

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: If it becomes a convention, it becomes very difficult. Out of deference to you, we accept it. But if it becomes a convention that we cannot argue about the admissibility, which, to us, is absolutely patent, and about which possibly we may be able to convince you.....

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The difficulty is this. There ought to be some authority or somebody who should take a decision, and ultimately if it comes to the Chair, then that decision, when once it is taken, should be accepted, even if it be wrong, at that moment. Now, I have taken a decision. Supposing it is wrong, and Shrimati Renu Chakravartty thinks that it is absurd and it is wrong, then, should there be an appeal to me or to the House that it should be upset just at this moment? It should be considered in all its aspects. Even if some Member thinks that it is not correct, then too, another occasion can be there for review, and we can discuss it, and I am prepared to be convinced, and if certainly there is some weight in what the hon. Members say, I shall reconsider it. That is what I would like to say.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: It is all right, so long as it is not taken as a convention.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: All right. Now, Shri Indrajit Gupta.

12.18 hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

PRICES OF RAW JUTE

Shri Indrajit Gupta (Calcutta—South-West): Under rule 197, I beg to call the attention of the Minister of Commerce and Industry to the following matter of urgent public importance and I request that he may make a statement thereon:—

“The difficulties faced by the jute growers of Orissa and West

Bengal owing to the fall in the prices of raw jute in the Calcutta market below Rs. 30 per maund and immediate need for commencing price-support operations”.

The Minister of Commerce (Shri Kanungo): There were two calling-attention-notice. Have both of them been clubbed together?

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy (Kendrapara): It was the same motion. My name has been clubbed along with that of Shri Indrajit Gupta.

Shri Kanungo: The movement of jute prices is kept under constant watch by the Government of India. After the abnormal conditions that prevailed in the last season as a result of shortage of raw jute, it was not unexpected that prices would come down to normal levels with the assurance of abundant supplies of jute in the current season. The fall in price has been gradual; the price of Assam bottom variety at Calcutta ranged between Rs. 33 and Rs. 35.50 a maund throughout September and October, 1961. In November there has been a further fall and the price touched the level of Rs. 30 a maund on the 20th of this month. As a result of intervention by the Jute Commissioner, purchase of substantial quantities of jute by certain mill groups has been reported and the price trend has been steadier. Since then, there has been no further fall.

In the course of my reply to the discussions held in this House on the 25th August, 1961, on fixation of a statutory minimum price for jute, I had stated that jute prices will not be allowed to go down to uneconomic levels. Government have very carefully considered the whole situation and particularly the implications of statutorily fixing a floor price. It has to be realised that in respect of a major export commodity like jute, considerations like competition in overseas market are of paramount importance. As an alternative to a

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy: What steps have been taken to protect the jute growers?

Some Hon. Members rose—

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Order, order.

The concern expressed is that the actual prices the growers are getting are much lower, and Members desire that Government should come forward and take some measures so that the growers, the real producers, get an economic price.

Shri Kanungo: That is what I said, that prices will not be allowed to fall below Rs. 30 in Calcutta.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: We asked one question and he has answered another.

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy: A specific question has been asked.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: In calling Attention Notices, normally questions are not allowed. If Members desire, they can have a regular discussion on this matter.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: We have been pressing for that.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Hon. Members, if they desire a regular discussion, may table a regular motion for that.

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy: I had given notice of an adjournment motion, but with the consent of the Speaker, it was converted into a Calling Attention Notice. Here I am trying to elicit information.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I have allowed him opportunity to ask questions.

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy: Only one question more.

Is it not a fact that the price of jute in the primary market in Orissa is Rs. 25, that is, Rs. 5 less than the Calcutta price? Are Government

going to take any steps to see that the growers also are able to sell at Rs. 30 in Orissa?

Shri Kanungo: Prices very for various reasons, according to the distance from Calcutta availability of railways facilities and other factors. I cannot provide for a price at all stations. All I have undertaken is that prices will not be allowed to fall below Rs. 30 in Calcutta.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: The whole operation is now being left to the LJMA, who are the biggest bulk buyers. They are the people who have always depressed the market, and they are the people who are going to be permitted to build a buffer stock. Government are now giving us to understand that we are not going to give a minimum price for jute to the primary producer. That is the statement Government have made. Am I right in this?

An Hon. Member: Quite right.

Shri Kanungo: The hon. lady Member is not right. The agency is being provided under a particular association, and Government undertake to see that the prices are not allowed to go down.

Some Hon. Members rose—

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I will advise the half a dozen Members to sit with the Minister and discuss it.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: We shall raise raise a discussion.

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy: He is with the traders.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Hon. Members can table a Motion for discussion.