

prices. If the public sector sell them at higher prices, then the hon. Members might criticise about the functioning of the public sector units. There would be a number of other implications. I do not know whether the public sectors units should at all be denied the normal advantage of the economic activities.

Rise in Issue Price of Wheat

*777. PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is true that immediately after the announcement of the new procurement and price policy, the issue price of wheat went up by 40 per cent; and

(b) if so, what prompt action is proposed to bring down the issue prices of wheat?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE): (a) and (b) Consequent from the increase in the purchase price of wheat, the Central issue price of wheat has been revised to Rs. 125/- per quintal for all varieties against Rs. 90/- and Rs. 96/- per quintal for common and superior varieties fixed earlier.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, before I put my supplementary, I would like to bring to your notice that he has not replied part (a) of the question at all. I shall put my supplementary after he replies to part (a) of my question.

MR. SPEAKER: You can ask that through your supplementary.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: I think he has forgotten part (a) of my question. Let him first reply to that.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: I would like to submit to you that the hon. Member may be having a different view. I have tried to make a humble attempt to reply to his question. May be, he may have a different view.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Part (B) of the question is—

“What prompt action is being taken to see that the issue prices are brought down?”.

Not a single word has been given in reply to that. You may read the reply yourself, Sir. If not giving a reply is also part of the reply, then it is all right.

MR. SPEAKER: He says that he has already given the reply. Now, I leave it to the hon. Member to get the clarifications he wants from the the hon. Minister through his supplementary question.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: In view of the 38.8 per cent rise in the issue prices as admitted by the hon. Minister, may I know whether Government would decide to provide adequate Central food subsidy so that the issue prices which have been raised can be brought down?

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: We appreciate the concern of the hon. Member about the high issue prices, but I would again like to appeal to the House and to the hon. Member to consider whether this was avoidable at all, because it was the desire of this House that remunerative prices should be paid to the farmers, and it was an almost unanimous demand from all sides of the House; and everybody knows that it is in the national interest that production should not go down and no prices should be fixed which may discourage production or bring the economy of the country into difficulties as a result of lesser production. So, a remunerative price of Rs. 105 has been fixed.

Now, the question is whether it should be sold at a subsidised rate. Even at the present rate of issue price, our calculations indicate that there would be a subsidy of Rs. 7 per quintal involved in that; that means that if 3 million tonnes of wheat are distributed, the total subsidy would come to about Rs. 21 crores. So, the subsidy is already there and it is provided for. If more subsidy is to be provided, it means deficit financing and a number of other implications of the same of which hon. Members are aware.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: I have said adequate food subsidy.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: I would seek your indulgence, Sir. I have observed your remarks earlier, but if I do not clarify one point further here, perhaps hon. Members may misunderstand me. Imported wheat at the moment is purchased at much higher prices, while we are selling it at cheaper prices. So, even the subsidy of Rs. 100 crores that we have provided for in the budget may get absorbed in that. It is a matter of judgment whether it is possible to have subsidy higher than Rs. 100 crores and whether the economy can bear it.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: In view of the increase in the issue price of wheat and also the unsatisfactory procurement, will Government decide to reconsider this entire approach to the policy of take-over so that at least the vulnerable sections of society can be assured of wheat at lower issue prices and also protection to them?

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: I do not know what the hon. Member means by reconsidering the policy. After giving a lot of thought to the problem, Government have come to certain conclusions and there is no proposal at the moment to reconsider the policy as such.

As far as providing foodgrains to the vulnerable sections is concerned, Government are equally concerned about it, and our effort would be to see that the public distribution system in the country is supported by providing food at the issue price of Rs. 125 to the State Government.

श्री विभूति मिश्र : अध्यक्ष जी, क्या यह सही है कि पंजाब, हरियाणा और सारे देग के किसानों ने, सरकार ने गेहूँ की जो कीमत निश्चित की है, उस के प्रति असन्तोष प्रकट किया है? क्या सरकार ने किसानों के लिये जो दाम निश्चित किये, उस की कास्ट-आफ प्रोडक्शन का हिसाब लगाया है? यदि लगाया है तो क्या किसानों को जो कीमत मिल रही है उस से किसानों को घाटा हो रहा है, जिस से खेती के उत्पादन पर असर पड़ेगा, उत्पादन घटेगा?

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: There has been mixed reaction but by and large, I learn that large section of the farming community have reacted very favourably to the prices announced by Government. But there can be different views, because the inputs are in short supply and there are a number of other difficulties, but the interests of the farmers, to my mind, have been taken into consideration while fixing the prices.

श्री जटल बिहारी बाबूदेवी : क्या मन्त्री महोदय को मालूम है कि कुछ राज्यों में जो गेहूँ 70 रुपये किन्टल खरीदा गया था अब वह राशन की दुकान से 140 रुपये किन्टल बेचा जा रहा है? क्या यह जरूरी था कि राशन की दुकान से बेचा जाने वाला गेहूँ इसी समय मंहवा किया जाता? क्या मन्त्री महोदय को मालूम है कि इस का असर यह हुआ है कि किसान भी अपना गेहूँ सस्ता बेचने को तैयार नहीं हैं क्योंकि जब वह देखता है कि राशन की कान पर गेहूँ 140 रुपये किन्टल बिक रहा है तो वह क्या ना गेहूँ सस्ता कैसे बेचेगा?

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: When the issue price is raised, naturally everywhere through the public distribution system from a particular date the new price comes into force. Most of the wheat procured last year has already been distributed; only a few areas here and there remain where it is now distributed. What is being distributed now is imported wheat over large parts of the country. In specific areas, there may be a small quantity of the procured wheat being sold. But that is inevitable when Government takes a decision on an all-India basis.

श्री विभूति मिश्र अध्यक्ष महोदय, मेरा प्वाइं ग्राफ ग्रांडर है। जब इम्पोर्टेड व्हीट का इतना महंगा दाम दे रहे हैं तो किसान को क्या नहीं दे रहे हैं ?

अध्यक्ष महोदय : यह ग्राफ कैसे खड़े हो गए ? क्वेश्चन ग्राबर में प्वाइंट ग्राफ ग्रांडर नहीं होता।

श्री जटल सिंह, श्री बाजपेयी मेरे प्रश्न का उत्तर नहीं दिया। मैं ने पूछा था क्या सरकार के लिए जरूरी था कि इस समय इस प्रश्न को बढ़ाया जाता ? क्या हम ने किसान के मन में यह भाव पैदा नहीं हुआ है कि उस को कम दाम दिया जा रहा है जब कि सरकार गणन की दुकान से हमें दाम पर देच रही है ?

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: The farmers' interest has been very much taken into account in the new policy. The hon. member will appreciate that the price fixed of Rs. 105 would be almost the minimum price and not the procurement price as such. If as a result of the operation of the market mechanism, the price rises at Rs. 110 or Rs. 115, to that extent the farmers' interests will be protected. In fact, what the new policy ensures is larger production and incentive to the producer. I do not think a negative view should be taken of this policy.

SHRI SHIVAJI RAO S. DESHMUKH: May I know whether the concept of subsidy is born out of a misplaced enthusiasm for increase in the cost of distribution which is as high as 40 per cent? How long do Government propose to insist on this democracy and socialism in the principle of subsidy under which all the high income group people in urban areas are subsidised in the matter of cost of foodgrains and also in terms of increased salaries and DA?

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: He has expressed his opinion. I do not think an answer is called for. It is not relevant.

SHRI SHIVAJI RAO S. DESHMUKH: It is relevant.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: Without going into the rationale of it, Government naturally feel that higher subsidies would create more problems for the economy and therefore, the effort is to reduce the element of subsidy in the issue price.

SHRI SHIVAJI RAO S. DESHMUKH: My question has not been answered. I asked whether the cost of distribution is as high as 40 per cent. Let Government come out with facts at least.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: It is not a correct statement that it is as high as 40 per cent. Of course, information about the cost of overheads etc involved in this has been given on the floor of the House a number of times.

SHRI SHIVAJI RAO S. DESHMUKH: Is it as high as 40 per cent?

MR. SPEAKER: Do not make it a debating hour.

पहले तो एक दम उठते हैं, फिर एक दूसरे को देख कर झीर खड़े हो जाते हैं। अब कैसे करें इतने क्वेश्चन इस पर हो गए। इस पर डिबेट भी हुई, फिर भी इतने लोग खड़े हो रहे हैं।

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: When the procurement price was fixed at Rs. 105 per quintal, we were assured by the Cabinet Minister that the issue price would not be more than Rs. 1.25 per kilo. Then the Chief of the Grain Dealers' Association, under whose initiative the whole thing was handed over to the private sector, made a statement saying that the price may rise to Rs. 1.50 a kilo, which has come true. What is the basis of fixing the issue price? Is it calculated on all basis of procurement price or some subsidy is given so that the consumer may be benefited or it has been done at the dictates of the Grain Dealers' Association who have forced Government to change the decision?

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: As I have said earlier, there was no question of Government formulating its policies on the basis of the dictates of any organisation as such. Of course, Government examines all ideas and suggestions. That is a different matter.

SHRI PILOO MODY: You make the policy at the dictates of these people and you change it at the dictates of some other people.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: It is well known to the hon. Members of the House that a very large number of elements for the subsidies were involved. The difference between the procurement price and the issue price was very low. After examining all the possibilities, the Government came to the conclusion that when the minimum price had to be raised to Rs. 105, naturally, the issue price was decided to be raised to Rs. 125, where it rests. According to the calculation of the Food Corporation of India, even this should include an element of Rs. 7 per quintal as subsidy, because, with the other costs like transport, storage charges, etc., it comes to almost Rs. 25 to Rs. 27 plus Rs. 5, totalling Rs. 32. That is the overhead expenditure. So, it means Rs. 7 as subsidy per quintal.

MR. SPEAKER: Next question.

SHRI S. B. GIRI: Sir, in my Telengana area we are not given any wheat. I want to ask a question.

MR. SPEAKER: Kindly sit down. I have called the next question. I do not go by areas; I go by the questions.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: He says not only Telengana was lost but wheat also was lost!

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down. We have not been able to do many questions.

उत्तर प्रदेश के पूर्वी जिलों में मोटे धनाज लाने-ने-जाने पर प्रतिबन्ध

* 778. श्री अग्निदा प्रसाद : क्या कृषि मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या एक राज्य से दूसरे राज्य में मोटा धनाज लाने-ने-जाने पर अब कोई प्रतिबन्ध नहीं है जैसा कि उन्होंने हाल ही में मसद में घोषणा की थी ;

(ख) क्या उत्तर प्रदेश के पूर्वी जिलों में विशेषकर बलिया में इसकी अवहेलना की जा रही है, और

(ग) यदि हां, तो इसके क्या कारण हैं और इस सम्बन्ध में सरकार क्या कार्यवाही कर रही है ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE
(SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE):
(a) to (c). A statement is laid on
the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

The decision of the Government of India to lift all restrictions on the movement of coarse grains was an-