

MR. SPEAKER : No. If it is a question of only Harijans, I will allow it. Mr. Chaubey, do not misquote me ; don't put words into my mouth.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Now Calling Attention Shri Saifuddin Chowdhary. Mr. Chowdhary, mind you, we have decided that only 10 minutes will be given and after that you will not be on record.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE . Can we resign and go to the State Legislature and raise it there ?

MR. SPEAKER : You can do so if you have got the guts to do that.

...(Interruptions)

12.13 hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

[English]

Failure of the Jute Corporation of India to purchase raw jute directly from jute growers

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY (Katwa) : I call the attention of the Minister of Textiles to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon :

"The situation arising out of the failure of the Jute Corporation of India to purchase raw jute directly from jute growers and the steps taken by the Government in that regard."

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN) : Sir, the Motion seeks to discuss the situation arising out of the alleged failure of the Jute Corporation of India to purchase raw jute directly from jute growers and steps taken by the

Government in this regard. At the outset, let me state the facts about the procurement of raw jute by Jute Corporation of India which would clarify the position.

India harvested a bumper jute crop in 1985-86 jute year (July-June) after a spell of four consecutive short crops. The Jute Corporation of India was called upon to undertake a massive procurement operation during the year to protect the interests of the jute growers. The JCI, along with its agents in the cooperative sector, conducted a prolonged procurement operation and mopped up a total of 28.15 lakh bales (of 180 kg. each) during the year. The comparative procurement figures of JCI during 1984-85 were only 10.14 lakh bales and earlier highest procurement was 17.61 lakh bales in 1981-82.

As a matter of policy, JCI purchases raw jute only from growers and not from middlemen or traders, so that the benefit of price support operation goes to growers. For identification of growers, JCI mostly relies on jute-cards and/or Panchayat slips. The same system was followed during 1985-86. Hence there was no failure of the JCI to purchase raw jute directly from the jute growers.

I may further point out that during the preceding jute year ending 30.6.86, the following steps were taken to safeguard the interest of the jute growers :

- (i) Announcement of minimum statutory price of raw jute and mesta;
- (ii) Expansion of market coverage both by the Jute Corporation of India and State Cooperatives. As many as 10 Departmental purchase centres and 4 sub-centres of JCI and 151 purchase centres of cooperatives were added in 1985-86 as compared to 1984-85.
- (iii) Enlargement of storage capacity;
- (iv) Full manning of purchase centres through recruitment of additional hands;
- (v) Sanction of credit on 'as required' basis by the Reserve Bank of India

for undertaking price support operation, total credit sanctioned being over Rs. 100 crores.

- (vi) Issue of directive on 6.9.85 by Jute Commissioner to all working jute mills in the private sector to build up stocks of raw jute up to specified levels so as to step up purchases of raw jute by mills;
- (vii) Use of mass media by Jute Corporation of India to advise the farmers not to make distress sale of their produce at prices below the statutory minimum to unscrupulous traders and bring their produce to JCI/Cooperative purchase centres.

So far as the current jute year beginning 1.7.86 is concerned, the Government has already taken the following steps to safeguard the interests of jute growers :

- (i) The statutory minimum price of raw jute and mesta were announced during February-March 1986 i.e. before the sowing of raw jute so that the farmers can take a view about the acreage to be held under jute. It was the first time that the statutory minimum price was announced so early.
- (ii) I had written to Chief Ministers of jute growing States months back to issue growers' identify cards to all the farmers so that the traders and middlemen are not in a position to issue facilities of buying raw jute at the statutory minimum price by the JCI.
- (iii) The JCI purchase centres and sub-centres are already equipped with men, material and resources for beginning procurement of raw jute as and when the farmers offer raw jute to such centres at the statutory minimum price.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have been informed that the procurement operations of JCI in the markets in North Bengal, where the jute crop arrives early, is about to begin. As pointed out earlier, we have kept the procure-

ment centres of JCI in complete readiness for the necessary operations. As pointed out by the Hon. Prime Minister in this House on 18.7.86 JCI will buy whatever jute is offered to it for sale by the growers at the statutory minimum price. The Government stand by this commitment.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY (Katwa) : Mr. Speaker, I am happy that even after the Zero Hour you are here to listen to this debate and I also think that you will exert your influence to see that the jute industry does not face any problems or the peasants do not face such problems, as Zero Hour, in the near future.

This issue about the jute industry is discussed by us every year in this House.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA (Bankura) : In every session also.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY : Yes, in every session, and some good announcements are made every time Assurances are given. But nothing is done to change the conditions drastically for this industry.

Now, some days ago during his visit to Calcutta the Prime Minister announced that all the raw jute would be purchased by the JCI and that created a kind of enthusiasm in the minds of the peasants and they heaved a sigh of relief and they understood that the kind of situation they face every year, will not be there this year or at least the year after. But on the other day in this House the Prime Minister himself said that he had never said this. What he said was this, that the jute that is brought to the JCI, that would be purchased. That is the problem. What he said was nothing new because the peasants would not find JCI when they needed it. When distress sale is over, then there is no question of intervention by JCI. Peasants are not safe in this way. What really is needed by the peasants has not been done. What we say is that jute is not only vital for the Bengal economy but it is the prime industry of our country which earns a lot of foreign exchange for our country and provides jobs for lakhs of people. Now, two lakh people are working in this industry and 40 lakh peasants are involved

in its cultivation. The prime concern for all of us should be to see how we can save this labour intensive industry which provides lot of employment and also a source of livelihood to the peasants. I am not going into the details as to what IJO has said about this industry. We cannot meet out a kind of step-motherly treatment to this industry. We can not allow some kind of synthetic or polythene to overtake this industry and destroy it because this provides the livelihood for the millions of our countrymen. Not only one section of our people, not only Bengalis or Biharis but people from different parts of the country are working in the jute industry. Some kind of national integration is there where they live together and work together. But the owners of the jute industry have sucked all the money from this industry. They never took care to improve the conditions of this industry, to spend money in research for new kinds of products to be brought and sold in the market, to see that production is cheaper which could compete with the new challenges that are coming. There is a kind of irresponsible behaviour on the part of owners of this industry and they have diverted money to other sectors. Now this industry is facing a serious crisis.

We all know what the UNCTAD has to say about this industry. They say that the jute industry provides more employment than any 10 core industries listed under UNCTAD integrated commodities programme. I am not going into the details of it. But IJO has mentioned and I quote :

“Since 1955 the price of jute has declined by about 60 per cent in real terms whereas the real prices of manufactured goods increased by 60 per cent.”

Same is the picture in our own country.

In 1985, as claimed by the Prime Minister JCI had purchased 2.8 million bales out of 12 million bales. It is a very little amount that they could purchase. It really did not help the peasants. Actually JCI did not help the peasants in time of need. The middlemen, the phariahs, the banias took advantage of the situation. What usually happens is that

JCI enters into the market very late when the distress sale has already taken place. So the question is as to how to reach the peasants and purchase from them directly. That is the moot point of our calling attention. We have heard reports last year from Purunia that peasants brought jute to the market, but they did not find any purchaser. So they burnt the jute there itself.

One point has been brought to our notice that the Central Government wanted—later they denied it—to phase out the jute cultivation. The things that have been taking place are that the West Bengal State Government has consciously decided that they will bring down the hectareage of jute cultivation. But still that is not solution. You cannot just put an end to the cultivation. You have to see whether the climate is such that other kinds of crops can be grown there. We just cannot think of a total ban on this cultivation or end of this cultivation. Therefore, what we have to do is to reach the grower and purchase directly from him, not in the manner the JCI is doing. That is helping only the middleman.

The jute season starts from 1st July and the Government has said here that they have already announced the price—and it is good, of course, that they have announced before hand. But how do they decide about what should be the minimum price? The *kisan* organisations have calculated that the minimum price should be Rs. 600. And what have you decided? Just Rs. 225 as the minimum statutory price. The jute has already come in the market and it is being sold at a lesser price than the minimum statutory price. When I say that on the 1st of July the season begins, the Minister in his statement has stated, “I have been informed that the procurement operations of JCI in the markets in North Bengal, where the jute crop arrives early, is about to begin.” Now, Sir, today is 22nd. What will remain after the distressed sales and what will they purchase from them? Is JCI meant for helping the middlemen? Why this delay is there I want to know. We have to reach the growers. We have to involve the *Panchayat*. They can give us the true picture as to who are the peasants. We have to involve them. We have to go to every village, not to the market only.

The Hon. Minister has written to the Chief Ministers about the card system. Very good. But even card system can be manipulated unless the real democratic organisations of the peasants and other people working in the village and the *Panchayats* are involved in it.

Now I come to the storage. I am not going into all the data because the time is short. Regarding storage, one point has been made but that is not a very important point which can be considered to be hindering the procurement of jute by JCI. The godowns can be made available to them. The State Government has offered their help in providing them godowns. Even it can be kept in the open under polythene sheets. Foodgrains that we eat are kept in the open. Jute we don't eat. So, why do they not take emergency steps to see that jute is procured from the peasant at the real fair price and thus they are saved from the present situation? Government is trying in different States to see that other cultivation is encouraged. But for the running of the industries, for the probabilities of our exports and all that, a large amount of jute is required. Many people are involved in this for their livelihood. How can't we take over the purchase of the whole raw jute? Then other questions also come in. That may be discussed later on. For the present this is what I wanted to say.

SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH (Uluberia) :
Mr. Speaker, Sir, as the earlier speaker has also said, we know that the JCI started functioning only to ensure remunerative price to the jute growers and for making direct purchase from the growers. The Public Undertakings Committee in their check Report 1977-78 have said that JCI failed to fulfil their two objectives of direct purchase and remunerative price. So JCI failed to fulfil their objectives for which they were meant. They never crossed their target. Only around 15 per cent of the total produce they are in a position to purchase. So, this is the situation which the growers are facing. This is how the JCI is operating.

The Hon. Minister made a statement that "JCI along with its agents" are purchasing jute. 'Why through agents'? As the agents are the agents of the mill owners, the

agents sabotage the purchase. They help the mill owners and not the Government. So, why should it be through agents? Why not direct purchase? The statement said that they mop up the total or a large amount of jute produced. But what is the percentage of the total production that they purchase? That percentage is very low.

The Minister in his statement said— 'minimum statutory price'. What is the statutory price enforceable by law? It is the minimum support price and it is not maintained at all. People suffer. They do not get the actual price. It is not correct to say that it is the statutory price. It is not even equivalent to the cost of production. It is far less than they are demanding i.e. Rs. 600/- per quintal. The Government announced only Rs. 232/- per quintal.

Then comes the question of enlargement of storage capacity. What is the enlargement in this year over the last year, we do not know? They will say that because of this we cannot do this. They have given some direction to the mill owners as said in the statement, given by the Minister. I want to know how many mill owners are following this. If they are not following, what action does the Government propose to take?

They have given some advice to the farmers to come to the JCI. But only through advice nothing will happen. We know that.

JCI officers in Calcutta declared that only 300 quintals per day from one market they will purchase. It is less than 50 per cent of the amount of jute which comes every day to the market. This is not up to the mark. So, only through advice they will not be able to help them. They will have to mop up the whole amount. Now, they are going back and say that they will not purchase the entire quantity. If it is so, they will not be able to save the growers.

They have announced that this year 65 lakh tonnes may be available. Government will purchase only 7 lakh tonnes. They say that their go-downs are full. So how will they help the growers? In this situation I request the Minister to consider monopoly purchase of jute this year.

The question is about the remunerative price and the direct purchase from the growers and finally the nationalisation of the entire process of purchasing selling and production of jute is the only solution. I ask the Hon. Minister to reply to these questions.

[*Translation*]

SHRI HARISH RAWAT (Almora) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is our misfortune that whenever there is a bumper crop, the procurement agencies fail to fulfil their responsibility.

MR. SPEAKER : For that purpose he is sitting here and he has to solve it.

SHRI HARISH RAWAT : I am thankful to you for providing me an opportunity to express my views. The Hon. Minister has said in his statement.

MR. SPEAKER : Hon. Minister is present here.

SHRI HARISH RAWAT : The Hon. Minister has said in his statement that the Government declared the support price in time and called upon J.C.I. to undertake procurement operation and informed the farmers accordingly. This is a good thing in itself but it is seen that the objectives of the J.C.I. are frustrated by the officers and employees at the lower level in connivance with the middlemen.

The first problem is that the procurement centres are generally located at far off places and the farmers cannot reach there in time. The farmers do not have the means to reach there in time. In the meantime, the middlemen go to their places and offer some price for their produce. Bearing in mind his inability to go to the market, the farmer is compelled to sell it off.

This year, we have a bumper harvest and as such I would like to request the Hon. Minister to increase the number of procurement centres accordingly I would also like to know from the Hon. Minister how many new procurement centres have been opened this year and secondly, what measures have

been adopted regarding procurement from other States and coordination with other States in this regard ? The Hon. Minister has not made any clarification in his statement in this regard.

Today, J.C.I. is also facing the storage problem. In this regard, generally you depend on the States and the States in turn depend on the middlemen who arrange for *benami* storage. Even J.C.I. has no proper information about the godowns. Somehow or the other, they keep on exploiting the farmers in connivance with the mill owners. I would like to know from the Hon. Minister about the present available storage capacity. Is J.C.I. in a position to store jute properly so that the jute industry could be supplied jute in time ?

The greatest need of the hour is to modernize this industry. I agree that enormous funds are needed for this purpose. The Planning Commission had partly sanctioned the projections submitted by you but it is insufficient to meet the requirement. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister whether he is going to adopt measures to modernize this industry so that whatever quantity is produced by the farmers could be utilized ? It is seen that we cannot meet its demand in foreign countries. That is why the countries, which were our traditional markets, are thinking of alternatives arrangements. Therefore, you should give it a serious thought.

I would also like to know from the Hon. Minister what long-term policy is he going to adopt to stabilise the jute industry to consume the produce within the country and to export the finished product. This industry, as other Hon. Members have also pointed out, is an important industry. Lakhs of people and farmers are employed in it and above all the economy of our country is also linked with it. Therefore, some policy should be formulated for this important industry. A new policy should immediately be chalked out by revising the existing policy.

[*English*]

SHRI BAJU BAN RIYAN (Tripura East) : Tripura is one of the jute growing States though it is a very small State. Tripura

has got no industry and jute is the main crop and cash crop of the people of Tripura. Last year the Tripura peasants harvested a bumper crop. About half the quantity of jute produced last year was not purchased by the J.C.I. Parts of this produce remained with the kisan and with the agents. I want to know from the Minister whether the Ministry will arrange to purchase the total quantity of jute produced during last year. And the agents of JCI are there. The primary agricultural cooperative societies and LAMPS are the main purchasing agents of JCI. But how much quantity they purchased? All the quantity purchased by these agents is not taken by the JCI. The JCI said they have got no storage facilities and they have got no transportation facilities. So they do not give the money to their agents and the agents in turn are not able to give money to the peasants. In this context I want to know from the Minister when those agents would get money from the JCI.

The new jute year has started now. The jute has started coming in the market, but the JCI is absent there. They are sleeping there and these agents are saying that there are no storage facilities. Last year whatever quantity they purchased, they could not dispose it of. So, what to do in this circumstance? Therefore, I want to request the Hon. Minister to do something for the kisans of Tripura and other parts of the country, as they have no other source of income.

MR. SPEAKER : The main questions remains : Why should'nt they be in position before ?

SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN : Sir, I would like to assure the Hon. Members in the first instance that the JCI is there already in the market and from the next week they are going to make the purchases and there will be no difficulty about it, and we will ensure that adequate infrastructure is available and the necessary funds are also available from the Reserve Bank. The Reserve Bank has promised to give all the necessary funds and there will be no shortage of funds. That, I can assure you.

Mr. Saifuddin had particularly mentioned that we have been buying through the agents.

Our agents are only your cooperative people, the Cooperative Department of the West Bengal Government.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : Not individual agents.

SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN : Not individual agents, they are the cooperatives.

SHRI MANIK SANYAL (Jalpaiguri) : In my constituency there are individual agents.

MR. SPEAKER : Bring it to his notice, we shall see.

(Interruptions)

SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN : Sir, there are more centres covered by cooperatives, but I would suggest that your cooperative Department has to be more active and more alert and they have to make more contribution.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : Give them money.

SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN : We advance them money. Unless we give them money, they won't buy for us.

(Interruptions)

SHRI MANIK SANYAL : Why do you go to JCI ? They are telling that 'no money has been given to us. How can we purchase jute ?'

MR. SPEAKER : Now he is giving the reply.

SHRI MANIK SANYAL : It is a sordid affair, we have been witnessing this.

SHRI ANIL BASU (Arambagh) : Who are the agents ?

SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN : Our agents are cooperative people mostly. They are your people.

AN HON. MEMBER : You have to find out.

(Interruptions)

SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN :
I do not know if there is any.

(Interruptions)

SHRI AMAL DATTA (Diamond Harbour) : First he said that the State Government Cooperative Department is the agent... *(Interruptions)*. In some cases local cooperatives may have been designated as agents, but not the State Government.

MR. SPEAKER: That is wrong. Government is not the agent. It is the cooperatives.

(Interruptions)

SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN : Cooperatives of your State—after all, they have to be cooperatives of the State Government.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : It is all right, don't interrupt. Let him finish his speech. Take your seat.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : We will take it up, don't worry.

SHRI MANIK SANYAL : One point should be clarified. When the JCI will start purchase of jute from North Bengal ?

MR. SPEAKER: You can send it to me, I will see this. But you can't take part in this discussion, you see.

SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN : I have just mentioned that in North Bengal the purchases will start next week.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Minister, you are not supposed to answer him. Mr. Hon. Member, you cannot take part in this. Your name is not here. You can give me in writing. I cannot break the rules for you. Just read out the rules and then come to me. You can send it to me.

SHRI ANIL BASU (Arambagh) : Every day you are kind but today.....

MR. SPEAKER : I cannot allow it. But I will do it on your behalf.

SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN : Sir, jute plays a very important role in the Eastern region. Therefore, we should ensure that jute industry is encouraged and all possible steps are being taken for encouraging modernisation of the jute industry. Unfortunately, modernisation has not been done for a long time and that is the main cause of difficulties and trouble in the industry... *(Interruptions)*. Now modernisation scheme has been provided. Recently I visited Calcutta...*(Interruptions.)*

MR. SPEAKER : If all of you speak like that, there will not be an end to it. I am not allowing.

SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN : Recently I also visited Calcutta and I told them, these soft loans must be utilised and if there is any difficulty, please let us know. We have also told the Jute Commissioner that he should interfere and intervene that wherever they have to import any machinery or they have to buy machinery locally, instead of paying money direct to the mill-owners, the mill-owners should place the order for the required machinery and the payment should go through the Jute Commissioner. So, no money is diverted for any other purpose. It is necessary that we have to diversify jute products, particularly with regard to carpets, we have to produce more. We have to produce decorative materials also. Jute packing cloth was not really moving earlier because in America, they have started making synthetic bags. Recently, our high-powered delegation has been there and that delegation talked to the individual people and collectively to them and they have assured the delegation that they have found that the synthetic bag is not very useful for them. Now they will again revert back to the jute cloth for packing. And that would be very useful and I feel that this is already moving and there are more orders pending. I think, it will be necessary for us to produce more jute packing cloth so that it will be exported.

The jute price has been fixed by the Commission of Agricultural Costs and Prices. This has been done by them. They fix the

price for the W-5 quality. And then on the basis of the price of W-5 quality and taking into consideration the market prices in the various States, the jute Commissioner fixes the prices differentiate of other qualities also.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY :
How do they determine and on what basis ?

SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN : The Commission of Agricultural Costs and Prices fixes the prices for all the commodities and they have to do for jute also, as they do for cane or wheat or any other commodity.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY :
It is not a fair price which is fixed.

SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN :
If it is not so, I will convey your sentiment to the Commission and let the Commission consider it. During the last season, we procured more than 28 lakh bales of jute. This was not 15% as stated by the Hon. Member. Here it is more than 28% of the total produce of jute in the country. About the storage capacity, we have got 500 godowns.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE (Pauskura) : What about 7 lakh bales announcement now, as against 28 lakhs made last year. The announcement of the JCI is that, they will purchase 7 lakh bales. Have you heard that ? Have you seen that ?

SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN : I do not think JCI can make this sort of irresponsible statement that they will buy only 7 lakhs.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : No, no. Not allowed.

SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN : The Hon. Lady member can take it from me that they will buy the quantity of jute which will be brought by the jute growers for selling particularly those jute growers who are holding the card. We have been requesting the State Governments to issue the identity cards.

But I will tell you there also the panchayat creates the problem. If we depend on the panchayat and no card is issued, then it will create problems.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : No interruption.

SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN :
More people go and obtain the certification from the panchayat but if the card will not be issued, we will have no option but to rely on the panchayat certificate.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY :
Panchayat certificate will be all right.

SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN : I do not think it is very correct idea. I still insist that the card should be issued.

[Translation]

(Interruptions)

SHRI HARISH RAWAT : In most of the Panchayats sabotage activities are spear-headed by CPI (M)... *(Interruptions)*.

MR. SPEAKER : The malady is so widespread that it is very difficult to single out anyone.

(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN :
Then we have 299 cooperative centres as against 299 which were before. We have 125 centres of JCI against 115. Then again, we have 72 sub-centres against 68 of the JCI in the previous year. So, the number of Centres available at present is adequate to take care of all the jute which will come into the market.

I have already mentioned about the modernisation. I said, yes, jute industry has not been modernised. It is one of the oldest industries like the textile industry and the modernisation is very necessary and we have given them the whole support for this modernisation and we have assured of all the soft loan to be made available if we are going to modernise the industry.

It is a fact that synthetics are replacing the jute industry to a certain extent. But it has also to be realised that synthetics has come to stay in this country. But, in any case to find a via media in which the synthetics do not replace jute industry altogether. We have taken certain steps recently. Laminated bags we have produced which will be much better for the use of the cement industry. Recently the railways had issued an order that they will use only synthetic bags. Then I wrote to the Minister for Railways and he very kindly agreed that jute bags will be used and only they will inspect the flooring of the wagons so that it does not affect the wagons.

12.53 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

The Hon. Member mentioned about Tripura. In Tripura, we purchased 1.55 lakhs of bales during the last season as against 0.28 lakh bales year before last and I can still assure them that whatever will be brought to the Centre, we will certainly purchase them and there is no problem. If there is any problem regarding storage capacity, certainly we will also make the experiment of covering the jute which is in the open with the tarpaulins.

I had already mentioned that the Reserve Bank is given an assurance that there will be no problem about the funds made available to the JCI. Last year they had made Rs. 100 crores available and, therefore, we were able to buy more than 28 lakhs of bales.

These are some of the important things.

SHRI ANIL BASU : What is the total quantity to be purchased ?

SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN : It all depends on how much jute comes. We will purchase all the jute that will be brought to the Centre.

SHRI ANIL BASU : What is the market ?

SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN : How can I say ? You will bring 10 lakh

bales or you will bring 5 lakh bales. Last year we were intending to buy 20 to 22 lakh bales, but when more arrivals came, we bought more than 28 lakh bales.

I suppose I have been also to answer all the questions. If there is any particular question, I would be glad to answer.

(Interruptions.)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Now, matters under Rule 377. *(Interruptions.)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Mr. Anil Basu, your name is not here. I cannot allow only those Members who participated in the Calling Attention, not all others.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY : I have asked whether the JCI agencies will go to the village—and not stay only in the Mandis—and in active association with the panchayats purchase directly from the growers.

SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN : We are paying substantial sums to your Government for providing the facilities at the centres. There is no purpose in going from village when the growers are bringing their jute to the Mandis. There is another problem.....

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY : How far is the Mandi from the village, what is the average distance ?

SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN : Another problem is that the growers do not accept cheques for payment of jute. Our people cannot carry money to the distant villages risking their lives.

(Interruptions)

AN HON. MEMBER : What about cotton ?

SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN : For cotton we are paying through cheques only.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Matters under Rule 377...