

[English]

Export of Wheat

*303. SHRI ANANTH KUMAR :

SHRI CHAMAN LAL GUPTA :

Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Food Corporation of India (FCI) has recently increased the prices of wheat for export purposes;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the extent to which the wheat export is likely to be affected as a result thereof?

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) :
(a) to (c). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

(a) Yes, Sir. The price of wheat sold by FCI for the purpose of export from Central Pool was last increased with effect from 1.7.1996.

(b) The price of wheat sold for the purpose of export was revised from Rs.4,410/- to Rs.4,900/- per MT with effect from 1.7.96 for sale ex-FCI godowns only in Punjab and Haryana from where the sale of wheat for the purpose of export is to be made.

(c) Against the authorisation given to the FCI during 1996-97 to export/sell for the purpose of export upto 5.0 lakh tonnes of non-durum wheat against the carry-over commitment made in 1995-96, about 4.42 lakh tonnes have already been released as on 15.7.1996 leaving a balance of 0.58 lakh tonnes of wheat. Wheat exporters are free to purchase wheat for purposes of export from the open market. Potential for export of wheat from the country depends, inter alia, on the world market prices, which cannot be precisely predicted at present.

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR : Sir, the hon. Minister has said in his statement that the price of wheat for export has been revised from Rs.4410 to Rs.4900, that is, Rs.490 is the increase per metric tonne from 1.7.1996. I want to ask the hon. Minister whether the benefit of this increase in wheat export price has been given to the producers, that is, the farmers or not. When was the last procurement price fixed and at what rate was it fixed? According to my information, the procurement price is Rs.370 per quintal and the difference between the procurement price that is given to the farmers and the export price of wheat is Rs.120 per quintal. In that case, where is the difference or the profit going?

[Translation]

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : Mr. Speaker, only the export price of wheat has been increased. The

support price for the farmers is increased every year to give them benefit. On 1st April, 1995, the price of wheat was Rs.360 per quintal, which was increased to Rs.380 per quintal on 1st April, 1996 keeping in view the large interests of the farmers.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Yes, second supplementary please

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR : No, no. Sir. This is my first supplementary only. My first supplementary itself has not been answered properly.

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : Sir, he has not given the right answer to the question asked by the questioner. I think, the Minister has not followed the question ... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : No, no please.

Sushmaji, I think, the hon. Member is capable of explaining the question.

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR : Sir, my question is very clear. Government has increased the export price of wheat from Rs.4,400 to Rs.4,900. The increase has been to the tune of Rs.490/- approximately per quintal. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether this increase in the export price has developed on the producers also or not. The Government has increased the price from Rs.360/- to Rs.380/- only. So, there is a gap of Rs.110/- per quintal. Therefore, I would like to know whether the profit that is accruing is going to the farmers or not.

[Translation]

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : Mr. Speaker, the support price is increased only to give benefit to the farmers. The export price has been increased for times so far. The export sale price has so far been more and not less than our domestic open sale price.

[English]

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : He has not asked this.

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR : Sir, he has not answered my question. You should protect me.

Sir my question is very straightforward. There has been an increase of Rs.110 per quintal in the export price of wheat. What I would like to know is, how much, out of this increase of Rs.100/- per quintal, would go to the farmers and how much would go to the producers?

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Minister, I think, the simple question is, when you are increasing the export price, are you corresponding increasing the procurement price also so that the benefit goes to the farmers?

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR : ...In the same proportion.

MR. SPEAKER : No, not necessarily in the same proportion.

[Translation]

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : The support price is increased only to give benefit to the farmers. The information given by the hon. Member is not correct. The export price has been increased to Rs.4900 per quintal. The hon. Member was saying that...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR : Sir, it is there in the answer.

MR. SPEAKER : Let the Minister answer.

[Translation]

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : Mr. Speaker, the export price was Rs.4410 per quintal which has been raised to Rs.4900 per quintal.

[English]

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR : Sir, I would like to bring to your kind notice that in his reply that has been tabled, in part (b) of the answer, it is said:

"The price of wheat sold for the purpose of export was revised from Rs.4,410 to Rs. 4,900 per metric tonne with effect from 1.7.1996.."

So, the revision of prices from Rs. 4,410/- to Rs.4,900/- means an increase of Rs.110 per quintal. He himself has said just now that the support price of wheat is Rs. 380. After having revised the export price of wheat, he should also correspondingly increase the support price of wheat. It is because that would benefit the farmers. If the Government does not do so then where is the surplus money going? Is it being spent to cover up smuggling, pilferage and leakages in the Food Corporation of India?

MR. SPEAKER : I think, you have made your point clear.

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : Mr. Speaker, the support price is increased every year to give remunerative price to the farmers. The fixation of the rate of export sale involves some expenditure. The export price is kept higher than the domestic price so as to give benefit to the farmers. You said that an increase of only Rs.20/- has been made. Prices are increased from time to time. A proposal to increase the support price for Kharif 1996 is still under the consideration of the Government.

[English]

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR : Mr. Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware of heavy thefts, leakage, and smuggling from the godowns of the Food Corporation of India, if so, what steps are being contemplated by the Government to check them? What is the total amount of rotten wheat lying in the godowns of the Food Corporation of India? Is it a fact that this rotten wheat is being supplied through the Public Distribution System and the good wheat is being exported?

[Translation]

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : Mr. Speaker, my attention was drawn to the apprehension expressed by the hon. Member. I have just now had three godowns of a State realed. In Phulwati Sherief of Bihar, there are FCI godowns. I noticed some irregularities there. I called the local administration there and checked the entire record and the accounts registers, wherein some irregularities were found. The matter was referred to the vigilance. If the hon. Member furnishes some specific information about some specific place regarding supply of substandard articles, I shall positively look into it.

[English]

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I asked a specific question and the hon. Minister has not answered that. My question was, "how many tonnes of rotten wheat are lying in the godown of the Food Corporation of India and what is happening to them?"

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Minister, you collect the information and give it to the Member.

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR : Sir, you should protect my rights.

MR. SPEAKER : I have protected you more than what I should have.

[Translation]

SHRI CHAMAN LAL GUPTA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, instead of asking them to come to the House after doing their homework, you are protecting them...*(Interruptions)* Sir, my question is: will the price increase effected by you lead to increase in export and if so, to what extent? In reply it has been stated that the potential for export of wheat from the country depends, interalia, on the world market prices, which cannot be precisely predicted at present.

But, Sir, when we have to export wheat from the country, how is it that we have no specific agency to assess precisely how much loss we are likely to suffer? Secondly, as Shri Ananth Kumar also asked, in many godowns of our country, irregularities are being committed. In reply to a question asked on the 17th, it was disclosed that 5574 tons of wheat costing over Rs.3 crore has been damaged. Thus 123 tons of foodgrains has been damaged in Jammu. Will the Govt. conduct an enquiry into this matter? I would like to inform you that the foodgrains from there are sent to Pakistan in large quantities and the Government agency there declares the foodgrains so sent as rotten. Will the Government order an enquiry into this aspect also and when will we know the results of such enquiry?

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : As the hon. Member has furnished specific information in the House, an enquiry will positively be conducted into the matter and the hon. Member will be informed of the result of that enquiry in due course of time.

SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister, in his reply, has stated that he does not know whether the price of wheat in the world market has increased or not. I would like to know whether the price of wheat has increased in the world market and if not, then why was the price of wheat meant for export from India increased? Does the Government agree that as a result of increasing the export price, the export of wheat will decline resulting in loss to the farmers? Will Government think in terms of exporting the wheat of Malwa region of Madhya Pradesh like that of Haryana and Punjab?

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : The original question pertained to Punjab and Haryana only. But the hon. Member has asked whether the wheat of Malwa region of Madhya Pradesh can also be considered for export. As per on stock position, we have, as on 1.7.1996, a stock of 143.4 lakh tonnes, out of which our consumption would be 131 lakh tonnes. We first assess the requirement of our country and then think of export. We can go in for export by after meeting the requirements in our country...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT : Sir, the price of wheat has gone up in the world market. Then why have the Government increased the export price of wheat? This question of mine has not been replied.

[English]

SHRI C. NARAYANA SWAMY : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister, whether the Government has any intention of increasing the quantity of wheat supplied through the Public Distribution System in the country. I would also like to know that in certain parts of the country like Southern Karnataka where wheat is not used, there are other millets like Ragi which are in common consumption whether the Government is thinking in terms of providing this popularly used millets through the Public Distribution System.

[Translation]

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : Mr. Speaker, 1,60,000 metric tonnes of foodgrains used to be supplied every month to various states in open sale. Now we have increased this allocation to 3,50,000 tonnes per month. F.C.I. sells in all States. It will also distribute whatever allocations we have made in P.D.S. As for increasing the allocation of wheat, we make allocations to the States. If they want any increase in the allocations to them, they may send proposals.

SHRI BHERU LAL MEENA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, In the tribal areas of Rajasthan, wheat and rice are not made available. The Government of India made allocations for those areas but the allocation was not lifted in full. What is the reason therefor? The Government of India did not permit them to lift the foodgrains. When I ask them, they say that foodgrains do not reach them due to non-availability of wagons. We lift and bring the foodgrains.

Sir, it is a serious question. Foodgrains are not available in those areas. If foodgrains are not made available in those areas at the fair price shops, the people there are put to a lot of trouble. 50 per cent of the foodgrains are distributed there in the first month and the remaining 50 per cent in the second month. The distribution there is not done in a proper way. From the very beginning, they supply less to the people. Whether they get their ration in the first month or in the second month, they are always supplied less. I would like to know whether Governments would arrange to have adequate quantities of foodgrains lifted in Rajasthan.

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV : Mr. Speaker, as for lifting of foodgrains, the state Governments lift foodgrains as per their capacity and resources. Offtake is the responsibility of the state Governments. The Centre Government makes allocations to the State Governments. For offtake, State Government are responsible. If they increase there offtake, we will consider to increase there allocation...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : I understand that. What can I do?

(Interruptions)

Levy Price of Sugar

*304. SHRI SOUMYA RANJAN : Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) the recovery and duration adopted in determination of levy price of sugar during 1995-96, zone-wise;

(b) the amount of purchase tax and the Cane Development Council Commission adopted during the aforesaid period, zone-wise;

(c) the cane cost and conservation cost in levy prices of sugarcane, zone-wise;

(d) the escalation cost provided in each month during the said sugar season, zone-wise; and

(e) the ex-factory levy sugar price during 1995-96 alongwith the retail price of sugar price of sugar for Public Distribution System during 1995-96, zone-wise?

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) :

(a) to (e) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

(a) to (d). The details are provided in Statement-I.

(e) The retail issue price of sugar distributed through