

subsequent to the price increase of 2nd November, which will reduce the burden on kerosene consumers and incidentally on the HSDO, consumers as well. For the first time, we have created conditions for the free availability of kerosene at controlled prices throughout the country by eliminating the incentive for its use in mixing with HSDO. All the kerosene which was being mixed with high speed diesel oil will now be available for sale in the rural areas. Until now, almost 70 per cent of kerosene was consumed in big cities or mixed with HSDO and not more than 30 per cent went into the rural areas. We are now taking crash measures for arranging its sale at the maximum number of existing pumps—there are already 11,000 pumps in the country mostly serving smaller towns and the rural areas. This will be in addition to existing sale channels. Reduction in the price of HSDO will benefit the cultivators who consume some 30 per cent of the total HSDO consumption. We have taken steps to increase its production to ensure its continuing free availability. Its present stocks are an all time high.

8. It would be appreciated that oil products have to be priced broadly on the basis of the price at which we are able to import crude oil. At the same time we have to mobilise resources for the Fifth Five Year Plan. It would not, therefore, be possible for us to absorb increase in crude oil prices by reducing excise duty. That apart, an ordinary consumer would have little incentive for economy unless he pays the true costs of the energy. With further continuing increases in crude oil prices, we would have to tackle this national problem as a challenge to our capabilities. Besides curbs which will have to be intensified, we will also have to develop alternative sources of energy. A comprehensive plan in this regard is being finalised and put through on a crash basis.

18.08 hrs.

STATEMENT RE: FOOD AND  
AGRICULTURAL SITUATION IN  
INDIA

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Annasaheb-Shinde.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI (Chiray-inkil): Sir, I have a submission to make on item No. 12.

MR. SPEAKER: If you want to raise it, you should have given advance notice, as Mr. Vajpayee has done.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Because I am coming from a hungry State, I want to raise it here. Please allow me to make it, just in a minute. It is a very relevant and a very genuine point. The Minister is expected to make a statement on the food situation. I just arrived last night from a starving State—

MR. SPEAKER: Your arrival is not a point of order.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: I would like to make just one point.

The Government here from Delhi has instructed the Kerala Government to increase the price of rice by 25 per cent, from Rs. 1.10 to Rs. 1.56. This is done, while the wage of the ordinary labour there is only Rs. 2 a day. I would like to inform the hon. Minister that we in Kerala are getting only three ounces of rice per head. The people are starving. I would like to know whether he is going to make a statement, taking into account, and in consideration of the fact, that in Kerala, the food situation is very serious—

MR. SPEAKER: It is not a point of order. (Interruptions). I am sorry my throat is a little hoarse today. Why do you all get up on a point of order when it is not a point of order?

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: It is very relevant. The food situation in Kerala has worsened now.

MR. SPEAKER: You can send me in writing if you want to raise a certain point. Do not take up any matter like that. I am not going to allow any more Members.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE): May I also lay it on the Table of the House?

MR. SPEAKER: Yes.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: I lay on the Table of the House a statement on the Food and Agricultural Situation in India.

#### STATEMENTS

As the House is aware, the food situation in the country came under considerable stress and strain in 1972, on account of set-back in foodgrain production in 1971-72 and more particularly because of the extensive damage to the 1972-73 kharif crops, resulting from erratic and scanty rainfall and the prevalence of drought conditions in several parts of the country, the worst affected States being Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan and parts of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.

2. In order to meet the drought situation prompt and effective steps were taken by the Central and State Governments. In addition to the massive relief operations, the public distribution of foodgrains was considerably stepped up during the year 1972, to mitigate the hardship of the consumers especially the vulnerable sections of the population. In spite of difficulties, during the years 1972 and 1973 the total volume of foodgrains released for the public distribution system was kept higher than the preceding two years.

3. Despite unprecedented drought affecting large areas of the country, the public distribution system has been kept running through determined efforts of the Central and State

Governments, largely with our own stocks, which were augmented through imports on commercial basis. Even then the situation was difficult, due to unprecedented rise in the world foodgrains prices and all time low availability. At this critical stage came the generous offer of two million tonnes of wheat from the Soviet Union. This offer is a loan on very favourable terms which we have accepted with gratitude.

4. During the current year, weather conditions have been generally favourable all over the country. Premonsoon showers, particularly in North-East India were helpful for the sowing of autumn paddy and jute crops. During the South-West monsoon season also rainfall has been normal. Good showers had been received generally during the month of October, which apart from helping the kharif crops, have been beneficial for rabi sowings. In certain parts of the country floods affected the standing crops to some extent. Although there have been some difficulties in respect of a few key inputs on the whole the prospects of kharif crops this year are very bright. Country-wide special efforts were launched to raise the production of kharif crops by increasing the area under high-yielding varieties, promotion of effective utilisation of irrigation potential and balanced use of fertilisers and provision of credit. The production of foodgrains, particularly rice, jute and cotton is expected to be substantially higher than the previous years output. The prospects of production of kharif oil seeds particularly groundnut are very encouraging. Though general price situation continues to be difficult, due to improved crop prospects, prices of some of the foodgrains particularly coarse grains like bajra and maize have already started showing an easy trend. Also the prices of kharif oilseeds have shown an easy trend, at some of the countries.

5. In order to ensure the remunerative prices to farmers and encourage production, the Govt. of India took the decision to increase the procurement prices of kharif cereals for the current season. Consequent upon the upward revision in the procurement prices, the issue prices have also been suitably revised to reduce the burden of subsidy and deficit financing. With the improved crop prospects and announcement of the kharif price policy, market arrivals of kharif cereals have been reported to be much better than the previous year. The current trend of procurement compared to the previous year is very encouraging. We expect that with determined efforts, and active co-operation of the State Governments, it should be possible to maximise procurement this year.

6. With better crop prospects, the availability of foodgrains in the market is going to be considerably improved, and undoubtedly this will bring in a considerable measure of confidence, in the management of food economy. Available stocks will have to be judiciously utilised, to meet the essential demands of the deficit States, but at the same time in the area of public distribution, we must be careful and vigilant to conserve and use stocks of foodgrains to our best advantage. With the considerable improvement in the food situation determined efforts will have to be made to keep up this optimism, so that its effect on the general economy could be equally felt.

13.11 hrs.

STATEMENT RE. GOVERNMENT  
 DECISION ON THE REORGANISA-  
 TION OF INDIAN COUNCIL OF  
 AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN  
 THE MINISTRY OF AGRICUL-  
 TURE (SHRI ANNASAHAB P.

SHINDE): I beg to lay a statement indicating Government's decisions on the reorganisation of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research in the light of the recommendations of the ICAR Inquiry Committee,

Statement

In his statement made in the Lok Sabha on 1st August, 1973, the Minister of Agriculture had informed the Hon'ble Members that in its Report the ICAR Inquiry Committee, set-up by the Government in June, 1972, had suggested some radical changes in the present organisational set-up of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR). Since decision making on the recommendations of the Committee had to be based on a detailed consideration of the position of agricultural research in the overall context of the organisation and management of Scientific Research Institutions in the country, the Cabinet had appointed a Group of Ministers, to examine the recommendations of the Inquiry Committee. In concluding the statement, the Minister of Agriculture had assured the Hon'ble Members that the Government of India was fully conscious of the urgency and importance of the matter and that all possible steps were being taken to arrive at decisions on the major recommendations of the ICAR Inquiry Committee, as expeditiously as possible.

2. The Report of the ICAR Inquiry Committee was subsequently placed on the Table of the two Houses of Parliament on 3rd August, 1973.

3. I now wish to report that Government, after giving careful consideration to the recommendations made by the Inquiry Committee and the views expressed by the Governing Body of the ICAR and other eminent scientists and keeping in view