

Title : Regarding problems faced by ration dealers and demand for reducing their retirement age from 65 to 60 .

SHRI LONAPPAN NAMBADAN (MUKUNDAPURAM): Sir, I rise to bring to the notice of the House, the problems of the ration dealers such as this: India has five lakh ration shops including 15,000 in Kerala. We have to protect the PDS in the country. PDS is in existence in Kerala for the last 45 years and the ration dealers in Kerala are covered by the Welfare Fund and Pension Scheme. Their present age of retirement is 65 years and the monthly pension is Rs.500.

I demand that their retirement age be reduced to 60 years and their pension increased to Rs.1,000. I also request that such welfare funds and pension schemes be introduced in all the States. The Government should allow kerosene and sugar to be sold to all the ration card holders. During festivals like Onam, Christmas and Bakrid, etc. It should increase the quota of items like rice, wheat, sugar and kerosene. It should continue to give agriculture and food subsidies. It should announce a long-term National Foodgrain Policy. It should make Food for Work Programme transparent and it should distribute only superfine quality food materials through PDS.