

tion. Unfortunately she is a lady, I cannot quarrel with her. But may I just say again, the components of the drought programme are already fixed; there is no question of misuse of funds released for drought relief.
[Interruptions by Shrimati Monika Das]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mrs. Monika Das. I will not allow you to interrupt hereafter. You had enough of it for the day -----

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY: The lady is very pugnacious.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is whether you will increase the allocation. That is the main question. All other things are irrelevant.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA: I agree with the honourable Member that the State has difficulties. This is the case with almost all the States this time because in almost all the States there is either drought or flood. It is not possible for the Central Government to give each and every pie to each and every State Government. Particularly for capital expenditure we are not able to provide help. Karnataka Government has requested for purchase of rigs and other assets. It is not possible for the Government of India to give it. However, we have given help to Karnataka Government on the following items: agricultural input subsidy, drinking water supply, employment generation, cattle conservation, fodder subsidy, other nutrition programmes, public health and also cooperation. For these items we have given money to the tune of Rs. 53.32 crores in both the memoranda.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Upendra, the question relates to Karnataka. ..

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: I shall observe the parameters. When 17 districts of Karnataka were affected by drought, there was a drought in sympathy in 18 districts of

Andhra. The Central team visited Karnataka and submitted their report. They also visited Andhra Pradesh but so far they have not submitted their report. The Centre has so far sanctioned 20 per cent of what the Karnataka Government had demanded. Will the Minister assure us that immediately at least that 20 per cent of what Andhra Pradesh has asked for will be sanctioned?

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA: It is not possible for me to agree to any of these demands.

DR (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI: At the time of discussion on drought and floods the Minister answered at great length—the relief that is going to be given and the procedure that is being adopted. But let us not be caught in the procedure because timely help is needed in the State and in the whole country, especially in Karnataka because there is acute shortage of fodder. Everyday thousands of cows are going to the slaughter house. It is an undeniable fact. Therefore, I would request the Minister to release funds immediately and also make adequate provision for funds for Karnataka.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA: We also would like to give more money. There is the resource constraint in the Centre like the States. The money is already released to the State.

Fall in prices of coconut in Kerala

*84. SHRI N. E. BALARAM: t
SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the steep fall in the prices of coconut in Kerala to the detriment of coconut growers in that State;

t The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri N. E. Balaram.

(b) what are the reasons therefor and what steps the Central Government are taking in this regard; and

(c) what are the details of the prices, month-wise, during the last three months and how do they compare with those during the last year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF (AGRICULTURE! AND COOPERATION (SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA): (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

(a) The Government are aware of the fall in the price of coconut in Kerala during the current year.

(b) The fall in price is due to increased production and consequent higher market arrivals. The decline in price is from unusually high levels attained in 1983 and 1984, when there was fall in production due to drought. Reserve Bank of India has been requested for credit authorisation of Rs. 20 crore to Kerala State Cooperative Marketing Federation to support its market intervention operation in copra. The Government of Kerala has reported that the Reserve Bank has sanctioned in the first instance a credit limit of Rs. 10 crores.

(c) The prices of 1000 coconuts with husk in Cochin market were Rs. 1500, Rs. 1450 and Rs. 1450 in the months of August, September and October, 1985 respectively. These prices were Rs. 1000, Rs. 1025 and Rs. 1000 in Kozhikode. In Alleppey the prices were Rs. 1375, Rs. 1370 and Rs. 1300 respectively. The annual average prices for these markets in 1984 were Rs. 2908 for Cochin, Rs. 2679 for Kozhikode and Rs. 2746 for Alleppey per thousand coconuts with husk.

SHRI N. E. BALARAM: Sir, I am surprised to read in the answer that the price for coconuts, according to the Minister, is about Rs. 1,500 per

thousand coconuts for the last three months. -Even the Kerala Government, when it made purchases, has only paid Rs. 1,400 per thousand coconuts. I do not know from where he has got these facts. Now, as far as the steps taken by the Central Government are concerned, he has mentioned about the authorisation of Rs. 20 crores for the Kerala State Co-operative Marketing Federation to intervene in the market. But they have also purchased about ten thousand tonnes only and they have stopped at that. I do not know why. After that also the prices are still falling and I do not know why they have stopped at that and why the prices are still falling. I understand that they are not able to procure further because they have no money. In this case, I would like to ask the Minister whether they cannot buy about ten thousand tonnes and release them through the Marketing Federation or through the STC to be sold outside the State.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA: Sir, the State Government is purchasing and the market intervention is being done by the State Government because of the support of the Central Government. The State Government requested for Rs. 22 crores. The resource constraint is there as the honourable Member has said. A credit of Rs. 10 crores was also given earlier according to my reply. But now I have got the information that a sum of Rs. 22 crores has been sanctioned to the State Government and there is no difficulty and they are entering the market and they are purchasing and they will go on purchasing. But still the price is falling.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, you put your second supplementary.

SHRI N. E. BALARAM- Sir, the price fall has become a regular feature in Kerala in respect of coconut. I would like to suggest one thing. Could the Government think of giving the same powers and status to the Coconut Board as are given to the

other Boards like the Rubber Board so that they can intervene in the market and purchase the coconuts and they can also give some money to the growers and they can also fix the floor price? Could they give such powers to the Coconut Board?

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA: This is a suggestion and I have taken note of it.

MR. CHAIRMAN; Yes, Mr. Gurudas Das Gupta. Absent. Yes, Mr. Thomas.

SHRI THOMAS KUTHIRAVATTOM; Sir, I would like to know from the honourable Minister whether any import of coconuts was made during the past one year and, if so, how many tonnes of coconuts were imported during the last one year.

Sir, I would also like to know from the Government the reasons for importing coconuts. There is a steep fall in the prices of coconuts. In this context, Sir, I would like to know from the honourable Minister whether, in view of the steep fall in the prices of coconut, the Government would consider exporting of coconuts as was done in the case of rubber when there was a crash in rubber prices in 1970-71. I would also like to know what the other measures are which the Government proposes to take to provide relief to the coconut growers.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA: Sir, export also is not an easy solution. I say this because I have got the details of prices all over the world. There is a trend in the international market and there is a substantial fall. In the case of coconut oil, the price in September, 1984 was 1,170 dollars and it has now fallen to 427 dollars. From 1,170 dollars it has come down to 427 dollars. Like that, in soyabean also the prices have come down. The price has come down from 245 dollars to 207 dollars. In the case of palm oil it has come down from 611 dollars to 360 dollars. Like

that there is a substantial fall and in the case of coconut oil it is a very very steep fall because from 1,170 dollars. So, it is not an easy 427 dollars. So, it is not an easy solution. But, in order to protect the interests of the farmers, the Government has intervened in the market and we are purchasing at a price which is a remunerative price to the farmers. In order to help the farmers, we have a number of schemes under the Coconut Board as well as under the Centre. There are Centrally sponsored schemes. Now, for new plantations, we are giving money because the root with disease has created a problem and in order to replace and replant trees we are giving 50 per cent subsidy on the inputs as well as on saplings. We are also giving money for pesticides. During the Sixth Five Year Plan, Sir, a scheme for providing financial assistance to the coconut growers for the removal of diseased plants in the country was implemented. An amount of Rs. 84.75 lakhs has already been released to the Coconut Development Board. As per the scheme, cash assistance was given to the growers for removal of disease-affected trees at the rate of Rs. 75 per tree and 50 per cent subsidy on the cost of seedlings and inputs such as fertilizers, plants and plant protection chemicals. Another scheme for rejuvenation of diseased and unproductive plantation in Kerala is implemented in the State as a centrally sponsored scheme. The scheme envisages supply of 4.4 lakh hybrid seedlings and fertilizers at 50 per cent cost. The total cost of the scheme during this plan was Rs. 102.93 lakhs to be shared equally by the Centre and the State Governments. The above performance will continue in the Seventh Plan also.

SHRI K. VASUDEVA PANICKER: Because of the drastic implementation of land legislation in Kerala, the land has been divided in the State and the poor man is the holder of land in the State. So the coconut

cultivation has become the business of the ordinary man in the State. The lowering of the price of coconut in the State has adversely affected the cultivators of coconut in the State. My question is that when the Government decides the policy, import policy, will they look into certain principles which will also take care of small coconut producers in the State? And when they frame export policy also, will they ensure that it is made in such a way that it does not affect the small producers?

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA: Sir, the Government always takes care of the farmers, and small producers while framing not only the export policy but all policies and in the case of import policy. At present we are not importing it. But I would like to inform the hon. Member, through you, Sir, that the coconut production per hectare in Kerala is very low compared to other States. In Kerala it is 3000 to 4000 per hectare—nuts in numbers, whereas in Pondicherry it is 10,000. In other States also it is more than 7000. So it has become a very old plantation; it requires to be replaced and rejuvenated. Scientists have made several suggestions and the Government has also asked the farmers to do it, so that the per hectare yield can be increased.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next question.

Subscription to news agencies by AIR and Doordarshan

*85. SHRI DINKARRAO GOVINDRAO PATIL: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the committee appointed by Government on July 31, 1985 to go into the question of increasing the amount of subscription by the All India Radio and the Doordarshan to news agencies has submitted its report;

(b) if so, what are the details of the recommendations made by the committee;

(c) what is the number of recommendations accepted by Government; and

(d) if the answer to part (a) above be in the negative, by when the committee is likely to submit its report?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI V. N. GADGIL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

(d) The Committee is finalising its recommendations.

SHRI DINKARRAO GOVINDRAO PATHI: Mr. Chairman, Sir, will the Minister be pleased to state the year in which the present specific rates of payment by Doordarshan and AIR to the news agencies were fixed, and in the context of this point whether there is any committee which decides the rates of subscription to news-agencies and, if so, the details thereof?

SHRI V. N. GADGIL: The rates were fixed on the 1st of October 1982 for two years till 1984. Then the news agencies asked for revision, and in July 1985 a high power officers' committee was appointed to consider whether a new formula is necessary and if so, from what date it should be applicable. As I have said in the written answer, the committee's recommendations are not yet available.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Second supplementary.

SHRI DINKARRAO GOVINDRAO PATIL: With the expansion of TV and AIR network and the policy of the Government to take these two-media to every nook and corner of the country, the expansion and strengthening of news agencies is imperative. In view of this, what steps are Government taking to develop news agencies for languages.