

price will be. What will be the selling price to the consumer?

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: Since the sale price of wheat to the consumer is subsidized, it would not make any difference to the consumer whether the wheat is purchased abroad or procured internally. The uniform selling price is Rs. 78 per quintal. I have already mentioned the FOB price and the freight will be 15 dollars a tonne approximately. The cost of subsidy will have to be worked out. As soon as the final accounts are available after some time, we would be able to work out the figures.

SHRI FATESINGHRAO GAEKWAD: Does the government accept it as a fact that if this wheat import had been made earlier, we would have paid a lesser price and that we had been late in placing our order?

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: I know that this question has been agitating the mind of the hon. Members and I am thankful to the hon. Member for raising this question. But I would submit that we could not have purchased in August or September when we had very large stocks with us. In fact, if there had been no drought in Maharashtra, Gujarat and Mysore during September-October, there would have been no need for import at all. So, it would not be correct to say that we were late in taking this decision for the import of wheat. Other countries decided about purchases earlier because their cropping and harvesting seasons are different. Since their harvesting season was June to August, they could take a decision earlier. The result was that the prices went up. I may assure the House that the Government gave very careful consideration to the question, keeping the national interest in mind.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA: The hon. Minister said that wheat has been purchased from Canada at the inter-

national price. While deciding whether the international price fixed by Canada is correct, did they make any comparison with the price paid by China and Russia to Canada?

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: No government officially discloses the price at which it purchases or sells. We have supplied those figures because we have got a democratic system and we want to respect the wishes of this House. Normally, it is not the practice to disclose the price. So, we are not in a position to know the price at which other countries have purchased. Moreover, the prices have been going up from August-September-October. Depending upon the month in which purchases have been made, those countries must have also paid those prices. If they were earlier purchases, they would be cheaper and, if they were later purchases, they would be costlier.

Cost of Old Age Pension

*84. **SHRI B. V. NAIK:** Will the Minister of EDUCATION, SOCIAL WELFARE AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any costs of old age pension in India, within permissible limits of fiscal capacities of the Centre and States, have been worked out; and

(b) if so, the outcome thereof?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WELFARE AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) and (b). Old age pensions are being given by some State Governments from their non-plan budgets. About Rupees three crores per year are being spent to cover about 1,50,000 persons. Any significant expansion of this programme is not likely to be within the fiscal capacity of the State Governments. The Government would like

to accord a high priority to and utilize available resources on services for the children.

SHRI B. V. NAIK: All over the socialist countries of the world, the old-age pension is a done thing. It may be at the rate of 700 to 800 crowns per month in Scavandian countries.....(Interruption). We call our country a socialist country. The question of old-age pension having been accepted as a part of the social reform, if it is a question of discrimination between the young and the old, does that not mean that there is also one case for the pensions to be granted to other classes like the Government servants, etc? It stands to the same reason when it comes to the question of old vs. young or the infant. Is not the same principle applicable to the pension classes in the country today which form a substantial and effective minority?

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION, SOCIAL WELFARE AND CULTURE (PROF. S. NURUL HASAN): It is a substantial minority. So far as Government is concerned, we believe that for every person who is old, social security should be provided to him provided we have the means. But when the means are limited, certain priorities have to be defined. It is our contention that we must put in as much as we can afford to put in for the looking after of children. That is a programme which we have been seeking to emphasize over and over again. If we were to make even a rough calculation, it would come to something like Rs. 525 crores. That would be the order of amount required for having a reasonable programme for old-age pensions. Looking at the limitations of resources of Central and State Governments, it was felt that instead of having some small token programme, we should have a massive programme for children and then, as our resource position improves, we will certainly go in for old-age pensions.

SHRI B. V. NAIK: Has the question been so interpreted by the hon. Minister that the care for the old in the form of a social security and the care for the young have to be mutually exclusive and that they cannot be complementary to each other?

PROF. S. NURUL HASAN: If our resources had been adequate, I am sure we would have ensured that they remain complementary. Unfortunately, the resource position is too well-known to this House.

श्री भान सिंह भौरा : ओल्ड-एज पेन्शन के बारे में स्टेट्स में जो लिस्ट है, वह इतनी बड़ी है कि प्रायर्टी देते बहुत से लोग मर जाते हैं और उन के बारे में फैसला बाद में होता है। ऐसे बहुत से केसिज मेरे नोटिस में भी हैं। क्या गवर्नमेंट कोई ऐसी स्कीम बनाने जा रही है कि स्टेट्स को सेंटर की तरफ से पैसा दिया जाये और लोगों को वक्त पर ही पेन्शन मिल जाये ?

श्री० ए०० नुरूल हसन : माननीय सदस्य का सवाल गालिबन सरकारी मुलाजिमों के बारे में है, लेकिन मेन सवाल इस से अलग था। सरकारी मुलाजिमों के बारे में पेन्शन के क्या कायदे हैं, यह मुझे मालूम नहीं है। माननीय सदस्य ने यह सवाल सरकारी मुलाजिमों के बारे में नहीं किया है। माननीय सदस्य का सवाल उस हर एक शख्स को पेन्शन देने के बारे में था, जो बूढ़ा हो जाये और खास तौर से जिस के पास अपनी देखभाल करने के लिए कोई धनराशि न हो। यह सवाल सरकारी मुलाजिमों को पेन्शन देने के बारे में नहीं था।

SHRI R. S. PANDEY: Since our State is a socialistic State, as was referred to by my hon. friend, Shri Naik and with which I agree, may I know from the hon. Minister whether, apart from the pension—the hon. Minister has explained that it will be very difficult to meet the requirement of old-age pension because there are many old people and the has not got the means to provide for that—, they

are contemplating any scheme by which the old people would be compensated like free medical aid or something like that—apart from pension because pension is a different thing. After all, all of us are going to become old one day.

PROF. S. NURUL HASAN: I think, the hon. Member is referring to the question of free medical assistance..

अध्यक्ष महोदय : आप कोई ऐसी दवाई दीजिए कि कोई बूढ़ा हो ही न ।

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD: Encouraged by the hon. Minister's statement of the necessity for such a scheme and also his statement that it would require about Rs. 500 and odd crores—that means, the Ministry has worked out the details—, may I know whether they will wait for some good years to come when they will have some resources or whether they will introduce the scheme even in parts as a nominal token? What exactly are the prospects of planning for this pension in the Government's consideration?

PROF. S. NURUL HASAN: This is a matter which the State Governments have already taken up, as the principal answer shows, and taking up of this particular measure by the State Governments does indicate that at least the State Governments are conscious of the responsibility of society to the old people. If the total resource position had been better, I have no doubt that it would have been possible to take this scheme towards a considerable step forward, but unfortunately, as I submitted, in the present position, it does not seem to me to be likely that very much of advance could be made. It is certainly not a fact that nothing is being done in respect of the old people. Many States are doing whatever is within their means.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: I would like to know whether he is aware that the Government of Uttar Pradesh, the Government of West Bengal and some other State Governments have started this scheme, but

the quantum of pension is so meagre as Rs. 20 only. I would like to know whether the Centre would subsidise to the State Governments in order to enable them to continue the scheme; otherwise, the State Governments are going to stop it for want of proper finances.

PROF. S. NURUL HASAN: As the hon. Member knows very well, in the calculations which are being made by the Planning Commission for the Fifth Plan, they have not yet started dividing what is going to be put in the Central sector and what is going to be put in the State sector. Therefore, when I submitted that it seems that it would not be possible to give a very high priority to the old age pension.....

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: My question was different. Some of the State Governments have already started this scheme and are paying a meagre amount of Rs. 20. As a matter of fact, they are unable to continue the scheme for want of funds, for want of aid from the Centre.....

MR. SPEAKER: He has understood that very well. He is replying to that.

PROF. S. NURUL HASAN: It was precisely this point that I was trying to make out for my hon. friend's information that if we had a scheme, we would be delighted to be of some assistance to the State Governments, but the present position is that we do not have a scheme, and when we made our calculations, we felt that, within the resources position that is likely to be available in the Fifth Plan, it might not be possible for us to make a provision.

Setting up of more Medical Colleges

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*86. SHRI R. K. SINHA:

SHRI M. RAM GOPAL REDDY:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY PLANNING be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to set up more Medical Colleges