

necessary whether something more is to be done in this regard to see that production of tea and other agricultural products could be increased.

Thanking you for the opportunity that you have given me, I support this Bill.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Shri P. Chidambaram to make a statement.

14.14 hrs

### STATEMENT BY MINISTER

#### Minimum release price for coffee

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBRARAM): The coffee marketing year is from 1st January to 31st December. The Minimum Release price for coffee ought to be announced before the commencement of the coffee marketing year. The Cost Accounts Branch of the Finance Ministry completed its study which is done once in five years, in 1989-90. Hence, the MRP for 1990 was announced only in March 1990. For succeeding years, the MRP is updated, based on actual data and information gathered from a random sample of small and big estates. The last such update was made in March 1991 and MRP for 1991 was announced only in March, 1991.

When I was in Bangalore two weeks ago, I promised that MRP for 1992 will be announced before 30th November, 1991, and that the method for determining MRP would also be made transparent. I have pleasure today in announcing the MRP.

The Coffee Board sought data and information from 600 estates chosen on a random basis. Based on such information, the cost of cultivation has been worked out as Rs. 14.51 per kg in the case of Arabica and Rs. 10.95 per Kg. in the case of Robusta.

After taking into consideration crop charges, development expenses, return on capital and other charges, the cost of production has been worked out at Rs.23.93 per Kg for Arabica and Rs. 19.21 per Kg for Robusta. Last year, the corresponding MRP was Rs. 21.38 per Kg for Arabica and Rs. 17.32 per Kg for Robusta. Hon'ble Members will appreciate that the increase in the MRP works out to 11.93% in the case of Arabica and 10.91% in the case of Robusta.

MRP forms the basis for fixation of floor price for internal pool sale for auction of coffee by the Coffee Board.

The Coffee Board is also the authority to determine the Price Differential Scale for every season. This is done strictly on the basis of last two years' average market performance of different grades of coffee. After taking into account all relevant considerations, the Coffee Board has, yesterday, finalised the gross initial payment to be made to coffee growers for the season 1991-92 at Rs. 11 per point. Last year the initial payment was Rs. 9 per point. Hon'ble Members will appreciate that the initial payment for 1991-92 is, therefore, a substantial increase over the initial payment last year. I am also pleased to announce that the Coffee Board has decided that the initial payment of Rs. 11 per point will be made without deduction of purchase tax. Purchase taxes of respective States will be deducted from the second instalment of payment.

The initial payment is not strictly related to MRP but coffee growers would always like to know what proportion of MRP is being granted as initial payment.

Let me take 4 benchmark grades Arabica Parchment, Arabica Cherry, Robusta Parchment and Robusta Cherry. The average points for these four benchmark grades would be 90, 65, 67 and 60 respectively. Based on the average points, the initial payment per KG at the rate of Rs. 11 per point for these 4 benchmark grades and as a proportion of MRP are given below in the form of a table.

<i>GRADE</i>	<i>Average Points</i>	<i>Initial payment</i>	<i>Proportion of MRP</i>
		<i>Rs.</i>	
Arabica Parchment	90	19.80	82.74%
Arabica cherry	65	14.30	59.75%
Robusta Parchment	67	14.74	76.73%
Robusta Cherry	60	13.20	68.71%

I may add that these percentages are substantially higher than the percentages of initial payment as a proportion of MRP in the last finalised year that is the year 1990 which was only 58%.

I am sure that coffee growers will welcome that decisions taken on minimum Release Price as well as the decision taken on initial payment for the season 1991.92.

14.17 hrs.

THE COMPANIES (ACQUISITION AND TRANSFER OF SICK TEA UNITS) AMENDMENT BILL—*CONTD.*

[*English*]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Again, we take up further discussion on this Bill. Shri Rasa Singh Rawat.

[*Translation*]

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT(Ajmer): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I welcome the Tea Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of sick tea Units) Amendment Bill, 1991 moved by the Government but I would simultaneously like to urge upon the Government, through you, that the problem of the workers working in these tea gardens or tea industries-be they managed by the corporation or the

contractor - is very pitiable. Just now, the preceding speakers have highlighted the condition of the women workers working there but there are child labourers too and child labour is a crime under law but because their delicate little fingers are considered to be useful for plucking tea leaves, they are therefore employed in the gardens and exploited by extracting more work and paid less.

Sir, I would through you, like to bring it to notice of the Government that the labourers working in the tea gardens of Assam are made to work more but are paid less that too not on time and then there are no proper residential facilities available the colonies they reside in so such so that there are no basic necessities or facilities like toilet, bath-room etc. present there. What to speak of educational and medical facilities and doctors etc. their basic necessities are not fulfilled. I have to say it with regret that the labour unions active amongst these workers do collect donations from them but do not fulfil their responsibilities in a proper manner, whether they are INTUC people or those of Hind Mazdoor Sabha. They only exploit the workers by extracting donation from them or fulfil their vested interests in collusion with the management.

I would, therefore like to request the Government to pay pay full attention to the workers of the tea-gardens.