

there are some other universities for which the States are pressing. Does the UGC conduct a survey of the entire country and feel for the areas which are neglected and backward, which are hilly and far beyond the touch of a university? Why should our universities be an ivory tower and the UGC a point at that ivory tower, so that it does not touch any thing and it does not have a dynamic outlook? I would like the UGC to take the initiative in the matter and try to determine things for itself. These things can be discussed with the State Governments and other people who are responsible for running the universities. At present, we are suffering from a sense of delay, a sense of deferred priorities, a sense of postponement. The Central Pay Commission has submitted its report and the Government has considered it. A large number of Central Government employees are going to get a bigger pay packet from 1st December. But our Government has not been able to take a decision on the recommendations of the Sen Committee. In answer to Starred Question 116 today—it was not taken up due to lack of time—the Minister has said that the report has been received and it is being considered. So, how long precisely is the consideration? Is it longer than that the Government took for considering the report of the Central Pay Commission? Are teachers so unimportant that they can be given this stock reply that the report of the experts committee appointed to consider their pay scales is still being considered. We want a quick decision to be taken on this report.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He may continue his speech the next day.

17.31 hrs.

HALF-AN-HOUR DISCUSSION
QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF RICE
SUPPLIED TO KERALA

MR. CHAIRMAN: We will now take up the half an hour discussion.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI (Chirayinkil): Sir, may I make a submission? My name could not come in the ballot and I have been left out. Since some of the hon. Members who have given their name may be absent, you may kindly give me a chance to ask a question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We will see.

SHRI C. K. CHANDRAPPA (Tellicherry): Sir, I am raising this half an hour discussion due to two reasons. First of all, the answer given to Unstarred Question No. 88 contained information which was not fully correct and in fact some of the statements made were obviously wrong. This is the reason why I am raising this half an hour discussion.

During the last session of Parliament the question of the food situation in Kerala was brought in this House, again by way of a half an hour discussion, and then the Minister promised that the Government are doing their best to save Kerala from a food crisis. But if you go through the statement made by the Minister, it is clear that the total quantity of rice and wheat supplied to Kerala at no time did exceed 85,000 tonnes. In October it was 45,000 tonnes of rice and 30,000 tonnes of wheat making a total of 75,000 tonnes.

Normally after the harvest in Kerala the rice price comes down. It should be noted that this year the price in the open market has not come down appreciably even after the harvest. The price in the open market is still Rs. 3 to 3.50 per kilo while in the neighbouring State of Tamilnadu it is Re. 1 to 1.50. Why is it so? It is precisely because the Centre failed miserably to keep up its promise in regard to the supply of the food requirements of Kerala after the food zone was abolished. In this context, I would like to quote what the Chief Minister of Kerala had said in an official publication "Three

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years in office", because it is often commented in a very vague way. The Chief Minister said:

"The difficult condition that we are going through in Kerala as regards food are due mainly to non-fulfilment of the commitments by the Central Government which was made at the time of introduction of rationing system in Kerala as far back as in 1965. They are committed to supply 75,000 tonnes of rice per month and an equal quantity of wheat so as to enable to distribute the ration of 160 grams of rice and 160 grams of wheat to each adult in that State."

The hon. Minister last time also tried to evade this fact. The commitment was for 75,000 tonnes of rice and 75,000 tonnes of wheat. But if you go through the supply to Kerala during the last one year, during every month it was 77,000 tonnes, 67,000 tonnes or 65,000 tonnes. The maximum was 85,000 tonnes. Last month it was 75,000 tonnes and this month it is only 73,000 tonnes.

7.35 hrs.

[SHRI N. K. P. SALVE in the Chair.]

The latest situation will be 73,000 tonnes of foodgrains to Kerala. Kerala will not get even 73,000 tonnes because there are certain book adjustments to be made. There are rice and wheat advances by the Food Corporation of India which will be adjusted. As against 53,000 tonnes of rice which is offered, nearly 27,000 tonnes will be adjusted against the F.C.I. advance. 20,000 tonnes of wheat is offered to Kerala during this month out of which again 14,000 tonnes will be adjusted. That means, in actual fact, this month, we will get 46,000 tonnes of foodgrains.

I know, our Food Minister was here and he pleaded with the hon. Minister and the hon. Minister finally had gracefully agreed to some small adjustment. But what I am trying to say is that the situation with regard

to food in Kerala will be a little worse than what was last month. In place of 75,000 tonnes which we got last month, this month we will get 73,000 tonnes. This is the situation.

Now, coming to another point, the second part of the answer Q. No. 88, was an interesting statement that was made. It is better I should read it:—

"Food supply position in Kerala is difficult. Keeping in view the overall availability of foodgrains in the central pool, the relative need of other deficit States, the maximum possible quantities of foodgrains are being supplied by the Centre for meeting the reasonable requirements."

I do not know what is the reasonable requirement. The reasonable requirement of Kerala is to get 12 ounces of ration per adult individual. Today, the situation is that the Kerala Government is not even in a position to give 6 ounces of ration. Today, what is being given is 3 ounces and, sometimes, a little more and, to make up 3 ounces, the Kerala Government is compelled to give paddy which was procured from that State itself. This is the shameful situation; this is the sad condition in which the rationing system has landed in Kerala.

Then, to add insult to injury, the statement comes—I quote:

"In addition, the Kerala Government was permitted to purchase some quantities of rice from surplus States on State-to-State basis."

When this statement was questioned, I got an explanation from the Ministry which says:

"Upto August, it was allowed."

But the Minister was answering the Question on 12th November in the House that Kerala was permitted, over and above what was given by the Centre, to take some rice from Madras or from some other States on State-to-State basis.

There should be a limit to misleading the House, misleading the country. But the starving people of Kerala cannot be misled because they are starving and that is the reality which they are facing.

On 7th November, that is, 5 days before the statement was made in the House, the Kerala Chief Minister made a statement which got a banner headline in *Indian Express* and other papers which says:

"The Central Government bans rice deals from State to State."

After banning the rice deals from State to State, you should understand, if the State deal had been allowed, Kerala could have given some electricity, some power, to Madras and could have got some rice from Madras to Kerala, to give our starving people. But the Centre, the Krishi Bhavan has said, 'Don't do it'. They said 'Nothing doing. You cannot do it'. When they say, 'You cannot do that', are they right to make a commitment here in this House? If the commitment has at all any value, you should stand by your commitment and you should completely fulfil your commitment. They never did fulfil and they never could do it.

Now, another thing which has happened is that we have surplus power in our State. That we can give to other States. There is no ban on it. So, whatever surplus we have we should share it with the rest of the country. We are not against it. We are very happy about it. But whatever deficit we have, we have to meet the deficit single-handed. How can these people, when they have such an attitude, such a policy, speak of national integration? I wonder.

Now, coming to another aspect, the Minister often says that rice is not available and 'Wherefrom we will get it? Nobody can give rice'. This is a fact. But here is a statement made by Mr. Juneja—he is the villain of the piece—the Secretary who is running the whole Ministry of Agriculture, sitting in the Krishi Bhavan....

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Now he is in Rome.

SHRI C. K. CHANDRAPPAN: When he was in India, he made a statement to the pressmen on the 28th September when the Soviet offer of foodgrains was made to India that an unspecified quantity of rice is also offered. What happened to that rice? Sir, there is a very strong wheat lobby here working under the patronage and blessings and guidance of this Mr. Juneja. They scuttled it. All these years these people were giving their advice to the people of Kerala, 'You have a very bad habit of eating rice. You change your food habit'. Now, we have changed our food habit. Then, what is the situation? Even wheat is not being given to us. When we change the food habit, no wheat. When we say, 'Give us rice', no rice. This is the wonderful condition in which our State is put.

Another aspect is that the issue price of rice is enhanced a little recently during this period. Mr. Chavan explained that that was the one way to fight deficit financing. But what happened to our State? When the issue price has gone up, the black market price has also gone up. Now, our people who are to depend upon black market, whether we like it or not, have to pay more in the black market. How will this be solved? This can be solved only if the Central Government behave in a fashion, more bold, more determined and more courageous in implementing the promises they have made, solemnly made to this country. That is the take-over of the wholesale trade in rice. The wheat take-over they have sabotaged and with regard to rice, in the name of that sabotage, they just put it in the cold storage. Now, they are helpless and when we speak of take-over of the wholesale trade, there is a ready answer. I hope the Minister will say—that is why I am a little careful—'If Kerala wants, it can take over the rice

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trade. We are not against it'. There is an answer which the Centre never wanted the world to know. Our State is a deficit State. Our State is 50 per cent deficit in the matter of foodgrains. We cannot take over the rice trade and we cannot abolish the private trade completely when the Centre is shamelessly helpless in helping Kerala. So, this is the situation under which we could not do that. But the Kerala State Government made it very clear that they are for the take-over of the wholesale trade provided the Centre will fulfil its commitments.

Our problem is that the Centre has never fulfilled its commitments and as many months have passed we find that the Centre is gradually going back from fulfilling whatever commitments they have made. That is why from October, from 75,000 tonnes it has been reduced to 73,000 tonnes. If the situation continues like this, if after the harvest the price of food does not come down but if it goes up, it will create a very explosive situation in that State. There is a limit for patience in everything. I have to ask only one question and that is this. Is the Centre going to fulfil its commitment? If so, what is the commitment that they are going to fulfil? Are they giving any new interpretation to the commitment, or will they stand by the commitment originally made?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Banerjee, absent. Mr. E. A. Krishnan, absent. Mr. Varkey George.

SHRI VARKEY GEORGE (Kottayam): May I know from the Minister whether he is aware of the fact that political parties in Kerala especially Kerala Congress repeatedly have demanded the reestablishment of the southern zone as the only practical solution to tide over the present deplorable food situation in Kerala and also whether it has

been brought to his notice or attention that there has been a public statement made by the Governor of Kerala Shri N. N. Wanchoo endorsing this view, and if that is true, what is the reaction of the Central Government for reestablishing the Southern Food Zone?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Jyotirmoy Bosu, absent.

Now, Mr. Vayalar Ravi, you have given intimation under Rule 55. Nothing would have delighted me more than to call you to ask a question for answer by the Agriculture Minister. But if you read Rule 55(5) and the explanation I am afraid I will not be able to call you to ask a question.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Your discretion is there, Sir. I would like to ask after he has spoken.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I am, bound by the rule which has been laid down.

श्री हुकम चन्द कछवाय (मरैना) :

कोई भी मेम्बर हाजिर नहीं है तो आप हमें मौका दे दीजिए ।

सभापति महोदय : कछवाय जी ,

नियम 55(5) के तहत आप ने तो नोटिस भी नहीं दिया है । जिन्होंने नोटिस दिया है उन को भी मौका नहीं मिल रहा है । आप रूल देख लीजिए । जो इंटिमेशन देते हैं उन में अगर बैलट नहीं होता है तो जिन्होंने इंटिमेशन दिया है उन को मैं बुला सकता हूं । बैलट होने के बाद जिन के नाम बैलट में आए हैं उन के अलावा और किसी को हम नहीं बुला सकते ।