

of the Indian Cashewnut Development Council was held on 30th March, 1976 at Cochin. The Council considered a detailed agenda and made a comprehensive review of the various development programme on Cashew. The Council has made a number of recommendations relating to strengthening of research on cashew, need for stepping up production of rawnuts, rationalisation of development programmes, marketing and pricing of cashewnuts.

The draft proceedings of this meeting are under finalization by the Government.

Commonwealth Symposium on Employment Strategies

*538. SHRI PRABODH CHANDRA: Will the Minister of EDUCATION, SOCIAL WELFARE AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Commonwealth Symposium on employment strategies was recently held at Chandigarh; and

(b) if so, the conclusions reached thereat?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WELFARE AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) and (b). According to the information furnished by the Commonwealth Secretariat, London, as a part of the Commonwealth Youth Programme, they organised South-Asia Symposium on Employment Strategies and Programmes at their Asia-Pacific Regional Centre for Youth work, Chandigarh. The report of the Symposium has not yet been finalised.

Relief to Agriculturists due to Fall in the Prices of Commodities

*539. SHRI S. C. SAMANTA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether most of the commodities of which prices have gone

down in recent weeks are those which are mostly produced by Agriculturists; and

(b) whether the State are being taken into confidence to strive to provide relief to the agriculturists in view of the fall in prices of agricultural products?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION (SHRI ANNA-SAHEB P. SHINDE): (a) and (b). It is true that the decline in prices during the last year or so has been mainly in agricultural commodities. It may, however, be recalled that prices of agricultural commodities had registered a steep rise during the inflationary period of 1972-74. For example, between September—end 1972 and September—end 1974, the wholesale price index for foodgrains had gone up by 73.5 per cent and that of oilseeds by 86.4 per cent. The recent fall in prices which is confined mainly to foodgrains and oilseeds, represents the process of normalisation of the price situation which had been distorted during the inflationary period.

2 Government of India and State Government are frequently in touch with each other regarding the price position of agricultural commodities. Government have been keeping a constant watch on the prices of agricultural commodities with a view to safeguarding the interests of the producers. The policy of providing support to the prices of major foodgrains, viz. paddy, rice, jowar, bajra, maize, ragi and wheat at procurement prices is being continued with the full support of the State Governments. Suitable bonus schemes linked to procurement of rice and wheat for the central pool are also in operation for the benefit of the producers. In respect of cotton and jute minimum support prices are being fixed; while, in the case of sugarcane, minimum prices payable by sugar factories are fixed.