

Title: Need to take steps to safeguard interest of coconut growers.

SHRI T. GOVINDAN (KASARGOD): Sir, today the price of coconut is reduced to half than the previous year. Coconut is the main source of income of the common people of Kerala. The reason for reduction in its price is import of edible oil and seeds like palm oil. The Union Government has reduced its import duty to 16 per cent causing large-scale import by industrialists making huge profits. The disease affecting coconut plantation, increase in the price of fertilizers and cost of production are the other factors affecting its producers.

As per the agreement of the World Trade Organization, any individual has the right to import or export items. So, the Government should come to the rescue of our agricultural farmers such as coconut growers so that they get remunerative price for their produce. The import has increased whereas export has not. This is not in the best interest of the country. Out of 41 lakh ton edible oil, the share of palm oil only is 24 lakh tonnes and it will surely increase in the coming years because the price in the international market is very low and the import duty has been reduced. The usage of palm oil in the soap industry etc., has affected the coconut growers. The price of copra is further declining day by day. It is high time that the Government should act for protecting the coconut growers. The Central Government can act in the same way when they had reacted at the time of loss suffered by the rice cultivators in Punjab recently by granting financial assistance.

In view of the serious situation prevailing in the Southern States, especially in Kerala, I request the Government to control import of palm oil and declare some economic package or incentives for the coconut growers as they have very much suffered loss due to fall in price of coconut.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri D. Venugopal.

SHRI D. VENUGOPAL (TIRUPPATTUR): Sir,...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just a minute, Shri Venugopal. There is no Interpreter there for Tamil. Have you given notice in advance?

SHRI D. VENUGOPAL : Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please take your seat for a minute. We shall find an Interpreter and then call you at the end.

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Or he can do one thing. Let him complete and then he can lay it on the Table. We shall get it translated.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You can lay it on the Table.