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Title: Need to increase the minimum support price for Copra.

SHRI C. MAHENDRAN (POLLACHI): Respected Chairperson, I thank the hon. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, my God, hon. *Puratchi Thalaivi Amma* for having given me an opportunity to be a Parliamentarian in this hon. House. I am also thankful to the people of my Pollachi Parliamentary Constituency for electing me as a Member of Parliament with a thumping majority with the grace and blessings of our great political mentor, the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, our God, hon. *Puratchi Thalaivi Amma*.

In my Pollachi Parliamentary Constituency, nearly 92,000 hectares of area is under coconut cultivation, which is 1/4th of coconut cultivation area in Tamil Nadu. Due to the failure of South-West and North-East monsoons, the water level has depleted much in the wells as well as the underground water level. Owing to insufficient water and high cost of maintenance, coconut farmers are in a very critical situation, and they are facing great loss in producing Copra. Hence, the production of Copra is dwindling in my Parliamentary Constituency. Even though, 2,02,000 metric tonnes of Copra is being produced, the agriculturists are not able to survive as the support price for Copra that was fixed by NAFED is only Rs. 52.50 per kg whereas in the open market it is being traded today at around Rs. 105 per kg.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Now, please conclude.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI C. MAHENDRAN: Sir, this is my maiden speech in the House. â€ (Interruptions)

HON. CHAIRPERSON: No, you are just supposed to mention the issue. There is no maiden speech in this.

SHRI C. MAHENDRAN: Hence, the procurement price has to be increased by NAFED to the level of market price or even higher procurement price is to be given in order to stabilize the demand and supply mechanism.

Now, the Copra production is not remunerative for the coconut growers, and they are finding out solutions by growing alternate crops. Presently, the coconut-yielding trees are maintained by growers for more than 15-20 years as coconut cultivation is a long-term crop and they have no other alternative. Due to the monsoon failure, only 50 per cent of agriculturists are able to maintain coconut cultivation and that too with great hardship.

While considering the above facts, will the present Government move any proposal to increase the support price of Copra and double the NAFED price or even make it Rs. 108 per kg so as to give relief to the existing coconut growing agriculturists.