

**CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER
OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE**

FAIR PRICE SHOPS IN KERALA

Shri A. K. Gopalan (Cannanore): Under rule 216, I beg to call the attention of the Minister of Food and Agriculture to the following matter of urgent public importance and I request that he may make a statement thereon:

"Inadequate arrangements for the distribution of rice in Fair Price Shops in Kerala."

The Deputy Minister of Food (**Shri M. V. Krishnappa**): Under the present conditions of decontrol, rice moves freely in the country, from one place to another through the normal trade channels. The Kerala State receives substantial supplies from Tanjore district of Madras State and the surplus districts of Andhra Pradesh. In view, however, of the upward trend in prices and to supplement supplies of rice moved through normal trade channels, fair price shops for the sale of rice have been opened all over Kerala State. These fair price shops are being supplied with rice released from Central reserve depots.

Fair price shops were first opened in Trivandrum in June 1956. Since then, the shops have been opened in other districts also. The number of shops now functioning in the State is over 3,000 and more shops are being opened to meet the demand, wherever considered necessary. Steps have been taken for the proper functioning of these shops. The quantity of rice issued from the Central Government depots to these shops during November 1956 was about 25,000 tons.

Adequate arrangements have been made to ensure substantial stocks of rice for meeting the demand of fair price shops in Kerala State. It may be mentioned that during the control period, when Kerala (the former Travancore-Cochin State and Malabar district of Madras State) was under complete statutory rationing, the average monthly offtake of rice in the State was not more than 50,000 tons. Now that free market also

exists in the State, the issue of 25,000 tons of rice by the Government during November 1956 constitutes a very substantial quantity. However, if necessity arises, more rice will be made available for issue. About 45,000 tons of rice are expected to arrive in Kerala ports from various sources during December 1956.

For the last two weeks reports indicate that a steep fall in the prices of rice is reported in important South Indian markets like Trichy and Tanjore (which supply rice to Kerala State). The present rates are Rs. 30 to Rs. 32 for *kuruvai*, and Rs. 43 for Nellore *samba* per bag of two maunds as against Rs. 42 for the former and Rs. 53 for the latter a fortnight back. Even at such low prices, there are no large buyers. The fall in prices is attributed to the anxiety of merchants to dispose of old stocks in view of the impending harvest coupled with lack of demand from Malabar consequent on the opening of fair price shops. That shows that the food position in Kerala is satisfactory.

RULES COMMITTEE

SEVENTH REPORT

Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava (Gurgaon): I beg to move:

"That this House agrees with the Seventh Report of the Rules Committee laid on the Table of the House on the 21st December, 1956."

Mr. Speaker: The question is:

"That this House agrees with the Seventh Report of the Rules Committee laid on the Table of the House on the 21st December, 1956."

The motion was adopted.
