

Dual Pricing Policy

*865. SHRI D. D. DESAI:

SHRI K. LAKKAPPA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to extend the dual pricing policy of Sugar and Steel to some other commodities also;

(b) whether this is going to control black-marketing; and

(c) if so, reasons for the delay in taking such a decision?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI K. R. GANESH): (a) Government recognise that a dual pricing policy may, in certain circumstances, be in the interest of both consumers and producers.

(b) A dual pricing policy enables consumers to meet a substantial part of their essential requirements at relatively low prices, while, on the other hand, any losses made by producers in respect of low priced supplies can be recovered on the portion of output sold in the open market. Both these factors would tend to limit the scope for black market operations.

(c) Government decisions in respect of pricing are generally based on the recommendations of expert bodies like the Agricultural Prices Commission, Tariff Commission, Bureau of Industrial Costs and Prices or Committees specially appointed for the purpose. Any recommendations in favour of dual pricing would receive Government's due consideration. In so far as items of mass consumption are concerned, the question would have been considered by the Committee on Essential Commodities and Articles of Mass Consumption whose report is under examination.

Central assistance for relief work in scarcity affected areas of Bihar

*866. SHRI M. S. PURTY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Bihar State Government has represented to the Central Government for the continuance of financial assistance which was given during the year 1973-74 for relief work for scarcity affected areas in that State; and

(b) if so, the quantum of help so far given by the Central Government to the State of Bihar and the relief work done in the Tribal areas?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRIMATI SUSHILA ROHTAGI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) On the basis of the Central team's recommendations, a ceiling of expenditure of Rs. 1.76 crores for drought relief measures in 1973-74 in the State as a whole has been approved as qualifying for Central assistance. The State Government had reported in February, 1974 an expenditure of Rs. 1.46 crores on both flood and drought relief measures without indicating the break up. No further report was received in 1973-74. As the repeated expenditure was below the Finance Commission's margin of Rs. 1.50 crores, no Central assistance has so far been released. Central assistance will be determined after complete details of the expenditure in 1973-74 have been received from the State Government.

Foreign tours by Officials of Central Government

*867. SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN:
SHRI VAYALAR RAVI:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to refer to the reply given to Unstarred Question No. 5756 on 21st