

PREVENTION OF WATER POLLUTION BILL

(i) REPORT OF JOINT COMMITTEE

SHRI SAMAR GUHA (Contai): I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Report of the Joint Committee on the Bill to provide for the prevention of water pollution and the maintaining or restoring of wholesomeness of water, for the establishment, with a view to carrying out the purposes aforesaid, of prevention of Water Pollution Boards, for conferring on such Boards functions relating thereto and for matters connected therewith.

(ii) EVIDENCE BEFORE JOINT COMMITTEE

SHRI SAMAR GUHA: I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the evidence given before the Joint Committee on the Bill to provide for the prevention of water pollution and the maintaining or restoring of wholesomeness of water, for the establishment, with a view to carrying out the purposes aforesaid, of prevention of Water Pollution Boards, for conferring on such Boards functions relating thereto and for matters connected therewith.

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

TWENTY-FIRST REPORT

SHRI K. N. TIWARY (Bettiah): I beg to present the Twenty-first Report of the Estimates Committee regarding action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in their Third Report on the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare (Department of Social Welfare)—General Social Welfare.

STATEMENT re PRICE SITUATION

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YESHWANTRAO CHAVAN): I beg to lay on the Table a statement on the price situation.

Statement

It is a little over three months ago that I had occasion to make a statement in the House in response to a

Calling Attention Notice regarding the steep rise in the prices of essential commodities. At that time I shared with the House Government's anxiety in respect of the rise in prices since the month of May this year, which was higher than what would normally have been expected in that part of the year. I had referred then to the late arrival of the monsoon and the subsequent dry spell which, as Hon. Members would know, lasted for a month. Consequently, this year's kharif crop has suffered considerable damage, and it has followed upon a decline in foodgrains production in 1971-72. Last year the output of coarse grains was affected, and this year the paddy crop too has suffered from drought conditions. The Government has initiated a crash programme to rescue as much of the kharif crop as possible, and to increase rabi foodgrains production to an extent which will help to make good the deficit in kharif output. From reports available so far, the wheat cultivation programme is going on as planned in all major producing areas, while other rabi cereals and pulses are also expected to do well in the northern parts of the country. The southern States, too, will contribute in varying degrees; nevertheless, the situation during the next few months will require a careful watch.

The position in regard to agricultural raw materials has also been affected by drought conditions this year, though the impact on individual items may be of varying degrees. The jute crop has suffered substantial damage but, fortunately, the excellent crop of last year has provided a buffer, and the prices of jute manufactures are lower than what they were a year ago. The record cotton crop of last year is, according to present indications, being followed by a satisfactory one this year, and the supply position should, therefore, remain comfortable. The sugarcane crop, which was poor in 1971-72 as a result of a cyclical decline in acreage and damage due to floods, is expected to show a modest recovery despite the