

per maintenance of the plot till it is utilised for housing purposes

### **Rice Production**

3622. SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION be pleased to state;

(a) whether Government consider that the production of rice in the country has substantial increased during the last two years;

(b) if, so, total production for the last two years as compared to previous two years;

(c) whether the benefit of higher production did not give relief to consumers as far as bringing its prices down; and

(d) if so, steps proposed to be taken to bring its price down?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION (SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA): (a) and (b). Production of rice which had reached a level of 48.74 million tonnes in 1975-76 declined to 41.92 million tonnes in 1976-77. During 1977-78, production of rice touched a new high of 52.67 million tonnes. Although firm estimates for 1978-79 are not yet available, according to present indications, production of rice during the year is expected to be around the record level of last year.

(c) and (d). Following the increase in production and market availability of rice, all restrictions on the movement of paddy and rice were removed from October, 1977. As a result, the market prices of rice in the deficit States and the consuming areas have generally shown a decline, thus benefiting the consumers. Presently, market prices of rice are ruling at reasonable levels in all parts of the country.

Although procurement prices of paddy and rice were raised during 1977-78 and during 1978-79, the issue

prices of rice have been kept unchanged and ample supplies are being made available through the public distribution system for protecting the interest of the consumers.

### **Removal of Lime Plaster at Lord Jagannath Temple**

3623. SHRI PABITRA MOHAN PRADHAN: Will the Minister of EDUCATION, SOCIAL WELFARE AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the thick lime plaster which is said to be about 9 to 12 inches in thickness and which is at present removed from the temple of Lord Jagannath at Puri, Orissa, acted like a blanket to protect the beautiful carvings and images of stone structures of the said Jagannath temple and if so, for what purposes; and

(b) whether there was any crack for which the present massive repair in the form of removal of the said thick lime plaster is taken up, or the crack was only a local one affecting only some two to three stones which could have been repaired easily instead of removing the massive and extremely hard thick plaster that goes a long way to protect the temple from the onslaught of the saline weather?

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION, SOCIAL WELFARE AND CULTURE (DR. PRATAP CHANDRA CHUNDER): (a) and (b). Sir, The layers of lime plaster, applied on the outer surface of the temple having become dead had cracked due to corrosion of iron clamps coming into contact with rain water which had seeped through the cracks spread all over the outer plastered surface of the temple because of which chunks of plaster and fractured stones were falling. The last fall of plaster was reported on February 9, 1974. Thus it will be seen that the coats of plaster are not virtually effective as protective.