

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : There is not much time left for questions. You can seek a discussion on the subject later on.

(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : That is why, I am saying it is all right. That will be discussed. If there is anything very important, we cannot devote all the time for one question. That is why, I say, you can have a discussion later on. I cannot have all this time for one question.

[Translation]

SHRI VIRDHI CHANDER JAIN : Mr. Speaker Sir, my question has not been answered. My question is about providing employment to at least one member per family.

MR. SPEAKER : You can seek a discussion later on.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER : I have already given a reply. (Interruptions)

[English]

Price of Fruits and Vegetables

*803. SHRI LAKSHMAN MALLICK : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the prices of fruits, vegetables and pulses have registered increase in the last few weeks;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps Government propose to take to reduce their prices ?

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV) : (a) Yes, Sir. The prices of some fruits, green vegetables and pulses have increased in the last few weeks.

(b) The main reason is the seasonality factor.

(c) Various schemes have been drawn up by different States/Union Territories for

increasing the production of these commodities. NAFED, Mother Dairy, Kendriya Bhandar and Super Bazar and Civil Supplies Corporations of different States are retailing essential commodities including fruits and vegetables, in the open market to stabilise prices.

[English]

SHRI LAKSHMAN MALLICK : There has been price increase in respect of food-grains, pulses and vegetables. The wholesale price and the consumer price have been increasing everyday. Prices of the commodities, specially the essential commodities and primary articles also have continued to rise. Sufficient stocks are not available in the retail sales centres marketing the essential commodities. The cost in the open market is also increasing day by day. The poor consumers are the hardhit due to increase in prices.

May I know whether the Government is aware of the fact that some merchants and businessmen are creating artificial shortage of essential commodities including vegetables and fruits ? If so, what are the steps proposed to be taken against these persons ? I would like to know whether the Government have any proposal to reduce the export of fruits and vegetables in order to see that all these commodities are available in plenty in the open market thereby stabilising the prices of these commodities.

SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV : So far as the availability of the commodities that are referred to in the question, i.e. fruits, vegetables and pulses are concerned, I don't think that in the case of fruits and vegetables there is any shortage; sufficient quantity is available. In the case of pulses we are increasing the production. Fortunately, the crop is very good this year and some pulses are being imported also. We are not exporting any pulses. Fruits and vegetables are available. Because of drought, no doubt, the production has not been upto the mark.

SHRI LAKSHMAN MALLICK : In the reply given by the Minister it is stated that States and Union Territories have drawn up various schemes to increase the production of these essential commodities. May I know from the Hon. Minister what percentage has been supplemented by the States and Union

Territories to supply such commodities to the consumers and to what extent the price rise has been arrested by such schemes ?

SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV : These commodities, particularly the vegetables and fruits, are mostly sold by the retailers. In Delhi the Dairy Development Board has set up certain retail outlets where they are selling fruits and vegetables. In so far as pulses are concerned, they are available in the open market. We import a lot of pulses through NAFED and distribute them through the public distribution system. In some of the States NAFED makes available these pulses. For the production of pulses a very ambitious scheme has been drawn up throughout the country and I hope that the production of pulses will go up.

SHRI RAM NAGINA MISHRA : Hon. Speaker, Sir, I want to the reasons as to why the prices of pulses, oilseeds and vegetables increase and why they become scarce. The traders purchase Arhar and oilseeds just after harvesting from farmers at cheap prices and after sometime sell them at double prices. Similarly when the production of potato is in plenty, some people purchase them at low prices and store the same in their cold storages because common farmers do not have such facilities. This leads to the hike in prices. The Government have separate shops for procurement of some grains like paddy and wheat at the rate determined by the Government. Would you please make such arrangement for pulses and oilseeds also to enable the farmers to get remunerative price for their produce which is now being snatched away by businessmen so that the prices may be kept under control.

My second point is that small farmers having less than one acre of land are given subsidy for growing oilseeds. He may grow paddy or oilseeds. Will you provide subsidy to other farmers also who have land and grow oilseeds ?

SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV : Hon. Member is aware that this is for pulses and oilseeds which are mainly grown in unirrigated land which is dependent on rain. Severe drought of last year has adversely affected the production of pulses and oilseeds. A separate scheme is being implemented to enhance the production of pulses.

At national level, two programmes have been launched to increase production of oilseeds namely National Oilseeds Development Project and Oilseeds Thrust Programme—'Beej Gram Yojana' has also been launched for it. Both the programmes i.e. G.O.D.P. and Oilseeds Thrust Programme are being implemented in 17 states. Farmers intending to grow oilseeds are being provided required facilities. As far as question of price rise is concerned I would like to make it clear to the hon. Member that the different support prices are fixed for different cereals. If prices fall below the fixed support price the Government purchases farmer's produce on support price through NAFED. The supply of pulses is being entrusted to the public distribution system. It is for the State Governments if they want to include it in their own distribution system. The edible oil, which is imported is sold by fair price shops. It was stated on behalf of the Government that this facility is available to all categories of farmers under the scheme of Pulses Development Programme.

SHRI RAM NAGINA MISHRA : Will Arhar and oilseeds be sold by fair price shops as wheat is sold by them.

MR. SPEAKER : He has already replied to it.

SHRI RAM NAGINA MISHRA : Will such directions be issued to the State Governments ?

MR. SPEAKER : He has already told.

SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV : States can do it.

[English]

SHRI M. RAGHUMA REDDY : Production of fruits is 58 million tonnes and juice extraction is 5.5 lakh tonnes. Due to the severe droughts and floods, how much production has been reduced ? And how much the quantity of pulp has been reduced ?

You are exporting pulp and pulp juices to other countries. I would also like to know how much you are exporting and how much amount you are getting by way of these exports.

Whether it is also a fact that some of the pulp industries are harassing the farmers

who are producing the pulp and pulp juices ?

MR. SPEAKER : I don't think he will be able to answer this question because the question is regarding the increase in the prices of fruits, etc.

SHRI M. RAGHUMA REDDY : He can answer the first part, that is, so much production has been reduced. Generally, we are getting 58 million tonnes from fruits. How much production has been reduced due to the severe droughts ?

[*Translation*]

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI BHAJAN LAL) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is a fact that the production of fruits and pulses has been reduced due to the incessant drought for last 2-3 years.

MR. SPEAKER : He is asking only about fruits.

SHRI BHAJAN LAL : I am coming to that. The production of pulses which was 133 lakh tonnes in 1985-86 reduced to 117.4 lakh tonnes in 1986-87 due to the drought. That is why we had to import pulses. We imported 227929 tonnes of pulses in 1983-84 and a sum of Rs. 92.00 crore (approx.) was spent on it. Later on we imported 2 lakh 35 thousand 390 tonnes of pulses in 1984-85

MR. SPEAKER : The hon. Member is asking about the reduction in production of fruits due to drought.

SHRI M. RAGHUMA REDDY : You should tell the quantum of reduction in the production of fruits due to drought.

SHRI BHAJAN LAL : You please listen. I was submitting that the production of pulses has reduced from 133.6 lakh tonnes to 117.4 lakh tonnes due to drought. As far as reduction in the production of fruits is concerned I do not have the figures at this moment.

MR. SPEAKER : You may furnish the same later on.

SHRI BHAJAN LAL : I can furnish the figures in respect of vegetables immediately, if hon. Members desire.

MR. SPEAKER : No, you may please furnish the figures pertaining to fruits later on.

Mr. Tanti, now it is your turn please ask your question.

[*English*]

SHRI M. RAGHUMA REDDY : The Minister comes without any preparation. The question pertains to fruits.

MR. SPEAKER : He will refer the matter to you.

[*Translation*]

MR. SPEAKER : He has already stated that the figures regarding reduction in production of fruits are not available with him at this moment.

(*Interruption*)

MR. SPEAKER : So, you want only to know the figures about reduction in fruits production due to the drought. The Minister will supply you the same because they are not available with him at this moment.

[*English*]

SHRI M. RAGHUMA REDDY : The Minister is expected to have all the details.

MR. SPEAKER : If he has not got the figures, then why should he give wrong figures ? Let him have the correct figures. Then he will pass them on to you.

[*Translation*]

When the figures are not available with him then what is the use of incorrect figures.

[*English*]

SHRI E. AYYAPU REDDY : Whether he has got the infrastructure or not ? Let him inform the House about the horticulture production.

Anti-Labour Practices in Newspaper Industry

*804. SHRI BHADRESWAR TANTI : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether anti-labour practices are prevailing in the newspaper industry;

(b) if so, the steps Government have taken to ensure that all newspaper managements meet their legal obligations towards their employees; and

(c) if not, the reasons for the same ?