

Agriculture, which has been existing for a long time, has been reconstituted with P.M. as its head

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Price of wheat in the open market

186. SHRIMATI SUSHILA SHANKAR
ADIVAREKAR :

SHRIMATI SUMITRA G. KUL-
KARNI :

SHRIMATI SARASWATI PRA-
DHAN :

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have decided to fix a ceiling on the price of wheat in the open market in view of the steeply rising prices ;

(b) if so, the details of the decision taken in this regard and the action taken to implement the decision ; and

(c) how far the prevailing prices are in accord with the decision and what is the machinery to enforce the price ceiling in the open market ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ANNASAHAB P. SHINDE) : (a) and (b) The Government of India promulgated the Wheat (Price Control) Order, 1974 on 5th June, 1974 fixing Rs. 150 per quintal as the maximum price of wheat for inter-State transactions in the States of Punjab, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh and the Union territory of Chandigarh.

The State Governments of Bihar, Karnataka and West Bengal and the Delhi Administration have already issued statutory Orders fixing the maximum wholesale and retail prices of wheat. The State Governments of Assam, Maharashtra, Orissa and Tamil Nadu are in the process of issuing Orders fixing maximum wholesale and retail prices of wheat. The Government of India have

advised all the State Governments/Administrations to exercise effective control and supervision over the open market prices of wheat.

(c) The prices of levy-free wheat exported from the surplus States are within the statutory ceiling of Rs. 150 per quintal. As regards the maximum prices fixed by the State Governments, the impact of the same is being closely watched. The State Governments concerned are enforcing the ceiling prices through the administrative machineries set up by them for the enforcement of various food control Orders.

Dismay over the recent hike in the price of vanaspati

187. SHRIMATI MAIMOONA SULTAN : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Vanaspati manufacturers expressed dismay over the recent hike in vanaspati prices and described it as arbitrary and not based on established principles ;

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto ,

(c) what were the precise demands of the manufacturers ; and

(d) the extent of increase in cost justified on account of increase in cost of vegetable oils and other raw-material and how much of it has been passed on to the consumer with the recent hike ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI B. P. MAURYA) :

(a) to (c) The vanaspati industry is not satisfied with the increase in vanaspati prices ranging from Rs. 1,800 to Rs. 2,000 per tonne at producer's level in the different zones, sanctioned by the Government on the 15th June, 1974 as it fell short of its expectation by about Rs. 500 per tonne. The industry has been pressing either for decontrol of the prices or for allowing the prices to fluctuate in step with the prices of

indigenous edible oils used in its manufacture, based on fortnightly reviews, in the interest of improving the production and augmenting the availability of supplies of the product. It has further pointed out that otherwise the production of vanaspati will fluctuate, rising or falling, according as the prevailing oil prices are lower or higher than the oil prices built into the vanaspati pricing formula.

After the last price increase, the total production of vanaspati in the country was 13,606 tonnes in the second fortnight of June, 1974 as against 4,027 tonnes in the first fortnight. It is hoped that this trend will be kept up and given a favourable monsoon and prospects of better production of oilseeds in the next year, the oil prices will fall leading to further improvement in vanaspati production and supplies.

(d) The incidence of the increase in vanaspati prices is wholly passed on to the consumer.

Fertilisers excess realisation fund

188. SHRI MAQSOOD ALI KHAN : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) the details of the Fertilisers Excess Realisation Fund set up by Government recently; and

(b) in what way it is likely to safeguard the general interest of the farmers ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE) : (a) and (b) The Central Fertiliser Pool which imports and distributes fertilisers is expected to operate on a no-profit no-loss basis. The sale prices of fertilisers therefore would have to be fixed in proportion to the import prices. The import cost of fertilisers have been rising very steeply over the last several months and it became necessary to revise the fertiliser prices upwards to prevent the Central Fertiliser Pool from incurring huge losses. The maximum retail

prices of imported and domestically produced Urea, Ammonium Sulphate and Calcium Ammonium Nitrate are statutorily fixed. If the prices of these fertilisers are fixed at levels at which the Pool will operate on a no-profit no-loss basis, and since there cannot be different prices for imported and domestically produced fertilisers the domestic manufacturers of these fertilisers will get huge profits, as these levels would be much above those which will ensure them reasonable profits. Therefore, while revising prices of fertilisers w.e.f. 1-6-1974 it was decided to mop up the surplus profits from the domestic manufacturers and credit them to the Government.

The amounts to be mopped up on the three fertilisers of which the maximum retail prices are statutorily controlled are given below.

| | Amount to be mopped up Rs./ tonne |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Urea | 610 |
| Ammonium Sulphate | 195 |
| Calcium Ammonium Nitrate | 295 |

The surplus profits mopped up in this manner will go to meet part of the import cost of fertilisers, the no-profit no-loss prices can be fixed at levels lower than what they would be if the surplus profits were not mopped up. This will be in the interest of the farmer.

Levies paid by Stevedors

189. DR. R. K. CHAKRAVARTI :
DR. V. A. SEYID MUHAMMAD :
SHRI SARDAR AMJAD ALI :
SHRI N. R. CHOUDHARY :

Will the Minister of SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that levies paid by the stevedors in different parts are not equal ;