

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION (SHRI ANNASHEB P. SHINDE) : (a) and (b) As a result of corrective measures and stringent action taken against hoarders and black-marketeers the prices of various essential commodities are showing a down-ward trend. The wholesale price index of cereals, pulses, sugar and edible oils during the period from 28-9-74 to 26-10-74 have shown a fall between 1.7 per cent and 8.9 per cent. The wholesale index number of milk and milk production, tea & groundnuts during the period from July upto 3rd week of October 1974 registered a fall ranging between 1.4 per cent and 10.4 per cent.

Assessment about the demand and supply of fertilisers for rabi season

335. SHRI B. P. NAGARAJA MURTHY: SHRI B. RACHAIAH:

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

(a) whether it is a fact that the off-take of fertiliser in most of the States has dropped by about 15 per cent because of the hike in fertiliser prices and widespread drought;

(b) whether any assessment by Government regarding the gap between demand and supply of fertilisers for the coming rabi season has since been made; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and action taken to meet it ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION (SHRI PRABHUDAS PATEL) : (a) Reports indicating a decline in the off-take of fertiliser in June-August 1974 as compared to the corresponding months of 1973 had been received in respect of some of the States. It is assessed that the decline was due to a number of factors like natural calamities of drought and floods, credit squeeze, increase in

by and large temporary factors and mostly requiring some adjustments in financial and internal distribution arrangements. The off-take has subsequently shown trends of recovery in most of the States.

(b) Yes Sir. It is estimated that during the Rabi 1974-75 season, availability of fertilizers may be roughly 30 per cent short of the requirements.

(c) (i) Maximum steps are being taken to increase production from domestic manufacturers.

(ii) Efforts are being made to import the maximum possible quantities.

(iii) A drive has been undertaken for the most economical use of the available fertilizer.

(iv) Efforts are being made to supplement the use of chemical fertilizers by the use of organic manures and rural urban compost.

(v) Keeping in view port handling, railway logistics and economic marketing zones of factories so that the minimum quantities may remain in the pipeline, several fertilizer distribution is being carefully planned in the most rational manner.

Representation for the fishing seamen's association

336. SHRI K. CHANDRASEKHARAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION be pleased to state;

(a) whether Government, have recently received any representation from the Central Government Fishing Seamen's Association, Cochin with regard to their problems ; and

(b) if so, what action has been taken thereon ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION (SHRI PRABHUDAS PATEL) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The representations of the Central Government Fishing Seamen's Association