

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.V. CHANDRASHEKHARA MURTHY): Sir, I introduce the Bill.**

13.09 hrs.

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

(i) Need to Ensure that the Benefit of Subsidy on Fertilizers is Passed on to the Farmers.

[English]

SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA (Kolar) : Sir, a substantial amount of Rs. 5,900 crore is being provided by the Union Government to the farmers as fertilizer subsidy. But the amount allocated does not reach the persons to whom it is meant. It is the middleman who takes away the major chunk of this money. Ultimately, the farmers are the sufferers.

In the year 1990, the price of fertilizer per bag was Rs. 200 only. But now the price is almost double. Strangely, the farmer is not getting the price for his produce proportionate to the increase in the fertilizer price.

The categorisation of farmers into marginal, small and big for giving subsidy has also not helped the farmers.

I, therefore, urge upon the hon. Minister for Chemicals and Fertilizers to take the following steps regarding the fertilizer subsidy to farmers.

All farmers should get the subsidy. In order to avoid corrupt practices, the subsidy should go to the companies and not to the departments. An additional amount of Rs. 4,000 crore should be allocated for providing subsidy to farmers.

(ii) Need to Declare Support Price of Onion

DR. VASANT NIWRUTTI PAWAR (Nasik) : Sir, Nasik is the largest onion grower in the country and almost 50 per cent of production is from this area. Due to the good rainfall and weather conditions, the production this year is very good. The farmers have to incur about Rs. 300/- per quintal as input costs for better yield. Unfortunately, due to glut in onion production, farmers are not getting good returns and there is panic sale at Rs. 30/- per quintal. Farmers are very much disappointed due to the apathy on the part of 'NAFED' to help them by buying at a reasonable price to avoid losses to them. To help farmers and instill confidence, I request that the minimum support price of the onion should be declared as Rs. 300/- per quintal by Government immediately. NAFED should be asked not to charge 5 per cent levy from the cooperative societies as service charges. *Since onion is a perishable item and its life is only two months,

** Introduced with the recommendation of the President.

Government's immediate intervention is necessary. Besides these steps, Government should give protection to cooperative societies in exporting onion. National Onion Research Centre should be established and the railways must provide wagons for transporting onions to various parts of the Country.

(iii) Need to Allow use of Vacuum Pan Technology by the Khandsari Units in the Country

[Translation]

SHRI AMAR PAL SINGH (Meerut) : There is a 6.5 per cent recovery of Sulphur Khandsari units in our country. Its recovery will rise to 9.5 per cent after the permission for vacuum pan technology is granted. This will not only save three percent national loss but the farmers will also get remunerative prices for their sugarcane production, the quality of sugar will be improved and there will be less consumption of electricity. Given this facility, the small scale industries will by themselves be able to generate electricity as per their requirements. Employment resources will be augmented in rural areas and the sugar production will increase to 2 crore tonnes. As a result of it, there will be no need of importing sugar. On the contrary, the country will be able to export sugar permanently.

Therefore, I urge upon the Government of India that in the interest of the country and the farmers, all the Khandsari units should be immediately given the facility of vacuum pan technology and the whole sugar industry should be delicenced.

(iv) Need to Include Khalilabad Town in Basti District in Uttar Pradesh Under I.S.D.L.T. and Provide Adequate Funds for it.

SHRI ASTHBUJA PRASAD SHUKLA (Khalilabad) : Khalilabad municipal area is the principal commercial centre for Handloom of the Basti district. It is a declared industrial area and industrial state. Being a principal handloom commercial centre and an industrial area, the population density of this municipal area is increasing and it is expanding proportionately. The development of this municipal area is not taking place due to paucity of funds. In the absence of any sewage system, the area remains permanently inundated in stagnant water. The condition of lanes and roads is quite pitiable. In the absence of a vegetable market the roads are riddled with crowds and garbage. Outdated wiring is used for supply of electricity, absence of a playground, safe drinking water and public convenience etc and numerous other problems need immediate attention and solution. There is a recurrence of many diseases including gastro-enteritis every year due to dirt waste and garbage in the area. The disease of gastroenteritis that engulfed the area last year has become a matter of serious concern.