

RAJYA SABHA

Wednesday, the 8th May, 1974/the 18th
Vaisakha, 1896 (Saka)

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

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

*297. [The questioner (Shri H. S. Narasiah) was absent. For answer, vide Cols 33-35 infra]

Monopoly procurement of wheat

*298. DR. Z. A. AHMAD :†

SHRI GURMUKH SINGH
MUSAFIR :

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI :

SHRI J. S. TILAK :

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR :

SHRI KRISHAN KANT :

SHRI V. B. RAJU :

SHRI KALJ MUKHERJEE :

SHRI T. V. ANANDAN :

SHRI SANAT KUMAR
RAHA :

DR. K. MATHEW KURIAN :

SHRI J. S. ANAND :

SHRI YOGENDRA SHARMA :

SHRI B. N. MANDAL :

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE
be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Central Government
have advised the State Governments to
give up monopoly procurement of
wheat; and

(b) if so, what are the reasons there-
for?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN
THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE
(SHRI ANNASAHAB P. SHINDE) : (a)
and (b) The psychology of shortage pre-
vailing in the country had unfortunately
encouraged hoarding at all levels. Non-

†The question was actually asked on
the floor of the House by Dr. Z. A.
Ahmad.

availability of wheat due to the fall in
market arrivals had also disturbed inter-
grain parity and accentuated price dis-
tortions between the surplus and deficit
States. In this context the policy had to
be revised to assure to the grower the
benefit of a good market price and
thereby encourage him to dispose of his
entire marketable surplus. By imposing
levy on the wholesalers and allowing
him to operate under a system of licens-
ing and control, the new policy also aims
at improving availability of wheat parti-
cularly in the deficit States and reducing
the wide variations in the prices of food-
grains in different parts of the country.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT : On a point
of order, Sir. The question is whether
the Central Government have advised
the State Governments to give up mono-
poly procurement of wheat.

SHRI K. CHANDRASEKHARAN :
That is the only thing which was not
answered.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Chandra-
sekharan, you don't want him to make
out the point.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT : The ques-
tion is very specific : Whether the Cen-
tral Government have advised the State
Governments to give up monopoly pro-
curement of wheat. And if so, what are
the reasons therefor? He has given reply
to part (b) and not to part (a). Our
charge is that the States of Punjab, Har-
yana and Uttar Pradesh did not want a
change but the Government of India
forced them to change. There is no reply
to that and he has got to reply . . .

SHRI ANNASAHAB P. SHINDE :
If the hon. Member reads between the
lines, it is said very clearly and, after
all, we consider the hon. Member as an
intelligent Member. . . (Interruption)

SHRI KRISHAN KANT : The diffi-
culty is, when the Government replies, I
thought they would be clear in their re-
ply and we need not read between the
lines.

SHRI ANNASAHAB P. SHINDE :
The meaning of what I said is this. And
I can appreciate the hon. Member may

not like the views expressed in this reply and that is a different matter. There may be different views on this. But the point is that the policy has been modified and that has been mentioned in the reply.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Minister, the question put to you is whether the Central Government has advised the State Governments to give up monopoly procurement of wheat . . . (*Interruption*) So, that is the question.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE : Sir, the policy decision about the take-over of whole sale wheat trade was taken last year. This year, wholesalers have been introduced. And it was not a Central Government decision as some hon. Member are trying to make out because we involved the Chief Ministers in our deliberations. It was a collective decision that was taken. And the decision which was taken has been incorporated in my reply. If any clarification is required, both myself and my senior colleague are available here and we are prepared to clarify anything. We do not want to conceal anything.

DR. Z. A. AHMAD : There is no question of concealing. The question is a very straight question and you have not got the courage to give reply to it. There is something up your sleeves which you do not want to give out. I want to know from you as to who took this decision. Was it the Central Government that took the decision and accordingly advised the State Governments not to pursue that policy and give it up? Or was it a broad-based committee consisting of the Central Government Ministers and the State Government Ministers which came to an understanding and a consensus? My question is this. You are avoiding that.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT : He cannot avoid it.

DR. Z. A. AHMAD : You have to clarify that. Sir, my main question is this. Is it a fact that when you met to consider the whole policy there were important Chief Ministers representing States from which bulk of wheat procurement is made, who were definitely

against the revealal of that policy, i.e., the earlier policy? They wanted the earlier policy to be continued. They wanted administration to be streamlined and more procurement at the new prices to be made, which they stated would be made and could be made. Is it a fact that you over-rode the opinion of these Chief Ministers from U. P., Haryana and Punjab?

AN HON. MEMBER : Assam also.

DR. Z. A. AHMAD : I am now talking of wheat only. Is it a fact that your Ministry, the Agricultural Minister, you and the Central Government over-rode the opinion, the clear opinion, expressed by those three States?

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED : Sir, I would like to make it very clear that there is no question of advising the State Governments. There is only the question whether a decision has been taken by the Central Government in consultation with the Chief Ministers of all the States concerned. This matter was thoroughly discussed in the Chief Ministers' Conference and the Chief Ministers consented to this proposal individually and after taking these facts into consideration, the decision was taken by the Government and it was communicated to the State Governments. Therefore, there is no question of some State Chief Ministers differing from the policy which has been enunciated by the Government in consultation with them.

श्री राजनारायण : मेरा एक व्यवस्था का सवाल है। मेरा व्यवस्था का सवाल यह है जैसा कि श्री कृष्णकान्त जी ने कहा कि राज्य सरकार को गेहूँ की एकाधिकारी वसूली को समाप्त करने की सलाह क्या केन्द्र की सरकार ने दी है। केन्द्र की सरकार कहती है कि . . .

डा० जेड० ए० अहमद : यह प्वाइंट आफ आर्डर कैसे आ गया ?

श्री ओउम् प्रकाश त्यागी : क्वेश्चन आवर में प्वाइंट आफ आर्डर ?

MR. CHAIRMAN : There is no point of order, Mr. Rajnarin.

श्री राजनारायण : मेरा प्वाइंट यह है कि कृष्णकान्त जी के प्वाइंट आफ ऑर्डर पर कि जब यह सरकार जो आज व्यवस्था है उसी व्यवस्था को एकाधिकारी बसूली की व्यवस्था कहती है तो उसको क्या ...

MR. CHAIRMAN : This is not a point of order. I over-rule your point of order.

श्री राजनारायण : श्रीमन्, मेरा सवाल यह है कि ...

MR. CHAIRMAN : This is no point of order.

DR. Z. A. AHMAD : I want to know from the hon. Food Minister as to what are the advantages that have accrued to the Indian people and the Indian Government as a result of the reversal of the old policy. I want to have a specific answer as to what are the advantages in terms of procurement, i.e., the quantity procured or the quantity which you will be able to procure in future and in terms of prices. My submission is that no advantages have accrued to you. Neither will you be able to procure more wheat and at the same time prices will go on rising and will become uncontrollable. I would like you to specify in concrete terms as to what are the advantages that have accrued to you as a result of the reversal of the said policy.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE : Sir, it will be too early to pass judgment on any scheme which has started operating just now. In fact, in a number of areas the scheme has not even started operating as yet.

AN HON. MEMBER : You can tell us the position about those areas where it has started operating.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE : Now, the main reason why this was done is because distortions had developed in the country in the price structure of foodgrains. Now, the hon. Member wants to make a point that as a result of the reversal of the policy, the price of wheat has gone up. But, if the

hon. Member looks into the price structure of various grains, he will find that prices of not only wheat but of other grains are also going up. In fact, there has been the steepest rise in the case of many grains during the last three months. In the case of wheat, the main reason for rise in prices was that — as it was the desire of this House that procurement price should be raised — prices were raised and farmers were given remunerative prices. Last year the procurement price was Rs. 76 per quintal. This year, it has been raised to Rs. 105 per quintal. Again, last year we were having a substantial element of subsidy in the issue price of wheat. We were procuring it at Rs. 76 per quintal and issuing at Rs. 78 per quintal.

DR. Z. A. AHMAD : I have asked a very specific question

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE : This is a very important matter. I would like to explain it by taking two minutes. I will not take more than two minutes. The issue prices have been raised to Rs. 125 as against Rs. 88.90. Because of that also, the level of prices has gone up and this should not be attributed only to the scheme that because of this scheme only, the prices have gone up. If I can say so, I have specific figures to show how the prices in deficit States have come down as a result of the scheme. In fact, if I can inform the honourable House, the prices, for instance, from 15th April, have come down in Bihar, by Rs. 27/- per quintal. In Gujarat, the prices have come down by Rs. 5/- in Maharashtra, the prices have come down by Rs. 11/- and in some parts of U. P., the prices have come down by Rs. 2 to Rs. 38/- per quintal. This is actually in some deficit pockets where the prices have come down.

DR. Z. A. AHMAD : It happens at every harvesting time.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE : Naturally. Now the scheme has just started. I am not passing a judgement. We will watch the situation. Naturally

it is a very vast country and the management of food economy is not so simple. If any problems come up, we shall take appropriate steps. The Government of India is constantly reviewing the position.

श्री गुरुमुख सिंह मुसाफिर : कायदे के मुताबिक एक ही सवाल पूछने की इजाजत है ।

श्री सभापति : जी, क्योंकि बहुत से मੈम्बर हैं, जो सवाल पूछना चाहते हैं ।

गुरुमुख सिंह मुसाफिर : सवाल बड़ा अहम है । एक तरफ सारा हिन्दुस्तान और दूसरी तरफ हमारा प्राविंस । सवाल अहम इसलिये भी है क्योंकि पंजाब में गेहूं की ज्यादा चर्चा है । मैं संबद्ध मंत्रालय से पूछना चाहता हूं कि क्या आपको इस बात की जानकारी है कि सरकार की मौजूदा पालिसी के तबादले की वजह से गेहूं मंडियों में आना बिल्कुल ही बन्द हो गया है, बल्कि न के बराबर है जबकि हार्वेस्टिंग खत्म हो चुका है । क्या सरकार इस मौके पर भी कोई सख्त कदम उठा सकती है जिससे कि अन्न संकट के जो इलाके हैं उनमें अनाज पहुंचाया जा सके, उस समय जबकि मंडियों में गेहूं आ नहीं रहा ।

मैंने अर्ज किया कि पंजाब के मृतालिक मंत्रालय ने कई दफा इस बात का इकरार किया है और माना है इस बात को कि वह सारे देश को अनाज गुहैया करती रही है, हतुलबस्ता, जहां उससे हो सका है ।

अब क्या सरकार इस बात को सोच सकती है कि पंजाब के मुख्य मंत्रों के बयान के मुतालिक चर्चा हो चुकी है और पंजाब ने गवर्नमेंट आफ इंडिया से मांग की है कि न उनकी अपनी ज़रूरत पूरी करने के लिये 6 लाख टन गेहूं मुहैया किया जाए तो क्या सरकार इस पर गौर कर सकती है कि वह अपने कोटे में दे या उनको इजाजत दी जाए कि मिनिमम रेट पर 6 लाख टन अपनी ज़रूरत पूरी करने के लिये खरीद सके ? इन दोनों बातों का आप उत्तर दीजिए ?

SHRI ANNASAHAB P. SHINDE : Sir, as far as the market arrivals are concerned, I would like to submit humbly to the hon. Members that market arrivals of wheat differ from year to year for various reasons and, therefore, no conclusion should be drawn. For instance, I have figures for 1971-72 which was a little above the average year in the country. The total market arrivals have been 64,000 tons of wheat while this year it is 61,000 tons. I have given figures of the month of April because May figures have not been compiled. When the food situation was very comfortable in the country, it was only 64000 tons in the month of April as against 61000 tons this month. And I find, for instance, in 1972-73 as against 1973-74 there was a difference of 1 : 3. Market arrivals were three times higher than in 1972-73. The pattern of market arrivals is not the same. This year particularly the Punjab crop was delayed by twenty days because of mild winter and ripening took some time. This is the assessment of the State Government which I am giving to the House. Of course, we have been watching the situation of market arrivals and whatever action is desirable, it will be taken.

Then about State reserves, of course, the needs of the Punjab Government are the concern of the Government of India. After all, the Punjab people are the brethren of the people of the rest of the country. So they are our concern too and we will help them. But if this basic concept of State reserves comes in the food economy, I think it will be a tragedy for this country because if every State thinks in terms of State reserves, then there won't be an all-India food economy. So I appeal to the Punjab Government, whatever reasonable requirements they have, it will be our best endeavour to meet them, because Punjab is making the greatest contribution to the food economy of this country. Their reasonable requirements will receive the highest attention of the Government of India. Therefore, the Punjab Government should not think in terms of State reserves. We will have it in the Central pool and we will try to help the Punjab Government to the maximum

extent possible. There should be no difficulty on this account. I hope no controversies are raised publicly or otherwise. We will take adequate care for Punjab's requirements.

श्री गुरुमुख सिंह मुसाफिर : मैं एक सवाल का स्पष्ट जवाब चाहता था . . .

श्री सभापति : आप कृपा करें; आपने 2 सवालों में ही काफी टाइम ले लिया ।

SHRI KALI MUKHERJEE : The Government, in all its policies and implementation, is not normally consistent. But here is a wonderful case in this Ministry where the Government is very consistent and that is in the matter of bungling the food policy throughout the period . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN : Kindly put your question. There are a number of other honourable Members who want to put questions.

SHRI KALI MUKHERJEE : Bungling is such a wonderful case where they follow consistency. One such step is not to purchase food and wheat during the period when China and Russia bought from the United States at 50 dollars a ton. They are now rushing to the United States, oiling them by offering 450 dollars a ton. And yet the United States is not willing to look at us. This is number one bungling. . .

MR. CHAIRMAN : Kindly put your question.

SHRI KALI MUKHERJEE : . . . creating crisis and shortage of food and what not . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Kali Mukherjee, this is not a debate. You must confine yourself to the question.

SHRI KALI MUKHERJEE : I am just giving the background, Sir.

Now the Government of India decided on monopoly purchase. I would like to know whether it is a fact that the Government decided to make monopoly purchase of food. Then, another consistency with bungling is surrender to the hoar-

ders, profiteers and private traders and to allow them to play havoc in the country. And then they again have withdrawn their earlier policy of monopoly purchase and allowed the hoarders, profiteers, etc. to play havoc. . .

MR. CHAIRMAN : I cannot allow you like this. Kindly put your question straightway.

SHRI KALI MUKHERJEE : Will the honourable Minister agree with me on what I have said and will he explain why he did not buy in time, why he has withdrawn the decision and why there is a reversal of the policy and why this surrender creating such a chaos?

MR. CHAIRMAN : You are only repeating your points.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE : The honourable Member is highly emotional. He is a very respected colleague of ours. I would like to say and I am sure he would agree with me that management of food economy in this country is not an easy job. I must concede that point. If anybody thinks it is a very easy job, then he is only trying to make it appear more than simple. I would only like to say, Sir, and through you I submit to the House that the other day we were consulting our experts and we found that because of population increase alone our food requirements annually go up by 25 lakh tons. It would almost involve Rs. 400 to Rs. 500 crores of foreign exchange at the highest level of international prices. So it is not correct to say what the honourable Member has said. The honourable Member has referred to purchases from international market. He has referred to the figure of 450 dollars or so a ton. Our purchases last year were somewhere between 110 dollars and 120 dollars a ton. In one case there was a slightly higher price and that was because of the prices prevailing in the international market being slightly higher. Therefore, the figure he has mentioned is totally incorrect. As I said. . .

SHRI KALI MUKHERJEE : What is the price you are offering now? What is the figure now? At least tell us that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Kali Mukherjee, kindly sit down. Do not interrupt the answer.

SHRI KALI MUKHERJEE: Sir, the nation is paying through its nose for the wrong policies of the Government.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: Again, Sir, I would like to seek your indulgence only for a minute...

MR. CHAIRMAN: No indulgence from me. You go on.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: The hon. Member is very unfair in making remarks which are not consistent with facts. First of all, our purchases were at a much lower price ranging from 110 dollars to 90 dollars, although in the case of one or two consignments higher prices were paid. I would like to plead with hon. Members not to press on the prices of recent purchases, but I would like to mention that recently there has been a very sharp downward trend in international prices. Actually prices had touched 251 dollars at the peak level, but during the last six week prices have come down. They have come down to 145 dollars a tonne. Because of good prospects in other countries perhaps prices are expected to come down still further.

SHRI V. B. RAJU: While the nationalisation of the wholesale trade in wheat was being considered and decided, it was said that the scheme of takeover of the wholesale trade was designed, by and large, to operate the marketed surplus. This is the statement that was made. A quantity of 4.5 million tonnes was procured in 1973-74 and the contribution of Punjab and Haryana was 80 per cent. Next comes U.P. Has there been a real failure in procurement? If there has been any failure in procurement, it was not because of the type or pattern of the agency. It was because of the Government not agreeing to an enhanced procurement price. Now, Sir, from Rs. 76 to Rs. 105, there is such a jump. In spite of the fact that the Agricultural Prices Commission having fixed Rs. 95/-, the Government is so generous to give

them Rs. 105/-. Very good. What was the need to change the agency for procurement from the State to private trade? Arguments have not been advanced and nothing has been said. We want to know what were the considerations that prevailed with the Government or that compelled the Government to take the decision. Where the Punjab and Haryana Governments consulted in this matter, as they are actually contributing 80 per cent of the procurement?

श्री वीरेन्द्र कुमार सखलेचा : श्रीमन्, मेरा एक प्वाइन्ट आफ आर्डर है।

श्री सभापति : क्वेश्चन अवर में प्वाइन्ट आफ आर्डर नहीं कर सकते हैं।

श्री विरेन्द्र कुमार सखलेचा : मेरा निवेदन यह है कि चूंकि यह क्वेश्चन बहुत वाइड है और इस पर हम सवाल पूछते चले जाएंगे तो क्वेश्चन अवर का समय चला जायेगा। इसलिए मैं चाहता हूं कि इस पर अलग से डिसकशन हो जाय तो उचित होगा, क्योंकि इसका सम्बन्ध सारे देश की जनता से है।

श्री सभापति : इस समय क्वेश्चन को चलने दो।

श्री कृष्ण कान्त : क्वेश्चन को चलने दीजिए डिसकशन भी होगा और क्वेश्चन भी होगा।

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: The main reason why the policy modification has been made is this. One point has been made and I would repeat it for the information of the hon. Member that distortions in the price structure were developing in a part of the country. For instance, wheat prices in certain parts of the country were ruling between Rs. 110 and Rs. 112, while in other parts of the country the prices were between Rs. 250 and Rs. 300. Actually what happened in Gujarat? There were many factors, but food was a very important factor which led to a number of complications. So, we had to take into consideration what was happening in the country. We should not take into consideration only what

was happening in surplus States. So, there were many factors which were taken into consideration. Price distortion developed. Epicentres of price rise were developing in some areas. Law and order problems were coming up as food is a very sensitive item. Therefore, Government, while making an assessment of the pros and cons, came to the conclusion that some policy modification was desirable in the present context of a very difficult international situation.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: Whether the reasons advanced are convincing or not, actually in the reply to the main question he has stated that the policy has been evolved to meet the needs of the deficit States, particularly of the vulnerable sections of the society. Apart from the apprehensions expressed by you and also your senior colleague, tell us the facts whether this policy is to help the deficit States, whether the surplus States like Punjab, Haryana and U.P. have allowed these grains which have been procured either through the Food Corporation or through the wholesalers, whoever it might be, to move out of their States to reach the deficit States. If it is a fact, how much was moved last year, in percentage? And if not, may I know whether the Central Government has abdicated its power in favour of the Chief Ministers to help their own traders and farmers?

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE : My senior colleague had discussed with the Chief Ministers of Haryana and Punjab the entire position. He asked me also to go to Chandigarh and discuss this matter and we have thrashed this out, and both the Governments have promised to issue liberal permits so that the deficit areas are fed. At the beginning, there were some difficulties because when any new scheme comes into force, it takes some time to operate in the field. Now, it would be implemented particularly in Haryana and Punjab. In marginally surplus States, we will naturally have to be more careful.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: I have raised a question which you also heard, Sir. The way in which the Minister is

replying all along is in a *gulmal* manner. If he wants to avoid the question, he can avoid it, and the other party colleagues also might help him. I want to know whether the deficit States should starve or should create riots or a revolution as against the surplus States. What is the policy of the Government of India, whether you are going to discipline the Chief Ministers and the traders in those States. That was my specific question. I also asked what is the quantity moved or whether States like Maharashtra should starve because of the policy of the Governments of those States, please be specified.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Kulkarni, do not shout at the Minister.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: I am not shouting at the Minister, I am shouting at the policy.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: I would like to say that whatever is produced in any part of the country, whether it is Punjab or Haryana or Tamil Nadu or Andhra, it belongs to the country and we have to reconcile the interests of the surplus and the deficit States.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: That may be your view.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: That is precisely the view of the Central Government. We are not prepared to abdicate our responsibility in this matter. Though this is a very wild charge...

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: No wild charge, it is quite a fact.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: ... one thing I concede that the movement has been on the low side, very little quantity has moved. Now, up to the 7th May, only about one thousand tonnes have moved. Now, progressively every day, I think the foodgrains would be moving on quite large scale.

SHRI J. S. TILAK: Because of the new wheat policy, my own fear is that the bulk dealers and traders will acquire a commanding position. To avoid this at least, has Government put any limit

on the traders about the procurement price and the quantum of grains to be held by them? What will be the optimum quantity of wheat a dealer could purchase from the State?

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: The specific quantities have been laid down in the Food Control Orders under the Essential Commodities Act. Now, in the surplus States, the maximum quantity for a wholesaler is 2500 quintals 250 tonnes. In the deficit States, the limit is 1000 quintals, that means, 100 tonnes.

SHRI J. S. TILAK: What about the procurement price?

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: The price naturally would operate in the market and some market mechanism is expected to operate, though we would like them not to compete in such a way as the price would rise very much. But there are various orders. They have to report their purchase, to declare their stocks, to seek permits, and to report to which States they have moved. A number of orders have been passed so that we are in a position to know what is happening.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT: Three reasons he gave — psychology of shortage, huge quantity of arrivals and good market prices. He said that was the basis. And last year the procurement did not take place very much. I would request the Chairman to bear with me. The All India Foodgrain Traders' Association in their letter claimed that the Government has succumbed to what they have said and that the whole policy is based on that. Whatever the Government may say, they have claimed like that and the people feel that you have succumbed to what they have said. When they talked with you, what was the estimate of procurement this year? Last year it was 4.5 million tonnes. Could you give the estimate of procurement that you have been given under the new policy? Are you satisfied with the behaviour of the traders as they are doing it now? Sir, was...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr Krishan Kant there are more than seven or eight Members who have to put question.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT: But it is a very important question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But you cannot monopolise.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT: I think later on also we will have a short duration discussion. The point raised by me was as to what was the total quantity of procurement you estimated because you say that the traders have some liability to procure and the traders say that the Government has all the liability to procure. The question is what was your estimate. Are you going to procure 2.5 million tonnes during this year? That is what I want to know...

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is enough.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT: No, Sir. This is not enough.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You can put only one question.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT: I want to know whether in view of the rising prices you will be able to keep the distribution system which you established last year. With the present policy are you going to reduce it? Mr. Ganesh said, when I asked this question, that he did not know but they wanted to keep the present distribution system and that it will not be restricted...

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, Mr. Krishan Kant.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT: Kindly bear with me.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. There are other Members who have also got a right to put supplementaries. You monopolise.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT: Today I have received a letter from an old Congressman from Abohar in the Ferozepur district. He says that if you do not give wheat at the market price,

then they must loot the godowns in the broad day light...

MR. CHAIRMAN: If you do not stop I will pass on to the next Member. You cannot take fifteen minutes over a question.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT: I am asking. May I know how the public distribution system is going to function? It is a very important question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Whatever may be the question. This is Question Hour and not a debate.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT: I am putting the question. May I know whether the distribution system is going to be maintained, whether the nexus of traders and farmers which was broken last year why are you forcing it upon Punjab encouraging black-market in this country for which you will be responsible?

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: The last part of the question has been replied by my senior colleague. The question is whether any State Government has been forced to adopt a policy...

SHRI KRISHAN KANT: Shall we put up the papers here and show that you have forced Punjab...

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: I would ask the hon'ble Member to be less emotional. Though he has a very strong point I would appeal him...

SHRI KRISHAN KANT: Punjab is most important.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: As far as the public distribution system is concerned the Government is very clear that we will have to shoulder the public distribution system and particularly concentrate on big cities, urban areas and other vulnerable sections of the society. Sir, the impression that the scheme has been evolved on the advice of some organisation of trading community is totally unfounded. Actually they did represent, they did argue, and they did meet the various representatives of the Government. But the argument that the Government evolved their policy on the basis of their advice is wrong.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: You have swallowed the hook, line and the sinker.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sit down.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: The entire effort is to introduce the element of market mechanism into this. As has been mentioned by my senior colleague on the basis of past experience that if some sections of the society misbehave nothing will prevent the Government from taking its own decision on the merits of the case.

SHRI NIREN GHOSH: You are surrendering to the monopolist.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT: He has not replied any question I asked. My question was what was the assessment of procurement when you changed this policy. He has not replied this question. He has not given reply to my question on distribution system. Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed in his press conference said that it will be restricted. Now, Mr. Ganesh said that it will not be restricted. The reply of Mr. Shinde is *golmal*. The point is whether it would be restricted or not, whether the distribution system that was there till last year would be maintained or not. All this is not yet clear. What is the present policy?

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: By and large, we have been distributing about 10 million tonnes. During drought years large quantities were distributed, 11 or 12 million tonnes. I think by now we have procured about 4 million tonnes of kharif grains. I think the level of public distribution — I am not saying with any arithmetical precision — by and large, would be of the same level. As far as targets are concerned we have not specifically set the targets because we could not anticipate market arrivals. So specific targets have not been worked out.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I asked whether Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed said that the distribution system will be restricted. Let him clarify the position because this has created confusion in the country.

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: I do not know what the hon.

Member is driving at. What I said was, on account of more availability of foodgrains during this year, if the States expect that the distribution will be kept at the same level, they are under a wrong impression. When foodgrains availability is more in the country, then so far as distribution from the public distribution system is concerned, it will have to be reduced to a certain extent. It will vary from month to month, from year to year.

श्री श्यामलाल यादव : श्रीमन्, उत्तर प्रदेश में 8 शहरों को छोड़कर तमाम शहरों में गेहूँ नहीं मिल रहा है

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please sit down.

श्री राजनारायण : श्रीमन्, मेरा निवेदन है . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: I do not want interruptions like this.

श्री राजनारायण : मेरा निवेदन यह है कि आप यह देख रहे कि मंत्री जी टालमटोल का उत्तर दे रहे हैं । तो आप कृपा करके यह कह सकते हैं संसदीय प्रथा में कि इसका उत्तर स्पष्ट नहीं आ रहा है . . .

(Interruptions)

श्री सभापति : मैंने यह बात सुन ली है ।

SHRI T. V. ANANDAN: May I know from the Government whether it is because of the pressure brought upon the Government by the capitalists in the country, after an experience of one year in food trade, that they had to revise their policy?

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: Sir, this presumption of the hon. Member is totally unfounded and it is not correct.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Raha.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Sir, he said the presumption on the part of the hon. Member is not correct. I say, take it to the Privileges Committee. We shall prove it is correct.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please sit down.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: You accept anything he says?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I am not here to accept or not to accept. I am here to control the proceedings.

SHRI NIREN GHOSH: He has not given any intelligible reply.

SHRI SANAT KUMAR RAHA: Sir, when the wholesale trade in wheat was taken over, there was criticism in this House that the procurement policy was pro-hoarder. The policy of procurement was on the basis of marketed surplus instead of marketable surplus. So market arrivals were shy and discouraging. In these circumstances, may I ask the hon. Minister whether the half-hearted policy of take-over of wholesale trade in wheat failed due to the faulty policy of procurement on the basis of marketed surplus? Is it not a fact that the Government had no policy of monopoly procurement of wheat when the take-over policy was adopted?

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: Sir, again I would say, I do not know what is in the mind of the hon. Member. But when the take-over decision was taken, we certainly tried to implement it. A number of distortions which I mentioned earlier appeared on the food front. It became a smugglers' paradise and a number of things were happening. Hoarding at all levels was taking place.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: What is the headquarters of that paradise, if not the Krishi Bhavan? The Krishi Bhavan is the headquarters of that paradise.

SHRI NIREN GHOSH: The Government of India as a whole is the headquarter.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: That is all right, you can have your own views. Naturally on the basis of our experience, we thought that there was some need and basis for modifying the policy. Therefore, this policy was modified. The main purpose is to make better availability of foodgrains in the country, that is, whatever is produced in surplus States is enabled to reach the

deficit States through the public sector channels as well as private channels.

SHRI SANAT KUMAR RAHA: My question was whether it was a monopoly procurement policy of the Government.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: Again it raises the original question. There I did not say monopoly procurement. Last year's procurement was not monopoly procurement. It was take-over of wholesale trade. Retailers, etc. were allowed freedom. Had I replied to the original question that it was not monopoly procurement, it would have raised some other issues. That is why I did not say that. I think the reply which was given to the original question meets your point.

DR. K. MATHEW KURIAN: It is clear that the Government has completely surrendered to the landlords' and traders' lobby. I would like to know whether it is not a fact that there is some secret deal between the Government and the wholesale traders that while the traders are expected to supply 50 per cent of the marketed foodgrains to the Government at the stipulated procurement price, they are allowed under the new policy to charge up to Rs. 150 per quintal? But in the market they are selling at a much higher price, which means the Government has legalised the black market prices. The Government is, therefore, on the one hand, trying to get a meagre surplus out of the marketed arrivals and at the same time is fleecing the people. Is this not the real content of your policy?

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: The repeated reference to surrender to traders, capitalists...

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: That is his language. Don't bother about it.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: ...all these things. I would like to submit, actually I do not know because my own assessment is, after all, wheat production is 25 million tons out of a total 100 million tons. And if foodgrains are to be taken over, I think, they have to be taken over as a whole, because, otherwise, it creates a number

of distortions. (*Interruptions*) But take over of all foodgrains is not an easy task. Bajra is being sold in the open market or maize is being sold in the open market or rice is being sold in the open market, or pulses are being sold in the open market, if this interpretation is being put that it amounts to surrender, I think it is totally unfounded, it is a politically motivated charge. As far the point about prices being exorbitant anywhere, if it is brought to our notice, we will not fail to take necessary action.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Anand.

श्री राजनारायण: श्रीमन, मैं आप के सम्मुख

श्री सभापति: मुझे एक नवाल तो खत्म करने दीजिए ।

श्री राजनारायण : मैं प्रक्रिया तथा कार्य संचालन के नियम 47 को आपके सामने रख रहा हूँ जिस में है प्रश्नों की ग्राह्यता की शर्तें । प्रश्न कैसे ग्राह्य किये जायेंगे । उस में है कि उस में नीति संबंधी ऐसे प्रश्न नहीं उठाए जाएंगे जो इतने विस्तीर्ण हों कि प्रश्न के उत्तर की सीमा के भीतर न आ सकें । उसमें (14) है कि उसमें ऐसे प्रश्नों की शरतः पुनरुक्ति नहीं होगी जिन के उत्तर पहले दिये जा चुके हों या जिन का उत्तर देना अस्वीकार कर दिया गया हो । उसमें नगण्य विषयों पर जानकारी नहीं मांगी जायगी । मैं आपसे यह निवेदन करना चाहता हूँ कि इन नियमों के रहते हुए आप किम अधिकार सीमा से ऐसे प्रश्नों को पूछने की इजाजत दे रहे हैं । 14 सदस्यों का नाम एक ही प्रश्न पर है और बार बार नीति संबंधी प्रश्न पूछे जा रहे हैं और मंत्री जी बार बार एक ही उत्तर दे रहे हैं । इस प्रकार पुनरावृत्ति हो रही है और सदन के समय का नष्टीकरण हो रहा है । कृना कर आप इस को रोकें ।

श्री सभापति : मैंने आप को नहीं पुकारा इसीलिये आप यह क्वेश्चन इस प्रकार उठा रहे हैं । This is no point of order.

श्री राजनारायण : तो यह क्या है ?

श्री सभापति : आप बीच में पड़ना चाहते हैं। यह प्वाइंट आफ आर्डर नहीं है। मिस्टर आनन्द।

श्री राजनारायण : यह प्रक्रिया नियमावली का 47 है।

MR. CHAIRMAN : I overrule you. I have called Mr. Anand.

श्री राजनारायण : उन्होंने अभी सवाल नहीं किया है। मैं उनके उत्तर में नहीं कह रहा हूँ। मैं तो नियमावली के 47 को कोट कर रहा हूँ। आप उसको तुड़वा रहे हैं।

श्री सभापति : मैं उसे नहीं तुड़वा रहा हूँ आप गलत कह रहे हैं। मिस्टर आनन्द।

SHRI J. S. ANAND : Does the honourable Minister know that after the announcement of the new wheat policy, wheat and atta prices in Punjab have gone up by 70 per cent in the open market, and in the biggest surplus district of Bhatinda out of nine *mandis* in seven not a grain was received till the end of April while in the other two only one-tenth was received last year? Does he know there is a day-to-day collusion between blackmarketeers and traders and peasants and traders take advance money to peasants telling them not to bring the grains to the market? Is it not a fact that even two quintals of wheat is not available to the people living in these places?

MR. CHAIRMAN : You have put your question. Please sit down.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE : Market arrivals in Punjab are progressively increasing now...

SHRI J. S. ANAND : I had asked about the biggest district of Bhatinda...

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please let him complete the answer.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE : As regards price rise the honourable Member has to appreciate that we ourselves raised the issue price of wheat to Rs. 125 to the State Government. Naturally the selling price by the State Governments to somewhere between Rs. 130 and 135...

SHRI J. S. ANAND : Rupees 175. And you want to take Punjab to the Gujarat level.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE : All over the country because of rise in issue prices — surplus States having different prices — there are some marginal increases in prices.

SHRI J. S. ANAND : Marginal? Is it not the result of your disastrous policy? Do you want to take the Punjab crisis to Gujarat level?

श्री भैरो सिंह शैखावत : अध्यक्ष जी, मेरा एक इम्पोर्टेंट क्वेश्चन है ...

श्री सभापति : अगर नोटिस होगा तो हम कंसिडर करेंगे।

SHRI KRISHAN KANT : You have admitted our Motion. The question is one of giving time.

Recognition of Languages by the Sahitya Akademi

*299. **SHRIMATI SARASWATI PRADHAN† :**

SHRI ROSHAN LAL :

SHRI K. B. CHETTRI :

SHRI NABIN CHANDRA BURAGOHAIN :

DR. R. K. CHAKRABARTI :

Will the Minister of EDUCATION, SOCIAL WELFARE AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the languages which are proposed to be accorded recognition by the Sahitya Akademi in the near future; and

(b) what are the criteria followed by the Akademi for according recognition to Indian languages?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WELFARE AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE (SHRI D. P. YADAV) : (a) Recognition has been claimed for Bhojpuri, Nepali,

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shrimati Saraswati Pradhan.