

Memorandum Regarding Food Trade Problems

*11. SHRI CHITTA BASU: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have received a memorandum from the Federation of All India Foodgrains Dealers Association regarding the problems relating to food-trade in April last; and

(b) if so, reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION (SHRI PARKASH SINGH BADAL): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) The main suggestions of the Federation were (i) that Zonal restrictions on movement of wheat and rice may be removed; (ii) that support price of barley and gram may be fixed at Rs. 70 and Rs. 90 per quintal respectively and of jowar, bajra and maize at Rs. 85 per quintal; and (iii) that instructions may be issued to State Governments asking them to review and withdraw cases registered against traders for minor technical offences under the Essential Commodities Act, DIR, MISA etc., particularly during the Emergency.

Government have already decided to remove Zonal restrictions on movement of wheat. The support prices of barley and gram have been fixed at Rs. 65 and Rs. 95 per quintal respectively. Zones have already been enlarged. Any further modification in this regard and the question of support prices for jowar, bajra and maize and other kharif cereals would be considered at the time of deciding kharif policy in September-October, 1977.

As regards the Federation suggestion for review and withdrawal of cases registered for food offences, it may be stated that the Government have considered the position in respect of action taken under Maintenance of Internal Security Act and Defence and Internal Security of India Regulations in the

light of the revocation of the "Emergency". Instructions have been issued to the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations to consider the release of all persons detained under Maintenance of Internal Security Act, except whose interests of security of the country are clearly involved or where persons have been detained on account of their recent indulgence in violent activities. In so far as economic offences under DISIR are concerned, the State Governments have been advised to pursue the matter in respect of persons standing trial in Courts or in respect of persons whose cases are under investigation. No instructions have been issued to the State Governments in regard to cases registered under the Foodgrain Dealers Licensing Orders or the Essential Commodities Act as it is essentially for the State Governments to consider each case on its merits and decide whether such cases should be proceeded with or not.

Disparity in the Irrigation Rates

*12. SHRI VASANT SATHE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there exists a wide disparity in the irrigation rates being charged by the States in the country for important crops;

(b) if so, the details of Inter-State range of variation for important crops;

(c) whether water rates charged in Northern region of the country are significantly lower than those in Central, Western and Southern parts of the country; and

(d) if so, what steps are proposed to rationalise the irrigation rate in favour of small farmers to check emergence of water lords?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION (SHRI PARKASH SINGH BADAL): (a) Yes, Sir.