

RAJYA SABHA

Saturday, the 26th August, 1978/the 4th Bhadra, 1900 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock,
Mr. Chairman in the Chair.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

Report (1st March, 1977 to 31st March, 1978) and Accounts of the Trade Fair Authority of India, New Delhi and Related Papers.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE, CIVIL SUPPLIES AND CO-OPERATION (SHRI ARIF BEG) : Sir, I beg to lay on the Table, under sub-section (1) of section 619-A of the Companies Act, 1956, a copy (in English and Hindi) of the First Annual Report and Accounts of the Trade Fair Authority of India, New Delhi, for the period from March 1, 1977 to March 31, 1978, together with the Auditors' Report on the Accounts and the comments of the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India thereon [Placed in Library. See No. LT 2687/78]

Accounts (1977-78) of the Rubber Board, Kottayam

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE, CIVIL SUPPLIES AND CO-OPERATION (SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR GOYAL) : Sir, I beg to lay on the Table, a copy (in English and Hindi) of the Annual Accounts of the Rubber Board, Kottayam, for the year 1976-77, and the Audit Report thereon. [Placed in Library. See No. LT-2707/78]

CALLING ATTENTION TO A MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Differentiation being made in regard to payment of subsidy on Rice and Wheat supplied to Consumers through the Public Distribution System

SHRI V. B. RAJU (Andhra Pradesh) : Sir, I beg to call the attention of the Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation to the differentiation being made in regard to the payment of subsidy on rice and wheat supplied to the consumers through the public distribution system.

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION (SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, the subsidy per quintal both in the case of wheat and rice arises out of the difference between the economic cost of the grain to the Corporation and its issue price. The economic cost consists of procurement price and other procurement incidentals as well as distribution charges of the Food Corporation of India. The procurement price both in the case of wheat and rice is based on the same principles. The distribution charges also are the same both in case of wheat and rice. The issue prices are determined by Government by taking into account the ability of the consumers to pay, the impact on the over all price level as well as the prevailing open market prices. The position in regard to estimated subsidy on wheat and rice for 1978-79 is as follows :—

The economic cost of wheat works out to Rs. 148 39 paise while the issue price is Rs. 125/- per quintal. This difference of Rs. 23 39 paise is re-imbursed to the Food Corporation of India by way of subsidy. In the case of rice, the economic cost works out to Rs. 156 04 paise per quintal while the issue price is Rs. 156/- per quintal. The difference of 4 paise per quintal is also re-imbursed to the Food Corporation of India by way of subsidy.

The bulk of the public distribution is in wheat and most of it is distributed in the non-wheat producing areas. As such, the benefits of the subsidy on wheat go mainly to the consumers in the non-wheat producing areas. While in the case of wheat the consumer issue price for public distribution system is only marginally cheaper than the open market price, in the case of rice, the issue prices are substantially lower than the open market prices.

From what has been stated above, it would be seen that there is no discrimination either against rice eaters or rice producing States vis-a-vis wheat.

SHRI V. B. RAJU : Sir, the Minister's statement is self-contradictory. There is a glaring discrimination in the payment of subsidy in respect of food-grains distributed through the Food Corporation of India. In the last three years, from 1975-78, on wheat distribution—that is, to the wheat consumers—a subsidy of Rs. 512 crores has been paid. I request the Minister to take note of this—a subsidy of Rs. 512 crores has been paid to the wheat consumers. Sir, what has happened during the same period of

[Shri V.B. Raja]
 three years ? Four crores of rupees, have been squeezed from the rice consumers, that is a draw-back has been made from the rice consumers. That is, while the wheat consumer is given wheat at a subsidised price—I will give further details—the rice consumer has been charged more than the economic price. Sir, what is the rationale behind it ? Does the Minister or the Government think that a rice consumer is economically better placed than a wheat consumer ? What is the policy of the Government in this respect ? I am not blaming this Government alone. Even the earlier Government had done the same thing because no voice had been raised at that time. Sir, this is a glaring discrimination, if I may put it, a differentiation, and I requested the Prime Minister also to intervene and check it. Sir, the Minister has already said as to what is the economic price of wheat, that is, the procurement price and incidentals all put together, because the foodgrains are distributed by the Food Corporation of India and the Food Corporation of India works out the economic price. As the hon. Minister has said, the economic price of wheat is Rs. 148.39 per quintal. Now, what is the economic price of rice ? That is Rs. 156.04 ; that is to say, there is a difference of only Rs. 8 in the economic price between wheat and rice. That means, rice is Rs. 8 costlier than the wheat as far as the Food Corporation of India is concerned. Sir, the Food Corporation works on commercial lines. What is the issue price ? Wheat is given at Rs. 125 per quintal, that is, at Rs. 23.39 less than the economic price. The hon. Minister will kindly recall—probably he has not taken a note of it—he increased the wheat procurement price by Rs. 2.50 recently. I think the Government may have to subsidise that also. If it comes to that, then the subsidy will come to Rs. 26 for every quintal of wheat distributed. What is the position of rice ? As I said, the procurement price, that is, the economic price of Rice was Rs. 156.04. Probably, the Minister is not aware of the latest position. I have got correspondence with the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister's letter says: "It is Rs. 156.71 p." The Minister has said that 4 paise subsidy is being given. No, actually 67 paise more is taken from the rice consumer. I would request the Minister to check up the latest position. Probably, the Ministry must not have correctly informed him. If I am wrong, I need to be corrected. Sir, this is the Council for States and we should take care of the interests of the States and the people residing in the States, and not the people residing in Delhi. While the Government gives a subsidy of Rs. 26,

that is, 26 paise for every kilo of wheat distributed, the Government takes back from the rice consumer 67 paise. Is it justice ? But the Minister is trying to make some discrimination here. Again he has committed a mistake. He says that it is being distributed to the wheat consuming population in the rice consuming States. What a fun ? Is it the policy of the Government that the rice consuming States should switch on to wheat ? What is the policy ?

Sir, what is the total production of rice and wheat in the country ? The rice production is in the order of nearly 43 million tonnes ; wheat production was only 22 million tonnes. This country is a rice consuming country. Certain parts like West Bengal, North-eastern States, the Southern States and also the Kashmir Valley are all rice consuming. When this is the proportion between rice and wheat production, does the Government feel that wheat should replace rice ?

Then there is another discrimination. The Government is procuring two-thirds of wheat and one-third of rice. Now, Sir, while the procurement of rice was two million tonnes the procurement of wheat was five million tonnes. The proportion is 1 : 2. That is, wheat is procured more while the wheat production is less and rice is procured less while the rice production is high. That is to say they are asking the rice-eating population to go to the open market. While the wheat-consuming population is protected by the public distribution system, by procuring less rice and by keeping its cost very high, it is making the rice-eating population to go to the open market.

Sir, as I said, a subsidy of Rs. 512 crores has been paid in the last three years. This subsidy has been paid in regard to wheat. Was it brought to the notice of the House ? Did the House know about it ? The Chief Ministers of the five Southern States and even the Chief Minister of West Bengal have mentioned this matter to the Government of India. But the same ensure answer is given by the Government of India that there is no discrimination. What does it mean ? Are my figures wrong ? Let me be convinced. Does the Minister say that we should not consume rice and go for wheat ? What will happen to the agricultural economy there ? I tried to enquire why this has happened, this discrimination, this disparity and this differentiation. When rice was in short supply in the country, when there was a great demand for rice, when we had to import rice and when the import price was very high, we could understand it. But now rice is plenty. It is a pool rate. It is a weighted average. The figures I gave and the figures given by the

hon. Minister are weighted average figures. There is no import now. In fact, the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh has asked for rice to be exported. The economy is undergoing a rapid change because of development but we are still clinging to the old policies. And who determines the prices? The Agricultural Prices Commission. What is that Commission? How many members are there? A single member and not every full-time. Sir, I would not take the time of the House. I have placed all the facts which are in my possession before the House and before the hon. Minister. This discrimination and this differentiation has to be rectified. I am not bringing in the question of procurement price here. I do not want to mix it up. I am speaking purely for the consumer. Is it the intention of the Minister and also the Government to destroy the public distribution system? It appears to be so when we look at the policy in regard to textiles, sugar, cement and so on. Sir, the dual pricing policy has come to stay in this country and the economists believe in it. If we want to make the goods available to raise the standard of living of the poorer sections of the society, then, we must make available the essentials of life within the economic price, below the production cost. To make up the wheat the free market is there for the rich people to pay more so that the resources of the rich may be transferred to the poor. Does the Minister think that the rice-consuming population is rich and that therefore, its resources should be transferred to the others? Let him not commit the mistake. I will be very happy if the Minister gives a serious consideration to it and call a meeting of Members of Parliament who come from the rice-consuming States, discuss with them and thrash out the matter.

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA : Sir, there are many hon. Members. Would it not be proper if all the hon. Members speak first and then I reply?

MR. CHAIRMAN : You can reply to them individually.

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA : Sir, the hon. Member has raised many points for consideration. One of the main objections raised by him is that the Government is trying to force wheat on the rice-eating population, that, probably, the intention appears to be to benefit the consumers of wheat and that, therefore, some subsidy is being given. To some extent, this is true. Subsidy is being given for the benefit of the consumers. As I had said in my statement. Subsidy is entirely being given for wheat.

This subsidy is being given for the benefit of the consumers of wheat. In what areas this wheat is consumed? I will give some fact. From this it will become very clear to the hon. Member that this apprehensions are probably wrong. This subsidy is going to the areas where it is very much needed. Kindly see the wheat consumed or the off-take of wheat from the Central pool by the various States. The hon. Member may note it down.

	lakh tonnes wheat
Maharashtra . . .	6.68
West Bengal . . .	12.00
Orissa . . .	1.70
Tamil Nadu . . .	4.51
Gujarat . . .	2.18
Andhra Pradesh . . .	1.58
Karnataka . . .	2.65
Kerala . . .	0.80

This is the wheat consumed in these areas from the public distribution system. Now about the subsidy, what amount of subsidy goes to them. The hon. Member had mentioned that about Rs. 500 crores have been given in three years as subsidy for wheat. I would mention the figures only for one year, for 1977-78, what amount of subsidy has been given on this to these States.

Maharashtra, consumer of wheat, has gained a subsidy of Rs. 16.94 crores. West Bengal has received a subsidy benefit of Rs. 30.43 crores. Orissa Rs. 4.31 crores, Tamil Nadu Rs. 11.43 crores, Andhra Pradesh Rs. 4 crores, Kerala Rs. 2 crores and 3 thousands, Karnataka Rs. 6.72 crores and Gujarat Rs. 5.53 crores. I am mentioning only these States only. This comes to Rs. 81.39 crores out of a total subsidy of Rs. 136 crores during the year 1977-78. This means 60 per cent of the total subsidy goes to these wheat-consuming States. Now from this it can be calculated for whose benefit the subsidy is being given and my hon. friend will be belied on these facts that it is being given for the consumers in these areas. Sir, very little wheat from the public distribution system is consumed by the surplus States. For example, Haryana, Punjab and Western U. P. take very little wheat from the public distribution system. So, they do not benefit from this subsidy. Wheat is mainly given to the deficit States for meeting their demands. There the States will benefit from this.

SHRI V. B. RAJU : Sir, the Minister has entirely and completely twisted all my arguments. I never asked for the States. I asked for the rice consumer and he is entirely misleading the House by saying that such and such State gets so much subsidy. Who asked him to give those figures ? (*interruptions*) I asked for the rice consumers and not for the States. The Minister admits that nothing has been given to the rice consumer.

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA : I mention these States only because these States are mainly rice-consuming States. I was mentioning these States because these are the rice consuming people who are being given subsidy to the extent of 60 per cent. ; all this subsidy goes to these rice-consuming States. Mostly these are the people who take foodgrains from the public distribution system. As the poorer sections of the people take their foodgrains mostly through the public distribution system, so this subsidy goes to the poor people of the rice-eating States, to the rice eating population. This is my point.

SHRI V. B. RAJU : Let us take the hon. Minister to Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. Sir, you are also from that area. Let us not go by wrong information. I am not bringing in politics or regionalism into it, I am only making a factual statement. You please check it up after you go to the office whether the subsidy of Rs. 512 crores on wheat has been paid or not. I have got a record with me. Secondly, you should also check up whether you had charged back more than Rs. 3.88 crores or Rs. 4 crores in these three years, squeezed back from the rice-consuming population.

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA : Sir, I have given the facts. I have not twisted any facts. I have given facts for every State.

MR. CHAIRMAN : This is not a controversial question. This is clarification only.

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA : I would only submit that politics should never come in where food is concerned, where agriculture is concerned. I have been saying so. I have mentioned these facts to the House that this is the off-take of wheat by the various rice-consuming States from the public distribution system and this is the amount of subsidy that has gone to the rice-eating population, the benefit that has been given to the rice-eating population out of the wheat subsidy. Those are the facts and figures given by me and they are correct.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Ramamurti—not there. Shri Ranga—not there, Shri V.V. Swaminathan—not there. Shri Deb Burman.

SHRI NARASINGHA PRASAD NANDA (ORISSA) : Sir, I also come from Orissa. I am a rice-consumer.

SHRI BIR CHANDRA DEBBURMAN (Tripura) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Minister has made a confusion between the rice-eating States and the rice-eating population. In rice-eating States, there are many wheat-eating people. So the wheat subsidy that has been given to those who take wheat will go to them. The main question is whether the rice-eating population, the people who take rice as their main food, are benefited by the subsidy that is given. The Minister has said that in rice-eating States, this amount of subsidy has been given. So it invariably goes in favour of the rice-eating people. This is not correct. That is the contradiction. In the rice-eating States, there are many wheat-eating people. So that subsidy will go in favour of those who take wheat as their main food. So the main question remains so far as the rice-eating population in those rice-eating States is concerned, whether they get the benefit of this subsidy or not, whether the subsidy goes in favour of the rice-eating population or not. A discrimination has been made between the rice-eating population and the wheat-eating population. This distinction between the rice-eating States and the rice-eating population is something which has puzzled the hon. Minister. He wants to confuse the rice-eating States with rice-eating population. In rice-eating States, there are wheat-eating people as well as rice-eating people. Whereas the rice-eating people are numerous, they are poor. So in the rice-eating States, this subsidy that has been given for wheat does not go in favour of the rice-eating people who are poor. So I want to know whether the Minister wants to do this discrimination and give subsidy not taking into consideration how much rice-eating population there is in each rice-eating State and whether they are benefited by the wheat subsidy that has been given to them. My submission is that the rice-eating population is the sufferer; they are poor and they are not getting this benefit and the wheat-eating population in those States is getting the benefit and is going to be benefited by this subsidy. I want the Minister to do away with this distinction between the rice-eating people and wheat-eating people in the rice-eating States and the wheat-eating States.

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA :
Sir, as I mentioned in my Statement, the economic cost of wheat comes to Rs. 148.39 per quintal and the economic cost of rice comes to Rs. 166.04 per quintal. The open market prices, so far as wheat is concerned, are much below Rs. 148. Even in the lean periods, they prevail at about Rs. 130 or Rs. 135/-. This is the open market price of wheat.

So taking that into consideration we had to keep it low for providing it to the general population as Rs. 125. But in the case of rice the prevailing price is much above this namely, Rs. 156. Normally even in lean period they range between Rs. 165 to Rs. 190 per quintal. That is why we could not lower this price further than Rs. 156 because that would create difficulties in the market.

SHRI N.P. CHENGALRAYA NAIDU (Andhra Pradesh) : I do not agree with Mr. V.B. Raju criticising the agricultural policy because charity begins at home. Sir, the Agriculture Minister comes from a wheat-growing area. So how can we find fault with him ? Only three days back I have told that all the agriculturists are treated as bonded labour. Sir, you know that the Government have ordered the release of bonded labour all over the country. But the agriculturists who are another form of bonded labour. Whatsoever we may produce the controls come in and whenever I want to sell my produce the controls again come in. Movement of commodities is not allowed. Our master, the Agriculture Minister, controls the bonded labour.

Sir, the hon'ble Minister was telling that he is giving subsidy to who ever consumes wheat in the rice growing areas. Sir, the poor people are forced to eat whatever they are given cheaper. If the Minister can give subsidy to rice then they will consume more rice. After all, it should be the same standard of subsidy to rice also. You are giving a subsidy of Rs. 500 crores, on one-third of the quantity of wheat on the total foodgrains produced in this country and not to two-thirds of the quantity of rice produced in the country. Why can they not give subsidy two-thirds of rice produced in the country for distribution in the Northern States where this wheat is consumed and they may be asked to purchase rice at a lower rate ? Why can the Minister be not kind enough to give subsidy to these wheat-consuming people and ask them to eat rice instead of wheat ? Here we are forced to eat wheat in the South.

Sir, the Minister says that he will give subsidy. Will the Minister consume poison if I give cent. per cent. subsidy ? The same thing applies to subsidy to the South also. That is the position. I would request the Government to tell us whether they are going to treat the rice-producing people on par with the wheat-producing people. Will the minister treat rice distribution on par with wheat distribution ? It is important.

Regarding the price fixation policy I do not know whether those in the price Fixation Committee are taken straight from the mental hospital. What is the cost of producing rice price per quintal ? And what is the cost of producing wheat per quintal ? Wheat is so easily produced. You do not need so much of water for it. Even rain water is sometimes enough for it. But for rice, for paddy producing you need so much of water. You put in so much of labour. You have to put so much of fertiliser, pesticides and all these things, it is double the cost of wheat production. so when the production cost of rice is so much what is this Price Fixation Committee doing ? There should be one or two agriculturist Members of Parliament attached to this Price Fixation Committee. The previous, Indira Government, did away with its agriculturist members. Fortunately, our Agriculture Minister is an agriculturist himself. Why can he not appoint one or two Members of Parliament who are agriculturists on the Price Fixation Committee and do away with those who have come straight from the mental hospital ? They should have on the Price Fixation Committee those who know something about agriculture.

I don't blame the Minister. He is an agriculturist and he is interested in these things. But both the Ministers in the Agriculture Ministry now are from wheat-producing areas. No South Indian is there, nobody to look after us. In agriculture it is like the bonded labour system and in this bonded labour also one section is treated as first class agriculturist and the South Indians are treated as second class agriculturists. Whenever we raise this issue they say don't bring in the question of North and South. That is the slogan they make. But I ask you, if you don't want us to feel like this, why don't you give more subsidy for rice also so that we can also feel that we are all one in India ? I hope the Minister will consider all these things.

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA :
Sir, the main objection is that I come from a wheat-growing area and that is why, probably, I have a soft corner for wheat and so this subsidy and all these things.

SHRI N.P. CHENGALRAYA NAIDU :
I don't blame you.

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA :
I don't say it is blaming ; it is just an expression of thinking. It is not as if we have introduced it for the first time. This has been the practice for a very long time and I think it was a good practice because it was introduced at a time when there was actual scarcity in the country. We used to import a lot of foodgrains. As the hon. Member knows very well, rice is not available in the open market in the international market and, even if it is available, it is available at a very high cost, more than twice the cost of wheat. So we have been importing wheat in large quantities—seven million tonnes in one year.

SHRI N.P. CHENGALRAYA NAIDU:
One correction, please. We have imported rice also.

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA :
That was a very small quantity at a high cost. I say it was imported at twice or 2½ times the cost of wheat in the international market. At that time a subsidy of about Rs. 100 per quintal was given on imported rice.

Sir, I was telling that it was introduced in those days and now that all those zonal restrictions have vanished and now it is a free market, almost all the quantities are available and we are meeting all the demands of all the States. We receive demands from the State Governments, that so much wheat is needed, and we allocate that wheat. We receive demands that so much rice is needed from Kerala, West Bengal and other States which need rice and we allocate the entire quantity of rice. There is absolutely no difficulty in that, Sir. So we are allocating rice as well as wheat to all those areas. How are we allocating the rice now ? Who is supplying this rice ? My hon. friend probably does not know that again rice is being supplied by the area from which I come. I am more of a rice grower now than a wheat grower. I will give some of the figures for the previous years. For example, in 1975-76, Punjab had a production of 14,45,000 tonnes of rice and, out of that, 12 lakh tonnes were given to the Central Pool. Haryana gave, out of 6,24,000 tonnes, 4,80,000 tonnes to the Central Pool. So, out of their total production, they have given about 81 per cent to the Central Pool. So, the rice that came to the Central Pool was mainly from Western U.P., Haryana and Punjab. That was the main rice that came to the Central Pool and that was the rice supplied to the deficit States. What was the procurement from other States ? For example, in 1976-77 Andhra Pradesh produced about 50 lakh tonnes of rice and procured only 4,77,000 tonnes. Karnataka produced 14,80,000 tonnes

and procured only 66,000 tonnes. Kerala produced about 12,41,000 tonnes and procured only 20,000 tonnes. Tamil Nadu produced 50 lakh tonnes and procured only 1,73,000 tonnes. So, all the rice needed by the deficit States was procured in the Northern States where rice production started in a big way. For example, I will mention that in the year 1976-77, the Central Pool contribution, leaving aside the State Pool, was 30.31 lakh tonnes. Out of this Central Pool contribution, 15.32 lakh tonnes came from Punjab, 6.41 lakh tonnes from Haryana and 6.1 lakh tonnes from U.P. So, out of these 30 lakh tonnes, 27.74 lakh tonnes came from these States

So I come from a wheat producing area as also a rice producing area. Much rice is produced there. (Interruptions) In fact, the structure of our country is such that wheat can be produced almost anywhere. For example, West Bengal has taken to wheat production and last year they produced one million tonnes of wheat. Similarly, Assam is also producing wheat. All these States can produce wheat. And wheat is as good as rice. There is no harm in taking wheat along with rice. We have now started taking rice along with wheat. Similarly, I would request my hon. friends not to have any discrimination with regard to wheat and they should also start consuming wheat along with rice.

SHRI N. P. CHENGALRAYA NAIDU:
There is one suggestion. Why can't you give rice for the "food for work" programme ? Why are you dumping rice on us ? There is now plenty of rice available. Last time, you said that enough rice was not there. But now enough rice is available. How much rice do you want from us ?

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Naidu, you are eating wheat also isn't it ?

SHRI N.P. CHENGALRAYA NAIDU :
Yes, Sir. I am also producing wheat.

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA :
May I say a word on what my hon. friend has said ? He is asking "for rice of the food for work" programme. The "food for work" programme was started last year. As we all know, we have started issuing wheat for it. Now the programme has caught up with the whole country and there is demand for more and more of foodgrains. Similar requests as the one made by my hon. friend, for giving rice, are also coming. So we are seriously considering to introduce some rice component along with wheat.

SHRI N.P. CHENGALRAYA NAIDU:
We want full rice.

श्री भीष्म नारायण सिंह (बिहार): मान्यवर, एक्चुअली मुझे माननीय मंत्री जी के उत्तर से कन्फ्यूजन होता है। आप किस राज्य को कितना गेहूँ और चावल का आवंटन करते हैं इससे ज्यादा हम लोगों को मतलब नहीं है। इस ध्यानाकर्षण प्रस्ताव के जरिये मैं यह जानना चाहता था कि गेहूँ और चावल की सप्लिडी में क्यों अंतर है? एक और तो गेहूँ का एफ० सी० आई० द्वारा रखा गया कास्ट प्राईस है जैसा बी० बी० राजू ने बताया 148-40 पैसे, वहाँ आप सप्लिडी देते हैं और इश्यू प्राईस होता है रुपये 125। चावल का दूसरी तरफ एफ० सी० आई० का कास्ट प्राईस 156-04 पैसे है और 156-71 पैसे इश्यू प्राईस है। तो हम लोग यह जानना चाहते थे जबकि चावल की पैदावार ज्यादा है गेहूँ की कम है फिर भी प्रोक्योरमेंट आप गेहूँ का ज्यादा करते हैं, चावल का कम और सप्लिडी लगभग रुपये 26 गेहूँ कर देते हैं और चावल पर तो सप्लिडी देने की बात नहीं है, 71 पैसे ज्यादा लग जाता है। इसका क्या कारण है जबकि देश में ज्यादा लोग चावल खाते हैं, मैं स्पष्ट यह जानना चाहता हूँ। इसका असर यह होता है जैसे बिहार में, चावल वहाँ ज्यादा होता है और गेहूँ कम। अब जो किसान चावल की खेती करता है उस पर इसका असर पड़ता है। अभी हमारे मित्र श्याम लाल यादव जी ने कल सुपर बाजार से चावल पांच रुपये किलोग्राम लिया तो मैं यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि यह अंतर क्यों है, यह मुख्य विषय जानने का है, उसको आप कैसे सन्तुलित या सम्यक् करेंगे, उसमें क्या कर सकते हैं। यही हम लोग आपसे मुख्य रूप से जानना चाहते हैं और आप इसके बारे में बताइये।

श्री सुरजीत सिंह बरनाला : आपने यह कहा कि हम प्रोक्योरमेंट जो करते हैं वह ज्यादा व्हीट की करते हैं, चावल की ज्यादा नहीं करते हैं। जबकि चावल खाने वाली पापूलेशन ज्यादा है, व्हीट खाने वाली ज्यादा नहीं है। हम वर्तमान हालत में प्रोक्योरमेंट किसी खास इरादे से नहीं करते हैं, यह हो जाता है; क्योंकि हमने सपोर्ट प्राईस फिक्स की है और वह इसलिए फिक्स की है कि इस रकम से कम पर किसान न बेचें। हम गेहूँ की करते हैं, पेंडी की करते हैं, राईस की करते हैं, ताकि उससे ज्यादा दाम न गिरने पाये। उस कीमत पर जो साल मंडी में आता है वह हम खरीद लेते हैं उससे ज्यादा अगर किसान को कहीं कीमत मिलती है तो वह बेच सकता है। He is free to sell in the open market anywhere he likes. हमें तो वही माल मिलता है जो इस प्राईस पर मिलने के लिए आ जाता है। प्रोक्योरमेंट के लिये हम कहीं जबरदस्ती नहीं करते हैं, महज उतना ही लेते हैं जितना विकने के लिए

आ जाता है। राईस खाने वाले ज्यादा हैं परन्तु प्रोडक्शन राईस की उस मात्रा में ज्यादा नहीं है। शायद राईस को खाने वाली पापूलेशन 2/3 है परन्तु राईस का प्रोडक्शन 2/3 नहीं है। आपने कुछ जो आंकड़े दिये हैं व्हीट के प्रोडक्शन के बारे में वह ठीक नहीं है, मैं उसको ठीक कर दूँ कि व्हीट का प्रोडक्शन गये साल में, पिछले साल में 30 मिलियन टन से ऊपर गया है, हमारा ख्याल है कि 30-31 मिलियन टन के दरम्यान हुआ है। The wheat production in the country is between 30 and 31 million tonnes this year. सो हमारा राईस इतना नहीं है जोकि बहुत मात्रा में प्रोक्योर हो जाए। जैसा मैं आपको बता रहा था प्रोक्योरमेंट महज उन स्टेट्स में होता है जहाँ राईस कम खाते हैं। जहाँ राईस खाते हैं वहाँ प्रोक्योरमेंट नहीं होता। अब वेस्ट बंगाल राईस खाने वाला है, लेकिन वहाँ प्रोडक्शन बहुत नहीं है। वहाँ प्रोक्योरमेंट ज्यादा नहीं हो सकता, मामूली होता है। केरल में 12-13 लाख टन पैदा कर लेते हैं, लेकिन खाने वाले ज्यादा हैं। इसलिये प्रोक्योरमेंट नहीं हो सकता। हम इनसिस्ट नहीं करती। दूसरी जगह जहाँ पड़ा हुआ है, वहाँ से हम देगे। असम में भी ऐसा ही है। कई स्टेट्स ऐसी हैं जो जितना राईस प्रोड्यूस करती हैं, वह वही कन्ज्यूम हो जाता है। उनसे ले नहीं सकते। इसलिये हमने बंदिश नहीं लगाई कि राईस किसान से लेना ही है। वह जहाँ चाहे बेच सकता है।

राईस की प्रोक्योरमेंट 1976-77 में 44 लाख 21 हजार टन हुई, मामूली नहीं थी, बहुत थी। लेकिन उसके मुकाबले में व्हीट की 51 लाख 65 हजार टन थी; क्योंकि व्हीट खाने वाले कम थे और प्रोडक्शन ज्यादा। वह उस भाव पर खरीद ली गई, वह पड़ी हुई है, उसका इस्तेमाल हो जाता है, जहाँ जरूरत पड़ती है।

आपने फरमाया पांच रुपये भाव हो जाता है। वह महज उस चावल का है जो बढ़िया किस्म का है, बासमती का होगा। दूसरे चावल का जो हमने इश्यू प्राईस फिक्स किया है वह करीब ६० 150 प्रति क्विंटल पब्लिक डिस्ट्रिब्यूशन सिस्टम में देते हैं।

SHRI NARASINGHA PRASAD NANDA : Mr. Raju raised a very important question on subsidy to the rice-consumers. That question has remained unanswered. The point that he raised was that the economic price of rice was Rs. 156.04 P. per quintal and that the issue price was Rs. 156.71 P. In other words, 67 paise is realised from the consumer, which means that so far as rice is concerned, the consumer has to pay 67 paise in excess of the economic price. There is absolutely no subsidy to the consumer of rice and he has to pay 67 paise. This question has not been answered by the Hon. Minister.

[Shri Narasingha Prasad Nanda]

What is happening in the rice-consuming areas? Our experience really has been that in the rural areas particularly, the people do not consume wheat. Even in the Food for Work Programme they take wheat and get it exchanged for rice. The wheat goes back to the seller, and in the process it goes back to somebody else. So, I raise a very basic question. The benefit of the subsidy on wheat goes really to the middlemen who deal in wheat, it does not actually go to the consumer. That is our experience. So, may I know from the Hon. Minister whether he will look into the matter?

I agree and I can see, Sir, that the only rationale behind this policy of subsidising wheat to a greater extent—as the Hon. Minister has said that almost Rs. 26 crores are given for wheat and hardly Rs. 4 crores for rice—is that probably the Government wants that the people should gradually consume more and more wheat because in the wheat producing areas more wheat is being produced and that should be sold in the market and that they should get accustomed to consumption of wheat. Probably, that is the only rationale for giving more subsidy to the wheat-consumers than that to the rice-consumers.

I would submit that the rice-consumers are also entitled to a subsidy, if not equal to what is given to the wheat-consumers, at least proportional. The consumers of rice should be given equal benefit by way of subsidy.

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA : Sir, about the figures, my hon. friend mentioned here that in the letter he received from the Prime Minister, the figure of Rs. 156.71 was mentioned, but I am mentioning a figure of Rs. 156.04. There is some mistake in the figures supplied to the hon. Member. There is some typographical mistake. The actual economic cost is Rs. 156.04. (Interruption). I am saying that you have received a letter from the Prime Minister in which the figure mentioned was Rs. 156.71, but there is some typing mistake or some mistake.....

SHRI V. B. RAJU : No typing mistake. It has been clarified. And I have replied also to that.

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA : According to the figures that I have received, the economic cost is Rs. 156.04. But I will again check it up with the Department.

Sir, my hon. friend has now stated that this subsidy goes to the middlemen. I do not know how he calculates that it goes to the middlemen. The subsidy is only paid for the consumers benefit.

The consumer gets wheat from the fair-price shop. He goes to the shop, the public distribution system, and purchases whatever he requires. And from the requirements of the various State Governments, we calculate the figures. And, Sir, these are not very small figures. As I was mentioning, 12 lakh tonnes in West Bengal means one lakh tonnes per month. That goes to the consumer. The consumer takes it. This is not forced on the consumer. The consumer takes it from the public distribution system according to his needs. So, that is all consumed by the consumers in those areas and not by the middlemen.

SHRI NARASINGHA PRASAD NANDA : The wheat goes back to the shop-keeper who eventually gives it back to the wholesaler, and the benefit of the subsidy goes to the middleman and not to the consumer. That was my point.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Bhattacharya.

SHRI G. C. BHATTACHARYA (Uttar Pradesh) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, after hearing the Minister, I am both pained and amused—pained, because of his lack of knowledge about the prevailing circumstances, and amused, because I am reminded of the situation which prevailed during the French Revolution. When the King asked the Prime Minister why the crowd was crying outside, he said, "They want bread, and bread is not available. He then said, "Let them have cakes. Why don't they eat cakes?" So, I was reminded of this when Mr. Barnala said. Why don't the people of rice-eating States have both rice and wheat together? This is the solution with which he has tried to solve all the problems.

Then, Sir, may I remind him that over 40 per cent of the population of this country are below the poverty-line? And when I say that 40 per cent of the population are below the poverty-line, is he aware of what the main subsistence of this population is? Have they even seen rice and wheat diets? Wheat, he says, is going to different States. Why? Sir, have you seen wheat which is supplied in the public distribution system? It is not even worth animal consumption, what to talk of human consumption? Good wheat goes to the free market. Therefore, people who can purchase wheat in subsidised rates are compelled to go for rice. And rice is not available at reasonable price. And even if it is available, it is available only once in a month or once in two months or once in three months in ration shops. So, who is benefited by this subsidy on wheat? He has tried to put a veil and that veil

will be pierced if you have to see clearly. Mr. Raju, Mr. Nanda and Mr. Bhishma Narain Singh have all spoken about the miseries of the people. I am inclined to agree with Mr. Nanda that this wheat subsidy goes to the middlemen. Even the persons in the wheat-producing States do not get the benefit of this subsidy, what to talk of rice producing States consuming wheat? Therefore, Sir, through you, I will only appeal to the Government to rise to the occasion and deal with middlemen effectively and give subsidy for rice also and not to give a reply merely because some reply has to be given. I am pointing out where the evil lies and how to grapple with the problem and find out a solution.

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA:

It is very easy to say things that wheat is not available, rice is not available. I have not received these complaints from any of the States, that they are short of wheat or they are short of rice: whenever I received a demand, it was fully met and no cut has been imposed in any manner and from whichever quarter, from whichever area the demand comes for rice or wheat, it is supplied. We have enough wheat and rice for supply. That is why we started this Food for Work Programme. The Government felt that there is need for supplying it to some people who do not have wheat, who cannot pay. We are supplying that food from the Central Government. It goes to the State Governments to be utilised for development work, etc. It goes to the poorer sections of the population.

SHRI G. LAKSHMANAN (Tamil Nadu) : It is not as though wheat growers and wheat consumers are better treated as compared to rice growers and rice consumers. I make it very clear. But I want to know whether the Government is aware that to produce rice nowadays one needs to incur three or four times the expenditure that was incurred four or five years ago. Even the manure price, other labour charges, everything comes to 3 to 4 times. But the price fixed by the Government is only half of what it was previously available. The point is you must go into the fundamentals, the rudiments of this system. You know in the South we think always in a national way; so we brought in land ceiling in South India. But in the North the wheat growers are rich landlords. They can bring pressure on any political party that come into power. That is why the price of wheat is increased. And therefore, they are able to get it. It does not go to the consumer also. The Landlords who produce wheat in the Northern part of India bring pressure on the powers

that be. You also know that very recently after the Janata Government came into power, they increased the price of wheat because an assurance was given by the then Agriculture Minister Mr. Badal, that he would see that the price of wheat was increased. That was said in his Punjab election manifesto or in his Haryana election manifesto. Therefore, rich landlords who are the growers of wheat can bring pressure which the poor rice growers from the South cannot do. The poor rice growers who are very sensitive, have brought land ceiling that nobody can have 15 standard acres of land. Therefore, I say there cannot be any discrimination. If I go to the Supreme Court definitely tomorrow any increase in the price of wheat will be cut down. Is the Minister, who is also a rice-eater, aware that the price of manure has increased? What is the price? The manure which you were getting for Rs. 100, now costs Rs. 300. You go to any village; you can see the conditions of a villager, a cultivator, a peasant. It is the same as it was during the British rule. He has no shirt. When I say this, I am not envying the wheat growers. But they have at least got a shirt; they have got a turban. But, Sir, if you go to a village in your esteemed State or in my State or in Andhra, the people there do not have even a thread. Even the ladies do not have anything; they have got only one saree even today. When they have to wash and dry their saree, they tie one end to a tree and with the other end cover their body. Till today, even after 30 years of independence, we see them in this condition. The ladies are in that position even today. Why?

AN HON. MEMBER : Because of poverty.

SHRI G. LAKSHMANAN : How was poverty brought about? Therefore, I say that we are living in this condition even today. I am not comparing the wheat price with the rice price and all that. Actually, people do not want to cultivate their lands and they want to go in for something else because the benefits they get from this are very insufficient. Therefore, these things must be taken in that way. How long are going to allow this uncivilized or, shall I say what my leader, the late Anna said, the civilized savagery that is in existence today in this country? This is the position in spite of the thirty years of independence and I do not blame the Congress people. I am happy that Mr. V. B. Raju was raising this issue. It is very good of him. Mr. Raju, you have raised it. But what did you do in your thirty years' regime to improve the conditions of the masses?

SHRI V. B. RAJU : We have produced the DMK in Madras.

SHRI G. LAKSHMANAN : Therefore, Sir, I say that this is not a political issue. Even Mr. Raju has raised it now. If he had raised it when he was in the same place, when his party was in power, I would have been happy. Anyway, I am very happy that he has raised it now.

SHRI V. B. RAJU : I had raised you were not here then.

SHRI G. LAKSHMANAN : Therefore, Sir, let us not take things in that way. The fact is that the wheat growers are big landlords and they can bring political pressure to bear on the powers that be. But the rice growers are poor peasants and they are not able to do that and that should not be the criterion.

SHRI V. B. RAJU : Mr. Lakshmanan this is about the consumers.

SHRI G. LAKSHMANAN : Yes. After all, they are there. Whether it is producer or consumer, it is the same thing and we are giving the same names. But our intention is not to make any distinction between wheat and rice. You don't decrease the price of wheat. But please raise the price of rice to that level and, if you don't do that, definitely there would be a feeling of North *versus* South and we cannot avoid that. At least, Sir, to avoid that they must see that wheat and rice are given the same treatment though the rulers may be wheat eaters and the ruled may be rice eaters.

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA : Sir, the honourable Member was making inconsistent statements, saying on the one hand that if he goes to the Supreme Court, it will strike down the wheat prices and the wheat prices will come down and, on the other hand, saying that he is presenting the problem of the peasants. But, Sir, from the way he was mentioning the prices of wheat, etc., I think he is not a good farmer and he does not present the problem of the farmers properly. In any case, I would like to give some facts from which the honourable Members will know what the rise in the price of wheat is and the rise in the price of rice is in the previous years, because my friend has mentioned several things and he has said that the wheat producers are the big barons and they can put pressure on any government that comes. I do not know from where he has got his

calculations or his figures or such knowledge that they are big landlords and all that. There are no landlords after the ceilings have been imposed, particularly in Punjab. I have seen it and I know the facts. 17½ acres of land is the maximum given to the agriculturists and with in that they have to lead a good life and I do not know why he was saying about keeping turbans and keeping their heads high. They have to put in hard work. For keeping turbans on their heads, they have to work hard, and they have to keep their turbans clean and they have to keep their heads straight. They work hard and earn a good deal of money and they provide for the needy areas of the country also and there is nothing wrong about it. Now, I would like to respectfully submit what the rice prices were during the past few years.

In 1970-71, the price of paddy prevailing in the country was Rs. 45 to Rs. 56 which means an average of Rs. 50.50 which was the average in 1970-71.

12 Noon

SHRI G. LAKSHMANAN : What is the price of manure ?

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA : I am not talking of manure now. I do not know why he is not hearing what I am saying. I am furnishing some facts. He can make his calculations later on.

AN HON. MEMBER : Everything you must give.

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA : In 1970-71, the average price was Rs. 50.50, in 1977-78, it came to Rs. 77.00. It was raised....(Interruptions) Then it was Rs. 110 in....(Interruptions)

SHRI LAKSHMANA MAHAPATRO (Orissa) : It is about paddy.

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA : Yes, paddy. So the percentage of increase in the case of paddy comes to 52.4, and in the case of wheat it is 44.7. So that is the percentage of rise for the last 8 years regarding paddy, regarding paddy and wheat. These are the comparative figures. I do not know why my hon. friend was saying that there has been a lot of rise in wheat prices. The paddy prices have been raised more than the wheat prices, comparatively. This is the answer to his question.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Mahapatro.
A small clarification.

SHRI LAKSHMANA MAHAPATRO : A very small clarification. Only one question will do. Sir, the hon. Minister has made a calculated move to miss the mark, because we are concerned with subsidy that is being given to the rice eaters, consumers. And, Sir, he has given so many facts. He is not telling why he is not able to make the issue price of rice at Rs. 125 as he has made in the case of wheat. That is my question. Why is he making a discrimination ? The wheat eater and the rice eater should not be said to be different men. If he is an Indian whether it is the wheat eater or the rice eater, he should get the issue price equally. There should not be a difference. The other thing that he says is that he is not able to keep this at Rs. 156.04. What is it that he has taken into consideration for saying that ? What is the reason ? There is absolutely no reason. Sir, you know, the income of rice eaters is much lower than the income of wheat eaters, who are getting wheat at Rs. 125. He said that when they give subsidy, they take into account only the economic price that is worked out and the issue price. He does not take into account the economic condition of consumers. That is the most important point. Sir, does he know that in the meantime, since 1971 when the last census was taken up and now, in the State of Orissa which is essentially a rice producing and rice eating State, the percentage of people below the poverty line has risen to 85 from 71. In the year, it was 71 per cent. Now, in 1977-78 it is 85 percent. Is it not high ? What is he giving by way of subsidy to the rice eaters there ? That is the real question. Sir, if the issue price had been fixed for rice at Rs. 125 as in the case of wheat, the off-take would have been much more. The off-take is not much because the prices are high. Therefore, you are making a discrimination. Please consider this. Please reduce it. Please don't make the rice eater as wheat eater by compulsion. Don't have compulsory sterilisations in the field of wheat eating.

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA : Sir, I have replied earlier to most of the questions raised by my hon. friend. The economic cost of rice comes to about Rs. 156.04 and the open market price of rice is much higher than this. In the case of wheat, the economic cost comes to Rs. 148.39 and the open market prices are below that. So, we had to bring down the price of wheat to that level where the open market price prevails or slightly lower than that so that the off-take can be possible. Sir, another thing that is

important is regarding procurement. If there is a lot of difference between the two prices, as my hon. friend has suggested, we will not be able to procure all the rice that is needed in the country, because already, as I have mentioned, the rice procurement is slightly below the level of wheat procurement in the country because the availability of wheat is more than that of rice. (Interruptions.)

MESSAGE FROM THE LOK SABHA

The Tobacco Board (Amendment Bill, 1978)

SECRETARY-GENERAL : Sir, I have to report to the House the following message received from the Lok Sabha signed by the Secretary of the Lok Sabha :

"In accordance with the provisions of Rule 101 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha, I am directed to inform you that the following amendment made by Rajya Sabha in the Tobacco Board (Amendment) Bill, 1978, at its sitting held on the 31st July, 1978, was taken into consideration and agreed to by Lok Sabha at its sitting held on Thursday, 24th August, 1978 :—

Clause 2

"That at page 1, lines 10-11, the words 'or at such other place as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, specify' be deleted."

REFERENCE TO THE REPORTED U.S.A. MILITARY AID TO PAKISTAN IN THE GUISE OF ECONOMIC AID

श्री शिव चन्द्र झा (बिहार) : सभापति महोदय, मैं आपके द्वारा इस सदन का और भारत सरकार का ध्यान एक विशेष और गंभीर मामले की ओर खींचना चाहता हूँ और उस मामले का संबंध अमेरिकी साम्राज्यवादियों के बढ़ते हुए पंजे से है। अमेरिकी साम्राज्यवाद का यह पंजा खास तौर पर भारत को मध्य नजर रखते हुए भारतीय उप-महाद्वीप में बढ़ रहा है। भारत जो कुछ काम कर रहा है और जिस प्रकार से अपनी शक्ति बढ़ा रहा है, अमेरिका को वह पसंद नहीं है और वह यह नहीं चाहता है कि भारत इतना ताकतवर हो, खासतौर पर विस-ए-विस पाकिस्तान के मुकाबले और दूसरे पड़ोसी राष्ट्रों के मुकाबले। वास्तविक बात यह है कि फ्रांस का पाकिस्तान के साथ वहां पर राबलपिंडी से डेढ़ सौ मील की दूरी पर स्थित चश्मा नामक स्थान पर एक रिप्रोसेसिंग न्यूक्लियर