

[Sh. Sukh Ram]

under public distribution system should be only for the poor people of our society. We have always been emphasizing that there has to be monitoring and there has to be surprise check also. We are also doing it. The Secretary of my Ministry and I myself have visited certain States and made surprise checks also. But this is the responsibility of the State Governments and we have been requesting the State Governments to make surprise checks. I do not have the figures but a number of shops have been raided and some people have been prosecuted under the Essential Commodities Act. Goods worth crores of rupees have been confiscated. If I remember right, essential commodities worth Rs. 40 crores were confiscated during the last year.

There was a point that ads also should not be from part of the price structure. As far as essential commodities, that is, wheat and rice are concerned, I do not think there are ads for them. There may be other items on which ads may be there. But as you know, the Consumer Protection Act, which is the most progressive law in our country, takes care of it. As far as wheat and rice are concerned, there are no ads and no price is added on account of ads.

Kumari Mamata Banerjee has raised one point that since the population is increasing, we also should increase the allocation of foodgrains. As I stated earlier, this support price is to save the farmers from distress sales. If it is a sellers' market, then the Government also has to compete and purchase the foodgrains at the price prevalent in the market. But we are just saving the farmers from distress sales. Since lot of foodgrains is available in the open market, people have to depend on the open market also. Food is a State subject and the State Governments also should take care of the shortfall. It should not be expected and

should not be the responsibility of the Central Government to meet the entire gap in the demand and supply in a particular State. There is no zonal system here and people are purchasing from the surplus States and taking it to other deficit States also.

I am not aware of the scarcity of kerosene oil. I can pass on this complaint to my colleague who is dealing with the subject.

As far as West Bengal is concerned, I do not have the figures as to how much quantity is given. But West Bengal is the second highest taker of foodgrains in the country. We have been meeting the demand of the West Bengal but it is not possible to meet hundred per cent of the demand because they have to depend on the open market also.

So, sir, I think I have met all the points that were raised here. I have tried to remove whatever misunderstandings for apprehensions the hon. Members had.

18.57 1/2 hrs.

BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

[English]

Sixty-eighth Report

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI H.K.L. BHAGAT): Sir, I beg to present the Sixty-eighth Report of the Business Advisory Committee.

18.58 hrs.

MESSAGES FROM RAJYA SABHA

[English]

SECRETARY-GENERAL: Sir, I have to report the following messages received from