

10th December 1952 have been received by me.

REPORT OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSES ON THE HINDU MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE BILL, 1952.

DR. P. V. KANE (Nominated): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I beg to present the Report of the Joint Committee of the Houses on the Bill to amend and codify the law relating to marriage and divorce among Hindus.

RESOLUTION RE. ORGANISATION FOR FIXING PRICES OF AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES

SHRI KISHEN CHAND (Hyderabad): Mr. Chairman, I beg to move the following Resolution:—

"This House is of opinion that Government should set up an organisation charged with the duty of so fixing the prices of important agricultural commodities as would ensure to the agriculturist an adequate return and also bear a fair relation to the prices of manufactured goods."

Sir, yesterday we mourned the death of Shri Rafi Ahmad Kidwai who was Minister for Food and Agriculture in the Central Government. We have passed through acute food shortages in the country and it was through his foresight and efforts to increase our agricultural production that we have attained self-sufficiency, and now we are going to pass through the stage of food surpluses. The problem of food surpluses is going to be equally, if not more, difficult than that of food shortages and I am sorry that Mr. Kidwai is not here to solve that equally difficult problem. I welcome his successor, Mr. A. P. Jain, and hope that he will solve this problem with vision and relieve the sufferings of the agricultural masses of this country. Sir, the question of food surpluses, though very small at pre-

sent, may in times to come become a very large problem. Our aim is a Welfare State. We want to improve the lot of the common man in this country and yet our Government is doing absolutely nothing for improving the lot of the agricultural masses who form at least eighty per cent. of the population of this country. Many hon. Members may be thinking that it is a very good thing if the prices of foodgrains come down; we will get cheap foodgrains and the common man will be very happy about it; they may think that in this matter the policy of *laissez-faire* should be adopted and that on the basis of supply and demand the prices will adjust themselves to the satisfaction of everybody. Sir, this is not the case. In the matter of food production and food prices, almost all economists are agreed that the theory of supply and demand does not apply *in toto*. It is a matter of common knowledge that if there is a shortage of even five per cent. in foodgrains, the prices go up by thirty or forty per cent. Likewise, if there is over-production of foodgrains by even five per cent., the prices of foodgrains will come down by at least twenty-five or thirty per cent. You know, Sir, that only a year or two back rice was selling outside the control market at the rate of one and one-fourth seers per rupee. I speak only of prices in Hyderabad, because in a vast country like ours prices vary from place to place, and so if the figures given by me are different from the figures prevailing in other provinces, it is due to the fact that our country is so vast; the price of rice in Hyderabad is three seers per rupee. That means that there has been a variation of nearly 300 per cent in the price. Likewise, in the price of wheat and edible oils, the variation in the last two years has been tremendous. As I said, economists have studied this problem very carefully especially in America where the Government has fixed the parity prices for all agricultural commodities. The Government of the U.S.A. has guaranteed a parity price for the farmer. If the price goes down below that parity