

and they have given it due priority also. Some special States and regions are covered under the minimum needs programme, such as, all North-Eastern States. The R.E.C. will take up its schemes in these States.

[English]

Or all States with less than 65 per cent electrification as on March, 1985. In these States, those districts will be taken up which have less than 65 per cent electrification in 1985, provided the States have less coverage. These will be given priority over others.

[Translation]

The question which you have raised just now will be covered under it. Besides, Kinnaur and Lahaul Spiti areas of Himachal Pradesh are also covered under it.

SHRI RAM SINGH YADAV : They are covered on paper only. Actually they are not electrified.

SHRIMATI SUSHILA ROHTAGI : From this, it is clear that there is a systematic programme going on in this regard. However, efforts will be made to accelerate the speed.

Paddy levy system in Punjab

*148. SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA : Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state :

(a) whether Punjab Government has urged the Union Government to reconsider the introduction of paddy levy system;

(b) if so, the details thereof ; and

(c) Government's reaction thereto ?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMEN-
TARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER
OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES
(SHRI H.K.L. BHAGAT) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA : The hon. Minister has said that he has not received any recommendation from the Government of Punjab asking the Central Government to abolish the levy system on rice. Either the Government of Punjab which is now a Centrally-ruled State is misleading the people, or-I cannot say-somebody else. According to *The Tribune*, dated 29th September, the Punjab Government has recommended to the Union Government to examine the possibility of abolishing the levy system on rice in terms of allowing the farmers to fetch better price for their paddy in the market. The measure will also help the farmers in providing suitable price for paddy. Now the Government of Punjab say that they have recommended to the Government of India in a memorandum on drought conditions in Punjab. I would like to request the hon. Minister that he should tell us whether the Government of Punjab is misquoting or whether some thing is wrong in his Ministry.

SHRI H.K.L. BHAGAT : There is nothing wrong in my Ministry. I do not know that the hon. member is quoting. Let him read the question. The question that he is asking is entirely different. His question reads :

“Whether Punjab Government has urged the Union Government to reconsider the introduction of paddy levy system.”

In reply, I have said, ‘no’. Now the hon. member is asking whether the Government of Punjab has asked us to do away with the levy system on rice. I am not aware whether it is abolished or not at the moment. But in principle, in the interest of the distribution system in the whole country, we cannot do away with the levy system. We have to see that also. The hon. member knows that in order to give incentive, the Punjab Government is giving extra bonus to the farmers from their own funds.

SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA : Anyhow, the point has not yet been cleared. The Minister has used technicalities.....

SHRI H.K.L. BHAGAT : No, no. I have answered you straight. In fact to your supplementary I have given more than you have asked for.

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD : The Minister is very generous.

SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOO-WALIA : I would like to ask the hon. Minister through you whether his Government is aware that in Punjab this question relates to the plight of farmers in Punjab the farmers have to spend Rs. 46 crores more on diesel because of drought. Due to drought, they also have to use 50 kilograms urea more per acre than in the previous year. They have to incur 60 per cent more expenditure on weedicides because weedicides do not work properly if water is not restrained in the fields. Similarly, they have to use more manual labour. Thus it is costing the Punjab farmer Rs. 100 more per quintal for the production of paddy. So, again I would like to ask whether he is going to look into it and abolish the levy to enable the Punjab farmer to get more. Will the Minister consider doing this ?

SHRI H.K.L. BHAGAT : I cannot subscribe to the figures mentioned by the hon. member. The Government has full sympathy for the Punjab farmers. Keeping the difficulties of the Punjab farmers in view only, the Punjab Government has decided to give them bonus. Normally, we are opposed to giving any special bonus. But in the case of Punjab, we have not opposed it. That is why they are giving a special bonus from their own funds. I again say we have sympathy for the Punjab farmer. I cannot say whether the figures quoted by the hon. member, Shri Balwant Singh Ramoowalia, are correct or not. In giving the support price, we go by the recommendations of the Agricultural Costs and Prices Commission.

**Control by Super Bazar on sale of items
in short supply**

*149. SHRI HAFIZ MOHD. SIDDIQ : Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the short supply items available at the Super Bazar and having premium in the market find their way out to bulk consumers ;

(b) if so, the details thereof ; and

(c) how does the Super Bazar control the sale of such items through its branches ?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI H.K.L. BHAGAT) : (a) to (c) A Statement is given below :

(a) to (c) The Super Bazar has reported that in the recent past they received two reports of diversion of Palmolein to bulk consumers, one in Kantinagar branch (75 tins of 2 kg. each). and the other in Mansrover branch (60 tins of 2 kg. each). Except for these two complaints, no other cases of diversion of essential commodities to bulk consumers have come to their notice. However, there have been certain reports of non-availability of short supply items in certain branches.

The Super Bazar has taken several precautions to ensure that the items of short supply reach the real consumers. Some such steps are issue of items against food cards, restriction of quantity to a consumer, sales against shareholders card to members etc. Strict vigilance is also being exercised through inspecting officers and surprise checks are made to ensure that the short supply items are properly distributed. In case of any irregularities coming to the notice of the Super Bazar, strict departmental action is taken.

[Translation]

SHRI HAFIZ MOHD. SIDDIQ : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has stated in his reply that the Super Bazar has reported that in the recent past they received two reports of diversion of Palmolein to bulk consumers—in the first case 75 tins were diverted and in the second case, 60 tins were diverted. Besides, there have been some reports of irregularities also. Through you, Sir, I would like to