lesser scale of pay than their contemporaries working in Marine Department (Andaman and Nicobar) for the same work under the same Administration and if so, reasons for such discrimination; and

(b) whether Andaman and Nicobar Administration have received any representation from Forest Seamen Union and if so, action taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION (SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA): (a) and (b). The information is being collected and the same will be laid on the table of the Lok Sabha.

Agricultural Farms in Kerala

978. SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION be pleased to state:

(a) the progress made in setting up new agricultural farms in the State of Kerala;

(b) whether the Government of Kerala have sought any financial assistance for this purpose from the Central Government; and

(c) if so, the reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION (SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA): (a) to (c). The Government of India do not have any proposal to set up new agricultural farms in the State of Kerala.

In their annual plan proposals for the year 1977-78 the Government of Kerala had made a provision of Rs. 10 lacs for getting up a new district agricultural farm in Idduki district. The Planning Commission have agreed to a provision of Rs. 380.20 lacs for crop husbandry as a whole in the State's annual plan for 1977-78. Necessary funds to set up the farm would presumably be found from within this provision by the State Government.

Rise in price of rice in Kerala

980. SHRI RAMACHANDRAN KADANNAPPALLI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether after the lifting of emergency there has been increase in the open market price of rice in Kerala State and consequently the off-take of rice from the ration depots has also increased; and

(b) if so, the steps taken and the policy of Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION (SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA): (a) There has been an increase in the open market price of rice and off-take from the ration shops in Kerala but this is mainly attributed to the commencement of the lean months in Kerala from March 1977 onwards when the off-take generally shows an increasing trend.

(b) The allotment of rice to the Government of Kerala was stepped up from one lakh tonnes allotted for the month of March, 1977 to 1.25 lakh tonnes per month for April and May, 1977 and was further increased to 1.35 lakh tonnes for the month of June, 1977. Keeping in view the over-all availability of rice in the Central Pool, the relative needs of the other deficit States and other relevant factors, it is the policy of the Central Government to make maximum possible allotments