

**Changes in PDS and Import Duty Structure**

† 1700. **SHRI SWARAJ KAUSHAL:** Will the Minister of **CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION** be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal to effect radical changes in Public Distribution System to protect interests of consumers and farmers;

(b) whether Government also propose to review the recovery policy and import duty structure;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) by when a final decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SRIRAM CHAUHAN):** (a) The Government introduced, with effect from June, 1997 Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) under which the consumers below poverty line (BPL) are entitled to get 10 kg. of foodgrains per month per family at specially subsidised prices. TPDS is an operation now in all the States and Union Territories except in the National Capital Territory of Delhi and the Union Territory of Lakshadweep. Foodgrains are procured from farmers under Minimum Support Price (MSP) scheme and utilised for distribution through the TPDS thereby encouraging them to increase production.

(b) to (d) The recovery policy and import duty structure with regard to various commodities are continuously under watch and reviewed from time to time. In respect of wheat, the basic customs duty has been increased from "free" to "50% ad-valorem" with effect from 1st December, 1999.

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†Original Notice of the Question was received in Hindi.