

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION (SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA): (a) Price Indices in respect of jowar, ragi, onions, pulses and cotton for the

week ending 3-2-1979 as compared with the price indices for the corresponding period in the previous year showing decrease/increase are given in the following table:

(Base : 1970-71 = 100)

Product	Price index for week ending 3-2-1979	Price index for week ending 4-2-1978	Percentage inc. (+)/dec. (-)
Jowar	154.0	156.5	(-) 1.6
Ragi	139.9	165.4	(-) 21.5
Onions	185.4	184.0	(+) 0.8
Pulses	238.7	231.4	(+) 3.2
Cotton	162.6	177.2	(-) 8.2

(b) Government's price policy aims at provision of remunerative prices to the producers of agricultural commodities. Procurement and minimum support prices in respect of important crops are fixed keeping this objective in view. State Governments are consulted before fixation of such prices.

(c) In the case of cereal crops, the State Governments operating either through FCI or through their own agencies undertake purchase operations at fixed procurement/support prices. For cotton, purchases are undertaken through C.C.I. and in Maharashtra through Maharashtra State Cooperative Marketing Federation. Purchases of pulses, soyabean and certain other oilseeds are being made through National Agricultural Marketing Federation (NAFED). In the case of onions; purchase is being undertaken by NAFED and State Co-operative Marketing Organisations.

(d) The measures being taken to encourage processing and conservation of perishable agricultural products include development of cold storages, quality control, development of processing and preservation industry, setting up of consultancy service for the industry and setting up of canning and food preservation centres.

Over 1550 fruit and vegetable processing units, a number of modern de-hydration units for onion, garlic, potato etc. and 33 community canning and preservation centres, are already functioning and efforts are being made for further development.

Procurement of foodgrains by Governmental and semi-Governmental agencies

645. SHRI ABDUL REHMAN SHEIKH:

SHRI KISHAN LAL SHARMA:

SHRI SYED NIZAM-UD-DIN:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION be pleased to state:

(a) the total quantum of foodgrains procured by various Governmental and semi-Governmental agencies till the end of January, 1979; and

(b) whether Government are aware of the fact that farmers have been compelled to sell their produce at prices lower than support prices fixed by Government because of the indifferent attitude of Government agencies in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

AND IRRIGATION (SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH): (a) A total quantity of 96.59 lakh tonnes of foodgrains were procured upto the end of January, 1979 in 1978-79 Kharif and Rabi marketing seasons.

(b) To the extent possible, adequate arrangements for extending price support are made by the Food Corporation of India and other State/Public agencies. Some reports alleging sales below procurement prices were, on investigation, found to relate to stocks not conforming to the specifications laid down by the Government.

Telephone facilities to rural areas

646. **SHRI KISHAN LAL SHARMA:** Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state what steps Government propose to take to improve telephone facilities in rural areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI NARHARI PRASAD SUKHDEO SAI): The Government have formulated a liberal policy for extending telephone facilities to the rural areas. According to this policy, telephone facilities can be provided even on loss at certain categories of stations based on their administrative importance, population, remoteness from the general telecom. network, places of tourist/pilgrimage importance, agricultural/irrigation project sites and townships. It is proposed to open 15,000 public telephones in the country during the period 1978-83.

A copy of the current policy is enclosed. [See Appendix CVIII Annexure No. 52].

Beautification of Delhi

647. **SHRI SHRIKANT VERMA:** Will the Minister of WORKS AND HOUSING AND SUPPLY AND REHABILITATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government, in the light of the recommendations of the

Art Commission, have formulated any scheme for the beautification of Delhi; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF WORKS AND HOUSING AND SUPPLY AND REHABILITATION (SHRI SIKANDAR BAKHT): (a) No, Sir. Delhi Urban Art Commission has not made any recommendations to Government in this behalf.

(b) Does not arise.

Withdrawal of S.T.D. facility provided from Muzaffarpur to Bangalore

648. **SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV:**
SHRI SULTAN SINGH:
SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN MISHRA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the night S.T.D. facility from Muzaffarpur to Bangalore has been withdrawn from 1st January, 1979;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor; and

(c) if the answer to part (a) above be in the negative, what are the reasons for which the S.T.D. from Muzaffarpur to Bangalore does not mature from 1st January, 1979?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI NARHARI PRASAD SUKHDEO SAI): (a) and (b) No, Sir.

(c) Due to changes of certain subscriber numbers in Bangalore these numbers were temporarily not available from Muzaffarpur on S.T.D. The necessary changes to overcome this, are being made.