

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH) : (a) and (b) Presence of some weed seeds was detected in the Australian wheat. Such weed seeds are an integral part of any foodgrains harvest and it is not unusual to detect weed seeds in any bulk import of foodgrains. The Australian wheat conforms to the provisions of the Contract and the specifications laid down in the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act and is fit for human consumption.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) and (f) Yes, Sir. The Government of India had deputed a team of experts to Australia to discuss the issue of presence of exotic weeds in the imported Australian wheat. Based on the findings of the team, it has been decided that imported wheat would be distributed only in the non-wheat growing areas to ensure that exotic weed seeds do not reach the wheat growing areas.

(g) No, Sir.

(h) Does not arise.

Prices of Drugs

*90. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA : Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether many vital drugs have escaped the price mechanism in the absence of any regulatory authority;

(b) whether it is also a fact that apart from anti-malarial and anti hormonal drugs prices going high, the prices of even common drugs have gone very high as a result thereof; and

(c) the steps taken for setting up Pricing Authority?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) : (a) For selection of drugs for price control the 'Modifications in Drug Policy, 1986' lays down the criteria, which are based on economic factors alone and not on therapeutic considerations.

(b) Studies conducted for large selling formulations, including anti-malarial and hormonal drugs, reveal that while there is some increase in prices, there are cases of price decrease also. The price increase is not across the board and abnormal and can be attributed to various

factors like increase in cost of raw materials, utilities, fluctuation in foreign exchange etc.

(c) The Chairman and Member Secretary of NPPA have been appointed. However, NPPA has not become functional due to problems of administrative nature, which are being sorted out.

Shortage of Wheat, Rice and Sugar in PDS Shops

*91. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY :
SHRI G.A. CHARAN REDDY :

Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it has been reported by the PDS shops in the States that there is an acute shortage of wheat, rice and sugar;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise;

(c) the main reasons for the shortage of foodgrains;

(d) the total quantity of wheat and rice supplied to the State Governments for distribution on the PDS shops since July, 1997;

(e) whether the quota from the 1st of June, 1997 under the new policy has not been fully and sufficiently despatched to those States; and

(f) if so, the total shortage felt and the steps the Government propose to ensure timely availability of wheat, rice and sugar in sufficient quantity to the Fair Price Shops in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH) : (a) to (c) No such report about the non-availability of foodgrains and sugar in Fair Price Shops, after launching the Targeted PDS, have been received.

(d) In July, 1997 9,76,220 MT of rice and 6,08,020 MT of wheat has been allocated to States and UTs.

(e) According to available information sufficient stocks are in place to meet the requirements against allocations made under TPDS for the months of June and July, 1997.

(f) Does not arise.