

NLD Statement 125/2000:

National League for Democracy
No: (97/B), West Shwegonedine Road
Bahan Township, Rangoon

Statement 125 (8/00) (translation)

1. For the current year 2000, agricultural loans at the rate of Kyats 1000/- per acre is obtainable in Kauk-hmu township (Rangoon division). The limit is Kyats 10,000/- for 10 acres. However those who have connections with the powers can get Kyats 15,000/- (special production loan).

2. Those who are unable to collect the loan because of their duties on the field can appoint another person in writing to withdraw their money. The penalty imposed by the agricultural bank for this is Kyats 200/- per individual. Those who cannot produce a household card are not eligible for such loans but a bribe of Kyats 200/- solves that problem. Those who are most disadvantages are those who continue to work the land which their parents had claimed as original settlers. Also, bachelors and others who return to civilian life from monkhood. It could be that they are genuine cultivators but are not entitled to agricultural loans. However there are no exceptions when it comes to collection of duty paddy. Every cultivator is included in the list and he is compelled to sell his quota to the authorities under the terms and conditions fixed by them.

3. No assistance is given for procurement of such necessities as machine oil and fertilizers. Fertilizers held by the Agricultural Department are released to the black market and the farmer has to pay Kyats 2200/- for a bag of Pa-le fertilizer and Kyats 3500/- for one bag of Te-su-ba fertilizer.

4. Up to 13 baskets of paddy per acre cultivated is apportioned as duty paddy which must be sold to the authorities at a price fixed by them which is much lower than the market price and the farmer's loss is heavy. Government pays the farmer at the rate of Kyats 30,000 per 100 baskets. In the open market the nga-sein type of paddy fetches Kyats 50,000/-. The farmers have to commit themselves in writing to sell at that rate of Kyats 30,000/-.

5. What is worse is - farmers who cannot fulfil the duty paddy quota are prosecuted under Section 406 of the Penal Code, and they suffer persecution. But the worst predicament is for defaulters of the previous year. Even though the rate is fixed at Kyats 30,000/-, the repayment rate applied is Kyats 65,000/- which is more than double the debt. The farmer indeed suffers great hardship.

6. No matter how much the claim is about the growth in paddy production, the military dictators policies and management is worthless and dishonest.

7. The National League for Democracy opposes in total all these forced and bullying tactics. We urge those who are in charge to act responsibly so as not to disadvantage the cultivator.

Central Executive Committee
National League for Democracy

Rangoon
7 August 2000