

श्री गैन्दा सिंह (पदरीना) : श्रीमन्, एक बात मैं आप से कहना चाहता हूँ - वर्षों के काम के बकाया का सवाल आप के सामने आया था और अब आलू के सड़ने की बात यू० पी० में आई है

अध्यक्ष महोदय : यह ठीक है कि मैं आप का बहुत मान करता हूँ, लेकिन जिस चीज को आप उठाना चाहते हैं, उस के बारे में मुझे पहले से पता होना चाहिये, एक दम उठ कर बोलने लग जाना ठीक नहीं है। आप को मुझे पहले बतलाना चाहिये था।

श्री मशिकूबच (दक्षिण दिल्ली) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, स्वचलर्स छोड़ दिये गये हैं, यह एक बड़ा राष्ट्रीय प्रश्न है, इस लिये इस पर काल-एटेंशन को मान लिये ।

अध्यक्ष महोदय . एक दम खड़े हो कर बोलने लग जाना ठीक नहीं है ।

12:02 hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

REPORTED DISCRIMINATORY POLICY IN FIXATION OF PROCUREMENT PRICE OF RICE

SHRI SAMAR GUHA (Contd.) : I call the attention of the Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon :

"The reported discriminatory policy in regard to fixation of procurement price of rice."

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION (SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE) : Sir, Government is not following any discriminatory policy in the fixation of procurement prices of rice. Procurement Prices of foodgrains such as paddy/rice, wheat and coarse grains are fixed by the Government on the basis of the recommendations of the Agricultural Prices Commission and after taking into consideration the views of the State

Governments as expressed in meeting with the Chief Ministers held before the pricing and procurement policy is formulated. All the relevant factors such as crop prospects, cost of production, need to provide for a remunerative price for the producers and a reasonable price for the consumer and the overall economic situation in the country are taken into account in formulating the price policy.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : In raising this call attention motion, I have nothing to say about the benefit that has been derived by the producers of wheat as also the consumers of wheat due to the food policy of Government. But as it is found that since the last 2½ decades the food policy of Government is almost wheat-oriented, to the detriment of the interest of the rice-growing areas and also the rice cultivators and consumers, it is painful for me to raise this issue on the floor of this House. The Government have given a very evasive reply without caring a little bit to give certain statistics, data or facts and figures to justify their stand that there is no discriminatory policy pursued by Government in regard to the procurement price fixed for rice.

The procurement price is related to the cost of production as also to the issue price of the grain. Our country is overwhelmingly rice-producing. The rice produced in fact, is almost double the quantity of wheat produced. In 1973-74, rice production was 43.75 million tonnes as against the wheat production of 22.1 million tonnes. It will be found that the subsidy given in pursuance of the price support policy this year has been Rs 295 crores. If to it is added the amount of bonus of about Rs. 50-60 crores, it will amount to Rs. 353 crores. But in pursuance of the food price support policy, Government have not given a single paise to the rice growing area or the rice cultivators.

The whole of this amount has been given in the name of subsidy to the wheat-producing areas and the wheat-producing cultivators.

SHRI DARABARA SINGH (Hoshiarpur) : Are you opposed to it?

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : I am not. I want more benefit to go to them. You did not hear me because you were engaged in gossip with some others. I said that

more benefit should go to them, but there should not be any discrimination against rice-producing areas. That was my point.

Since 1956, almost every year on an average Rs. 300 crores was given as subsidy for price support. This subsidy, which since the last 20 years amounted to Rs. 6,000 crores, has gone wholly, totally and only to the wheat cultivators and the wheat-producing areas. The result is that the rural economy of the wheat-producing areas had an advantage over the rural economy of the rice-producing areas, and we find the growth of the rural economy in the rice-producing areas stagnant whereas the rural economy of the wheat-producing areas is going a little bit ahead, though not at the expected pace.

One of the most important factors relating to the fixation of price is the cost of production. But the procurement price or even the issue price is fixed on a very faulty basis of the gradation of rice. In our country, there are about a thousand varieties of rice produced, but they are being divided only into four broad categories—coarse, medium, fine and superfine—whereas in the case of wheat there is only a single variety which is taken as the variety of grain.

Sir, as a result of this, we find the issue price that has been fixed for coarse grain per quintal is Rs. 135.0 for medium, Rs. 150.0 for fine Rs. 162.0 and superfine Rs. 172.0 per quintal. But I do not know whether people have been able to get fine and super-fine varieties from the ration shops of Calcutta. I have never seen those varieties, except coarse and medium varieties. In other words, they have to pay Rs. 170.0 per quintal for these varieties. Although they call it a superfine variety they have fixed the issue price for the fine and super-fine rice eaters have to pay the price of super-fine and fine varieties, but they only get the coarse and the medium varieties. Just now a question was asked but the hon. Minister very carefully avoided that. If you just look into the food import policy of the Government there you will find a difference, namely we have been importing wheat for the last ten years but not rice. During 1973-74, no rice was imported from other countries. Before 1965, rice was imported from Burma and South-East Asian countries. Even for growers that creates a problem. In 1974, 42.09 lakh of tonnes

of wheat was imported but not a single grain of rice was imported. That means the benefit had gone to the wheat consumers, not to the rice consumers to that extent.

Sir, the procurement price for paddy is Rs. 94.0 per quintal, for rice Rs. 110.0 per quintal, for wheat Rs. 105.0 per quintal plus the bonus incentives that is proposed to be given. If you add that then it comes to Rs. 110.0 per quintal. As I said there is a lack of data for full production of different varieties of rice. Sir, the procurement price is fixed on the basis of cost of production. The Report on National Commission on Agriculture says like this.

“Estimates of costs of production have usually shown wide variation among different cultivators. Where the scatter is wide, the average does not solve the problem of a representative cost.”

It further says—

“The Agricultural Prices Commission is handicapped for want of adequate data. We have already mentioned that the Commission depends for its data support to a considerable extent on the Directorate of Economics and Statistics and the cost of production studies organised by it. In our view, these and other related studies should be designed and undertaken in consultation with the Agricultural Prices Commission, so that they could be geared to the needs of the Commission.”

The hon. Minister referred to the Agricultural Prices Commission and said that the procurement price is fixed on the basis of its recommendation. But the Agricultural Prices Commission's report says that they had no reliable data. Therefore, it is just possible for them to take a decision in regard to the fixation of procurement price for rice and wheat. The result is that I on the basis of that which you have now proposed for the wheat procurement price less Rs. 5.0 per quintal as procurement charges, the procurement price of paddy should be Rs. 90.0 per quintal on the basis of your own calculations. But they are giving only Rs. 74 per quintal. According to the figures given by the Government these are not my figures during the last five year plan period, 75% of the Rs. 2000 crores of financial assistance

[Shri Samar Guha]

Given by cooperatives, government institutions and commercial banks, have gone to the wheat-producing areas and not rice-producing areas. Similarly, 80% of the benefits of the inputs like manure, fertiliser, hybrid seeds, tubewells, tractors, cleaning machine, electricity, machine labour, diesel etc. have gone to the wheat-producing areas and not rice-producing areas.

As I said, the policy of the Government is almost absolutely wheat-oriented. The benefits of subsidy given to food procurement and issue price have gone to wheat cultivators and wheat consumers. During the last 20 years, about Rs. 6000 crores of subsidies which you have given have gone almost totally to the wheat-producing areas to the detriment of the interests of rice-producing areas. As I said, about 75% of the Rs. 2000 crores of financial assistance given by cooperative, government institutions and commercial banks have gone to the wheat-producing areas and 80% of the inputs have also gone to the wheat-producing areas. But yet, Government says, there is no discriminatory policy against the cultivators in rice-producing areas.

In conclusion, I want to know whether Government will set up a high-powered committee, including Members of Parliament to go into the policy of the Government, which is absolutely wheat-oriented in detriment to the interest of rice-growing areas, rice cultivators as well as rice consumers, so that this discrimination is removed and the rural economy of rice-producing areas gets equal benefit as the rural economy of the wheat-producing areas is getting.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE : While I appreciate the concern of the hon. member for producers of rice, I think his conclusions are absolutely wrong and inconsistent with facts. We should not unnecessarily try to develop new controversies in the country which have no basis.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : Please prove how I am wrong. It is your own data I have given.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE : The traditional distinction between rice and wheat growing areas is no longer there. He should know it. Punjab, Haryana and West U. P. are the largest

contributors of rice to the central pool now. The agricultural scene of India has undergone a tremendous change and there is no conflict between the interests of rice growers and wheat growers. Imaginary conclusions are being drawn.

Then, Sir, the hon. Member made a mention that while higher procurement price had been given to wheat producers, the same level of price increase had not been given to rice-growers. Now, take, for instance, the base year of 1968-69. While the paddy price per quintal was between Rs. 45 to Rs. 56.25 nP, the wheat price was Rs. 76. Now there has been some increase in the procurement price both of wheat and rice. What has been the increase? As against Rs. 45 or Rs. 56.25 nP the paddy procurement price is Rs. 74 or Rs. 76, while wheat price...

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : According to your figures, it should be Rs. 90 per quintal.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE : While the wheat price as against Rs. 76 is Rs. 105. In terms of percentage, while rise in paddy is generally 45 to 48%, rise in wheat is about 38%. Even percentage-wise the conclusion of the hon. Member is absolutely wrong and not consistent with the fact. I am prepared to sit with him and convince him.

Regarding bonus, I am very sorry for the ignorance of the hon. member because there is a scheme for bonus both for rice and wheat. In fact, if I may say so, the bonus scheme for rice is a little better than the bonus scheme for wheat. For instance, bonus scheme which has been recently announced by my senior colleague while replying to the debate on the Demands for Grants...

SHRI PILOO MODY (Godhra) : Why are you discriminating against wheat growers?

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE : You can settle it with Guhaji.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : I say, give equal to both. Sir, he is a master of ignorance. (*Interruptions*).

MR. SPEAKER : Please try to understand the position. The difficulty is that you don't understand the position.

(*interruptions*) By displaying emotions, you can't straighten the matter. He is telling the facts. He may be refuting which you don't like to be refuted. After all, facts are facts.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : He is a master of ignorance. He knows how to ignore the facts. I have given the data and figures but he has not touched any of them. (*Interruptions*).

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Piloo Mody, he is already enough and you do not prompt him any further.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE : Sir, even for rice the average bonus is Rs. 5.50 nP. and for wheat it is Rs. 4.75 nP. So, the bonus for wheat is marginally little less than the rice. Therefore, there is no ground for the complaint by the hon. Member on that score.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : You know, how much bonus has been given to them. (*Interruptions*).

MR. SPEAKER : He need not reply. There is no use of replying if you are not prepared to listen. You don't have the patients to listen to him.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE : The hon. Member has referred to the subsidy for rice. First of all, I do not know whether the hon. Member is posted with the facts. It is true that subsidies are involved into the distribution of very large quantities of wheat. But what is the reason? The reason is that the international level of price of wheat is very high and we are importing it at a very high price and distributing it at a pre-determined price, i.e., the issue price of Rs. 125 per quintal to all the State Governments and this is why, this large element of subsidy comes in. Even if the subsidy does not go, as the hon. Member has said, regionwise, in fact, very large quantities of wheat are going in to Kerala, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal. These are pre-dominantly rice-eating areas but because there is some difficulty of meeting the food requirement of State Government with rice, we are distributing wheat. Therefore, there is large subsidy element which is going to the rice eating areas and there is not distinction between the wheat growers and the rice growers.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : The rural economy is affected.

MR. SPEAKER : He is not prepared to listen. There is no use telling him anything if he is not prepared to listen.

So many times he has interrupted. (*Interruptions*) You need not. He is not prepared to listen. (*Interruptions*). No, no please. After all... I have not asked him to reply. He interrupts you every time. There is no sense in it. You need not, because he interrupts you every time. Then the House must ask him not to get up every minute. He is not listening to me also.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE : Then another statement has been made that all inputs are going into wheat-growing areas and not into rice-growing areas. And he made a mention of some percentage also. I have made the statement that the old, traditional distinction between rice-growing and wheat-growing areas is no longer there. But apart from that, if for instance he looks to Andhra, the fertilizer consumption there is so high. And it is a rice-growing area. And a very substantial portion of inputs goes there. In Tamil Nadu, e.g. they are asking for fertilizer and we have been making sincere efforts on the part of the Government of India and of my Ministry to see that the largest allotments are made to Tamil Nadu, Andhra etc. Therefore, to say that the scarce inputs like fertilizers are going to particular areas, is not correct; but even suppose—in kharif season for instance, we had made an allotment of fertilizers to Punjab; and it goes mainly towards rice. The same thing I can go on repeating for west U. P., Haryana, like that. The hon. Member has got some fixed notions about rice and wheat growing areas; and, therefore, he is not in a position to appreciate what I am saying; but one thing is true in this country, viz. some amount of uneven development is taking place; and the hon. Member can find a solution to this problem elsewhere. It is not confined to rice or wheat. (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER : Do not go beyond the scope of his question.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE : Therefore, I do not want to take more time on this subject. I have broadly mentioned some of the important figures of rice and wheat economy; and I would also like to submit information as to how his allegations in this regard are not correct.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : I have requested him to tell us whether the Government is prepared to set up a high-power committee including some Members of Parliament to go into the question (*Interruptions*). He has himself agreed that there is an uneven economic development in different sectors. The uneven economic development in the rural sector is due largely to the policy of the Government. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE : There is no case for setting up such a Committee.

SHRI P. K. DEO (Kalahandi) : The Minister, in his statement, has passed on the baby, so far as the fixing of the procurement price is concerned, to the Agricultural Prices Commission and to the Chief Ministers ; but at the same time, the Centre cannot abdicate its responsibility, for the consequences that have followed from this irrational procurement price. While supporting the principle of levy and anti-hoarding and anti-profiteering drive taken seriously by the Government, we stand for a remunerative price to the agriculturist because of the rise in prices of various inputs ; and the cost of agricultural operation has also simultaneously gone up. At the same time, we urge upon the availability of rice at a subsidized price to the vulnerable sections of the society; and they should be assured of work. We do not want those poorer sections to be beggars.

They should be provided with some work and their purchasing power has to be increased.

There are two aspects. One is the agricultural programme and the other is social programme. Agricultural production must increase. If there is increase in agricultural production, then only we will be able to stabilise the prices of essential food commodities. So, there should be parity of prices, as far as wheat or rice is concerned, in relation to other commodities.

We swear by socialism, but we cannot provide two square meals a day to the people. From my constituency and various other parts of Orissa and Chhattisgarh we are getting reports of starvation deaths and there is large-scale migration of people.

I most respectfully submit that whatever may be the procurement price, the public distribution system should be streamlined. There is a peculiar phenomenon developing, specially in Orissa. Because the number of ration shops or the distribution centres are not adequate to meet the requirements of the people, so the consumers are resisting forcefully the levy of whatever surplus is there in those villages. They insist that whatever paddy is procured from a village should be stored there so that they could be assured of getting that paddy in the lean months.

I would point out that this drive is being used as an instrument of oppression. What happened on the 10th will corroborate my statement. In Parlakemdi constituency of Orissa, where the BLD MLA shifted his loyalty and joined the ruling party, the target of attack was the village "Gurandi" from where Shri Narayanpatra, ex-MLA, & M.P. belonging to Congress (O) has secured the second largest number of votes in the last elections. The procurement has been more than what was envisaged in the levy. From Shri Narayanpatra 30 quintals were procured, against 10 quintals scheduled, even though he owned only 7 acres. From Shri Duryodanpatra, who owned 4 acres 25 quintals were procured. When the people resisted, there was indiscriminate firing and five people died on the spot. The Government were not satisfied with that. They burnt a haystack in the 'Gurandi' village. Since there is a judicial probe into that, I do not want to go into the merits of that case.

An identical incident happened a month back in Sambalpur, where during the procurement operations there was firing and a poor boy lost his life. His body was not handed over to his parents for cremation. Similar incidents are happening in Raipur and Balasat.

Taking into consideration all these facts, I would request the Government to seriously consider this matter and be more pragmatic in their approach and assure parity of prices to the agriculturists. They should store the grains procured from the villages in those particular villages assure work to the agricultural labourers, give subsidised rations to the vulnerable and poorer sections of the people and streamline the public distribution system.

Under the present arrangement the main beneficiaries are the Government and the Food Corporation of India. On every transaction of one quintal of rice they make a profit of Rs. 50. I was surprised to learn from my friend, who came from Punjab yesterday, that so far as Basumati rice is concerned, they procure it in Punjab at the rate of Rs. 80 to 90 per quintal and sell it in Orissa at Rs. 400 per quintal.]

Taking into consideration all these facts, I request the hon. Minister to come forward with a categorical answer that all these requirements will be fulfilled if he wants an equitable distribution of foodgrains to every section of the society.

SHRI ANNASAHAB P. SHINDE : The hon. Member has expressed his views and made some suggestions, but this Calling Attention Notice is about the reported discriminatory policy in regard to fixation of procurement price of rice.

SHRI P. K. DEO : And its consequences,

SHRI ANNASAHAB P. SHINDE : He has said something about Basmati rice being distributed through the public distribution system in Orissa, which is not correct. His observations regarding that are not justified.

SHRI P. K. DEO : What about the indiscriminate firing that is taking place while the procurement operations have been going on? Why not take into consideration these facts? It is not a question of law and order relating to the State Government alone. You are a party to it. They have been indiscriminately killing people.

MR. SPEAKER : He is only the Minister of Food.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE (Rajapur) : While I raise certain issues, let me make it clear that I do not want to pose it as an issue between the rice lobby and the wheat lobby. We need both wheat and rice. Different sections need different commodities. The only purpose of this Calling Attention is to pose certain issues and seek clarification.

Some time back the hon. Minister for Agriculture had assured us, at least in principle, that a representative of the farmers would be taken on the Agricultural Prices Commission. I would like to know whether any concrete decision

has been taken in this connection, and if a decision has not been taken, what are the obstacles in the path of the appointment of such a representative, so that the farmers' interests can be safeguarded in the Agricultural Prices Commission.

There is another aspect which I would like to raise, which is very relevant to procurement, and I am raising this issue on the basis of the experience that I have gained in the region from which I come here as a representative of the people. Sometimes a definite limitation is kept below which no levy will be imposed, and no foodgrains would be obtained, but we are always told that voluntarily the farmers or peasants can always offer the necessary levy. Theoretically it is true that the voluntary levy cannot be objected to, but very often the authorities fix a particular target and the local authorities say that whatever might have been the assurance by the Minister concerned, they have been told by the high-ups that this is the target fixed for the area and whether it is voluntary or compulsory, it is only the thin end of the wedge and they are not concerned. They tell the villagers that if they want to stay in the village and if they want all the facilities there, the target must be fulfilled and that is how there is forcible levy under the garb of voluntary levy. I would like to know whether this type of coercion cannot be completely avoided.

We are told by the hon. Minister that there has been absolutely no discrimination and I do not want to attribute any motive, but I would only like to place certain facts before him. If a remunerative price is offered to the rice cultivators, it should result in a greater amount of procurement, and we should be able to fulfil our targets. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether these figures which I am quoting are correct or not. If they are correct, he may supply the correct figures. We are told that the following are the figures of targets and the actual procurements in lakh tonnes in the different States :

State	Target	Procurement
Andhra Pradesh	9.0	5.44
Haryana	2.5	2.44
Punjab	9.5	9.00
Tamil Nadu	3.0	3.50

[Pro Madhu Dandavate] :

This seems to be the only State, thanks to our friends there, where the target has been exceeded

Uttar Pradesh	3 25	2 54
West Bengal	5 00	1 67

This is a very interesting picture and I would like to know whether it is a fact. This is a greater achievement of Mr Sidhartha Shankar. In Madhya Pradesh the procurement was 1.32 lakh tonnes and the target was 1.50 lakh tonnes. This seems to be a picture, and if you go through the picture, it would be very clear that almost in every State, the actual procurement that has been achieved and secured is lower than the target that has been fixed. I would like to know from the hon. Minister why such a situation has arisen. I would also like to know whether the present procurement policy will be able to meet with the requirement of the statutory rationing as well as the new areas where modified rationing is going to take place. I would also like to know from him what has been his experience. I would also like to put this specific question. The Chief Minister of Maharashtra has made a proposal to supply better seeds to the farmers in exchange for a levy of one-third of their output of grains as the official procurement price.

Sir, very often, the greater the difference between the pre-market price and the procurement price, the more will the former be having the tendency to hide his proceeds and try to give less in procurement. Therefore, I would like to know in terms of his experience how is he going to solve the issue. The Government also must remember that if it imposes a levy on paddy alone—of course, everywhere, it has not happened—it will encourage the farmers to divert their crop from paddy to some other crop, which will not be necessary requirement of the consumers in terms of their priorities. And therefore, from that point of view, whether these particular imbalances which exist in certain areas I think in giving the reply here he indicated that there were certain imbalances and will have to be corrected,—I would like to know what concrete steps will be taken to ensure that these imbalances will be completely removed?

One more question regarding the news report which has appeared. There was a proposal that FCI would buy an additional one lakh tonnes of rice at open market price, if necessary. I want to know whether this decision has already been taken? It was a reported decision. And very often, it happens that it is the rice mills which are concerned here, and if they are allowed to sell their ready stock without any limitation on price, then the proposed FCI's operation may probably raise up further rice of the open market prices, and ultimately it may compel the Government to see that the issue price for the ration shops articles which are given to the consumers, that also might be raised up. That will be the consequence. I would like to know whether such consequence would be avoided? These are some of the specific questions which I pose and I would expect answers from the hon. Minister.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE

Sir, beginning with the last query of the hon. Member, there is no proposal before the Food Corporation to buy at open market prices. So, the apprehension of the hon. Member is not justified. The hon. Member made a plea that there should be a representative of the farmers on the APC (Agricultural Prices Commission). I know the feeling of the hon. House. A number of times, hon. Members have made suggestions. Perhaps one can take the position that Agricultural Prices Commission needs to be strengthened. The difficulty with the Government is that supposing we start giving representation to sectional interest why farmers and numerous others also should not be there. All these questions may come up. And I think it would be better if this body is kept as an independent body representing economists, experts so that it does not become a body which is subject to various pressures, etc. This is the Government's view.

Sir, the hon. Member's suggestion had been considered in the past, and when an occasion comes, my senior colleagues will naturally give some thought to this problem giving representation to the various sections including farmers.

As far as procurement is concerned, because the hon. Member has referred to compulsion being employed, etc., I have elaborately argued the case while speaking on the Demands for Grants. In this

country, as far as levy etc. is concerned, all round support and co-operation is necessary so that necessary atmosphere is created for procurement by the State Governments. But the mode of procurement is entirely left to the State Government. We do not want to interfere in the affairs of the State Government. They are in a better position to take necessary view and judgment in these matters, as far as targets are concerned.

PRO. MADHU DANDAVATE : Can you suggest guidelines ?

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE : These matters are repeatedly discussed in the Chief Ministers' Conferences. We find that the conditions in different parts are so different that really it is better to give discretion to the State Government in this matter. Hard and fast rules will not work and they have never worked in this country.

Sir, the hon. Member has referred to targets. I must say, in fairness, that despite severe drought conditions in different parts of the country like Orissa, parts of Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, the procurement is coming up very well. Last year, there was the record production of rice. The procurement this year is short by only 2 lakh tonnes. It is coming up very well. Now, the target is 41 lakh tonnes of rice and we anticipate that there is a possibility of this target being reached. The performance is satisfactory. The hon. Member need not have any fear on that ground.

As to whether the procurement can be linked to inputs, the Government of India would like to encourage the State Governments and, if possible, the procurement can be linked to the supply of inputs.

As regards imbalance in the economy, it is a much larger issue. The lack of land reforms, the system of land tenure, the historical background, the social conditions, all these factors come in. A number of steps will have to be taken not by my Ministry alone but by the Government of India as a whole to remove imbalance. The Government of India's effort has been in this direction.

As regards land reforms, I think in the field of agricultural economy, unless land reforms are undertaken, unless

the things like elimination of the system of share cropping etc., are properly attended to, the imbalance in the economy will continue to persist. Many of the subjects are State subjects. We have taken a very clear position on these matters. Naturally, it is the implementation which is the crux of the matter. My Ministry has no reservation. We would like the State Governments to implement these policies.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : About the Maharashtra Chief Minister's proposal, I want to know what is the position.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE : I have made a statement. We have no objection to encouraging the State Governments to link it up with inputs, including water. I consider water a very important input. If the State Government wants to proceed on that line, we do not come in their way.

SHRI ARJUN SETHI (Bhadrak) : Sir, it has been the practice of some of the Opposition parties in our country, in the recent past, to sidetrack the merits of the case so as to fulfil their partisan ends and make a political capital out of the whole issue.

The Hon. Member opposite from Orissa who is not here just now complained against the arbitrary policy of the State Government. He brought before the House some incorrect statements. I must say, he has stated the wrong side of the picture while dealing with a particular incident at Parakhemid Sub Division resulting in death of 5 persons and injury of the Sub-Divisional Officer on the spot.

He said that the State Government is carrying on victimisation against a former Member of Parliament. But unfortunately, I must say, this very Member of Parliament led a procession and tried to incite the people on the spot. As a result, they set fire to about 300 houses belonging to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe people and weaker sections of the people. When the police fired at the mob, the deaths took place.

The whole case is under investigation. The State Government has already ordered a judicial inquiry to go into the details of the incident. It is no use saying that the State Government or the Police officers set fire to the houses of these poor

[Shri Arjun Sethi]

people. But whoever might be the culprit, certainly the sufferers are the poor.

However, I would like to put a specific question to the hon. Minister. It is a matter of fact that the policy of the Government, whether it is in regard to fixation of price of rice or it is in regard to the levy procurement of grain, the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe people and the marginal and small farmers are coming forward to cooperate with the Government for the success of the procurement policy of the Government.

In this context, a section of the people in certain areas are being insulted and victimised in a manner which is very much regrettable. So, I would like to ask the Hon'ble Minister whether he will give the full protection to people who are co-operating with the Government for the successful implementation of the policy of procurement of rice and other food-grains.

Secondly, I would like to ask the Hon'ble Minister whether he will advise the State Governments in some cases so that they may look into complex cases regarding up-to-date data of land holdings so that fixation of levy is done with justice and no complaint of this nature can arise in the future.

SHRI ANNASAHAB P. SHINDE : We will draw the attention of the State Governments to the observation of the Hon'ble Member.

SHRI B. V. NAIK (Kanara) : I would like to start with the point as to whether the Hon'ble Minister rightly pointed out that Prof. Samar Guha's statement may be a political statement, I say that because I have some figures relating to Punjab and Haryana about the acreage under paddy and the acreage under wheat. In the State of Haryana there are 2,69,000 acres under paddy as against 11,29,000 acres (i.e. 1.1 million acres) under wheat. Similarly, in Punjab there are 3,90,000 under paddy and 2.3 million acres, nearly under wheat. A comparison between these States and States like West Bengal, Orissa, Assam, all the four southern States and part of Maharashtra where virtually 95% to 98% of the land is under paddy, would be an unequal one because the dietary

habits in the areas where paddy is grown as the principal crop—95% crop—differ from the dietary habits of our very valiant farmers of Punjab and Haryana where it is not grown as a sort of consumption crop; it is a crop in the nature of a commercial crop. Even though it may be called a sort of food crop, the food crop in Punjab and Haryana is wheat and the commercial crop in Punjab and Haryana—the so-called Kharif crop—is paddy. Under the circumstances, so long as your principal source of income is from wheat, is it wrong on the part of the Punjab and Haryana farmer to be more interested in wheat, irrespective of the procurement requirements? He treats that as a sort of by-income and is not agitating. But in regard to wheat, it is this principal income, it is his bread and butter and, therefore, he agitates and gets what he wants. But that is not the case with the farmers in the rest of the country. I wish the very productive farmers in that area pay attention to rice also so that the millions of the farmers in the rest of the country will be benefited. This is the first point regarding discrimination. There is discrimination...

MR. SPEAKER : You have already taken five minutes.

SHRI B. V. NAIK : If I make any irrelevant point, you can ask me to sit down, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER : Whether relevant or irrelevant, the rules prescribe only five minutes for each member.

SHRI B. V. NAIK : I humbly submit to you, Sir; this is a very vital point for us.

MR. SPEAKER : You have lost time in introduction.

SHRI B. V. NAIK : If you see the index numbers of production which you have given in your statement for the last 20 years or so, you will find that in the case of rice in 1949-50 to the index number was 73 or round about that and the maximum reached was 129.0 in 1971-72, in the course of the last two decades, which is an increase of about 80 per cent. The index number in the case of wheat production in 1949-50 was 60.7 and in 1970-71 the figure was 129.3. In the case of paddy the rise in production was only to the extent of 80 per cent

whereas in the case of wheat the rise was to the extent of 400 per cent. Would you not call this discrimination? I still pay compliments to the wheat growers. But why are you subsidising wheat? It is the most productive sector of our economy; the most productive farmers are there. If you want to refute what Mr. Samar Guha has said that the wheat farmers in this country, in the course of the last decade or so, have been subsidised to the tune of Rs. 3,000 crores..

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : Rs. 6,000 crores.

SHRI B. V. NAIK : .. to the tune of Rs. 6,000 crores or so, why don't you provide the figures to the contrary? The question of subsidy came in the last one year; we were told that there was going to be a subsidy, so far as the Central Pool was concerned, to the extent of Rs. 195 crores....

श्री बरबारा सिंह (हाशियारपुर) : हमें कुछ बिग ईस्ट्रोज दे जा जे । अनाज ये पैदा कर देगे ।

SHRI B. V. NAIK : The hon. Member will have his time. He has been having his time for the last 20 years. Let the paddy farmers also have some time.

SHRI DARBARA SINGH : Not at the cost of wheat.

SHRI B. V. NAIK : Now, my third point is...

MR. SPEAKER : You have already taken more than five minutes for introduction...

SHRI B. V. NAIK : This is a vital question, Sir. If the Speaker is going to permit a discussion under rule 193 in the interest of the 20 crores of paddy farmers...

MR. SPEAKER : I am now concerned with the present motion and not with any promises. Kindly conclude.

SHRI B. V. NAIK : In the case of international price, the other day the hon. Minister has said—now I am saying something in favour of the wheat growers—that, in the United States, on the field, the price paid to the wheat grower, even in regard to the imported American wheat,

according to bushels and dollars, is in the neighbourhood of Rs. 125 to 140 per quintal; therefore, there is no justifiable case for giving a higher price for the wheat grower in our country except that the international parity in regard to the prices should be there. What is the price of paddy per quintal in Burma? Is it Rs. 250 per quintal? Why the statement that in respect of wheat you maintain a sort of parity between the international price and the native price is not being made applicable in the case of paddy? Why are you taking it down to one-fourth of the Burmese price, that is Rs. 75 per quintal.

13.00 hrs.

In 1964-65, according to the chart that is given here, the all-India minimum support price for rice was Rs. 44 to Rs. 45 per quintal, while that of superior farm variety of wheat was Rs. 49 per quintal. Today, after ten years, paddy fetches Rs. 75 and wheat is in the neighbourhood of Rs. 106 per quintal. I have not said anything about the other cereals about which the hon. Minister has said like Jawar, Bajra, and other hill millets. I would request you not to deny off the cuff that there is no discrimination. In the most sincere terms, we would request you to give an even-handed treatment to all farmers because they are our brothers.

SHRI ANNASAHAB P. SHINDE : I am very sorry to say that very unrealistic type of controversies are being brought on the floor of the House without any realistic controversy being there.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : The Minister wants everybody to be knowledgeable or abuses them to be very ignorant and whenever some figures are given, he calls from unrealistic.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU (Diamond Harbour) : Why are you disturbing wheat-rice parity? The rice growing States are being devalued.

SHRI ANNASAHAB P. SHINDE : My submission is that there is no controversy whatsoever as between the interest of wheat grower and rice growers. In fact, wheat growers have rendered yeomen service to this country, because the production in this country would not have come the way it has come for the last ten years. Nobody would have been able

[Shri Annasaheb P. Shinde]

to manage the food economy in the country otherwise. Punjab and other farmers have played a very great role in this regard.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : We agree we appreciate and we congratulate them but please do not forget others.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU : Why are you disturbing the wheat-rice parity ?

MR. SPEAKER : Let him reply to the Member, who has asked the question ; he is just an intruder.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE : Punjab today makes the largest contribution of price to the Central pool for feeding the deficit States and rice growing States, and that also needs to be taken note of. If Shri Naik's contention is that the rice producers are treated discriminately, it is the Punjab farmers, who are the largest contributors of rice ; I hope, he does not mean that. He contradicts himself by saying that even Punjab farmers are being denied a fair deal.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : You are talking again and again about the rice produce of Punjab. What is the percentage of rice production of Punjab and Haryana compared to Tamil Nadu, Assam, Orissa and West Bengal, Bihar and other areas ?

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU : While congratulating the Punjab farmers. I want a clarification through your good offices. I seek your permission.

MR. SPEAKER : No, please. The Rules do not allow any other member except the Members whose names appear in the call attention motion.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU : Let him give a clarification whether by disturbing the price differential, they have not devalued the rice-growing States.

MR. SPEAKER : The Minister need not listen to what the hon. Member says.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : The Prime Minister is right that the external threat is growing.

MR. SPEAKER : They forget that in Punjab, the land is the same, the farmer is the same and after all, the same land produces wheat as also the rice.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU : We also do not refuse the Punjab farmers what is their due. We admit that they are doing a wonderful job. But I want to know : what percentage of total rice production do the Punjab farmers produce and what percentage other areas are growing ?

MR. SPEAKER : That is not the question. The question is about discrimination.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE : The hon. Member referred to the price structure. I would like to repeat that taking 1968-69 as the base when rice price was between Rs. 45 and 56.20 per quintal, if the increase is taken into consideration, the rice price increase is between 44 and 45 per cent while the wheat price increase has been only between 34 and 38 per cent. Even on that score, the hon. Member's contention will not stand. I am prepared to sit with the hon. Member if I can possibly succeed in convincing him.

The hon. Member referred to subsidy I will again repeat that large quantities of wheat are to-day distributed in the country in the rice-eating areas and if any subsidy is there, the benefit goes to the rice-eating areas also.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : Yes, to the consumer but not to the cultivators. Here the question is of rural economy. The question is whether the benefit goes to the cultivator.

SHRI B. V. NAIK : Out of nearly 45 million tonnes of paddy produced, are you trying to come to the conclusion that a million tonnes procured in the Punjab and Haryana are feeding this country ?

MR. SPEAKER : I am not allowing. The Minister may reply only to his first question.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE : If a subsidy is there to-day, it is because we purchase wheat in the international market at a very high price and we issue

it to the State Governments at a lower price of Rs. 125. Why it is not possible to get rice in the international market is because the price of rice in the international market is three to four times higher and a much larger amount of foreign exchange will be required. In fact some of our neighbouring countries export substantial quantities of rice and import wheat in order to meet the interests of their national economy. I think the hon. Member has at his heart the interests of the national economy. This country is not in a position to-day to spend a higher foreign exchange element if we are required to import rice also. In fact in the interests of the country's economy, if possible, we should export rice and import wheat to the extent possible. This will serve the purpose of our national economy. Prior to last year the element of subsidy in indigenous wheat was higher because the difference between the procurement price and the issue price was limited—Rs. 76 procurement price and Rs. 78 was the issue price. Because of that, it involved an element of subsidy. Therefore, there was no question of the subsidy going to the producer of wheat. It went to the consumers of wheat. As is known, a large quantity of wheat which is procured by public agencies is not distributed in the surplus States of Punjab, Haryana and Western U. P. It is distributed in deficit States—Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and West Bengal. Therefore, these quantities which are procured to go the deficit States and not to the surplus States where we procure wheat.

These are the main points of the hon. Member and I hope he will get convinced about it.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA : Are you yourself convinced ?

13.09 hrs.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC UNDERTAKINGS

SIXTIETH REPORT

SHRI NAWAL KISHORE SHARMA (Dausa) : I beg to present the Sixtieth Report of the Committee on Public Undertakings on Action taken by Govern-

ment on the recommendations contained in their Thirty-Seventh Report on National Mineral Development Corporation Ltd

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-FIFTH REPORT

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU (Diamond Harbour) : I beg to present the Hundred and fifty-fifth Report of the Public Accounts Committee on paragraph 19 (Sugar Rebate Scheme) of the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the year 1972-73, Union Government (Civil), Revenue Receipts, Volume I, Indirect Taxes.

श्री ज्योतिरमोय (बांका) : अध्यक्ष महोदय मेरा प्वाइन्ट आफ ऑर्डर है। पब्लिक एकाउन्ट्स कमेटी जो सरकार के एकाउन्ट्स होते हैं उन की जांच करने के लिए है। आम तौर पर ऑडिटर जनरल की जो रिपोर्ट आती है उस के ऊपर जांच करते हैं। लेकिन ऐसे भी उदाहरण मिलते हैं कि रिपोर्ट के बाहर भी अगर कोई इरेग्युलेटी या अनियमितता है तो वे उस पर भी विचार करते हैं। मेरे पास सी० ए० जी० की रिपोर्ट है—रेवेन्यू रिपोर्ट्स, वॉल्यूम 1, इस में पैराग्राफ 60-बूलन सेक्शन के बारे में है। इस में ऑडिटर जनरल ने कहा था :

"The extension of the exemption from duty given to unstripped woollens by executive instruction is not legally correct. Further, in the cases reported, the nature and extent of mutilation carried out at the dock, are not known."

आगे कहा गया है, मैं सब नहीं पढ़ंगा -

"The duty involved in respect of 3,345 bales of such garments released is Rs. 18 93 lakhs."

तकरीबन 19 लाख —

"However, the extent of duty on all consignments imported is yet to be ascertained."