

THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY DEBATES

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SECOND SESSION OF THE SIXTH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, 1946



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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mondau, 4th November, 1946

The Assembly met in the Assembly Chamber of the Council House at Eleven of the Clock, Mr. President (The Honourable Mr. G. V. Mavalankar) in the Chair.

MEMBERS SWORN:

The Honourable Mr. Jogendra Nath Mandal (Law Member); and

Sir John Francis Sheehy, C.S.I., I.C.S., M.L.A. (Government of India):
Nominated Official):

STARRED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(a) ORAL ANSWERS

DESTRUCTION OF OFFICIAL PAPERS RELATING TO NATIONALIST LEADERS.

164. *Sardar Mangal Singh: Will the Honourable the Home Member please state:

(a) whether there is any truth in the press reports that certain papers in the Secretariat, relating to certain nationalist leaders were destroyed or hidden before the Interim Government took over;

(b) whether the Interim Government made any enquiries about this matter; if so what is the result thereof; and

(c) whether Government have taken or contemplate to take any measures against those responsible for this action?

The Honourable Sri C. Rajagopalachari: (a) Yes; some papers relating to certain nationalist leaders were destroyed as no longer wanted. No papers were hidden. No papers were destroyed in the Secretariat.

(b) The answer to the first part is in the negative; the second part does not arise.

(c) Government do not consider that any action in the matter is called for.

Sardar Mangal Singh: May I know if papers relating to the leaders of all parties have been destroyed, or only those relating to the leaders of the Congress Party?

The Honourable Sri C. Rajagopalachari: The answer to this question would result in the disclosure of the contents of things which ought to be protected.

Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal: Will the Honourable Member be pleased to state whether it is a fact that fresh files have been started in respect of these same leaders?

The Honourable Sri C. Rajagopalachari: This suggestion I must totally deny. Even an answer to this question would involve undesirable disclosures.

Seth Govind Das: How does the Honourable Member think that the papers destroyed were only papers which were not wanted.

The Honourable Sri C. Rajagopalachari: That is information I am authorised to give.

Lala Deshbandhu Gupta: Has particular care been taken to destroy the personal files of the Honourable Members sitting on the Treasury Benches?

The Honourable Sri C. Rajagopalachari: The answer has to be a repetition of what I have already said. But I would like to explain. That there has been a long and serious conflict between those in authority before and those who are now in authority is a patent circumstance and it is no use trying to escape the corollary of that circumstance. No Government can get on without an Intelli-

gence Department and we cannot get loyal service from an Intelligence Department if we do not protect the sources of information which they use. If with every change of masters, loyal members of the permanent services should be exposed to ridicule and persecution, it would not be a desirable state of things. It is therefore necessary, Sir, to preserve the convention in all good democracies where Opposition becomes Government and Government becomes Opposition, this convention being that members of the public service should not be exposed to any attack or ridicule on a change of masters

INDIAN TROOPS IN INDONESIA.

165. *Sardar Mangal Singh : Will the Defence Secretary please state :

- (a) whether there are any Indian Troops in Indonesia ;
 (b) if the answer to part (a) above be in the affirmative when will the Indian Troops be withdrawn and when will the last Indian soldier leave the soil of that country ; and
 (c) the number of Indian soldiers and officers who have been killed, wounded and missing in Indonesian operations since the cease fire order on the Far Eastern Front ?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Indian troops will be withdrawn from Indonesia by the end of November 1946.

(c) The number of Indian Army Officers and other ranks killed, wounded and missing in Indonesian operations since the cease fire order is given in detail in a statement placed on the table of the House. The totals for the Netherlands East Indies are: Killed—966, Wounded—1,684, Missing—212.

Statement showing number of Indian Army Officers and Other Ranks killed, wounded and missing in Indonesian Operations in Netherlands East Indies since the cease fire order was given in the Far East, as on 10th October 1946.

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|-------|
| 1. Indian Commissioned Officers— | | |
| Killed | | 11 |
| Wounded | | 15 |
| Missing | | 2 |
| 2. British Officers (Indian Army)— | | |
| Killed | | 20 |
| Wounded | | 35 |
| Missing | | 2 |
| 3. Viceroy's Commissioned Officers— | | |
| Killed | | 29 |
| Wounded | | 70 |
| Missing | | 2 |
| 4. I. O. Rs.— | | |
| Killed | | 906 |
| Wounded | | 1,684 |
| Missing | | 206 |
| 5. Totals for N. E. I.— | | |
| Killed | | 966 |
| Wounded | | 1,684 |
| Missing | | 212 |

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan : Arising out of part (b), I want to know whether the white man's burden will be transferred to the shoulders of Holland after the British and Indian military forces leave that place?

Mr. President : Has the Honourable Member understood the question?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja : I am afraid I have not followed the question.

Mr. President: Will the Honourable Member repeat the question? What is the information that he wants?

(Maulana Zafar Ali Khan did not rise to explain his point)

Sardar Mangal Singh: May I know whether arrangements have been made to get our troops out of that country, or is it only the intention of the Government to do so and that there may be some difficulties later on and the Government may not be able to fulfil their assurance given here?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: No, Sir. Plans have been well laid for the withdrawal of all Indian troops by the 28th of this month and I see no reason why, unless something very unprecedented happens the last Indian soldier should not have left Indonesia by that date.

Mr. Manu Subedar: May I know whether there is any understanding with the Dutch people that the power relinquished by the British will be passed on to the Dutch, and that care is being taken even by our Government that such power does not go to the Indonesians?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: There is no understanding so far as I am aware between the Government of India and the Dutch authorities on this subject of the kind referred to by my Honourable friend.

Seth Govind Das: Isn't it a fact that till now several dates had been fixed for withdrawing the army from Indonesia and several times promises were given in this House that by such and such date the Indian troops would be withdrawn? Now should we take it that this 28th November is final?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: According to the present plans and intentions of Government, this is the final date.

Babu Ram Narayan Singh: Has this Interim Government got full powers over the movement of Indian troops?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: That is a big question of policy. But I am sure that the Government of India have a considerable voice in deciding on the movement of troops.

TALKS *re* SETTLEMENT OF STERLING BALANCES.

166. *Sardar Mangal Singh : Will the Honourable the Finance Member please state :

(a) when the question of settlement of the sterling balances is likely to be taken up with His Majesty's Government, whether the talks will take place in Delhi or in London ; and

(b) whether Government propose to consult this House before the final settlement is reached ?

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar: (a) The question of the date and venue for the negotiations in connection with the sterling balances is at present under discussion with H. M. G.

(b) The Government have duly noted the views expressed in the House during the discussions on the budgets and the Bretton Woods Motions and will bear them in mind. Government consider, however, that discussion of proposals in the Assembly before final settlement would not be a feasible or satisfactory method of conducting these negotiations.

Mr. Manu Subedar: Has the attention of Government been drawn to the statement of Dr. Dalton, the Chancellor of the Exchequer that no negotiations would start about the sterling balances till an all Party Government takes place in India? And if it is so, have Government examined the full implications of the statement that England would not pay unless and until there was this sort of Coalition Government which now exists?

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar: The Government have seen reports regarding the Chancellor of the Exchequer's statement but as the Honourable the Finance Member made it clear in his speech on the Brettonwoods motion, the Government of India are in communication with His Majesty's Government and the

latter have expressed their anxiety to conduct the negotiations as early as possible. So the meaning and implication of that statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer do not really arise.

Sardar Mangal Singh: May I know from the Honourable Member whether these negotiations are likely to take place before the next Budget Session?

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar: I should think so. As the Honourable the Finance Member has made it quite clear, they are to be started as early as possible.

Sardar Mangal Singh: Will the Honourable Member give the assurance that the Government of India will press that the negotiations should take place in Delhi and not in London?

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar: I think the House may take it that this point will be duly considered by Government.

APPOINTMENT OF A TAXATION ENQUIRY COMMITTEE.

167. *Sardar Mangal Singh : Will the Honourable the Finance Member please state :

(a) whether Government have decided to appoint a taxation enquiry commission to review the entire taxation structure of the country ;

(b) its terms of reference and whether they will include the review of the land revenue system also ; and

(c) whether Government will await its report before taking any action to abolish or alter any individual tax ?

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar: (a) and (b). The matter is under consideration and Government have not come to a final decision.

(c) The point raised by the Honourable Member will be kept in mind. Whether or not a taxation enquiry committee is appointed Government must reserve the right to consider individual cases on their merits.

Sardar Mangal Singh: Is it not a fact that during the last Budget Session, the then Finance Member announced in this House that a Taxation Enquiry Committee will be appointed and now the Honourable Member says that the Government of India have not made up their mind yet. Has the decision of the other Government been upset?

Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar: That was the old Government and this is a new one!

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar: What the then Honourable the Finance Member said was "I propose therefore to set up a Taxation Enquiry Committee in the near future." As Honourable Members know the then Finance Member was here only for a short while after the Budget Session, during which he made certain preliminary investigations for the purpose of setting up this Committee and the matter and not been concluded before he left. Now that there is a new Government the matter has got to be considered again.

Miss Maniben Kara: Do I have the assurance of the Honourable Member that the interests of the taxpayers also will be represented on this Taxation Enquiry Committee?

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar: I think on the question of representation on the Committee, the then Finance Member made this point quite clear, that it should be an expert rather than a representative body.

Miss Maniben Kara: Does the Honourable Member consider that the taxpayer cannot be represented by an expert on that committee?

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar: That also has been mentioned—"although care should be taken to obtain the views of all the interests affected,—industry, commerce, agriculture, labour, the consumer, the ordinary taxpayer and lastly, the Administration, both Central and Provincial."

Prof. N. G. Ranga: Is it not a fact that the Interim Government has reached a decision in favour of the abolition of the salt tax?

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar: There is a question on that later on.

Sardar Mangal Singh: With reference to part (b) the Honourable Member has said that this suggestion will be kept in view but may I ask the Honourable Member whether he is aware that in reply to the debate in this House the then Finance Member assured the House that the question of land revenue will be one of the terms of reference to this Committee?

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar: The question here is, "whether Government will await its report before taking any action to abolish or alter any individual tax?"

Sardar Mangal Singh: I am referring to part (b) which refers to land revenue.

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar: That also is mentioned in the then Finance Member's declaration—all questions will be considered by the Taxation Enquiry Committee.

IMPRISONED OR DETAINED I.N.A. PERSONNEL.

168. *Sardar Mangal Singh : Will the Defence Secretary please state :

(a) the number of Indian National Army personnel still imprisoned or detained without trial ;

(b) the number of prisoners of the 20th C.I.H. ; and

(c) whether Government propose to review their cases and release them forthwith ; if not why not ?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: (a) (i) The number of military I.N.A. personnel still undergoing sentences of imprisonment is 15.

(ii) The number detained without trial is Nil.

(b) The number of prisoners of the Central India Horse still serving sentences is nine.

(c) The remaining portion of the sentences of the nine men of the Central India Horse has recently been remitted. As regards the I.N.A. personnel, I would invite the Honourable Member's attention to the reply to part (e) of Starred Question No. 93, asked by the Honourable Shri Sri Prakasa on the 30th October, 1946.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: What about the civilian section of the I.N.A. ?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: The Defence Department are not responsible for the Civilian section of the I.N.A. personnel, but the Home Department.

Shri Sri Prakasa: With reference to the answer to my earlier question to which the Honourable Member has referred and the facts stated in the statement that was placed on the table of the House along with the answer to that question, may I know the conditions in which these prisoners are kept in the Provinces and whether the Government meets their expenses ?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: I am afraid I must ask for notice of that question. I may, however, say about the prisoners, that once they are transferred to Provincial Governments they cease to be the responsibility of the Central Government so far as their wellbeing and other matters are concerned.

Shri Sri Prakasa: In view of the fact that in part (b) of the statement that was read on the floor of the House on that occasion it was said that the present rules of the respective Provinces apply to the prisoners that are kept in those Provinces, will the Honourable Member make sure that these prisoners are properly treated, because I find that some of these are kept in the 'C' class; and will the Honourable Member order that they should all be put in 'B' class at least?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: I have already explained that the moment the military prisoners are transferred to civil jails they become the responsibility of the Provincial Governments concerned and all matters, including the question of classification are the concern of the Provincial Governments.

Shri Sri Prakasa: May I take it that the Government of India have no hand in forcing the Provincial Governments to treat their prisoners properly? Do the

Provincial Governments meet all the expenses or have the Government of India to pay for them?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: I have already explained that the Government of India have no say in the matter.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: Why not?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: Because they cease to be the responsibility of the Central Government the moment they are transferred to the provincial jails. That is the position. I am not sure about meeting the cost and that was why I asked for notice of that particular question.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: If it is not the concern of the Government of India even when their own prisoners are transferred to the civil jails of the various provinces, may I know why it should be so? There must be some reason for it.

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: The reason why some of the military prisoners are transferred to civil jails is that after the expiry of their term, they are no longer to be re-enrolled in the army and therefore they cease to be really the concern of the Central Government.

Shri D. P. Karmarkar: Whoever may be responsible for the welfare of the prisoners in the Provinces, in view of the clearly expressed opinion of this House, do the Government of India propose to tender advice to the Provincial Governments to see that the prisoners are properly treated?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: If there is any individual case in which the treatment meted out is not satisfactory, we will certainly bring it to the notice of the Provincial Government. From the statement that I have supplied there is only one 'C' class prisoner.

Shri Sri Prakasa: Three according to the statement.

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: The reason why I say only one is that I believe two of them are civilian internees, who have been included in this statement.

Shri Sri Prakasa: Will the Honourable Member kindly get those prisoners to Delhi, if the provinces do not treat them properly? As the Honourable Member asked for a specific case, will he also kindly enquire about the prisoner who is in Agra and find out why he has been put in 'C' class?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: I will enquire about the particular person the Honourable Member refers to but there is no reason to believe that the Provincial Governments do not treat these prisoners satisfactorily as is implied in the first part of his question.

WITHDRAWAL OF INDIAN TROOPS FROM BASRAH.

169. ***Mr. Ahmed E. H. Jaffer:** (a) Will the Defence Secretary please state when all the Indian troops will be withdrawn from the port of Basrah?

(b) Do Government propose to place on the table of the House all paper pertaining to the decision in regard to the despatch of Indian troops to Basrah?

(c) Have Government received any protests from the Government of Iran and Iraq in connection with this matter?

(d) What is the strength of the armed forces at present stationed in Basrah and elsewhere in Iraq?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: (a) I cannot state when all the Indian Troops will be withdrawn from the post of Basrah as the matter is still under the consideration of Government.

(b) No, Sir; it would be contrary to Parliamentary practice to place on the table of the House all papers leading up to an executive decision.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) I am afraid so long as other countries do not disclose the strength of their Armed Forces it would not be advisable to give the strength of Indian Armed Forces abroad.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: Whose decision was it to send our troops to Basra? Was it the decision of the British Government or was it an independent decision of the Indian Government?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: The decision was taken in consultation with the Government of India.

Mr. Ahmed E. H. Jaffer: May I ask whether the Honourable Member is in a position to give us an assurance as to the approximate period within which these Indian troops are expected to be recalled from Basra?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: I wish I could give that information, but as I have said the matter is under consideration, and I would rather not give a definite date.

Mr. Manu Subedar: In reply to part (a), the Honourable Defence Secretary said that the matter is receiving the consideration of the Government. May I know whether it is the Government here or the War Council in London? And will the Honourable Member make it clear to this House the point as to the restrictions which this Government has got in regard to the movement of Indian troops from India to elsewhere and back again?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: I shall repeat the statement which I made the other day that so far as this Government is concerned, their policy is very clear and that is that Indian troops should be withdrawn from all overseas stations. It is, however, subject to our obligations arising from India's past associations with other countries.

Mr. Manu Subedar: My question is, have the Government of India an absolutely free hand in this matter? As I know they have not, will the Honourable Member explain to this House the present constitutional position as to what extent the judgment on these matters is taken,—the final decision is taken in London—and to what extent the Government of India are involved in such decisions?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: I must confess I am not prepared for the discussion of the constitutional position this morning; but I can give this assurance that whatever views are expressed by the Government of India in a matter like this would very likely—I should say most probably—be acceptable to His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom.

Shri Sri Prakasa: What and whose parliamentary practice is followed in putting papers asked for on the table of the House?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: I think it is a well-known practice that papers leading up to an executive decision should not be placed on the table of the House, for obvious reasons. Numerous people from the lowest rung of the ladder to the highest record their notes on files, and what the House is, I think, interested in is the final decision of the Government, and not the stages by which that decision has been arrived at.

Shri Mohan Lal Saksena: May I know when was this decision to send troops to Basra taken?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: In August last.

Shri D. P. Karmakar: May I know the object of keeping these troops in Basra?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: That was announced in our press communiqué. I will read that out if my Honourable friend desires it:

"In order that there may be ready at hand for the protection, should circumstances demand it, of Indian, British and Arab lives and in order to safeguard Indian and British interests in South Persia, troops are being sent from India to Basra. There are many hundreds of Indians employed in the oilfields and refineries of South Persia and India depends largely on this source for her vital supplies of petrol."

Diwan Chaman Lal: When was this decision taken?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: This press communiqué was issued on the 3rd August.

DEMOBILIZATION OF INDIAN TROOPS

170. *Mr. Ahmed E. H. Jaffer: (a) Will the Defence Secretary please state how many Indian troops are still awaiting to be demobilised from the Indian Army?

(b) What is the strength of the Indian Defence Forces at present under the following Services :

- (i) total number of men in the Army ;
- (ii) total number of men in the Air Force ; and
- (iii) total number of men in the Navy ?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: (a) The difference between the strength of Indian Troops on 1st October, 1946, and their strength in the ultimate peace time Indian Army is 669,000.

It should, however, be noted that the strength of the ultimate peace time army is at present provisional as it has not yet been approved by the Government.

(b) The strength of each of the three Services of the Armed Forces (excluding civilians) on the 1st October, 1946, was as follows:—

| | | |
|---|--|-----------|
| (i) Army— | | |
| Officers | | 32,866 |
| Other ranks | | 10,23,344 |
| (ii) Air Force— | | |
| Officers | | 3,748 |
| Airmen | | 38,475 |
| (iii) Navy— | | |
| Officers | | 1,252 |
| Warrant Officers, Ratings and WRINS | | 11,698 |

Mr. Ahmed E. H. Jaffer: With reference to part (b) of the question, may I ask whether the figures given by him will be maintained during the post-war period or will they be reduced considerably later on?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: This is the strength as existing at present. It is going of course to be considerably reduced in the course of demobilisation, and as I just now said the ultimate size of the defence force has not yet been finally determined by Government.

Sardar Surjit Singh Majithia: May I ask the number of airmen who have applied for permanent commissions?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: I am afraid I must ask for notice of that question. It does not directly arise out of this.

REVISION OF PAY OF MEN IN CIVIL AND MILITARY SERVICES

171. *Mr. Ahmed E. H. Jaffer: Will the Defence Secretary please state whether Government have under consideration the revision of pay of men in the services, the Army, the Air Force and the Navy ?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: Yes. Government have already appointed a Committee to make recommendations on the post-war pay, allowances and pensions of the three Defence Services. The constitution of the Committee and its terms of reference were announced in a press note on the 29th January, 1946.

Sardar Surjit Singh Majithia: Is the Government aware that it is due to the inaction on the part of Government regarding the announcement of the pay of the airmen that there are not enough volunteers to serve the air forces permanently?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: Government are very well aware of the disturbing consequences of uncertainty, particularly uncertainty about the question of pay and pensions; but unfortunately the Government in the Defence Department cannot come to a unilateral decision on the questions of pay, etc., until and unless they

have seen the recommendations of the Central Pay Commission which the Government of India have appointed. Obviously the two should be correlated as far as possible.

Lt.-Col. Dr. J. C. Chatterjee: With reference to the reply just now given, why this question not referred to the Pay Commission and why was it not considered that the two commissions should sit jointly or at any rate consult each other?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: As I said, this committee was appointed early in January of this year, whereas the idea of appointing a Central Pay Commission to examine the questions of pay and emoluments of the civil services came up at a later stage—if I mistake not, as a result of an impending strike in the Posts and Telegraphs Department.

Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar: May I know what the strength of this committee is and if there are any Indians on it?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: I answered that question fully on the last occasion.

Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar: That there is no Indian on it?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: There is Mr. Dayal of the Military Finance Department on the committee: I promised to examine the suggestion made in this Honourable House about the possibility of finding other suitable Indian officers to sit on this committee.

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REMARKS OF DR. HUGH DALTON, CHANCELLOR OF EXCHEQUER re RECOVERY OF STERLING BALANCES

172. *Mr. Manu Subedar : (a) Has the attention of the Honourable the Finance Member been drawn to the remarks by Dr. Hugh Dalton, Chancellor of the Exchequer, relating to negotiations for the sterling balances of India and his reiteration in this connection that the terms of the Anglo-American Loan Agreement would be fully carried out ?

(b) Did Government put forward any clear statement of India's case in order to counteract the propaganda against Indian interests in this connection ?

(c) What steps have Government taken to secure early recovery of the sterling balances ?

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar: (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) The position has been explained in the course of the Honourable Finance Member's speech on the motion on the Bretton Woods Agreements on the 28th October, 1946. The Government of India are in correspondence with His Majesty's Government with the object of having the sterling balances negotiations as early as practicable.

Mr. Manu Subedar: In view of the fact that India gave these sterling balances, or was made to give these sterling balances, in the course of five years and in view of the fact that according to the Anglo-American Agreement Britain is claiming that the bulk of these sterling balances would not begin to be repaid for six years more and that the actual repayment would cover a period of 50 years, in other words in view of the absurd position taken up by the United Kingdom under the Anglo-American Loan Agreement by which the Chancellor of the Exchequer swears, will Government put forward India's side of the case and say—what you took in five years you cannot claim 56 years for repayment?

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar: In the first place I must say that the presumption in these questions is not quite correct. There is no such demand made officially by the British Government that they would pay in 56 years. What my Honourable friend is referring to is the terms of the Anglo-American Agreement

Mr. Manu Subedar: Clause 10.

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar: A portion of the sterling balances will be paid immediately, a second portion, being funded, will be paid over a period of years (it does not mention 56 years) and a third will be adjusted. Now, so far as the question of our having paid in five years and receiving in 56 years is concerned, my Honourable friend knows very well that it was not money that we paid. It was war supplies that we gave and it has got to be fully repaid in the form of goods and services and they must necessarily take a number of years. So far as taking up the question with H. M. G. is concerned, naturally it cannot be taken up piecemeal but it will be taken up along with the sterling balance negotiations.

Mr. Manu Subedar: Has not my Honourable friend seen the suggestion officially made from the U. S. A. as well as from the U. K. that no payment should begin to be made for six years, that is, until 1951 and that after that, payment would be made over 50 years by such instalments as may be fixed. In view of the claim made for such extension of payment, will not the Government of India take proper steps in order to counter the propaganda that what the British Government took from us in five years they will be able to repay only in 56 years?

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar: Sir, as I said, the whole thing must be considered in connection with the sterling balance negotiations. So far as the propaganda is concerned, it is not official and the Government of India will take such steps as they consider proper.

Diwan Chaman Lall: Is the Honourable Member aware of the fact that Sir William Edie is coming out to settle the question of the sterling balances with the Government of India?

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar: As I said, the question of negotiations is under discussion with the H. M. G.

GOLD PAR VALUE OF THE RUPEE

173. *Mr. Manu Subedar: (a) Has the Honourable the Finance Member reached any conclusion with regard to the gold par value of the rupee? If so, by what process, on the strength of what materials, and what is the conclusion?

(b) What is the officially accepted value of gold in India?

(c) Have Government any information as to changes in the official value of gold in any of the important countries?

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar: (a) No, Sir.

(b) None.

(c) From the information available the only countries that have changed the gold value of their currency recently are Canada and Sweden. In the former case the gold value of the Canadian Dollar was altered from 0.80768 grammes of fine gold per dollar to 0.868671 grammes of fine gold with effect from the 6th July, 1946, while in the case of the latter, the value of the Kronner was altered from 0.211595 grammes of fine gold to 0.246914 grammes of fine gold with effect from the 13th July, 1946.

Mr. Manu Subedar: In respect to (b), will the Honourable Finance Secretary tell this House at what rate the Reserve Bank is bound to buy gold if it is tendered to it?

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar: It is not bound.

Mr. Manu Subedar: In view of the very vast fluctuations and the great speculation occurring with regard to the bullion markets in Bombay, will Government consider the desirability of checking the speculation by stopping the forward trade in gold in view of the importance of gold in the International Fund or in any case will Government see that the rules under which the associations are working for the sale of gold—future transactions—are constantly seen and revised both by the Reserve Bank and the Government?

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar: Government's attention has been drawn to the present condition of the bullion market and they are considering the necessary steps to counter the present tendencies.

Dr. Zia Uddin Ahmad: What is the official value of gold in India?

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar: There is no official value of gold in India.

Dr. Zia Uddin Ahmad: Is the gold sold to the highest bidder by the Reserve Bank?

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar: The Reserve Bank is not selling gold at present.

Dr. Zia Uddin Ahmad: Is it not a fact that the gold is sold for foreign banks by the Reserve Bank?

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar: Not at present.

Dr. Zia Uddin Ahmad: When was it stopped?

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar: I have not got the date. It was stopped nearly a year ago.

Dr. Zia Uddin Ahmad: It was not stopped during the last session of the Assembly. I put this question repeatedly. They are selling it and accepting some commission.

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar: So far as I am aware, the actual date when the gold sales was stopped was given.

Dr. Zia Uddin Ahmad: You may make a reference. You will find that I am correct that the Reserve Bank

Mr. President: The Honourable Member will address the question to the Chair.

MONOPOLIES IN THE INTERMEDIATE BOARD, AJMER

174. *Pandit Sri Krishna Dutt Paliwal: Will the Honourable Member for Education be pleased to state if Government are aware that Checkership, Tabulater-ship and Inspectorship of the Intermediate Board, Ajmer, remain the close monopoly of a few persons only and that more than half of the names on the list of these office holders have been appearing for the last fifteen years? If so, what steps Government propose to take to break this monopoly?

The Honourable Sri C. Rajagopalachari: The Honourable Member apparently refers to the Board of High School and Intermediate Education, Rajputana, Central India and Gwalior.

The question relates to the internal administration of the Board. The Chairman of the Board, Dr. J. C. Chatterji, is a member of this House. I propose to bring the question to his notice.

Lt.-Col. Dr. J. C. Chatterjee: With reference to the reply given by the Honourable Member may I bring to your notice the constitutional position? I am asking for your ruling on a point of order. This Board is a Federation of the Indian States of Rajputana, Central India and Gwalior. It has been created by a Resolution of the Political Department. The Government of India have never paid one penny towards its maintenance. Now, Sir, I would like your ruling whether a question of this kind where the Board is not the concern of the Governor General in Council can be discussed in this House, as the matter is one for the Indian States?

The Honourable Sri C. Rajagopalachari: I can help Dr. Chatterjee to understand the position. The Educational Adviser of the Government of India is the controlling authority of the Board.

Lt.-Col. Dr. J. C. Chatterjee: The Controlling authority is the agent of the Political Department.

RESULTS OF DEMONETIZATION OF CURRENCY NOTES

175. *Shri Sri Prakasa : Will the Honourable the Finance Member be pleased to state :

(a) the total amount of Government currency notes that were demonetized during the last financial year 1945-46 ;

(b) the amount that Government ultimately paid for these notes to the holders thereof ;

(c) the amount of profit that Government made by this Ordinance ;

(d) if any persons whom it was the intention of the Ordinance to catch, were actually caught : and if so, how many, and to what extent they suffered losses, and if any further action was taken against them ;

(e) if Government are satisfied that no innocent persons have suffered as a result of this Ordinance ; and

(f) the results of the scrutiny held in the reasons the holders gave for having the notes in their possession as required by the relevant Ordinance ?

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar : (a) Rs. 143,96,69,000.

(b) Government have not ceased to make payments in exchange for these notes, but the total payment made up till the 11th October, 1946 was Rs. 128,59,89,500.

(c) I invite the Honourable Member's attention to the reply to part (c) of Sardar Mangal Singh's starred question No. 73, on the 30th October, 1946.

(d) The Ordinance has so far resulted in seven prosecutions, all of which are as yet *sub judice*. Several other cases for prosecution are under consideration.

(e) No claims have so far been refused, and Government are satisfied that no loss has been caused to innocent persons presenting High Denomination notes for encashment.

(f) As the scrutiny of the declarations filed is continuing, Government are, as yet, unable to indicate its result.

Shri Sri Prakasa : With reference to the reply given to Sardar Mangal Singh's question on an earlier occasion, may I infer that the Government expects to make 20 crores of rupees from this transaction ?

An Honourable Member : Where is the harm ?

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar : In reply to another question we mentioned the amounts which had already been paid. It has already been mentioned that 128-59 crores have already been repaid. I am afraid 20 crores is not likely to be realised. Even the present difference is only about 15 crores.

Lala Deshbandhu Gupta : Is the Honourable Member aware of the fact that soon after the ordinance was issued, currency notes of the value of Rs. 1,000 were sold in Delhi for Rs. 500? Enquiries showed that some very highly placed officials of the Supply Department were seen busy making transactions.

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar : There are various reports, but the Government is unaware of it.

Shri Sri Prakasa : With reference to the Honourable Member's reply to part (a) of the question, is he not aware that a lady in Karachi died of heart failure as soon as she heard of this Ordinance? If so, may I know whether the Honourable Member has pinched her thousand rupee notes and, if not, what has happened to them?

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar : The Government is not aware of this, and if the lady died, I do not know whether it was genuine or not.

Lala Deshbandhu Gupta : With reference to the reply of the Honourable Member to my supplementary question, may I ask whether it is a fact that particular mention was made in the local press about these transactions? If so, may I know if any action was taken by Government or Government propose to make necessary inquiries in the matter?

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar: This very question was asked on a previous occasion on this matter in the Assembly and it was pointed out by the Government Member then that as soon as this report came to the notice of the Government of India instructions were issued to all the District Magistrates to be on the watch for such cases and take action.

Shri Sri Prakasa: Will not the principle adumbrated this morning by the Honourable the Education Member apply here also to the effect that permanent officials should not be victimised?

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar: I do not see the point of the question.

ABOLITION OF SALT TAX

176 *Shri Sri Prakasa : Will the Honourable the Finance Member be pleased to state :

- (a) if it is a fact that Government are considering the abolition of the salt-tax;
- (b) if so, when the proposals are likely to come into effect ;
- (c) what will be the loss to revenue ; and
- (d) what arrangements Government propose to make for the production and distribution of salt in the future ?

Sir John Sheehy: (a) to (d). The Honourable the Finance Member hopes to be able to make a statement shortly.

Shri Sri Prakasa: Could the Honourable Member enlighten the House as to the amount by which the price of salt will be reduced when the salt tax is abolished?

Sir John Sheehy: The duty on salt at present is Re. 1-9-0 per maund and the cost of manufacture of salt is about 4 annas. Anyhow, the price ought to be reduced by Re. 1-9-0, which is the amount of the duty.

Mr. Manu Subedar: Will Government assure this House that steps will be taken to see that the salt supplied to the public is clean and that the amount of the deleterious kind of salt which the poor man manages to get will be reduced and will not be increased by the abolition of the duty?

Sir John Sheehy: I think we can give that undertaking.

Khan Mohammad Yamin Khan: Has the Honourable Member abolished the system of giving monopoly for the sale of salt in the districts to individuals?

Sir John Sheehy: That will be considered; but that was necessary in order to insure an adequate supply of salt in the various districts.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: May I ask if there will be still monopolies even when the salt tax is abolished?

Sir John Sheehy: I do not know whether the salt tax will be abolished and I cannot answer hypothetical questions.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: I had already asked one supplementary question: is it not true that the Interim Government had already reached a decision that the salt tax should be abolished?

Sir John Sheehy: I cannot answer that question.

*177. [Withdrawn].

PROGRESS OF WORK BY THE PAY COMMISSION

178 *Shri Sri Prakasa : Will the Honourable the Finance Member be pleased to state :

- (a) the progress so far made by the Pay Commission ;
- (b) the period of time for which they are expected to sit further ; and
- (c) the approximate date by which their report is likely to be ready ?

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar: (a) The Pay Commission have under consideration the large mass of representations sent, in the first instance, by associations of Government employees and others as also the replies received to the Commission's questionnaire. At present the Commission are in the stage of taking the oral evidence of representatives of staff associations and of Government officials in elucidation of the points made in the replies.

(b) It is expected that they will sit till the end of the current financial year, but, if the programme is slowed down by the fact that the Members of the Commission have, also to attend to legislative business, the work of the Commission may have to be prolonged till the end of June 1947.

(c) The report is likely to be ready within the period indicated above for the sitting of the Commission, but it is expected that Government will be informed of the preliminary views of the Commission by the end of January 1947.

Miss Maniben Kara: Is the Honourable Member aware that the strike of the workers all over India, particularly of the railway employees, was suspended as a result of the assurance given that the Pay Commission will hurry up with their results as early as possible?

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar: That is true, but the whole question has to be considered for all the Government services and the Pay Commission cannot take up the question of one particular service only.

Miss Maniben Kara: Is the Honourable Member aware that there was an All-India strike of the Posts and Telegraphs workers also and they were also assured to await the result of this Pay Commission? Is he also aware that a terrible feeling of discontent prevails among the workers owing to this delay in publishing the report and finishing their inquiry?

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar: Government is fully aware of the whole situation, but, as I have explained, the Commission must take its time because the whole question is very complicated.

Mr. S. Guruswami: Is it not a fact that certain Provincial Governments have been already advised by the Central Pay Commission about the pay structure of certain categories of staff?

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar: I must ask for notice of this question.

Lt.-Col. Dr. J. C. Chatterjee: Is the Honourable Member aware that the Pay Commission takes evidence for over seven hours a day and that it is humanly impossible to take evidence for more than seven hours at a stretch?

Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar: Is it not a fact that the Government had promised to direct the Pay Commission to take up the investigation of pay and salaries in the Railway Department first before they directed their attention to the other Departments of the Government of India?

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar: That is true, but the Commission said that they must deal in a single report with the whole question of salaries of all Central Government services.

Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar: Has the Pay Commission gone into the salaries of the railway employees at all till now?

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar: I am sorry I do not know the exact stage which the Commission has reached.

Miss Maniben Kara: Do we have the assurance that the report of the Commission will be completed by the end of this year as they had promised in the beginning?

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar: I have said in my reply that the Commission hopes to finish their report by the end of the financial year; but, as I pointed out, if the time of other Members is taken up on account of the legislative business, it will have to be prolonged.

CULTIVATION AND MANUFACTURE OF OPIUM IN INDIA.

179. ***Shri Sri Prakasa** : Will the Honourable the Finance Member be pleased to state :

- (a) the amount of opium cultivated and manufactured in India during the financial year 1945-46 ;
- (b) the amount sold in India and the amount exported abroad ;
- (c) the countries to which opium is exported ;
- (d) the amount of profit made by Government by such sale ; and
- (e) if any countries have protested against the export of opium to them ?

Sir John Sheehy : (a) In the Government Opium Factories at Ghazipur and Neemuch accounts are maintained for the opium season, *i.e.* from October to September. The information furnished below is accordingly for the opium season year ended 30th September 1945 in so far as the two factories are concerned. Information in respect of certain Indian States which produce opium is not readily available.

The quantity cultivated, by which I take it the Honourable Member means, produced and the quantity manufactured was 14,650 maunds and 8,344 maunds respectively.

(b) The total quantity of opium sold in India and the quantity exported abroad was 6,740 maunds and 1,380 maunds respectively.

(c) Since 1936 opium is normally supplied to the countries with which there is a close geographical or long-standing political link, namely, the French and Portuguese Settlements in India, Nepal, Burma, Zanzibar (including Pemba), Aden and the United Kingdom.

(d) The amount of profit made on opium exported from India during the aforesaid year was Rs. 28,75,000. Opium issued for internal consumption in India, to the Provincial Governments and Indian States is sold at cost price.

(e) None.

Sreejot Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri : May I ask in what provinces of India opium is not sold at all?

Sir John Sheehy : I should like to have notice of that question, but I think it is prohibited in Assam. But I would not say that it is not sold there.

Shri Sri Prakasa : Is it a fact that no opium is exported to China?

Sir John Sheehy : That is so.

Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar : While exporting opium to foreign countries, is care taken to see that opium sent to other countries is used only for medical purposes?

Sir John Sheehy : Yes, it is.

REPATRIATION OF INDIAN PRISONERS IN ALLIED HANDS

180. ***Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal** : Will the Secretary of the Defence Department be pleased to state :

(a) how many Indians—outside India—are still either prisoners in the Allied hands or are exiles ;

(b) the machinery which the Government of India can use for getting whereabouts and other particulars direct in respect of such men ;

(c) whether the Government of India have entered into direct diplomatic relations with the Allied powers for the above purpose ;

(d) what steps are being taken by this Government for repatriating such persons to India ; and

) the Government policy in the matter ?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: The question should have been addressed to the Honourable Member for External Affairs. It has accordingly been transferred to the list of questions for the 7th November, 1946, when it will be answered by him.

FUNDS FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF DESTITUTE HOMES

181. *Seth Govind Das : (a) Will the Secretary for Health Department please state if Government have ever given any consideration to the estimate of funds required for the establishment of destitute homes ?

(b) Will he take the Lucknow ' Poor Home ' as a suitable basis for such estimates ?

Mr. S. H. Y. Oulnam : (a) The question was considered in 1944 in connection with the establishment of a Poor Home in Delhi.

(b) The provision made in Lucknow was considered when the Delhi scheme was drawn up.

TEST FOR MINISTERIAL STAFF IN THE INCOME-TAX OFFICES IN SIND.

182. *Seth Sukhdev : (a) Will the Honourable the Finance Member be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the Income-tax Commissioner, Bombay, introduced a test for the ministerial staff in Income-tax Offices in Sind in 1944 ?

(b) Is it a fact that clerks in the lower grade irrespective of age or service were required to appear for the test ?

(c) Is the Honourable Member aware that some persons who were on the eve of retirement were reverted for not securing a certain standard in the test ?

(d) Is it a fact that the persons who were reverted were subsequently promoted after a year or so, ignoring the result of the said test ?

(e) If the reply to part (d) is in the affirmative, why were they not allowed the difference of pay due to them for the intervening period ?

Sir John Sheehy: (a) and (b). The Honourable Member's attention is invited, to the replies to parts (a) and (b) of his question No. 1044, on the 19th March, 1946.

(c) I am not aware of any such cases.

(d) Yes; some persons have been so promoted to officiate temporarily, as it was not possible to secure more efficient men to fill the posts which had to be filled to try and clear the arrears.

(e) Because they did not hold during the intervening period the posts carrying the higher pay and discharge the duties pertaining to those posts.

NEW SCALES OF PAY FOR OLD CLERKS IN INCOME-TAX OFFICE, SIND WHO WERE REVERTED AND THEN PROMOTED

183. *Seth Sukhdev : (a) Will the Honourable the Finance Member be pleased to state if it is a fact that on introduction of the new scales of pay from the 1st January, 1945, the salaries of the old clerks in the Income-tax Offices in Sind and Baluchistan who were reverted and subsequently promoted were re-fixed on the new scales ?

(b) If the reply to part (a) is in the affirmative, why were their salaries fixed at a lower stage than their juniors, in spite of their longer service in higher grades ?

(c) Is the Honourable Member aware that on introduction of new posts of Upper Division Clerks in Sind and Baluchistan, senior persons, though performing more important duties, are drawing less salaries than their juniors doing less important duties ? If so, why ?

(d) Do Government propose to afford relief to the affected staff ?

Sir John Sheehy: (a) Yes.

(b) This happened in some individual cases under the ordinary application of the rules, because they did not have a substantive right to the higher scale of pay; but when the hardship was brought to the notice of Government special orders to remove it were issued.

(c) I am not aware of any such cases.

(d) Does not arise.

IMPROVEMENT AND MARKETING OF BETEL-NUTS.

184. *Sri A. Menon : (a) Will the Honourable the Finance Member be pleased to state what grant was allotted for the purpose of financing measures designed to improve the production and marketing of betel-nuts for 1946-47? And what is the amount spent so far for the purpose?

(b) Were any applications for help received from duly constituted Co-operative Societies or other recognised bodies of betel-nut growers of the Malabar District received by Government? Was any help given to them?

(c) Do Government propose to call for a report from the Madras Government on the working of the above Society or Societies, and if the reports are favourable, to render them aid before the betel-nut season is over?

Sir John Sheehy: The question should have been addressed to the Secretary of the Agriculture Department. It has accordingly been transferred to the list of questions for the 11th November, 1946, when it will be answered by the Secretary of the Agriculture Department.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SARGENT REPORT.

185. *Mr. Madandhari Singh : Will the Honourable Member for Education be pleased to lay on the table of the House a comprehensive statement indicating the action that has been taken or is proposed to be taken on the principal recommendations of the Sargent Report?

The Honourable Sri C. Rajagopalachari: A fairly comprehensive statement is laid on the table of the House.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.

Statement indicating the action that has been taken or is proposed to be taken on the principal recommendations of the Report of the Central Advisory Board of Education (Sargent Report) on Post-War Educational Development in India.

The Report of the Central Advisory Board of Education on Post-War Educational Development in India popularly called the Sargent Report was published in January 1944. In October 1945 the Government of India accepted generally, the principles and the objects of the Report.

The decision of the Government of India was conveyed to the Provincial Governments and they were asked to prepare their educational development plans in the light of the main recommendations of the Central Advisory Board of Education. All the Provincial Governments with the exception of that of N.-W. F. P. have now prepared their first five year programme of educational expansion. The Centrally Administered Areas and the Central Government have also prepared their five year plans, which are complementary to the plans prepared by the Provinces. This entire programme proposed involves a total expenditure of Rs. 125 crores approximately. The schemes are being examined by this Government with a view to according their final approval. Some of the plans received from the Provincial Governments are still tentative but their finalised plans are expected very shortly.

The Provincial Governments have been requested to embark forthwith on schemes selected out of the Five-Year Plans, which are of an urgent character. As far as Education is concerned, schemes regarding higher technical education, the training of teachers and educational facilities for ex-servicemen received high priority. These schemes have been examined by the Government of India and those found suitable have been sanctioned for immediate execution.

In the first quinquennium a reasonable provision has been made in the Provincial and Central Plans towards the following essential requirements:—

1. *Universal Compulsory and free basic (Primary and Middle) education for all boys and girls between the ages of 6-14.*—The Provincial and Central schemes of basic education cater both for boys and girls except in Sind and N.-W. F. P. whose plans have not yet been finalised. Bihar, Orissa, Madras, the United Provinces and the Centrally Administered Areas have agreed to provide for compulsory basic (primary and middle) education in due course for the entire age-group of 6-14; the remaining Provincial Governments have not made it clear if it is their objective to cater for the entire age-group 6-14 though they have made provision for the age-group 6-11 in the first instance. The rate of progress is mainly

determined by the availability of trained teachers. The total expenditure proposed in the Provincial plans on basic (primary and middle) education, including indirect expenditure on the training of teachers, inspection, school meals, amounts to Rs. 56.95 crores (Rs. 20.52 crores capital and Rs. 36.43 crores recurring) which is about 58 per cent. of the total expenditure on Provincial education schemes. The total expenditure on basic (primary and middle) education during the quinquennium in Central areas will approximate to Rs. 1.9 crores (Capital Rs. 1.14 crores, recurring Rs. .79 crores).

Most Provinces have also agreed that the education to be imparted at earlier stages, would be through the medium of creative activities.

2. Technical and Commercial Education.—The Government of India have initiated a scheme in co-operation with the Provincial Governments under which they are sending approximately 500 scholars each year abroad for higher technical training and scientific research. It would cost the Central Government approximately Rs. 3.60 crores over the five year period. An All-India Council for Technical Education has already been set up to make a survey of the needs of the country as a whole and recommend ways and means to meet her urgent requirements. The Provinces have made the following additional provision in the five-year period :

(1) Establishment of 160 new Institutions (105 Junior Technical and Vocational Schools, 35 Technical High Schools, 16 Polytechnics and 4 Engineering Colleges.)

(2) Expansion and re-organisation of 32 Junior Technical Institutions, 12 Technical High Schools and 10 Engineering Colleges.

The total capital expenditure for the above schemes will amount to Rs. 7.1 crores and the recurring expenditure in the five year period will total to Rs. 4.43 crores and the ultimate recurring expenditure per year will be about 2.14 crores. While the Provincial plans propose generally to improve facilities for turning semi-skilled and skilled craftsmen, foremen and chargemen and some engineers, the training of high grade engineers and technologists (designers, planners, research workers, production experts, etc.) to take up positions of trust and responsibility in industry will be provided by the two proposed Central Higher Technological Institutions each with an annual output of 1,000 engineers and technologists costing 3 crores in capital and .46 crores annually in recurring expenditure. The Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, and the Delhi Polytechnic will also be strengthened considerably. These four institutions together with other Provincial colleges will ensure an annual output of about 4,000 engineers and technologists in the quinquennium. It is also proposed to set up a Technical Teachers' Training College to train teachers for Technical High Schools and Senior Technical Institution. The Central schemes are expected to cost about Rs. 8.48 crores in capital and Rs. 2.96 crores total recurring expenditure over five years and with an ultimate recurring expenditure of Rs. 1.06 crores per year.

The Provincial and Central schemes for the five year period on technical education will involve an expenditure of about Rs. 23 crores (capital Rs. 16 crores and recurring Rs. 7 crores).

3. Adult Education.—The expenditure proposed by Provincial Governments on Adult Education in the first quinquennium is Rs. 2.10 crores which is about 2.2 per cent. of the total expenditure on all provincial education schemes.

4. University Education and Research.—It is proposed to spend approximately Rs. 2.54 crores on the three Universities (Delhi Rs. 1.14 crores, Aligarh Rs. 70 lakhs and Benares Rs. 70 lakhs) during the quinquennium to strengthen the Universities and bring them upto the standard prevalent in other educationally advanced countries. Benares and Aligarh Universities will be assisted to set up a Medical College each to teach up to the degree standard. Provincial Governments in their development plans have made some provision for strengthening the provincial universities. They propose to spend approximately Rs. 5.24 crores in the next quinquennium.

The National Institute of Sciences will advise the Government of India on all scientific matters. It is also contemplated to give substantial grant-in-aid to all-India research Institutes which are in a position to promote higher scientific research and it is proposed to spend about Rs. 75 lakhs for promotion of scientific research in educational institutions in the quinquennium.

Other Educational Schemes.—The Five-Year Plans also include a reasonable provision for strengthening secondary education with a view to meeting the requirements of professional and technical colleges, for the training of teachers and for the improvement of the health of the School child. Special attention has been paid to women's education to make up for the present deficiency.

The Department of Education of the Government of India have also prepared a number of schemes which have been approved by the Co-ordination Committee of the Cabinet. It is proposed to start a post-graduate Training College for men and women, a Training College for Physical Education and to reorganize the present Lady Irwin College for Domestic Science, by next year in Delhi. A grant has been paid to Visva-Bharati for training of teachers on the lines recommended by the Board and a grant is being paid for the same purpose to Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi, where a scheme for training of teachers has already started. A proposal for reorganising the Marris College of Hindustani Music, Lucknow on an all India basis is also under consideration in the Department of Education.

CONTROL ON CAPITAL ISSUES.

†186. *Mr. Vadilal Lallubhai: Will the Honourable the Finance Member be pleased to explain the necessity of continuing the control on Capital Issues even now when the war has ended?

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar: The control is being continued as offering a first instalment of a National Investment Policy designed to secure a balanced investment of the country's resources in industry, agriculture and the social services.

INDIAN TROOPS IN IRAN.

187. *Dr. Zia Uddin Ahmad: Will the Defence Secretary be pleased to state:

(a) if it is a fact that both Congress and Muslim League have been demanding that Indian troops should not be sent abroad;

(b) if it is a fact that the Interim Government gave its consent for sending the Indian troops to Iran; and

(c) whether Government propose to take steps to see the withdrawal of all the troops?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No orders for sending troops to Iran were passed by the present Government; in fact, there are no Indian troops in that country.

(c) Steps are being taken for the progressive withdrawal of Indian troops abroad.

Khan Mohammad Yamin Khan: Does the Honourable Member know that a convention was started in 1938 in which the then Viceroy agreed that no Indian troops would be sent outside India except with the consent and after consultation with the Party Leaders in this House?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: Yes, Sir. This question referred particularly to the despatch of troops to Iran. If you permit me, Sir, I am prepared to answer the question now raised in a general way.

Khan Mohammad Yamin Khan: When the convention is in existence, why there are any troops outside India and how is it that these troops have been sent away?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: A statement was made on the floor of the House that in so far as considerations of time and secrecy permit the Government will consult the Legislature before Indian troops are sent overseas for purposes not connected with the defence of India.

Mr. Manu Subedar: Will the Honourable Defence Secretary or the Honourable Defence Member take an opportunity sometime during this session to make a clear statement to this House on the constitutional disabilities of India in regard to military matters generally and particularly in regard to the despatch and withdrawal of Indian troops from abroad?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: We will examine the suggestion.

Dr. Zia Uddin Ahmad: Will the Honourable Member explain the position? In one part of his answer he says there are no Indian troops in Iran, and in another part he says that steps are being taken for the progressive withdrawal of Indian troops from abroad.

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: Part (b) of the question referred to the despatch of troops to Iran, whereas part (c) is in general terms, whether Government propose to take steps to see the withdrawal of all the troops. This we understood to imply that it referred not only to troops in Iran, but in other places.

†Answer to this question laid on the table, the questioner being absent.

TRAINING OF INDIAN PERSONNEL FOR THE ARMED FORCES.

188. *Dr. Zia Uddin Ahmad : (a) Will the Defence Secretary please lay on the table of the House a statement about the steps which he is contemplating to take for the training of Indian Personnel for Army, Navy and Air forces ?

(b) Will the training for the three categories of the fighting forces be common or separate ?

(c) How many Indians are competent to take the command of brigade and regiments ?

(d) What is the policy of the Government of India in appointing foreigners non-Britishers and non-Indians for the defence of India ?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: (a) and (b). Officers.—The intention of Government is that on the opening of the National War Academy the majority of officers will start their training together at this institution. On completion of their Academy course, they will be granted commissions and thereafter training in all three Services will be continuous throughout an officer's career. It will consist partly of training in units, and partly of courses of instruction at various schools. All three Services have established in India Service schools for various specialised training. Training is normally separate for each Service but there are from time to time joint inter-Service exercises, and inter-Service training problems are co-ordinated by an inter-Service training committee. Broadly speaking all training is carried out in India and from Indian resources, except in the case of a few highly specialised officers who still have to go to the United Kingdom.

Other Ranks.—All training of ratings and other ranks, both basic and specialised training, is given in this country, although occasionally ratings from the Royal Indian Navy are sent to the U. K. for instruction in duties not previously undertaken by the R.I.N., *e.g.*, on manning cruisers. But the same principle is followed for other ranks as for officers in that training is continuous in units and specialists are deputed from time to time to specialist schools.

(c) So far, in accordance with the normal machinery, seven Indians have been accepted as suitable for command of brigades or sub-areas, and 82 for command of regiments or battalions.

(d) The policy of the Government of India is not to appoint any foreigners except as Advisers or in technical jobs.

Shri Sri Prakasa: With reference to part (a), will the Honourable Member kindly let us know what training is given to Vice-Chancellors of Indian Universities before they are conferred the title of Lieut.-Col.? Are the Government also satisfied with the manner in which they put on their ill-fitting uniforms?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: I am not sure whether this derision is deserved by the Vice-Chancellors. I suggest that this supplementary question does not arise out of this question.

Shri Sri Prakasa: This part (a) of the question refers to the training of Indian Personnel for Army, Navy and Air forces?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: This 'Indian Personnel', we take it as meaning personnel in the defence services and not non-official gentlemen.

Dr. Zia Uddin Ahmad: May I suggest that if my Honourable friend is so anxious he can take these titles? But I wish to ask

Mr. President: No more question on this point.

Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi: May I know, out of seven Brigadiers, how many belong to each section of the population of this country?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: I am afraid I must ask for notice of that question.

Lt.-Col. Dr. J. C. Chatterjee: With reference to part (a) may I know whether it is the intention of the Government to close down the academy in Dehra Dun after the new Academy has been established?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: Government have not yet received the report of the National War Academy Committee. So far as one can see at present it is the intention, that on the establishment of the National War Academy that we envisage, the academy at Dehra Dun will be probably converted into a feeder school.

Mr. Ahmed E. H. Jaffer: Is there any truth in the rumour that the National War Academy is going to be shifted from Poona to the North?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: The Government have not yet received the report of the National War Academy Committee and they have not yet come to any final decision on this question.

Mr. Ahmed E. H. Jaffer: Is it finally decided to establish this National War Academy at Poona?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: That is the tentative decision of the Government.

Lt.-Col. Dr. J. C. Chatterjee: In reply to the supplementary question asked by me, may I ask further, whether the Honourable Member considers that one training academy whether at Poona or elsewhere would be sufficient for the needs of training officers in all the three branches of the armed service for so vast a country as India?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: Sir, that was prominently the question which was referred to the committee for advice by Government and when the report is received by Government, I have no doubt that the question will be re-examined finally.

Sardar Mangal Singh: May I have an assurance that at least this report will not be treated as secret?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: No, Sir, the report will be made public.

Shri Mohan Lal Saksena: Will this House be given an opportunity to discuss the report?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: If the House so desires, Government will certainly have no objection; but I thought it would suffice if the report were first placed before the Defence Consultative Committee which is a Committee of this House.

(b) WRITTEN ANSWERS

ABOLITION OF SALT TAX.

189. *Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal : Will the Honourable the Finance Member be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the present Government have considered the question of abolishing Salt Tax ;

(b) whether Government are aware of the demand and desire in the country for the abolition of the said tax as early as possible ;

(c) how the consideration of the matter stands at present ; and

(d) the difficulties, if any, standing in the way of immediate abolition of the said tax ?

Sir John Sheehy: (a) to (d). The Honourable the Finance Member hopes to be able to make a statement shortly.

PERMISSION FOR CAPITAL ISSUES.

190. *Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal : Will the Honourable the Finance Member be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that complaints are frequently made about discriminatory treatment in the matter of granting permission for capital issues ; and

(b) whether Government propose to have an *ad hoc* committee for supervising capital issues and for going into the complaints ?

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar: (a) The Government have received no complaint of discriminatory treatment.

(b) The Government have not considered such a course necessary.

INFLATION DUE TO ABNORMAL NUMBER OF CURRENCY NOTES IN CIRCULATION.

191. *Mr. P. B. Gole : Will the Honourable the Finance Member be pleased to state :

(a) the amount, in currency notes in circulation in 1939 and the amount in currency notes in circulation at present ;

(b) whether Government are aware that the abnormal number of notes in circulation constitutes inflationary danger affecting prices of even essential commodities ;

(c) whether Government propose to take steps in order to bring down inflation ; and

(d) the highest figure in money of notes in circulation after the cessation of hostilities ?

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar: (a) The note circulation in 1939 averaged Rs. 186.49 crores.

The note circulation on the 25th October 1946, which is the latest date for which information is available, was Rs. 1,195.18 crores.

(b) The danger does not arise in the case of most of the essential commodities as their prices are controlled. Other commodities which are not subject to price control are doubtless exposed to inflationary pressure on prices in present circumstances.

(c) I would refer the Honourable Member to the reply to Dr. Zia Uddin Ahmad's starred question No. 105, on the 30th October, 1946.

(d) The highest figure was reached in June 1946, when it amounted to Rs. 1,241.97 crores.

NOTICES UNDER U. P. TOWN IMPROVEMENT ACT ON RESIDENTS OF DELHI, WARD No. 14 (SERAI PURANI IDGAH SCHEME).

192. *Sri R. Venkatasubba Reddiar : (a) Will the Honourable the Member for Health be pleased to state whether notices issued under sections 36 and 38 of the United Provinces Town Improvement Act 1919, as extended to the Province of Delhi have been served on the residents of Delhi, Ward No. 14 (Serai Purani Idgah Scheme, Part I) to enforce the said scheme ?

(b) In view of the fact that housing problem in Delhi is very acute, do Government propose to withdraw the scheme in the interest of the people who will otherwise be adversely affected ; if not ; why not ?

Mr. S. H. Y. Oulnam : (a) Notices under section 36 of the Act have been served but the scheme has not yet been sanctioned.

(b) The matter is under consideration.

PROTEST AGAINST THE SERAI PURANI IDGAH SCHEME, PART I, IN DELHI.

193. *Sri R. Venkatasubba Reddiar : (a) Is the Honourable the Member for Health aware of the fact that a representation from the inhabitants of Ward No. 14, Delhi, was sent to the Chairman, Delhi Improvement Trust, on the 31st March, 1942, protesting against the Serai Purani Idgah Scheme, Part I ?

(b) Are Government aware that in reply to the representation referred in part (a) above, the Chairman, Delhi Improvement Trust, in his letter No. G/46(6)42, dated the 16th April, 1942, promised to give the inhabitants a chance to put their objections before the Committee appointed by the Trust ?

(c) Has any such Committee been appointed for hearing objections? If not, when the same is likely to be appointed?

(d) Has the Committee actually resumed hearing objections from people? If so, what its result is?

Mr. S. H. Y. Oulsnam: (a) No joint representation was received by the Chairman, Delhi Improvement Trust, but a number of individual objections to the scheme were received in the office of the Trust in February and March 1942.

(b) Yes. A reply to that effect was addressed to one of the people who made representations.

(c) and (d). Yes. A committee of three Trustees was appointed in May 1942. It met on the 20th November, 1942, and heard the objections from the various persons concerned. The committee's recommendations regarding each objection were taken into consideration by the Delhi Improvement Trust.

REPRESENTATIONS AGAINST THE SERAI PURANI IDGAH SCHEME IN DELHI.

194. *Sri B. Venkatasubba Reddiar: Has the Honourable the Member for Health received any representation from the residents of Ward No. 14, Delhi, during the month of October 1946, against the Serai Purani Idgah Scheme, Part I? If so, do Government propose to take steps to redress their grievances? If not, why not?

Mr. S. H. Y. Oulsnam: Yes. The matter is under consideration.

STEPS TO CHECK THE RISING OF PRICES AND WAGES.

195. *Mr. Manu Subedar: (a) Will the Honourable the Finance Member please state what steps Government are taking in order to check the rising spiral of prices and wages?

(b) What steps Government are taking to deal with the menace of unspent money represented by a large pile of deposits in banks in India?

(c) What is the total amount of Treasury Bills outstanding up to the 30th of September 1946?

(d) What is the total debt of India upto the 30th of September 1946?

(e) How much of the 3½ per cent Paper was converted and how much was paid out in cash?

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar: (a) and (b). I would refer the Honourable Member to the reply to Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad's starred question No. 105, on the 30th October, 1946.

(c) Rs. 77 crores.

(d) Rs. 1,523 crores approximately.

(e) On the basis of the advices received so far, out of a total outstanding balance of Rs. 273 crores of the 3½ per cent. paper, about Rs. 257 crores has been converted and Rs. two crores paid out in cash.

REASONS FOR MAINTAINING CAPITAL CONTROL.

196. *Mr. Manu Subedar: (a) Will the Honourable the Finance Member please state why Government are maintaining the capital control?

(b) Have Government got any plan, which will enable them to give priority to enterprises necessary for the country and check outlay in directions, which are unnecessary or which can be postponed and delayed?

(c) What is the total number of companies and the capital issued by them in each of the years 1943-44, 1944-45, 1945-46 and 1946-47 (upto 30th September 1946),

(d) What is the amount of money directed to be placed in Government securities under these provisions?

(e) When do Government propose to release these funds and have Government considered the full effect of such release and provided for it?

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar: (a) The control, which was introduced as a war-time measure, is being continued as offering a first instalment of a National Investment Policy designed to secure a balanced investment of the country's resources in industry, agriculture and the social services.

(b) No such plan as is referred to has been worked out to cover the whole field of capital expenditure, but the control is exercised to ensure that there is no capital issue for schemes which are contrary to the development plans which have been prepared for any field by the Central or Provincial Government.

(c) The statistics recorded by the Examiner of Capital Issues are not available by financial years. They show that consent orders were passed in favour of the following total amounts:

From 17th May 1943, when the control began, to 30th September 1945, 260 crores and 36 lakhs of rupees (3,784 companies);

1st October 1945 to 30th September 1946, 206 crores and 41 lakhs of rupees (856 companies).

It will be realised that the figures do not represent the amount of capital actually subscribed under these consent orders, still less the amount actually paid up.

(d) Orders have been issued to date imposing the condition about investment in respect of a total of 195 crores of rupees. The condition becomes effective only as the capital is subscribed and paid-up; and the amount actually invested up-to-date is about 18 crores.

(e) The Government propose to release these funds as and when the payments for which they have been earmarked (usually imported machinery) fall due. The Government have considered the probable effect of the releases but have concluded that no special provision is necessary, as the process of release will be a gradual one.

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MUSLIMS IN THE ARMY.

197. *Mr. Ahmed E. H. Jaffer : (a) Will the Secretary of the Defence Department be pleased to state if Government have received any complaints during the recent weeks of concrete instances showing how Muslims are discriminated against in the Army?

(b) Do Government propose to make their policy and the position clear and remove all doubts by concrete action that no such policy of discrimination is in force and that Government's policy is not anti-Muslim in any sense?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: (a) Government are not aware of any complaints made during recent weeks giving concrete instances of discrimination against Muslims in the Army. There have, however, been a few press reports of such discrimination which were investigated and found to be incorrect.

(b) I can assure the Honourable Member that the policy of Government is entirely non-communal and is in no sense anti-Muslim.

PERMANENT COMMISSION IN THE ROYAL INDIAN NAVY TO MUSLIMS.

198. *Mr. Ahmed E. H. Jaffer : (a) Will the Secretary of the Defence Department be pleased to state if he is aware that in the Royal Indian Navy about 65 per cent of its ratings are Muslims and that about 35 per cent of its Commissioned cadets including war time personnel are Muslims?

(b) Are Government aware that recently selections have been made in order to recruit fit candidates from the Emergency Commissioned Ranks and that 150 permanent Commissions in the Royal Indian Navy have been granted out of which only ten have gone to Muslims?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: (a) No, Sir. On the 1st of October 1946, 40.3 per cent. of the ratings in the RIN were Muslims. On the same date 20.4 per cent. of the officers were Muslims.

(b) No, Sir. The percentage of Muslim applicants amongst those applying for permanent commissions was 14.33. The number actually selected was 23 out of a total of 156 or about 15 per cent.

STRICTURES BY MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT ON JUDGE ADVOCATE OF INDIA.

199. *Mr. Ahmed E. H. Jaffer : (a) Will the Secretary of the Defence Department please state if Government are aware of the strictures passed by many Members of Parliament recently in the House of Commons upon the Judge Advocate of India and his Deputy ?

(b) Have Government received any communication from the War Office, London, in this connection and if so, does he propose to place all the correspondence on the table of the House ?

(c) Do Government propose to appoint a Committee to go into the whole question of legal procedure and other questions in regard to the trial of Members of the Services at Court Martials in India ?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: (a) The reference to India in the statement by the Secretary of State for War was an error. The trials in question were conducted under the orders of the Commander-in-Chief ALFSEA and India was in no way concerned.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.

OBJECTION BY BOMBAY MUSLIMS TO THE USE BY ALL-INDIA RADIO OF SANSKRITISED HINDUSTANI.

200. *Mr. Ahmed E. H. Jaffer : (a) Will the Honourable Member for Information and Broadcasting be pleased to state if he is aware that Bombay Muslims as a body have stated that the All India Radio is using Sanskritised Hindustani and is also using the prefix "Mahatma" before the name of Mr. Gandhi and that instructions have been given to the All India Radio that "Qaid-e-Azam" must never be used before the name of Mr. Jinnah ?

(b) Do Government propose to issue instructions to the All India Radio to avoid this discrimination in future ?

The Honourable Sri C. Rajagopalachari: (a) and (b). No such representation has been received from the Bombay Muslims as a body as stated in the question. As to prefixes, the matter has been dealt with in the reply given by Sir Akbar Hydari to Nawab Siddique Ali Khan's starred question No. 1293, in the Legislative Assembly on the 27th March, 1946. No change of procedure has been ordered in this respect. Government do not propose to issue any further instructions in regard to the prefixes when mentioning the names of eminent men. Such prefixes are in accordance with common usage and a prefix which is universally used becomes part of the name. No discrimination is either intended or involved.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

SHORTAGE OF MATCHES IN BENGAL.

30. Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal : Will the Honourable the Finance Member be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware of the acute shortage of matches in Bengal ;

(b) the reasons for such shortage ; and

(c) what steps are being taken for relieving the situation ?

Sir John Sheehy: The question should have been addressed to the Honourable Member for Industries and Supplies. It has accordingly been transferred to the list of questions for the 11th November 1946, when it will be answered by the Honourable Member for Industries and Supplies.

**PROVISION FOR ACCOMMODATION OF RESIDENTS OF SERAI PURANI
IDGAH, DELHI.**

31. Sri N. Narayanamurthi : (a) Will the Honourable Member for Health be pleased to state when the residents of Serai Purani Idgah Scheme Part I, Ward No. 14, Delhi, will be actually required to vacate their houses ?

(b) In what locality do Government propose to house the inhabitants of Serai Purani Idgah Scheme Part I, Delhi, after vacating their houses ?

(c) Do Government propose to provide the residents of Serai Purani Idgah Scheme Part I, Delhi, with houses constructed by Government under the Delhi Re-housing Scheme ? If so, how these Government houses are to be distributed ?

Mr. S. H. Y. Oulsnam : (a) The scheme has not yet been finally approved and it is not possible at present to state when the residents of Ward No. 14 will be required to vacate their houses.

(b) The matter is under the consideration of the Delhi Improvement Trust and no final decision has yet been reached.

(c) The Delhi Improvement Trust will offer alternative accommodation to those persons who are entitled to the benefits of the state-aided rehousing scheme.

**GOVERNMENT HOUSES FOR POOR OF SERAI PURANI IDGAH, DELHI, UNDER THE
DELHI RE-HOUSING SCHEME.**

32. Sri N. Narayanamurthi : (a) Will the Honourable Member for Health please lay on the table of the House a copy of the revised conditions under which poor men will be provided with Government houses ?

(b) Do Government propose to give an assurance to those people of Serai Purani Idgah Scheme Part I, Delhi, whose property is acquired that they will be provided with suitable accommodation under the Delhi Re-housing Scheme? If not, why ?

Mr. S. H. Y. Oulsnam : (a) The detailed conditions under which persons shall be eligible for the benefits of the rehousing scheme are still under consideration of the Trust.

(b) Only persons whose income does not exceed Rs. 50 a month will be provided with accommodation under the rehousing scheme.

PROVISION OF ELECTRICITY AND WATER UNDER THE DELHI RE-HOUSING SCHEME.

33. Sri N. Narayanamurthi : Will the Honourable Member for Health be pleased to state if Government propose to provide the amenities of life in the shape of electricity and water to people who come under the Delhi Re-housing Scheme which has been contemplated by the Delhi Improvement Trust ?

Mr. S. H. Y. Oulsnam : Arrangements for the provision of water and electricity in the areas where the houses will be constructed will be made by the Improvement Trust.

**COMPENSATION SCHEDULE FOR ACQUIRED HOUSES BY THE DELHI
IMPROVEMENT TRUST.**

34. Sri N. Narayanamurthi : Will the Honourable Member for Health be pleased to lay on the table of the House a copy of the Schedule according to which compensation will be paid to those whose land and property will be acquired by the Delhi Improvement Trust ?

Mr. S. H. Y. Oulsnam : Compensation is assessed in accordance with the provisions of section 23 of the Land Acquisition Act, 1894, as modified by the Schedule to the United Provinces Town Improvement Act, 1919, as extended to Delhi.

BUILDINGS IN WARD No. 14, DELHI, NOT ACQUIRED BY DELHI IMPROVEMENT TRUST.

35. Sri N. Narayanamurthi : Will the Honourable Member for Health please lay on the table of the House a list of buildings in Ward No. 14, Delhi which have not been acquired by the Delhi Improvement Trust ?

Mr. S. H. Y. Oulsnam : Information has been called for and will be furnished to the House when received.

SHORT NOTICE QUESTION AND ANSWER

PURCHASE OF GRAIN FROM UNITED STATES.

Seth Govind Das: (a) Will the Secretary of the Food Department please state whether he has seen the news item in the *Statesman* of the 12 Noon, 30th October, 1946, that India will have to buy grain direct in the United States Market?

(b) Will such purchases cost the same as hitherto or will they have to be made at a higher rate due to competition in the open grain market of the United States of America?

(c) Will India be a loser on this account? If so, to what extent?

(d) Will foodgrains be available in sufficient quantities or at least in the same quantity which the Government of the United States of America had promised to dispatch to India?

Mr. B. R. Sen: Yes, Sir; I have seen the news item referred to. We have, however received a message from our Agent-General in Washington this morning to say that the new procedure will not apply to wheat which will continue to be purchased by the Department of Agriculture as before. The other parts of the question do not, therefore, arise.

Seth Govind Das: Is only wheat going to be imported from the United States or any other grain also?

Mr. B. R. Sen: No, Sir. At present wheat is purchased by the Department of Agriculture of the United States for the countries to which that wheat is allotted. This news item stated that for all grains the importers from the United States would have to go to the market and not the Department of Agriculture.

ELECTION OF A MEMBER TO STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIES AND SUPPLIES

The Honourable Dr. John Matthai (Member for Industries and Supplies): Sir, I beg to move:

"That this Assembly do proceed to elect, in such manner as the Honourable the President may direct, one non-official member to serve on the Standing Advisory Committee to advise on subjects with which the Department of Industries and Supplies is concerned, during the unexpired portion of the current financial year, *vice* Shaikh Rafiuddin Ahmad Siddique resigned."

Mr. President: The question is:

"That this Assembly do proceed to elect, in such manner as the Honourable the President may direct, one non-official member to serve on the Standing Advisory Committee to advise on subjects with which the Department of Industries and Supplies is concerned, during the unexpired portion of the current financial year, *vice* Shaikh Rafiuddin Ahmad Siddique resigned."

The motion was adopted.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO DEFENCE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Mr. G. S. Bhalja (Secretary, Defence Department): Sir, I beg to move:

"That this Assembly do proceed to elect, in such manner as the Honourable the President may direct, three non-official members to serve on the Defence Consultative Committee, *vice* Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan, Mr. M. Asaf Ali, now members of the Cabinet and Shree Sarat Chandra Bose, resigned."

Mr. President: Motion moved:

"That this Assembly do proceed to elect, in such manner as the Honourable the President may direct, three non-official members to serve on the Defence Consultative Committee, *vice* Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan, Mr. M. Asaf Ali, now members of the Cabinet and Shree Sarat Chandra Bose, resigned."

Prof. N. G. Ranga (Guntur *cum* Nellore: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I should like to know how often the Defence Consultative Committee has met since the House adjourned last session and what work it transacted. I thought we were given an understanding by the department concerned that a short summary of their proceedings would be circulated among the Members of the House and I do not know whether any such summary has been at all circulated.

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: Sir, I was advised that on this motion I should not make any statement and that is why I did not think it worth while taking the time of the House. But as my Honourable friend wants to have details I shall gladly give them. After the last Committee was elected by this House two meetings were held, one on the 8th March 1946, and the other on the 12th and 13th April 1946. The meeting of the 8th March 1946 discussed the Royal Indian Navy mutinies. On the 12th and 13th April 1946 among the items discussed were the future officering of the defence services of India, the future of Viceroy's Commissioned Officers, policy regarding the retention of Gurkha units in the post war forces, the progress of demobilisation in the three services, purchase of cruisers for the Royal Indian Navy, the Women's Auxiliary Corps (India)—organisation during the war and future policy after the war, and the progress made by the Indian National War Academy Committee.

Mr. Ahmed E. H. Jaffer (Bombay Southern Division: Muhammadan Rural): Sir, may I take it that there was no meeting of this Committee held in the last six months since April? If so, is there no matter of urgency and importance to be placed before it, in view of so many problems arising in regard to the post-war army in India? Why was no meeting held in six months?

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: Our intention is to call a meeting at the earliest possible date. But, as the House is aware, three vacancies have arisen; and in respect of the Members of the Upper House the election is to be held for the year 1946-47 as soon as that House meets. Members of that House elected on the last occasion have ceased to be members of the Committee, and it was not considered desirable to proceed with a Committee on which there was no representation of the other House and which three Members of this House would not be able to attend.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That this Assembly do proceed to elect, in such manner as the Honourable the President may direct, three non-official members to serve on the Defence Consultative Committee, *vice* Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan, Mr. M. Asaf Ali, now members of the Cabinet and Shree Sarat Chandra Bose, resigned."

The motion was adopted.

Mr. President: I have to inform Honourable Members that for the purpose of election of one Member to the Standing Advisory Committee for the Department of Industries and Supplies and three Members to the Defence Consultative Committee, the Notice Office will be open to receive nominations upto 12 Noon on Wednesday, the 6th November and that the elections if necessary will be held on Friday, the 8th November. The elections, which will be conducted in accordance with the Regulations for the holding of elections by means of the single transferable vote, will be held in the Assistant Secretary's room in the Council House, between the hours of 10.30 A.M. and 1. P.M.

BANKING COMPANIES (RESTRICTION OF BRANCHES) BILL.

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar (Government of India: Nominated Official): Sir, I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill to restrict the opening and removal of branches by banking companies.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill to restrict the opening and removal of branches by banking companies."

The motion was adopted.

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar: Sir, I introduce the Bill.

RESERVE BANK OF INDIA (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar (Government of India: Nominated Official): Sir, I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934.

Mr. President: The question is:

“That leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934.”

The motion was adopted.

Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar: Sir, I introduce the Bill.

FOREIGNERS BILL.

The Honourable Sri C. Rajagopalachari (Member for Education and Arts): Sir, on behalf of the Honourable the Home Member I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill to confer upon the Central Government certain powers in respect of foreigners.

Mr. President: The question is:

“That leave be granted to introduce a Bill to confer upon the Central Government certain powers in respect of foreigners.”

The motion was adopted.

The Honourable Sri C. Rajagopalachari: Sir, I introduce the Bill.

INDIAN EXTRADITION (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The Honourable Sri C. Rajagopalachari (Member for Education and Arts): Sir, I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the Indian Extradition Act, 1903.

Mr. President: The question is:

“That leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the Indian Extradition Act, 1903.”

The motion was adopted.

The Honourable Sri C. Rajagopalachari: Sir, I introduce the Bill.

DELHI SPECIAL POLICE ESTABLISHMENT BILL

The Honourable Sri C. Rajagopalachari (Member for Education and Arts): Sir, I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill to make provision for the constitution of a special police force for the Chief Commissioner's Province of Delhi for the investigation of certain offences committed in connection with matters concerning Departments of the Central Government, for the superintendence and administration of the said force and for the extension to other areas in British India of the powers and jurisdiction of members of the said force in regard to the investigation of the said offences.

Mr. President: The question is:

“That leave be granted to introduce a Bill to make provision for the constitution of a special police force for the Chief Commissioner's Province of Delhi for the investigation of certain offences committed in connection with matters concerning Departments of the Central Government, for the superintendence and administration of the said force and for the extension to other areas in British India of the powers and jurisdiction of members of the said force in regard to the investigation of the said offences.”

The motion was adopted.

The Honourable Sri C. Rajagopalachari: Sir, I introduce the Bill.

INDIAN RAILWAYS (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The Honourable Mr. M. Asaf Ali (Member for Railways and Transport): Sir, I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the Indian Railways Act, 1890.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the Indian Railways Act, 1890."

The motion was adopted.

The Honourable Mr. M. Asaf Ali: Sir, I introduce the Bill.

SPECIAL TRIBUNALS (SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS) BILL.

The Honourable Mr. Jogendra Nath Mandal (Law Member): Sir, I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill to make certain provisions in relation to sentences and orders passed by Special Tribunals constituted under the Criminal Law Amendment Ordinance, 1943, on such Tribunals ceasing to function.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill to make certain provisions in relation to sentences and orders passed by Special Tribunals constituted under the Criminal Law Amendment Ordinance, 1943, on such Tribunals ceasing to function."

The motion was adopted.

The Honourable Mr. Jogendra Nath Mandal: Sir, I introduce the Bill.

INDIAN ARMY AND THE INDIAN AIR FORCE (AMENDMENT) BILL.

Mr. G. S. Bhalja (Secretary, Defence Department): Sir, I beg to introduce a Bill further to amend the Indian Army Act, 1911, and the Indian Air Force Act, 1932, for certain purposes and to make certain consequential amendments to the Administrator General's Act, 1913.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the Indian Army Act, 1911, and the Indian Air Force Act, 1932, for certain purposes and to make certain consequential amendments to the Administrator General's Act, 1913."

The motion was adopted.

Mr. G. S. Bhalja: Sir, I introduce the Bill.

MOTION RE FOOD SITUATION.

Mr. B. R. Sen (Secretary, Food Department): Sir, I beg to move:

"That the food situation in India be taken into consideration."

It has been the practice in the past on a motion of this character for the mover to make a statement reviewing the position in India as a whole, and indicating the measures which Government have taken or propose to take in dealing with it. On this occasion the House will no doubt like to have that statement not from me but from the Honourable the Food Member, Dr. Rajendra Prasad. I shall not therefore take up the time of the House except to say that at a later stage, since the Honourable the Food Member will not have the time to reply at a later stage, I should be prepared to deal with any points which arise in the course of the debate and on which information is asked for or on which clarification of Government policy is required. Sir, I move.

Mr. President: Motion moved:

"That the food situation in India be taken into consideration."

I have received one amendment in connection with this motion. I would prefer that the amendment is also moved at this stage, so that the House may be in possession of the original proposition as well as the amendment.

Mr. C. P. Lawson (Bengal: European): Sir, I beg to move:

"That at the end of the original motion, the following be added, namely: 'and that the particular attention of the Government be directed to the matter of losses in storage'."

Mr. President: Amendment moved:

"That at the end of the original motion, the following be added, namely: 'and that the particular attention of the Government be directed to the matter of losses in storage'."

The Honourable Dr. Rajendra Prasad (Food Member): During the last session of the Assembly the question was debated at great length. This was in February 1946. Since then the situation has not improved, except for the fact that the monsoon which has just ended has on the whole been more or less favourable. It is therefore necessary for me to explain to the House the way in which we have managed to deal with the situation during the last seven or eight months.

It will be recollected that it was pointed out during the debate in February that we anticipated, on account of the failure of the monsoon last year and the failure of winter rains, a deficit of something like seven million tons in *kharif* and *rabi* crops. The question with which the Government was faced was how to meet this big deficit. It was a big deficit because if you take into consideration the amount of grain that is produced normally in the year it came to something like 10 per cent., and in a country which lives more or less from hand to mouth a deficit of 10 per cent. is likely to upset most calculations. We had, therefore, to take steps from the very beginning to meet the situation with which the country was faced. The Government decided upon three courses for meeting the situation: The first was to get imports of foodgrains from foreign countries. Great stress was laid, I find from the reports of the proceedings, on this aspect of the question. Many members impressed upon the Government the desirability of getting as much imports as they could from foreign countries. The second line which the Government adopted was to husband the resources within the country and this involved two different modes: one was to procure what we could within the country, and the second was to so distribute what we had as to make the deficit spread over the whole country as far as possible, and to let people share the difficulties as equitably as they could. The third line was to step up production as far as that could be done. I will take each one of these and will place before the House the extent to which we have succeeded in the steps that we have taken.

Coming first to the question of imports from foreign countries, as soon as we discovered that we were faced with a large deficit, the Government of India deputed the Food Secretary, Sir Robert Hutchings to London and to America. This happened before the debate took place in February last. During the course of the debate, it was announced that a larger delegation under the then Food Member would proceed. The Food Member did not go but the delegation did proceed under Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar, and it was fortunate enough in securing the support of the British Government. Subsequently ex-President Hoover of America visited this country and sometime later another American Mission under Dr. Schultz went round the country visiting particularly the areas which were worst affected. Our delegation pressed the case for India before the International Organisation which deals with the food question and as a result we secured some allocation. Our demand was for 4 million tons. Unfortunately, we never got any firm promise with regard to the amount that we could get and since then what has happened has been more or less a sort of *ad hoc* arrangement, programmes made from month to month for giving us wheat from America, Australia, Canada, and other countries, and rice from the countries of South East Asia like Burma, Siam, Indo-China, etc. We have been pressing the International Food Emergency Commission for larger and larger allotments to us but situated as the world is today, it has not been possible for that Commission to give us all that we wanted. We know that the whole world today is in short-supply with regard to foodstuff and it is the function of that body to pool whatever surpluses are available from the producing countries and to distribute them to the countries which are in need. India has had her share, but unfortunately it has not been what we wanted or what we needed. With all our efforts we have so far been able to import into this country 1,484,740 tons of wheat and other grains and rice 247,500 tons, a total of 1,732,000 and odd tons. This is as against our demand of 4 million tons. We have been therefore faced with this other difficulty of meeting this big deficit which arises on account of our not getting what we wanted from foreign

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countries. We are indeed grateful to those foreign countries which have come to our help, and we cannot blame them if they are unable to give us more. But at the same time, we cannot help asking them to give us more, and I hope that in the months which are still difficult for us we shall be able to get something more. But it is not only the difficulty of allocation or difficulty of availability which has stood in our way. There have been other difficulties also which have made imports more and more difficult. We know that in the United States of America the shipping strike has been going on for a pretty long time. That has affected our imports to a considerable extent from that country. We expected something like 224,000 tons of wheat from America in the month of September. All that we have been able to get has been no more than 110,000 tons, thus causing a short-fall of no less than 114,000 tons. We find that it was not possible to rely only upon America, Canada and Australia, although they have given us quite a good deal of wheat. We felt that it was necessary to look to other sources also, and therefore we turned to countries which are just west to our own. We have got supplies from Iran, Turkey, Abyssinia and Egypt and these are of the following order. They come in all to 89,210 tons, of wheat, barley and millets from these countries. We have got from Brazil 28,904 tons of rice. The House is aware that recently Diwan Chaman Lal, a Member of this House, whom we are all pleased to see back today, was deputed on a mission to Argentine to secure permits for the export of 300,000 tons of maize which we purchased in that country. I am sure the House will be pleased to convey to him its thanks for the skill with which he conducted the negotiations and congratulations on the way he has achieved success in that effort. Out of the 300,000 tons of maize which we have secured in that country, 150,904 tons have already arrived and we are hoping that the balance will be coming within the next two months or so. In order to secure these supplies, we have had to be constantly in touch with the International Emergency Food Council through our representative and with the various countries from which we have these imports. In some of these we have got our permanent representative: in others our representatives go as necessity arises.

Turning now to the countries on the South East from which we have got our rice, I find that we have secured about 247,500 tons from these countries. Burma is of course the largest exporter of rice for us. We had expected a large quantity from Siam, but unfortunately that has not materialized and we have not secured more than 17,000 tons from there. We were offered very kindly by the Indonesian Government some 500,000 tons of paddy, and we had hoped that we would be able to get that paddy, which would have gone a great way towards solving our difficulties. Unfortunately in Indonesia as in Siam, difficulties have arisen which have made exports difficult. In both these countries, there were internal difficulties of transport. The Government of India offered to meet these difficulties by supplying locomotives, wagons and trucks to Siam and trucks and coal to Indonesia. The position in Indonesia was complicated by the fact that political considerations came in and military reasons stood for sometime in the way of the supply of our trucks. Fortunately all these difficulties have now been removed and a special officer has been deputed by the Government of India to Indonesia to expedite the despatch of rice or paddy from that country. On account of these difficulties our import from Indonesia has not been more than 18,000 tons so far out of the 500,000 tons promised. We are hoping that with the changed circumstances and with the facilities which we have provided in the shape of trucks and coal we may be able to import larger quantities hereafter. As I have stated the total imports thus far from foreign countries come to something like 1,700,000 tons.

One question with regard to these imports is that of price. We have been paying rather heavily for these imports. We expect in the course of the

current year to make purchases to the extent of 91 crores worth of foodgrains from these countries. The prices at which these arrive in this country and the prices prevalent in this country differ to some extent and we felt that if we allowed these imports to be sold at the cost price, it might have the effect of upsetting the price structure in this country and the Government therefore decided to make good the difference between the price at which these were purchased and the price prevalent in this country for the same quality of grain. This would come to something like 15½ crores in the course of the year. This is what we have done by way of imports.

Turning to the second line of attack, we had first to procure what we could get in this country. Procurement is not easy, when you have not a factory or a number of factories from which you have to procure, but when you have got innumerable cultivators spread over this vast country, from each one of whom you have to collect what is surplus to his own needs. There is the further difficulty which has arisen on account of lack of statistics and information with regard to individual producers. In provinces where the ryotwari system prevails there is undoubtedly an agency which keeps account of individual cultivators and which can give us more or less reliable data with regard to what is produced by each cultivator. In the areas where the permanent settlement prevails no such agency exists, because there the Government is concerned only with getting its land revenue, which is paid by the middleman, the zamindar. The difficulty in procuring therefore has been greater in the case of the permanently settled areas than in the ryotwari areas.

The system that has been followed by the various Provincial Governments with regard to procurement has also not been uniform. In some places practically monopoly procurement prevails. This Government has been in favour of monopoly procurement in all provinces but it has taken time for all the provinces to fall in line with the policy of the Central Government. On the opening day of the session a statement was laid on the table of the House which showed the methods pursued in the different provinces. Today I can say that almost in every province there is or is going to be more or less monopoly procurement and we expect that with the next crop the procurement will be on a larger scale than has been possible in the past. But even as it is procurement has given us a very considerable quantity of grain within this country. We have been able to secure by procurement 3,800,000 tons as against 1,700,000 tons of imports. We have procured within the country itself more than double what we have been able to import from other countries.

Dr. Zia Uddin Ahmad (United Provinces Southern Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): Is not procurement less than ten per cent. of the produce?

The Honourable Dr. Rajendra Prasad: I think it will be less than ten per cent. but it has to be taken into consideration that the procurement can only be with respect to the surplus which is actually marketed. Every cultivator naturally wishes to retain for his own use what he needs

Prof. N. G. Ranga: (Guntur *cum* Nellore: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Should they also be straved?

The Honourable Dr. Rajendra Prasad: And his needs are in the first place, food for his family and in the second place wages for his labourers to the extent they are paid in kind and not in cash and thirdly, seeds.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: and the village requirements also.

The Honourable Dr. Rajendra Prasad: After making allowances for these three kinds of requirements of the cultivator, whatever remains as surplus he places in the market. It has been found that the surplus which is marketed ordinarily is 40 per cent. of the total produce. That has been arrived at by our statisticians and if we take into consideration the total produce at 60 million tons and deduct from that what is retained by the cultivator we get 24 million tons for sale. And out of these 24 million tons we have secured nearly

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4 million tons, 3·8 million tons to be accurate. That I think is about 1/6th or 16 per cent. of the surplus which was available for procurement. Honourable Members will be able to understand and appreciate the importance of this procurement when they take into consideration the amount procured in the provinces which have been worst affected. We have to deal with two kinds of Provinces and two kinds of crops. There are certain crops in certain provinces which are grown for the market. In other provinces the crop is grown for consumption and only a part of it which is surplus is really marketed. Take, for example, the case of the Punjab or Sind. Some part of the wheat grown there is for sale. Whereas in a province like Bihar, if anything is sold, it is sold more or less under necessity. There is hardly any grain produced for sale.

So, in taking into consideration what amount the governments have been able to procure, we have to consider whether in any particular province the procurement has been of grain which was produced for sale, or of grain which was disposed of by the cultivator as surplus to his needs. Naturally what was produced for sale came in larger quantity and in greater proportion to the market for sale. What was produced for consumption naturally came in a much smaller proportion to the market for sale, and therefore when we see the figures for procurement for Punjab or Sind, we see a higher percentage of procurement; when we come to a province like Madras, which has been hard hit during the last year and which is still very badly hit at the present moment, we find that there the procurement has been very very successful from this point of view; there we find that during these difficult times through which we have been passing Madras has been able to procure something like 94 per cent. of what might be a surplus with individual cultivators; and it is because of this policy of rigid procurement and rigid distribution that that province has so far been able to scrape through.

I do not know if it will be able in future to do so and to what extent it will be able to do so, but it is because of this rigorous procurement and rigorous distribution that it has succeeded.

The province that comes next in this respect is the province of Bombay. There, the procurement has been something in the neighbourhood of 60 per cent. Amongst other provinces I might mention the case of the United Provinces, which in previous years depended upon the Government of India for meeting its deficit to a considerable extent; but after the last *rabi* crop the ministry there carried out a rigorous policy of procurement, with the result that we have been free from anxiety for that province for these months, and any responsibility that we had in respect of that province has for the time being been taken off our hands. I do not say that that will be so in the future, but that is the present position.

On the other hand coming to a province like Bengal or Bihar, procurement has been rather poor; and as I have explained one of the reasons has been the difficulty in getting statistics and data on which to proceed. As I have submitted, the procurement policy of the government has so far been more or less un-uniform. Now that we are going to have monopoly procurement, I am hoping that in the coming season we shall have larger quantities at the disposal of the government which could be taken to places in need from places where there is a surplus.

The second line of attack in regard to internal husbanding of resources has been an attempt to make distribution as fair and equitable as possible. For that purpose, we have had to extend rationing and controlled distribution. Rationing has been extended very considerably. In 1943 there were few towns that were rationed, and the population that was rationed was not a very large one. There were only 2 million people rationed in March 1943. By March 1944, the number of rationed people had increased to 26 millions. In March 1945 it was 52 millions, and in March 1946 it was 100 millions. Today it is

150 millions. This does not mean that this entire population of 150 millions is completely rationed in the sense that each member has got a card. A certain number—one-third—is completely rationed in that sense; the remaining two-thirds of about 100 millions are under controlled distribution. The areas which are completely rationed are mostly urban areas but there are some rural areas also. The areas which are under controlled distribution are mostly rural, and these belong largely to the southern presidency of Bombay and Madras and to Bengal; and the states of Mysore, Travancore and Cochin. For meeting the demand of this rationed and controlled population, we have been distributing from government sources and through government agencies something like 650,000 tons of foodgrains a month, roughly; and this has continued for the last 8 or 9 months up to now.

Members will recollect the figure of imports and the figure of internal procurement which I mentioned a little earlier in my speech. The two come to something between 55 and 56 lakhs tons. We have been distributing 650,000 tons a month during the last 8 or 9 months. We started with a ration of 12 oz. per head. To begin with the ration was of the quality of grain which was consumed ordinarily in a particular locality; but as the position became tighter we had to alter that; particularly in regard to rice, the position became so tight that even in a presidency like Madras and in the states of Travancore and Cochin, where the ordinary food of the people is rice, we had to give them only wheat; we had to give them not even wheat but also maize; and the House can easily imagine the difficulty of people who have never been used to wheat or maize, having to take to them under stress of hard times. But they have taken to them because they could not get anything better and we had most reluctantly to acquiesce in giving them wheat and even maize because we had nothing else to give them. In Northern India, where rice is eaten as in Bihar, there also wheat had to be given but no portion of Northern India is so unfamiliar with wheat or maize as the South is. Therefore while inconvenience must have been caused to these parts too, it could not be anything compared to what the people in the South had to suffer.

The system of rationing has further had to be modified and altered to suit the exigencies of time by dividing the ration of 12 ounces into separate kinds of grains, a portion to be given in wheat, a portion to be given in rice, a portion to be given even in maize or millets and I imagine—in fact, I fear that in some cases people have not taken their full ration because they could not use the full ration on account of the unsuitability of the grain which was given to them. That has happened, I believe, in many cases. Then the question arises how is it that with this small import, when we demanded four million tons and we got only 1.7 million tons, how is it that we have been able to survive these months. I have to point out that various factors have contributed to this. Our people are used to suffering and they know how to face such difficulties because they have done it in the past and India is more or less in a chronic position of underfeeding. That has been one of the causes contributory to our success in gaining this time which we have so far succeeded in gaining. Another cause which must have contributed to it is that from the very beginning the Food Department has been anxious to maintain two things—to maintain the ration at 12 ounces by splitting up the ration into various kinds of grains and thereby making some sort of a saving, although indirectly.

Dr. Zia Uddin Ahmad: You give a stuff which cannot be eaten. That is true of Madras.

The Honourable Dr. Rajendra Prasad: In the second place we have always been anxious to maintain a stock for about six weeks in every province. It has been a most difficult job to maintain this stock of 6 weeks. We have some how or other managed so far but the month of November opens with a stock of 4 weeks or even less in some of the provinces. I can say this, that the most difficult months we have now almost passed through. We now have the corps in sight of us. The monsoon has been fair. There have been floods in

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some parts like Assam, Bengal and Bihar which have damaged the crop considerably and we have had short rain also as in parts of the Punjab and Sind but on the whole I must say that nature has been kind to us this year and we are hoping to get a more or less normal crop this season. With this crop in sight I venture to hope that our people will not starve and what is more I have found that the provinces and the people have shown a grit in facing this difficulty which is really admirable. Some time ago after taking office I made an appeal to the people to save as much as they could. It has gladdened my heart to see that I have received thousands of letters and telegrams from thousands of people offering to save part of their ration. Some people have even starved and they have started fasting clubs to be able to save their own food for the sake of others. All this taken in terms of maunds and tons may not come to very much but that shows the spirit in which the people have taken it and the spirit in which they have been facing this calamity. I have also appealed to provinces which have any surplus to spare over and above what they declared earlier in the year to make such surpluses available and I am glad and grateful that Orissa, the Central Provinces and the Punjab have given us larger quantities than they promised to give in the beginning. This extra surplus which we have received from these provinces comes to something like 45 thousand tons which is not an inconsiderable amount when we are so hard pressed. All these factors have enabled us to pass through the most difficult times. We are not yet out of the wood. November and December are still difficult months; although we have a crop standing in front of us, we still need imports of wheat from foreign countries because during the past months we have had to borrow wheat from some provinces to meet the urgent necessities of other provinces and they were able to give us even at risk of their own supplies going short. We are pledged to repay the loan within December and I hope that we shall be able to get this import of wheat which will enable us to repay the loan. We cannot get any more wheat in this country because the wheat crop will not be ready before the spring next year and our loan of wheat has to be repaid out of imports from foreign countries. It is for this reason that I have said that we are not yet out of the wood but the chances are, my hopes are, that with people determined to get over the present difficulties we shall be able to get over them.

One question which has been raised and which has caused us considerable anxiety is the question of prices. That has two aspects. The first aspect relates to the price which we have to pay to the cultivator for the grain that he gives us. The second relates to the price at which the grain is to be sold by the Government to the consumer. Both these go together and I shall deal with them in such a way as to place before the House the views which we have taken in regard to them.

Taking first the question of prices at which we have to place our food supply to the consumer, I know that throughout the country there is control of prices of the principal foodgrains. There is widespread complaint that in some places

the grain that is actually sold in the market is not sold at the control price, and I have myself come across cases where the difference between the control price and the price at which the grain is actually sold is very very great. It is as much as twice or two and a half times the control price. This is due undoubtedly to various causes—we may call it black marketing—but if you analyse what that actually means, we shall see that various factors enter into this. It was suggested to me in my own province, which I recently visited, that if inter-district restriction of movement of foodgrains is removed, it would be possible to bring down the sale prices of foodgrains within the district. It is very often assumed that the man who actually sells to the consumer is the really guilty person in respect of these high exorbitant prices. As a matter of fact, the retailer is only the last link in the chain through which the grain has passed from the producer to the consumer. Every link that has preceded this last link has had its share in some way or other in

putting up the price. It may sometimes be the greed of the various men through whose hands the grain has passed. It may be—probably it is in some cases—corruption on the part of those who are entrusted with the control of these prices which is responsible for adding to them.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: And the Police also; every constable!

The Honourable Dr. Rajendra Prasad: I think I have included that. We cannot forget that whenever anything is smuggled, the smuggler runs a certain risk and the profits which he charges naturally are commensurate with the risk which he runs. So what with the greed of the middleman, what with the corruption of those who have to supervise the sales and what with this additional profit which is to be charged as a result of smuggling, the price of which the retailer sells to the consumer becomes very exorbitant.

Dr. Zia Uddin Ahmad: How many stages this wheat passes through? Can we not minimise them?

The Honourable Dr. Rajendra Prasad: It is difficult for me to say that. It depends upon the particular locality; it depends also upon the agency which is employed. And the idea of monopoly procurement has been to eliminate as far as possible these intermediary stages in the matter of procurement. Similarly, wherever it has been possible to have co-operative societies for the sale of goods, that has been encouraged; and wherever it will be found possible to eliminate these stages, the Government will undoubtedly give consideration to any suggestion and eliminate these intermediaries who add to the price. The question of the control of retail prices is really in the hands of the Local Governments. We from the Central Government can only advise and can only give indications but we cannot really control the retail shop and the retail shop-keeper. I do not mean to suggest that the Provincial Governments are not mindful of their duty. They are, I am sure, doing their best to control these things, but the force of circumstances and the forces of events have made their efforts unfruitful or, at any rate, not as fruitful as one would wish them to be.

Turning, then, to the other aspect of the price, the price at which the grain has to be procured from the producer, we have to take into consideration two classes of people. We must give the producer a reasonable profit for his labour; we must, at the same time, attend also to the position of the consumer, who should not be made to pay more than he can bear. And in fixing the price for foodgrains particularly, one has to be very careful to see that the interests of neither are sacrificed. I know there is a great demand for raising prices of foodgrains, and it has been suggested that the cultivator does not get what is his due and the prices of agricultural produce should be enhanced to give him a reasonable and fair return. On the other hand, the number of consumers is not negligible. Among the consumers we have a class of people who do not produce at all. There is another class which produces only a part of its requirements and for the rest it has to depend upon what is produced by others. In the first class, that is to say, those who are only consumers and not producers at all, we may include the townspeople all over the country; we may include the entire population which is engaged on labour in factories; and we may include also a certain proportion of labour which is employed in agriculture but which has got no land of its own. A certain proportion of the land labour is paid in kind; but the modern tendency—I should say the up-to-date tendency—is to pay in cash and not in kind, and that is partly also because of the high prices which grain fetches. The cultivator does not want to part with his grain, if he can help it, for paying wages to his labourers. Then, there is another class which is employed in various kinds of sundry services and which is also a non-producing class. If you take all these classes together, you will find that a pretty good proportion of the entire population is a non-producing class.

An Honourable Member: All the M.L.A.'s are non-producing class.

The Honourable Dr. Rajendra Prasad: I do not know if all, but certainly most. There is no means of ascertaining the exact proportion of the population which is purely a consumer population as distinguished from the producer

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population. But there are some data from which we can draw an inference. I stated earlier that about 40 per cent. of the total produce is marketed by the producers. I take it roughly that that indicates the quantity which is surplus to his own needs, that is to say, for feeding himself and his family, for wages which he pays to his labourers, for seed etc. If 40 per cent. is actually sold by the producer, I take it that roughly speaking 40 per cent. of the population is fed with that 40 per cent. of the produce; and we add to that a certain quantity which used to be imported from abroad, that would also go to feed the non-producing population. I take it therefore that 40 per cent. or a little more than 40 per cent. of the population consists of people who do not produce, but who purchase their food requirements from the market. In fixing the price, we have to consider the interest of this 40 per cent. or more of the population as against 60 per cent. or so of the population, which is the producing population.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: The average income is three or four times that of the agriculturist's income.

The Honourable Dr. Rajendra Prasad: If we consider the prices from the point of view of both these classes of our population, we cannot help coming to the conclusion that the price should be fixed in such a way as to be fair both to the consumer class and the producer class. Now, Sir, in arriving at the correct figure of prices, we have also to take into consideration other things to which I will presently refer. What would be the fair price that we should pay. The claim for higher prices arises because it is said that the prices of other consumer goods which the cultivator or the producer consumes have risen and therefore he has to spend more and he should accordingly get more for what he produces. If we look at the index figures of various kinds of commodities, we find that in the case of agricultural produce, the rise has been higher than in the case of other consumer goods. Taking 1939, August, as the base, I find that in September 1946, the price of rice has risen 322 per cent, wheat 377 per cent, sugar, 169 per cent, cotton, 192 per cent, jute 227 per cent, linseed 357 per cent.

Sardar Mangal Singh (East Punjab: Sikh): What about cattle? It has risen five times.

The Honourable Dr. Rajendra Prasad: I have not got the figures.

Now coming to the materials which go into consumption.

Mr. President: The House will now adjourn for Lunch. The Honourable Member can continue his speech after Lunch.

The Assembly then adjourned for Lunch till Half Past Two of the Clock.

The Assembly reassembled after Lunch at Half Past Two of the Clock, Mr. President (The Honourable Mr. G. V. Mavalankar) in the Chair.

The Honourable Dr. Rajendra Prasad: Sir, when the House rose for Lunch I was giving the index figures of various commodities—agricultural and other—which go into the daily consumption of the people. The year 1938-39 (August) is taken as the basic. The index figures in September 1946 were: Rice,—322; wheat—373; sugar—169; cotton—192; jute—227; linseed—357; iron—117; hides and skins—200; kerosene—151; cotton manufactures—261; cement—182; galvanised corrugated sheets—229. It would appear from these figures that agricultural products, particularly foodstuffs, have got the highest index figure, much higher than those for manufactured articles like cloth, kerosene and other things which are largely used by agriculturists. If we took these figures into consideration it would seem that there is no case for raising the price of foodstuffs in this country.

There is another test which might be applied. If, as a matter of fact, agriculture does not pay and does not give a fair return to the producer one would expect one of three things. The producer might reduce production, that is to

say, give up the land which he cultivates or allow it to remain uncultivated; secondly, he might divert the land from food crops to other crops which might bring him more money; thirdly, he might reduce his cultivation by less intensive effort in cultivation and thereby reduce the actual produce. I am not aware of any evidence that any of these things has happened in the case of agriculture. We know as a matter of fact that land instead of going out of cultivation has actually increased in extent, and within the last five or six years there has been considerable increase in the acreage under cultivation. We have no evidence of land going to cash crops from food crops. On the other hand, within the last five or six years a considerable quantity of land which was under cotton cultivation has been diverted to food crops. Some amount of land which was under cane cultivation has also been diverted to food crops; and there is no evidence whatsoever that I know of to show that there is less intensive cultivation on the part of the agriculturist. Taking this test into consideration I think there is no case made out for increase of agricultural prices. I know there is a great demand for increasing the prices of agricultural produce. Some of the provincial Governments under pressure from the producing section have recommended increases in the price of agricultural produce. The position of the Food Department is very unenviable when it has to sit tight in spite of demands made by Provincial Governments, in spite of demands made by the producing section of the community. My position is particularly difficult. On the one hand I have to look to the interest of the agriculturist, and on the other I cannot ignore or neglect the consumer. I have no personal experience myself, but sometimes I feel I am in the position of a man with two wives, both of whom he loves equally, but does not know whom to neglect or ignore. As Member in charge of Agriculture my interest is to see that the agriculturist gets as high a price as he can; on the other hand as Food Member my duty is to see that the consumer gets food as cheap as possible. Between the two you can easily imagine what my position must be. I can give this assurance that it is only under a compelling sense of duty that I have to stick to the prices which have been fixed and not to agree to an increase at the present moment. But I may say this also that Government have not been content to leave things to their own decision alone. We have known that for some time past a sub-committee which was appointed some time ago under the chairmanship of Sir T. V. Krishnamachari has been considering the question of prices of agricultural produce. That committee has submitted its report only recently—just a few days ago—and we have not had time to consider that report. But it is a comprehensive report which deals with all aspects of the question; and Honourable Members must have noticed from the press summary that has been published that one of the recommendations is to have a sort of independent and semi-judicial body to deal with the question of prices. We shall consider the report of that committee as soon as it is available in a printed form which I hope will be very soon.

Dr. Zia Uddin Ahmad: Will the report be circulated to the Members of the House or those who desire to have it?

The Honourable Dr. Rajendra Prasad: I think we shall follow the usual practice. If such reports have been previously circulated to Honourable Members, this also will be circulated.

Dr. Zia Uddin Ahmad: It depends on the generosity of the Honourable Member.

The Honourable Dr. Rajendra Prasad: I did not know that; if that is so, the Honourable Member can count upon it.

So as soon as this report is available in a printed form Government will give their most earnest consideration to it; and I can give the House this assurance that if as a result of the consideration of that report a review of the price policy is called for, I shall not be deterred from taking action simply because the Food Department has been wedded so long to a particular policy. And I shall give effect to such decision as on a consideration of that report Government feel

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it is necessary to arrive at for the benefit of the agriculturist and the consumer alike.

I will now come to the third line of attack on the shortage of food, and that is to increase our production in this country. In a sense that is the most important aspect of it. We have seen that we cannot depend upon imports from foreign countries for meeting our requirements. It is not possible either to continue to depend upon such imports. India is an agricultural country and it is really a matter of shame for us if we have to go to other countries for the one thing which is supposed to be our main source and our speciality, namely, agriculture. It would therefore be in the fitness of things that Government should take all possible steps to increase the production in this country. It is the function of the Department of Agriculture to find out ways and means for increasing production, and I will mention briefly the programme which the Department of Agriculture has before it. It is no new programme which we are going to adopt today. In fact it was explained at some length in the course of the debate last time. The objective that we have set before ourselves is twofold: We must produce enough to meet the present emergency, and, secondly, we must produce enough not only to meet the present emergency on present scale of consumption, but also to improve the standard of living of our people, and to find enough food which will be sufficient in quantity and also in quality. The problem, therefore, has to be attacked in two ways: We are contemplating one long range programme and another short range programme. As a long range programme, there are several multi-purpose projects which are in contemplation of the Government. I might mention the project of the Damodar river which flowing through Bihar passes into Bengal and causes immense havoc in Bengal whenever it is in flood. The idea is to train the river and to so control it as to make the water, which is now a source of havoc and devastation into a source of profit to the agriculturist and at the same time to create power which will be available for industrial and other purposes cheaply. Other projects relate to the river Mahanadi which is in Orissa, to the river Kosi which is in Bihar, which is the source of immense devastation not only of wealth but also of human life because in its trail there is always malaria. There are similar other projects of this nature. But these projects are likely to take time to be planned and to be executed and we cannot depend upon them for meeting our immediate requirements. But we can certainly depend upon them for giving us more food to enable us to improve the standard of living of our people.

The other kind of projects are short term projects which are intended to bring quick results and they have become popularly known as Grow More Food projects. The target which we are fixing before us is to produce four million tons food in the next five years, *i.e.*, by 1952. Four million tons will be sufficient, as we think, to meet the present requirements at the present scale of consumption and also the requirement of the increasing population which we shall have by 1952. It is not expected that this four million tons will in any way be able to improve the standard of living or the standard of consumption. It can only meet the demand at the present scale of consumption and no more, but for the present we are aiming at that and leaving it to the multi-purpose projects to supply us more for the other purpose. It may seem to be a very ambitious project to be able to produce four million tons, but I submit, Sir, that if we take into consideration the quantity of land on which this has to be grown it is not much. After all it amounts to an addition of four million tons to 60 million tons that we are producing now, or 1/15th of what is being produced today. If the area which produces 15 maunds to-day, can be made to produce an additional maund, we shall have reached the target of four million tons assuming that every unit which produces 15 maunds today begins to produce 16 maunds by 1952. Looking at the same problem from another point of view, we know that the average acreage of land under food crops for five years is something like 240 million acres, or 24 crore acres and we shall have to raise this 4 million tons from this 24 crore acres, which means really that we shall

have to produce about half a maund extra per acre which is not a very big demand to make. So whether we look at it from the point of view of producing one maund extra for every fifteen maunds that is produced today or from the point of view of producing half a maund extra per acre, the figure is not such as to terrify us. But I know that averages are sometimes very deceptive, and I am sure it will require much determination and much application to secure this additional four million tons.

With this object in view the Government have decided to give aid to agriculturists for various purposes. One of the needs of agriculture is irrigation and it is proposed to help small irrigation works like surface wells, tubewells, digging tanks, repairing or digging channels, putting up small equipment for drawing water from rivers. In this way we expect that we should be able to add considerably to the present production by means of additional irrigation.

Dr. Zia Uddin Ahmad: Have you got any planned scheme for using sub-soil water?

The Honourable Dr. Rajendra Prasad: We are working out a plan. As a matter of fact that plan is being prepared and I am thinking of sending the Agricultural Development Commissioner to the various provinces to fix up targets year by year in consultation with the provinces and to see to it that in course of time these targets are reached.

The first thing is about irrigation. The second item is to supply manure at relatively low cost to the cultivators to enable them to increase their production. The third thing is to give them seeds of improved variety so that a larger yield may be secured.

We also propose to help in bringing under cultivation land which on account of deep-rooted grass is not fit for cultivation today by helping parties to cultivate them with tractors and such other mechanical implements.

It is hoped that with all these methods of encouragement it will be possible to raise the four million tons.

The Government propose to bear a part of the cost of these schemes. The idea is that if a particular scheme costs Rs. 100 Rs. 50 should be made available by the party benefitted by it. Of the balance of Rs. 50, Rs. 25 should be contributed by the Provincial Government and Rs. 25 by the Central Government. This applies to all provinces except the three smaller provinces of the North-West Frontier Province, Orissa and Assam, in the case of each of which the share of the Central Government would be two-thirds of the half, which is payable by the Provincial and Central Governments jointly. We hope that with this contribution there will be sufficient encouragement given to the cultivators to come forward to increase their produce.

When I was thinking of raising the question of prices of foodgrains, I felt we would be much more profitably employed in thinking out means of raising the produce per acre and increasing the income of the cultivator in that way and also solving the food problem incidentally. I know that the cultivator in the past has suffered on account of economic forces over which he had no control. But today that is not the position. Today the cultivator is getting what in fairness he can claim, and I hope that with these schemes for increasing the production, it will be possible for him to increase his income from his land cultivation.

Dr. Zia Uddin Ahmad: Have you done anything for manuring? What practical steps have Government taken?

The Honourable Dr. Rajendra Prasad: As regards manuring, there are two kinds of manure which can be used. There is the farmyard manure which can be used in the form of compost and chemical fertilizers which are produced in factories. Propaganda is being carried on and practical demonstrations are given for producing compost from the refuse matter which ordinarily goes into waste and very often is the cause of ill-health and insanitation.

Dr. Zia Uddin Ahmad: And burnt also?

The Honourable Dr. Rajendra Prasad: Yes, in many places cow-dung which can be converted into fertilizers is burnt, but that is complicated by the question of finding alternative fuel for the poor man. My own belief is that if all that is wasted today could be utilized by way of manure, the cultivator would be able to get more than what he would lose by way of fuel from his cow-dung.

Seth Govind Das (Central Provinces Hindi Divisions: Non-Muhammadan): What about bullocks? This is a very knotty problem?

The Honourable Dr. Rajendra Prasad: That is another question and a very much larger question. I was thinking and confining my remarks this afternoon to the question of cereals and grains and not to go into the question of other kinds of foodstuffs.

Dr. Zia Uddin Ahmad: "Grow More Food" comes under that!

The Honourable Dr. Rajendra Prasad: I would have liked to deal with more milk, better bullocks, if I had time, because that is a subject in which I personally feel very very interested. But at the present moment I will content myself with saying that the Agricultural Department, apart from what it is doing for increasing the production of cereals by the methods which I have just indicated, is not negligent of improving the breed of cattle and cattle husbandry generally. We have in hand many schemes for improving the yield of milk from our cows and also for improving the breed of cattle. It must be recognised that in a country like India, which is largely agricultural and where agriculture depends upon bullocks very considerably, we cannot afford to have cattle which will give either only milk or cattle which can be used only for draught purposes. We need cattle which will serve the double purpose of giving good quantity of milk and doing a great deal of hard work with the plough, etc. The object of the Department is to encourage these breeds and considerable experiment has been made in this respect and we are trying to help provide dairies and *goshalas* to improve the breed of cattle and to improve the milk yield of the cows.

I have not dealt with other items of food because I thought I had better concentrate on the question of cereals and foodgrains in this debate. But I may give this assurance that none of these has been neglected and we are conscious and we are anxious to improve the yield of milk, to improve the yield of ghee, to improve the quality of the bullocks, to increase the quantity of sugar which may be made available to our people.

Dr. Zia Uddin Ahmad: The prices have gone up!

The Honourable Dr. Rajendra Prasad: In regard to the price of sugar, we find that in the case of sugarcane, land has been diverted from sugarcane to other crops which were found to be more profitable than sugarcane and consequently the quantity of sugar that was produced had gone down. One of the tests as I said for judging whether prices of a particular commodity should be raised or not is whether in actual practice the production of that particular article is coming down or is increasing or is stationary. If it is increasing or stationary, there is hardly any case for increasing the price. If it is going down, then the question does arise and we will have to consider the extent to which the increase should be given. We find in the case of sugar that in the last few years land under sugarcane had gone down by more than 13 per cent. We also found that the quantity of sugar produced during the last few years compared with what was produced in the last season, had gone down in the last season by over 13 per cent. It was for this very reason that we have cut down the allocation of sugar to the various provinces by 13 per cent. and unless that previous figure is reached it will not be possible to increase the allocation to the provinces. The long range programme has contemplated the establishment of a number of factories,—I forget the figure (I think it is about 24 or 25, but I am not sure). They are fresh factories to be established in the provinces to enable the quantity of sugar produced to be raised from about 9.48 lakh tons, which was raised last year to about 15 lakh tons. We have to wait and see when all these factories begin to function and when we are able to get this larger supply of sugar.

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As I have said, the most important thing in the matter of food is to increase our production of foodgrains and every thing that we require for our food purposes and this cannot be achieved by the Government of India or for that matter by the Provincial Governments without the co-operation of the cultivators, the producers, the labourers and also the general public and we require also scientific knowledge for this purpose. We are anxious that this question of shortage of food should be solved and solved within the quickest possible time. The only way in which it can be solved is to produce more and more within this country. We cannot, as I said, depend on imports. Imports are undependable. Imports also mean something to be given in exchange. Up to now India has been an exporting country and the exports used largely to be agricultural produce and raw materials. It was in exchange for these that we used to get manufactured goods from other countries. If now we have to import not only manufactured goods but also our foodstuffs from foreign countries, I do not know how we shall be able to pay for them. As I said earlier, this year we are importing more than 91 crores worth of foodgrains. If we go on at this rate, I doubt whether we shall be able to go along for any length of time over this path. And therefore the only course left to us is to increase our production and for that purpose the co-operation of all is required. The Government is willing to give aid to the extent I have just indicated. The Provincial Governments are expected to pay their share of the aid and we hope that the cultivators will see that it is after all profitable to invest the 50 per cent. of the cost. I was calculating the cost of an ordinary well in my province, say at about Rs. 600 or 700. The share of the agriculturist in that would be about Rs. 300 or 350. One well is expected to irrigate about six acres and if on each acre we get, say one or two maunds extra, which is what is expected to be produced as the result of the improved irrigation, then the agriculturist would get something like 12 maunds extra and we can easily see that in a few years time (say in four or five years time) he will have earned enough from this extra produce to cover what he has invested.

Babu Ram Narayan Singh (Chota Nagpur Division: Non-Muhammadan): But there is no money with the cultivator to invest.

The Honourable Dr. Rajendra Prasad: We have suggested to the Provincial Governments and some Provinces are prepared to advance the share of the agriculturist also and to realise it in course of time, in instalments, something in the nature of a *taccavi* loan. So the difficulty which my friend apprehends may not arise but of course I cannot promise that it will be done in every case, because it means, in that case, that the Governments—both Provincial and Central—will have to find practically the entire amount of the cost. I cannot promise that that can be done in every case and I believe that there will be many cases in which it would not be necessary for the Government to invest the entire amount. There will be many cultivators forthcoming who will invest either their own money or money raised otherwise in the hope that they will be able to recover what they have invested within four or five years at the most. I therefore feel that although we have passed through the present crisis and although we may not soon expect to be in the brightness of full sunshine, we have just begun to see streaks of light and I am hoping that we shall be able to pass through the darkness of this crisis and emerge into full sunshine very soon. We cannot ignore the perennial problem of shortage of food in this country and the only way to meet that is to increase our own production. I appeal to all members of this House, to all the Governments concerned, to all cultivators, to all producers, to scientists and technicians both in Government service, as well as elsewhere outside Government service, to help in this work of increasing our food and saving the country from having to face this kind of calamity again.

Mr. C. P. Lawson: Sir, I would like to begin by thanking the Honourable Member for Food and Agriculture for a most excellent summing up of the situation, which I have listened to with the greatest attention. Not only has he produced a masterly survey of the situation which faces the country but

[Mr. C. P. Lawson] he has also faced up to problems in a way which we find extremely heartening. I would like to say that we here view with particular pleasure the fact that Dr. Rajendra Prasad now presides over the two departments of Food and Agriculture, which we have always considered to be complimentary and his speech this morning and this afternoon has shown very clearly that these two departments are now in extremely capable hands.

Sir, I know that he will not object if I also pay a tribute to his department which we here feel has done an extremely fine job of work over these past few years. I would like to say at once that the rationing that this Department has introduced, a rationing which embraces, as Dr. Rajendra Prasad told us, 150 million people, is an organisation which is second to none in the world. It rations more people than are rationed in any country in the world, and I feel that to the Food Department is due its meed of praise for having carried this organisation into effect. I would like to say also that we are much impressed by the flexibility of this department, its ability to distribute the food in accordance with the varying demands of the country, switching from north to south with bewildering rapidity; and third, but by no means last, I would like to congratulate the department on realising the need in which the country stood of imports and on getting down at once to securing those imports which were so greatly needed and which indeed the world owes to India for this is no parochial problem; this is not a problem of feeding a single country; it is a problem of feeding one-fifth of the inhabitants of the world, and the rest of the world cannot deny its responsibility for that.

I would like to say that these three items seem to us to supply a very good reason for thanking the Food Department and paying them a tribute for their work; and as I have stated already, it is indeed a great pleasure to us to see them aligned with the department of agriculture as they properly should be under the leadership of Dr. Rajendra Prasad.

Now, Sir, the difficulties that the Food Department have had to face have been considerable; a number of these difficulties are constitutional and it will be the work of many of my honourable friends in this house soon to see how those difficulties may be overcome. The Food Department is not paramount in its sphere; it relies upon provincial governments for carrying out its mandates. Indeed up to the present, it has not been in a position of power in the field of agriculture, upon which department it depends for its supplies. It has in fact been a distributing department, with the doubtful ability to say to the various provinces "Unless you do as we ask, we may be able to make things difficult for you." That is a situation which will need to be faced in the future, and the courage with which the Member for Food and Agriculture has faced up to the problems he has put before us leads us to hope that that problem also will be solved in the future.

Sir, I have moved an amendment to the main Resolution today which deals with storage and I have moved it in no spirit of criticism but more in the hope that in putting these various points before the House we may be able to do something to add a little more to the full efficiency which we hope will undoubtedly come. No one would suggest for one minute that any grain in any country can be stored without loss. It would be quite an impossible thing to happen, and indeed if we can do anything to save a few maunds here and a few maunds there, the speech of the Honourable Member has supplied us with every reason for doing so. He has for instance indicated that we are going to spend the enormous sum of Rs. 91 crores on food. That is money paid out from India, going abroad. He has also indicated a figure of Rs. 15½ crores in subsidies. Now, these are very big figures for a country with comparatively slender finances; and we now see that an enormous figure of 1,700,000 tons of foodgrains is coming from abroad—a figure which indeed is higher than I expected and must have covered a period of more than a year;

but however that may be we now have the figure of 1,700,000 tons, an expenditure of Rs. 91 crores, and subsidies of Rs. 15½ crores—I say, save 50 per cent of your storage losses and you have that for nothing. That to me is an effective point. The country loses every year 3 million tons of foodgrains in storage. Save 50 per cent of that loss, and you have very nearly as much as your total imports for nothing or for a comparatively negligible cost, and of course saving all the money in subsidies too. That is why I have been impressed with the need for emphasising this necessity for proper grain storage. We shall never eliminate total loss in storage and I do not suppose there is a country in the world which could. But we can undoubtedly reduce those losses and I am sure that this is taking place. I asked a question on the subject some few days ago, and the Honourable Secretary for the Food Department gave us an idea of what was going on. I asked for certain figures—perhaps I asked for them a bit too early. This is not a matter which can be cleared up in a minute, and I do not expect it to be so cleared up, but provided we have it in mind, I think it should be a fruitful source of making up a little bit on our losses, and saving the money that we so greatly need.

Now, Sir, a memorandum has been issued by the department which I have also read with particular interest. I could wish that all Dr. Rajendra Prasad told us could have been included in this memorandum, because to me it had one grave drawback. This memorandum of some 26 or more pages contain something like 20 pages of matter dealing with the question of food supply from abroad, the position of food organisations abroad, and I began to think, surely this is a bit too much. Surely the balance should be the other way round; surely there should be 20 pages about production in India and perhaps 6 or 7 pages about the situation abroad. That balance has been entirely rectified in my mind by the speech of the Honourable Member. He has put things back into the proper perspective. He has shown us that whatever we do with these organisations abroad, whatever we get from abroad, the problem of this country will be really to feed itself. What do we get from abroad? Supposing we get 1,700,000 tons—we need it, we cannot do without it. But against a production of 60 million tons, it falls in importance; and if we can increase the yields over and above this 60 millions, that is really what we are after. The questions in fact which I wanted to be answered and which were not answered in this memorandum but which have been largely dealt with, though not wholly dealt with, by the Honourable Member, are something like the following. What are we growing? Are we producing more than 60 million tons total, because working it out we need about 60 million tons to supply everybody in this country with a pound of cereals a day?

Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar (Madras Ceded Districts and Chittoor: Non-Muhammadan Rural): 65.

Mr. C. P. Lawson: 65, thank you. Are we meeting the population increase? In other words, are we every year growing that amount of more food which the extra mouths will need. I would like to have known, for instance, how we were getting on with the programme of supplying improved seed which, I believe, before the war was utilised only to the extent of about 6 per cent. I wonder how much more is being used. Above all, I wondered what the increase in the yield per acre was coming to, whether we were beginning to show any results in that most important side, because however many more acres we can put under cultivation it is the yield per acre which is going to save this country. In due course if every cultivable acre in this country is put under the plough, a state of saturation will be achieved, but there is the most enormous room for improvement in the yield per acre and that is the whole prospect on which we must base our hopes.

Now, Sir, I would like to join the Honourable Member in paying a tribute to the work, which we have followed in the newspapers, of Diwan Chaman Lall in the Argentine. I am sure the House will be grateful to him for what he has done and I was more than heartened to hear that so great a proportion of this 300,000

[Mr. C. Lawson]

tons had already been shipped. At the moment of course a thought also comes to my mind that that 300,000 tons is just about one-tenth of our total losses in storage. The figure is interesting just to mark the importance of my point. I also sincerely hope that the incredible confusion which appears now to exist in the jute market will not cause any trouble in that arrangement and perhaps later on in the debate we may hear a little more about that, because while one does not want to start unpleasant hares, I do sincerely hope that the jute situation will soon be settled. We understand, of course, that there was some *per contra* understanding. But to think that by just making a saving of one-tenth of our losses in storage we could make up all that Diwan Chaman Lall by his efforts has produced justifies the amendment that I have put before this House.

Now, Sir, I have said before that the Department of Food has to rely very largely on Provincial administrations for the working out of a lot of this programme, including its programme of storage. I understand from the figures supplied to me that the Government of India has produced something like storage for 2½ million tons. Apart from that they have hired space for about another 8 million tons and I presume therefore that some 2½ million tons are now accommodated in reasonably good storage conditions but I take it also that that 8 million tons of storage is to a large extent administered by the provinces and there of course is room for improvement. What are these godowns like? Are they full of rats, cockroaches and vermin of every type? I am sure, as the Honourable Member said, that Provincial Administrations do what they can to help but I also know the water tight compartments that Government produces when the demand for the provision of accommodation becomes an annoyance to the people who have to produce it. Then they are not perhaps so careful and we have a situation to be watched. I have in mind the situation in this particular city. Sometime ago when a railway strike was threatened, it was thought wise to send some stocks of grain to Delhi. The stocks of grain arrived. They remained in station premises for a very long time. Then the rats and other pilferers began to take their toll. The rains began to come. Somebody said to the Chief Commissioner of Delhi: "You will have to requisition godowns to take this stock". I may as well inform this House that in the last six months in this city both derequisitioning and requisitioning have taken place. The Defence Department derequisitioned. The Chief Commissioner under the orders of the Civil Supplies Department requisitioned. I asked the other day for a statement of what requisitioning had been taking place and a list was laid on the table. I looked through the list. It was a list of only about 6 items which could easily have been read to the House. It was laid on the table and I noticed items like this—"godowns in Naya Bazaar, godowns behind the cloth market" and other items which did not make clear how many godowns there were and in what condition they were. Now, in reply to another question I was told that those stocks could not be moved even up to the Cantonments because of the extra cost of transport involved. I myself made an inquiry as to whether these stocks could be moved out to Ghaziabad where I knew there were a lot of godowns and movement to which was fairly easy. I was told that this could not be done because Ghaziabad was not in the Delhi province. These are the water tight compartments regarding which I complained. The godowns behind the Cloth market and in Naya Bazaar may not have been suitable. They may have been infested with every kind of vermin, but because of a few rupees to be spent in lorry charges or because Ghaziabad, 15 miles from Delhi, was over the borders of the Delhi Province, these stocks must go to godowns which I believe were never used for this purpose before and Lord knows what they contained before. Now, Sir, if that is happening in Delhi, it is probably happening in other places too and I emphasize the point because I think it is a thing in which we all can help. I daresay poking my nose into this matter was not particularly liked in certain quarters. But these are

things in which we carry a responsibility for poking our noses and I think that much can be done to stop this kind of thing.

Now, Sir, I am not going to take very much more of the time of the House because I have been raising these points now on this agriculture question here and in other place *ad nauseam*. I can see the Honourable Secretary, Food Department, getting that tired expression that he cannot help feeling when he hears repetition of the various points that have been put before him and before the Honourable Secretary, Agriculture Department, time and time again.

I was glad to hear the Honourable Member for Food and Agriculture raise the point of food prices and we on this side have always stressed the necessity for the standardization of prices as soon as this may be done. The reasons are obvious. First of all, unless the cultivator can see ahead a good, sound price for his produce and knows just what those profits are going to yield him, a feeling of insecurity must be there and we could not be certain of our increase. There is another reason and this is that the price of food is, to my mind, a basic principle in the make-up of the normal *per capita* income of the country. I think that the time is shortly coming when a review will have to be made of the *per capita* income in the country so as to judge just where we stand. I do not see, for instance, how we can possibly fix wage-scales and so on—the work that is going on now under the Pay Commission—without just knowing what the *per capita* income of the country is. Clearly, if we start paying out more than we are taking in, we aim in the direction of inflation, and, until food prices can be stabilised, I do not see how this review can be made. I feel that we are very largely working in the dark even over these food prices. The price for a commodity changes. Perhaps one year we get a good price for sugar-cane and another year an exceptionally good price for rice or wheat. Over the switch-round of crops this Central Government has no control and the Provinces can change whenever they like. This must be most disturbing and must upset the estimates of what is coming in and what is to be distributed. It is equally certain that until something is done, we shall never know what the cultivator is eating and, as we are told that 60 per cent of the available food is eaten by the agricultural classes; it is important to know just what they are eating.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: Has anybody worried about it?

Mr. C. P. Lawson: My friend Prof. Ranga says: "Has anybody worried about it?" Well, Sir, I worry about it a good deal and I have studied the subject a good deal because of that.

Babu Ram Narayan Singh: Thank you.

Mr. C. P. Lawson: My friend, I am glad, expresses the thanks, which I thought would undoubtedly come from Prof. Ranga.

Then, Sir, there is another point that perhaps I might make before I finish. I was a little bit mystified by some of the figures produced by the Honourable Member and, in particular, the figure of 3,800,000 tons procurement. If that represents the procurement portion for the consuming part of the population (I gathered from him that 60 per cent was eaten by the agricultural part of the population and 40 per cent. by the non-agricultural portion) we have 3,80,000 tons against that 40 per cent. Perhaps later in the debate the Honourable Member or Honourable Secretary will tell us how the rest gets to the consumer.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: It is sold voluntarily.

Mr. C. P. Lawson: By that, I suppose, the Honourable Member means sold outside, the method of compulsory procurement.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: Without the intervention of these procurers.

Mr. President: Order, Order: Let the Honourable Member proceed.

Mr. C. P. Lawson: I look to a possibly more authoritative but no less vocal source for information later in the debate.

Now, Sir, there are a number of other points that I have been frequently pressing. There is the point of fish which I hope will continue to expand in procurement, which I have mentioned on other occasions and which I do not propose to deal with just now. Certain figures were given us the other day. I do not think they indicate very much material advance. I am certain the Department has the most excellent plans, but one day we shall certainly want to see the result of this plan. I asked a question as to what the Department was doing to attract capital to fisheries and I think an Honourable Member from Bengal interjected: "Would the Government say that they would do everything possible to keep this business out of the hands of the capitalists?" One of my reasons for wishing to see the distribution of this trade over a wider field is that certainly in the province from which I come the very danger to which that Honourable Member refers has occurred. In fact, I do not suppose there is a more strongly protected ring than the fishery ring in Calcutta and I would very much like to see that net thrown a bit wider—not the fisherman's net but the capitalist's net. I do not mind if the Provincial Governments feel it worth their while to interest themselves in the project too.

Well, Sir, I do not propose to occupy the House any more. I would like to conclude once again by thanking Dr. Rajendra Prasad for a most able survey which we on this side greatly appreciate.

Mr. M. R. Masani (Bombay City: Non-Muhammadan Urban): Mr. President, Sir, Mr. Lawson followed me in the last debate in this House in February and was good enough to lend support to the plea I made then for concentration on imports into this country and I am glad to follow him on this occasion and lend my support to the case he has made out for concentrated attention on the not negligible problem of storage and the elimination of waste that takes place in this country. I would also like to join Mr. Lawson in welcoming the lucid, fair and frank exposition of the problem that has come from our esteemed friend, the Honourable Member for Food and Agriculture. Since we last discussed this problem, two major developments have taken place. One is for the good, and the other is for the bad. The unfortunate development has been the further deterioration in the food situation revealed in the data made available to us. When we discussed this problem last, we were considering the reduction of the ration in this country from a *per capita* ration of 1 lb. of cereal to that of 12 oz. and we accepted that reduction under protest. We were then assured that the 12 oz. ration was an irreducible minimum and that it was very temporary in its operation, and that the 1 lb. ration would be restored very soon, within a matter of a few months.

Recently, when the Honourable Member delivered his broadcast, he had to indicate a further deterioration in the position and he drew our attention to the fact that, if things could not be improved, even the 12 oz. ration would be in danger. The train of disappointments, the series of disappointments in regard to imports, has undoubtedly been primarily responsible for this further deterioration in our position.

The change for the better is the change that has come over this House and the political change that has come over this country with the establishment of this Interim Government representing various elements in our political life and including the two major political Parties. When we met last we all expressed the hope that if only a National Government could be established in office, then the very bleak situation that faced us then would not continue. I was among those who claimed that it was only a National Government that could speak with authority and on terms of equality in the society of nations and claim for India that justice which was due to it. We also claimed, Sir, that a political government representing the major political parties would be able to exercise moral authority over the provincial Governments and make the surplus provinces in this country play their proper part in contributing towards the national economy

in regard to food. We also felt and expressed the hope from all sides of the House that only a National government could deal effectively with anti-social elements and anti-social practices. Unless, Sir, this political change for the better can check the deterioration that has taken place, those hopes that we expressed would be belied. If this Government representing the people of this country cannot check this deterioration and can, not only maintain the 12 oz. ration which it has today, but also look forward within a period of months to restoring the 1 lb. ration, which in itself is inadequate for human needs, then, Sir, I feel that the challenge to the existence of this National government will not have been met.

I am therefore very gratified to see the note of determination that runs right through the speech of the Honourable Member and the guarded optimism that he has expressed that, unless further ill-luck dogs our steps, we shall be able to surmount the immediate crisis that faces us in the remaining two months of this year. It is in the spirit of strengthening that note of determination and optimism, that this country can meet this food problem, both in the short range and long range problem, that I would like respectfully to make a few submissions to the House and to the Honourable the Food Member and to suggest certain detailed ways and means by which the food crisis can be tided over.

When I moved an amendment in the Food Debate in February last, which this House accepted, I stressed the importance of imports—added imports from overseas. Today, I would like to shift the emphasis to what can be done in this country because, in spite of all the efforts that have been made, in spite of the success of the mission to the Argentine and the removal of difficulties in the case of Indonesia, it is quite clear that—so far as the next seven or eight weeks are concerned—very little relief may be expected from overseas. If anything comes, that will certainly help us. But it is becoming more and more evident that we shall have to rely on our own resources if we are going to maintain our present ration and turn the corner from 1946 to 1947. It has been said that if only we can get additional imports in the next two months of the order of 515,000 tons of food grains, we can avoid any major breakdown of our system. It is obvious also that only a fraction of this can be expected from overseas and that therefore, we shall have to look, for the major part of these 515,000 tons, to our own country.

That brings us to a choice between two alternatives: either we can hope for nothing better than what has already been obtained from the surplus provinces and from such stocks as might lie hidden in all the provinces of this country, in which case we would have to resort to the expedient of cutting the ration again, or we must bridge the gap of 515,000 tons. I was very happy to see today that the Honourable Member did not even refer to the grim possibility of a further cut in the ration, and I would like to express to him the gratitude of the House that he has found it possible to avoid such a recourse because only six weeks ago, in the course of his broadcast, he found it necessary in the public interest to sound a note of warning when he said: "It may become necessary, and people must be prepared, for a further reduction in the rationing of cereals, particularly rice." If his silence today means that we can now lay that possibility aside and look forward at least to the maintenance of the present ration and to its ultimate increase in the not too distant future, then I am sure it is a matter for gratification today for us. But just in case any lurking thought may continue, not in his mind, but in any other minds among those who wield authority in this particular regard, I would like Sir, to make the submission that the needs of the case do not justify recourse to any further cut in the ration.

The present ration, as we all know, has a calorific value of anything between 1,000 and 1,200 calories a day. One of our delegates, who has just returned to this House today from the Copenhagen Food and Agriculture Conference, after taking part, along with the delegates of other countries, in fixing world targets, will tell you that at that Conference they fixed on a *per capita* ration of 2,600 calories. Yet, in our country today, we have a ration of which it has been said

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that "it is so little that a man cannot live and so much that he cannot die." Is that a ration, Sir, which any Government can even contemplate reducing still further? A Member of the U. S. Food Mission, to which the Honourable Member referred, went back to America and said: "If we mean by 'alive' a human being in full possession of his five senses, then the Indian people are not alive." It was very distressing for us to have read in the broadcast of the Honourable Member that the deterioration had gone so far that even that terrible expedient of reducing the basic subsistence of our people still further was not absolutely absent from his own mind, particularly when the Provincial Food Ministers' Conference passed a resolution on 10th August 1946, which was accepted, I understand, by the Government of India. That resolution, Sir, is one which I am sure, if this House were to express itself in that formal way, would find ready acceptance. It said:

"After carefully examining the over-all picture of the food-grains position in India, this Conference is definitely of opinion that the present over-all ration of 12 oz. is already inadequate and a further cut is bound to have disastrous consequences on the health and life of the people. Also, such a course will defeat its very object by slowing down procurement, shaking public confidence and causing general confusion and unrest. This Conference, speaking in the name of 400 million Indians, calls upon the Government of India, and regards it as their clear duty, to redouble their efforts to secure additional supplies from overseas without which a breakdown on a wide scale cannot be avoided."

There is another important reason why this flow of food from the producing to the consuming end needs to be kept going without interruption. Just before coming up to Delhi, I had the misfortune to live in a part of Bombay where the Water Department of the Bombay Municipality lowered the pressure. Being on a hilly-part of the city, I found that the storage tanks got easily emptied. But the point is that even when the storage tanks filled up later when the pressure was increased, the water did not automatically begin to flow again. A vacuum had been created, air had rushed in and it required plumbing operations before the water which was in the tank above could reach the tap and the showers in the bath-room. The flow of food supplies is rather of the same kind. It goes through a pipe line and the pipe line has got to be kept filled all the time if it is not to dry up. The position we in the South face is that on 1st November we have one month's stocks in the Provinces of Bombay and Madras; and at the present rate, on 1st December, we shall have, I believe, only 18 days' stocks. In other words, our storage tanks will start getting emptied; and if these storage tanks are not replenished in time from those parts of the country where surpluses exist, it will not be possible, when the new crop comes on the market or new supplies become available, to push these stocks down the pipe line which by that time will have gone dry and where a vacuum will have been created. It is therefore highly essential that an uninterrupted flow of foodstuffs down this pipe line should continue at whatever cost.

My Honourable Friend, and any one else who takes a grim view of the picture, would then be entitled to ask: "How is this gap of five lakhs of tons, which we expected from overseas and which may not materialise, to be made good?" I am not suggesting for a moment that the demand for imports should not be kept going insistently. We have every right, at every international gathering, to point out that the present position, where the people of more favoured countries can eat a diet of three thousand calories or more while leaving the people of India to make shift with a thousand-calorie diet, is inconsistent with the ideal of One World which is professed by the Democracies of the world. We also have the right to point out that if people in other far away countries take the view that they are not interested in our plight, they are not doing their duty in the comity of nations. But if we turn the search-light inwards, I think we shall also find that there are parts of this country which might not illegitimately be accused of showing a similar indifference to the plight of those who are less fortunately situated than themselves.

I come to the question of provincial surpluses. And here I should like to say that I wish I could share the satisfaction which the Honourable Member

has expressed at the progress made with the scheme of compulsory procurement in the various provinces of this country. I noticed that the Honourable Member qualified his satisfaction by saying that one could "almost" say that most provinces had gone in or were going in, "more or less" in for monopoly procurement. That, Sir, is not satisfactory, because at the Food Ministers' Conference a Resolution moved by the delegate of the Punjab Government, Sardar Baldev Singh, was unanimously carried, and that resolution runs as follows:

"This Conference is of opinion that the time has now come when in every Province and State, surplus or deficit, procurement of rice and wheat shall be by Government monopoly, and by compulsory levy wherever necessary and possible. Where other cereals are important they too should be procured by similar Government monopoly. Only by such steps can the resources of this country be best mobilised."

Now, going through the note which was circulated by the Food Department to us a few days back, I find that this is not a situation which has by any means been achieved. It is true that progress has been made in the past few weeks, but I suggest that the progress is not commensurate with the gravity of our position. I understand—and I am prepared to be corrected by the Food Secretary when he replies to the debate—that in the Punjab, monopoly procurement exists for rice, but that for wheat it only applies to surplus districts of the province. I suggest that the next step forward, which should also be an immediate step, should be for the Punjab Government to bring in monopoly procurement not only in surplus districts but also to bring it into play in the case of individuals who may have surpluses but who live in deficit districts. So that, as in Bombay and Madras and other provinces, that individual surplus or the surplus of a particular farm can be brought into the market under Government control. Bihar and U. P. have gone in for a compulsory levy, but there one finds that the levy is rather light and the exemption limits are high, and the incidence of that levy bears no comparison with what it does in more progressive provinces. And Bengal, I am afraid, cannot avoid the charge of having defaulted substantially because, while half the districts in that province are nominally under direct procurement, as far as we can ascertain, about 80 to 85 per cent. of the total produce is still being left for collection to the Chief Purchasing Agents and is not being done departmentally, as it should be in any scheme of monopoly procurement. This is reflected in the figures of percentages of the amount procured of the marketable surplus to which my Honourable Friend referred this morning. Here are the figures. I am leaving aside the Punjab and Sind because, as the Honourable Member rightly pointed out, different considerations apply in their case; but as between the provinces which are of the same nature it will be found that there is a wide disparity in the percentages procured in various provinces. Madras obviously takes the prize because, in the case of rice it managed to procure 94 per cent. of its total marketable surplus. Bombay came next with 63 per cent. in rice and 81 per cent. in wheat. And then we have a sudden drop to U. P., which in the last figures available procured only 16 per cent. of rice and 16 per cent. of wheat, Bengal, which procured 19 per cent., and Bihar which procured only 11 per cent. The total, as the Honourable Member pointed out, of procured foodgrains is 3.8 million tons out of a marketable surplus of 24 million tons, which is about 15 per cent. I should like respectfully to suggest to the Honourable Member that this is not a percentage about which we can feel any satisfaction. We are talking about the marketable surplus and not the total produce, some of which the peasants would keep with themselves. There is no reason why in every province of this country the larger part of the marketable surplus should not be procured by the Provincial Governments as the provinces of Madras and Bombay have managed to do for themselves. The only hope, therefore, would appear to be that the provincial surpluses should be adequately drawn into the common pool and I should like to ask the Honourable Member, or the Food Secretary who will speak for him, whether the Government of India are satisfied, for instance, that a surplus province like the Punjab has done all it can and is doing all it can to part with supplies which can be made available in the next few weeks by way of a loan to tide over the deficit

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provinces whose ration would otherwise be in danger. Is it true, for instance, that while in the past the figures of production prepared by the Punjab Government have tallied with the figures of the sample survey prepared by the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research, in the case of the last crop the Punjab Government's figures are materially lower than the figure the sample surveys of the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research would show? If so, what is the view that the Central Government take of this disparity in the figures of yield? As I said, we have every right to quarrel with Americans and Russians and any others who cannot or do not adequately come to our rescue. But a pre-condition to our claims on them surely is that at least in India itself all the provinces and all the people are prepared to pool their own resources. Therefore, Sir, if imports cannot give us the five lakhs of which we are short in the next two months, surely a part at least of the five lakhs can yet be obtained by further loans from surplus provinces like the Punjab.

Another means of making up this gap would be to offer incentives to the peasants to come out with past stocks which they have not disclosed so far. I am not ignoring the considerations urged by the Honourable Member in resisting the raising of prices. That is an issue in itself into which I will not enter; perhaps my Honourable friend Prof. Ranga and others may have something to say on that point! But assuming that the considerations pointed out by the Honourable Member against a rise in the price of foodgrains are sound and valid, even so, temporary inducements should not be out of the question, because the problem we are facing is one of life and death. And in that regard, I believe, an example has already been set by the Province of Madras which, I understand, in the month of May offered a bonus of one rupee per maund to cultivators who came forward with stocks. That amount I understand has been raised to Rs. 2 per maund. At the same time, no questions are asked as to where the foodgrains have come from, in other words immunity is given to a man who may or may not have put away the stocks for a rainy day. In any case, an incentive has been given to the cultivators

4 P.M. to come forward with their reserve stocks and thus to keep the ration intact. I should be glad to know if the Government of India can not recommend to other provinces such a method of financial bonus to bring out stocks which most people assert lie hidden here and there throughout the country. I know that there will be the danger that the cultivator who has got the bonus once and has tasted that profit may feel he had better do the same thing again by putting away some food to start with and produce it in case there is similar scarcity again. But those dangers have to be faced. I think the necessity of keeping our present ration intact is such a supreme necessity that it justifies us in taking a chance by offering bonuses of a like nature to those offered by the Government of Madars.

An alternative method would be to make available to the cultivator who comes forward immediately with foodgrains consumers goods on preferential terms. I believe in my own province of Bombay the Provincial Government has been considering, and probably has by now put into operation, some such incentive—that a cultivator who comes forward with a material stock of foodgrains would have easier access to cloth or to implements or to manure compared with another who may not do so. These are two possible ways in which an incentive can be given for the immediate production of stocks.

I wonder, Sir, these methods are not adequate to produce five lakhs of tons, though I believe that they should—with imports on one side provincial surpluses better mobilized and brought into play by way of loans on the other, and on the third hand incentives to the cultivators throughout the country to come forward with stocks which they may have spare. I should imagine that five lakhs should not be too much to expect out of these various sources.

[At this stage Mr. President vacated the Chair which was occupied by Mr. Deputy President (Khan Muhammad Yamin Khan)].

After all, five lakhs is less than one per cent. of our total foodgrain production in a year, and if this Government has, as I believe it has, moral authority and political leadership over the masses of this country by reason of its representing the major political parties as well as other elements, then it should not be beyond the leadership of this Government to produce less than one per cent. of our total annual produce. We are aware how at the present time, the people of Britain, faced with the necessity of building up their export trade, are doing without the essential comforts of life and seeing them shipped under their very noses to foreign countries so that Britain's export trade might be built up. They are going short of socks, shoes and other necessities of life, so that people abroad can buy although they have made them. If this national discipline can be enforced by the British Labour Government, I feel that our National Government, faced with the possibility of starvation or breakdown of our rationing system can produce even better results in national discipline.

But I would say that, if all these methods fail, then there is one last expedient which I would like to place before this House and before the Honourable Member and that is to bring into force those principles of equitable distribution to which he referred in his speech this morning.

I understand in the City of Delhi, while a loaf of bread is on the ration, even today dinner loaves can be had off the ration. It is a small point, but it shows that even today the upper classes in this country are doing well for themselves at the expense of the masses. And to take the argument a little further, if I can eat fish, eggs, and chickens, if I can afford milk and a variety of vegetables and fruits, do I really need the same 12 ounce ration that a poor man does, for whom rice and wheat are his staple and practically his entire diet? My Honourable Friend made an appeal which has already produced some results in that direction. I remember reading in the papers in Bombay that within a few days of his broadcast a thousand people in Ahmedabad gave up their cereal ration for one week. That was a fine response, and we are glad to know that the Honourable Member has had evidence of similar responsiveness not only from Ahmedabad but various other parts of the country. In our own City of Bombay, the People's Provincial Food Council launched a campaign to induce the well-to-do classes to give up at least half, if not the whole of their cereal ration for a period of three months, and I am thankful to the Government of India for the support they gave us in the way of advertising space. But the result was that after two months of campaigning we were able to get 1200 people of the well-to-do or upper classes to give up their ration. It is a drop in the ocean: even so we should pay our tribute to those who gave up their ration as public spirited people. But the point is that in the City of Bombay itself, there are at least 10,000 motor car owners and thousands of club members. If the social conscience of our upper classes is not adequately developed to the needs of the situation, I wonder if there is any reason why our Government cannot enforce restrictions which will make that conscience come to life, and what I would like to suggest is that, if ever any modification of the present ration were to become necessary, rather than make a flat cut of two or three ounces in the ration, a differential ration on an income basis needs to be considered first. I am told that is all very well for non-vegetarians; what about the poor vegetarians. I will not go in detail into the nutritional side of the question here, but I can assure Honourable Members who may have such fears that the kind of nutrition that cereals give, which is known as carbohydrate, can be adequately and easily replaced from other vegetables, fruits and nuts and that one does not need meat or fish to replace rice or wheat. There is a long list of foodstuffs with which you can replace your cereal ration. A pound of potatoes can replace your wheat ration and other substitutes which are manifold include gram, lentils, soya beans, sago, tapioca, macaroni, groundnuts, cashew nut, dry coconut, bananas, and plantains, raisins and dates, honey, sugarcane and jaggery. A reasonable quantity of some of these would make up for the cereal ration of 12 ounces for the day, particularly in

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the case of people who can also have milk and other milk and vegetable products to take. Therefore, if our upper classes do not respond in time to the call of the country, I for one would like to see Government consider the institution of a differential ration in the case of people who pay income-tax on incomes of more than Rs. 5,000 a year. That is an arbitrary figure; details will need to be worked out. But it should not be beyond the administrative capacity to Government to draw a line between those who can do without cereals and those who cannot. In fact, if we go back in history we find that in the days of Ancient Iran there was a King named Tehmurasp. Once during his reign, says a history book, a great famine swept over his kingdom. "Tehmurasp introduced fasting as one of the measures of relief. He decreed that the rich and the well-to-do should take one meal a day, and give away the morning meal to the poor of the land. This order was compulsory for everyone of his subjects and heavy punishment was meted out to anyone who dared to defy the King's order." This shows that even in olden times it was not considered inequitable, Sir, that when famine and starvation faced the common people, the upper class should be coerced, if necessary, to do with the minimum which it needs for its requirements. Since we cannot ration meat and vegetable and other products, let us leave the cereal ration for the common people of this country who cannot afford anything else.

That, Sir, is the spirit in which I would like the declaration made by the Honourable Member that we hope to tide over our crisis to be implemented, and I do hope that when the Food Secretary replies, he will be able to give us an assurance that so far as the immediate crisis for the next two months is concerned, we can leave out of consideration any threat to our present, already inequitable ration of 12 ounces, and that in that spirit, Dr. Rajendra Prasad's declaration that "we refuse to be defeated" will be honoured and respected by Government.

Mr. Krishna Chandra Sharma (Meerut Division: Non-Muhammadan Urban): Much emphasis has been laid as to how much food has been procured and how it was distributed. But mere procurement and distribution will not suffice. It is the question of production that is important. So far as the present crisis is concerned, if the Government assures the producer that the next crop if it is a better crop may fetch him a better price, then I assure the Honourable Member that there is so much food in rural India that you can meet the crisis without any difficulty. I have been in the procurement line in the United Provinces and I know that still a lot of it is lying in the houses of the cultivators. But the trouble is that if the prices are not attractive, there is neither the stability nor the guarantee that if he produces more his produce will find a market to-morrow. The 1st world war's experience is still fresh in his mind. What happened after the 1st world war? During that war he went on producing more and more, and after the war had ended that surplus was not marketable. The prices fell and the cultivator was nowhere. During the last war in England there was a guarantee that the minimum wages would be given to the cultivator and the market would be found for their grain. In India there is no such guarantee and the prices are not stable. You must also look to the need of the cultivator. The price of a bullock has gone up ten times. Iron has gone up, so far as the cultivator is concerned, no less than 50 times. Ordinary timber it is difficult for the cultivator to get. So when you talk of procuring grain, I again assure the Honourable Member that there is so much grain that the present need is not difficult to be met. But the question is not only that the cultivator is not willing to sell but that is the position, because he feels insecure and he has developed an apathy towards the city population. The conflict is between the man who produces and between the man who enjoys, and many of the things which are unpleasant today owe their origin to this conflict. You cannot ignore it. What I mean to say is that too much emphasis is laid on the question of procurement and on the system of distribution.

but very little emphasis is laid on the question of production, its method and the facilities to be provided for it. Today we have the Honourable Food Member's statement in a English daily with headlines 'Food situation dangerously insecure'. The situation has been insecure for a long time past. As far back as 1942, the Indian Central Cotton Committee and the Advisory Board of the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research made recommendations for growing more food, and in 1942 a conference for growing more food was called. It recommended certain measures, namely:

(a) an increase in the area under food and fodder crops by—

- (i) bringing new land, including fallow land, under cultivation;
- (ii) double cropping; and
- (iii) diverting land from non-food crops to food crops.

(b) an increase in the supply of water for irrigation by the improvement and extension of existing irrigation canals, the construction of additional wells, etc.,

(c) the extended use of manures and fertilizers,

(d) an increase in the supply of improved seeds.

The difficulties that arose in the way were described, namely: lack of water; lack of drainage; unhealthy conditions, chiefly due to malaria; deep-rooted grasses and weeds; low fertility of the soil; salinity and alkalinity; and liability to damage by wild animals.

Some of the difficulties pointed out were simply frivolous. No deliberate and determined effort has been made to produce more food, and the situation is that since 1942 we are where we were. Food has not increased and without an increase of food, the system of procurement and perhaps a better system of distribution cannot be achieved. After 1942, when these attempts were made, there came the terrible famine of Bengal of 1943 wherein no less than 35 lakhs of our people died. We called it callous disregard for human life and we said it was due to the inefficiency or lack of appreciation on the part of the Government at that time. But what is the present situation? Have we improved any the better? Sir, the UNRRA Food Committee recommended that a diet containing 2,650 calories would be necessary, in addition to the necessary nutrition of other elements as the amount necessary to keep up the full health and efficiency of man. A diet of 2,000 calories was considered just sufficient to keep a man going and sustain his energy. Mr. Bevin was recently shedding tears that 40 million people in Europe were getting 1,500 calories of food. Japan was getting 1,575 calories and Germany was getting no less than 1,500. But Japan and Germany are enemy countries and we were the favoured allies of the great powers. Yet we got from 900 to 1,000 calories and at 900 they say that death begins. So we are somewhere between death and life. It is dying a long time. A terrible situation. It is a pity that with a country like ours and with the man power that we possess we have got this miserable state of affairs in our land. One element that has been largely responsible for the decrease in food is that 2 million of our youth were recruited for the army. The decrease in food was mainly due to the shortage of labour. The best youth of the country went to the army and labourers in the field joined factories and industrial concerns. Now the labour of the field has gone out of the field altogether and for ever. They are not returning back. They have taken to other occupations and the cultivator will never be able to pay what labour demands now, because it is too high.

Agriculture in this country unfortunately has been merely an occupation: it has never been a profession. Those who could not do better elsewhere were left to agriculture. As a matter of fact it was a sort of residue of society. That sort of class can never be expected to pay labour in terms of its demands. The only remedy lies in utilising the energy and the labour of the demobilised soldiers. If you meet a soldier in the streets you will find that he is unwilling to go back to the field. So the position is that the field worker has gone out, the youth of the village who joined the army and is coming back after being

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demobbed is unwilling to join agriculture or work on the field. It is a difficult problem which has to be tackled with great determination and deliberate and planned strategy. Without planning you can never expect to have greater production and without greater production we cannot meet the demand of the increasing population in our country.

There has been great emphasis on the imports from other countries. Many deputations have been sent to foreign countries and many of our able leaders have placed our case before the world with ability but the response has been poor. So the question is whether it is safe to depend on foreign countries. The English became our masters by supplying us with fine clothes and things of comfort and convenience. It is difficult to believe that England and America have overnight turned altruistic to play the role of a Christian Samaritan. If you hold the beggar's bowl before them the supply would come at the cost of your liberty. Take the case of Russia. The border countries which are being supplied with food by Russia are coming under its political domination. They could appease their hunger at the cost of their liberty. There are no opinions about that. So it is not a safe thing to depend on imports from abroad. It has not been a pleasant experience to get things of comfort and luxuries from other countries and it would not be pleasant in future either. We have to depend on our own resources and our resources must be so organised that in the future our demands should not be allowed to outgrow our production and steps should be so taken that there would be no question of inadequacy of food in our country.

One thing which would go a great way in creating a new life in our society and encourage the producer to produce more is systematic and organised propaganda. We have our broadcasting department. What has it done? It only broadcasts cheap songs daily. If we start with something to tell the villager that the old chapter has ended, new life born, new spirit permeate, and that he has to play a great part in the present situation and in the times to come, that his role is superior and more responsible than that of others, he would be induced to labour harder and be more responsive to our appeals. After all during the war by propaganda and publicity 2 million of our youth went to the army. If a man can be induced by systematic propaganda to face death, not for his own country, or his people but at the command of a foreign ruler who has never been kind to him, then it needs no logic to see that he can be induced to work harder for his own people at the command of his own great leaders and for the fair name of his own country. The first thing is to create a new psychological change in the cultivator, to give him a more honourable place, to make him understand that he is as good and honourable a creature as anybody else and that he is no longer the residue of society. Let him know that from now on he has become an honourable man, that he has a responsibility, that he is something to be counted upon, that the sustenance of the people lies in his hands and that on account of the labour that he does on the field his place in society is better than that of anybody else's. He should be told all this through broadcast and through publicity organisations and non-official committees. We had in the U. P. non-official committees of M.L.As. to procure food. Before that the district authorities went to the people. They asked under the threat of law that the cultivator should give his grain and the people refused. Nobody came forward from the villages. When they came they said they did not get timber, they did not get iron, they did not get any bullocks nor any of the articles they needed were supplied to them. "And now you may shoot us down but we will not give you grain to eat." They refused. But when the non-officials went round, they promised that the timber would be supplied to them, the iron would be supplied to them, bullocks would be provided for them, and ploughs would be given to them. The cultivators willingly supplied the requisite grain. The promises have not yet materialised. That is the tragedy of the situation. When we asked the government "Please give us these things which we promised at your instance: will you fulfil them?" They said "Yes, we will try to do it." But when the

time for the fulfilment of the promises came they were deaf. This position has created all the difficulty. We made certain promises at the instance of the authorities. Those promises have not been fulfilled; and now if we ask the ministers and the authorities to do the needful, they do not listen. So, when we go again to the villages, they cry "Once you have deceived us; next time we are not going to believe what you say." I say again there is so much grain in the rural areas that you can meet the demand and tide over the crisis. But the fact remains that the cultivator has made certain demands and we have not met those demands. The Government have to co-ordinate the position from the centre with the help of the provinces. The Government have got to have a vigorous campaign. I want the government to tell the cultivator on the broadcast something like this: "You have a new life; you have a new sense of responsibility"; then they will respond to the call as once they said they would. Let them begin with a song like Goethe's—

Build it again,
Great Child of Earth,
Build it again—
With a finer worth,
In thine own bosom build it on high,
Take up the life once more,
Run the race again,
High and clear
Let a lovelier strain
Ring out than ever before."

Something like that you have to sing. Say goodbye to the useless song; say goodbye to the things that are not palatable to the man in the street. The government must have a purpose, and objective. You must make a determined effort and adopt a deliberate policy, a policy that will create new life and a new sense of responsibility in the cultivator. Without all this you cannot hope to create an atmosphere to bring in more produce into the market. It is impossible. Things have come to a crisis, not because there is want of production and not because enough cannot be produced or is not being produced, but because the producer stands apart from the consumer: he is not willing to sympathise with the consumer. He has suffered and he is not prepared to suffer longer. So you have to change the existing state of things. You must have a planned economy and a deliberate and determined effort.

I come now to how it is possible to produce more under the present conditions. To produce more you have to give additional labour help to the cultivator. As I said, the decrease in production was caused by over two million people going to the war, from the field, and also by a lot of labour joining the factories. Therefore it is the function of the Central Government so to plan the economy that those areas now lying waste are brought under cultivation. We have got in this country over 250 million acres lying waste or fallow, that can be brought under cultivation. It might be said that it requires long term planned economy and that nothing can be done tomorrow. It might be that you cannot have water reservoirs tomorrow, but you can dig wells. If during the last war the Burma jungles could be laid low and roads opened and many great things could be done, not in months but in weeks and days, then I see no reason why wells cannot be dug tomorrow and why *kutchra* wells cannot be constructed soon, and why river water cannot be raised, or tank water could not be raised. Very little mechanism is required to do all these things, but we are failing as perhaps we never have failed before. The need of the hour is great efforts and determined efforts but we have been supplied with long range policies. We were told last time that every green field would be seen with vegetables and fruits growing thereon; but we see today that the green fields are as good or as bad as ever. Promises were made and policies were laid down but no actual change in the affairs has happened. So, long range policies and big promises will not help. It is only immediate action that can help. The cultivator will respond in the measure that you actually work out your plans tomorrow. If you fail for a day the country will fail you for two days. I want you to start him again with whatever little help can be given to him, and I do not think that you cannot do much. You can do much. Where is the difficulty

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in digging wells? Where is the difficulty in not utilising river water? Where is the difficulty in providing manure and good seed? These are things which alone can increase production by 50 per cent. Further, the agricultural department can issue a list of substitute food. It is not necessary to take as much cereals as one usually takes: there are other substitute foods which people can take. The higher class people can take less of cereals and more of other foods and so you have to plan accordingly. The balanced diet is an important question. Cereals may be reduced and other nutritious elements added.

As my Honourable friend said, in Madras you are giving wheat which the people there do not like; they like rice; but if you ask them to live on bajra or jowar for two months, it disagrees with their system; but perhaps if you give wheat along with it, you will get a better diet. The necessary thing is to plan production, and to plan diet and then to make a vigorous propaganda for the objective. Take all measures necessary to save food where possible. Much of food is wasted in family and on ceremonial occasions. Procuring and distribution are necessary measures but production is more important for unless you can produce more you cannot distribute more. After all we shall have to produce more some time and so why not do it immediately? My only submission is that you should take immediate steps and take those steps effectively and the position will improve and it will improve in no time. At present, I would suggest that vigorous propaganda is necessary. The formation of non-official committees is necessary and co-ordination with the Provincial Government is a further step that would help it. With the co-ordination and sympathetic co-operation of the Provincial Governments, the Central Government may go into details with regard to the particular areas and find out the possibilities of growing particular crops and possibility of an increase in the quantity produced and I am confident that in no time things will improve with very little effort and with a little improvement in the things necessary for the cultivator for producing the crop, I have no doubt that 50 per cent. of the increment would be forthcoming. Most of our manure is wasted. A little propaganda in this direction and a little co-ordination with the Provincial Governments can save lot of manure. Cowdung is a precious kind of manure which is wasted as fuel. Pressure from the Local Governments to induce the forest department to supply them with cheap fuel would save the cultivator lot of precious manure. There are other kinds of manures which can be made easily available and with the good manure available to the villages, the yield can be increased by 15 per cent. and if you supply good seed this will help further increase the yield. My experience of the United Provinces goes to show that good seed is never supplied in time. When the peasant needs the seed, it is not supplied to him in time. If good seed is supplied to him at the proper time, the production can be very easily increased. If ordinary irrigation wells are dug out and water is made available then, Sir, the crop can be increased. There may be double cropping, triple cropping and cultivator may have many crops in a year. It is not very difficult to give proper irrigation facilities. If this is done, we shall have good harvests in time and that will improve the situation. Let us meet the situation as brave men and with all the resources at our command instead of going about with the beggars' bowls before this country and that, risking things which are precious in life, which are precious today and which would be much more precious tomorrow for the generations to come. I express my sense of gratitude to the Honourable Food Member for the steps he is taking and hope much more determined efforts would be made.

With these words I take my seat.

Sardar Mangal Singh: I heartily congratulate the Honourable Food Member for his masterly analysis of the food position in the country. The country is grateful to him for the effort he is making to save the starving millions. He has said that he wanted 7 million tons in the beginning. Out of that, he wanted to get 4 millions from outside the country and during the last few months several delegations have gone out with begging bowls in their hands, with the result that so far we have succeeded in securing only 1.7 million tons. While

on this point, I wish to say that we should make efforts to produce all our food from inside the country and we should stop looking forward to other countries to get food from those places. I quite agree with my Honourable friend Mr. Lawson when he said that in the note which was circulated to the members a very large number of pages were devoted to the efforts which the Government of India made to secure food from outside. The position should have been just the other way about. Efforts should have been made to grow more food in this country. The Honourable the Food Member has given large number of figures but he has omitted to mention how much area during the last year the grow more food campaign of the Government of India has actually brought under the plough and how much grain has been produced by the efforts of that campaign. The Honourable Member has not mentioned these figures. It would have helped the House to come to some decision if he had mentioned as to what efforts the Government of India is making to produce food immediately. The Honourable the Food Member has mentioned that Government has now sanctioned subsidies to sink more wells and to help other means of irrigation. On this point I may mention that the efforts of the Government of India so far in this direction have remained mostly on the files only undefined. I speak subject to correction. Last year the Government of India decided that it will offer 50 per cent. subsidies to those agriculturists who sink wells on their own lands. Out of this 50 per cent., 25 per cent. are to be met by the Government of India and the remaining 25 per cent. are to be met by the Provincial Governments. I know from personal knowledge from my province of the Punjab, the Punjab Government failed to avail of this facility. I understand from the Agricultural Secretary now that the Punjab Government have reconsidered the position and now they might contribute their 25 per cent. quota but I wish the Honourable the Food Member to make sure whether all the Governments will fall in with this scheme, because the scheme has already met with some obstacles in some of the provinces. We can produce more food if irrigation and other facilities are made available to the cultivator. The greatest help which the Government can give is to make water available to the agriculturists. In my province most of the land is lying uncultivated for want of water. In certain villages about 50 per cent. of the land can be brought under the plough if water can be made available to them. Then, again, the Government of India have so far done nothing to provide agricultural implements, such as, tractors, and manures and other things, which can help them to grow more food. The Government of India has spent 15½ crores to subsidise the imports of foodgrains. If the same amount had been spent in the other direction, I think the results would have been much better. I hope the Government of India even now will turn in that direction and will immediately make available to the cultivators all the things which they want.

One other thing which is worrying me is the availability of the bullocks to which the Honourable Member referred and in which he is personally interested. In these days the price of the bullocks has gone up very much. The Honourable Member gave the index figures about wheat, sugar and other articles which the agriculturist is selling, but if he had taken the trouble to find out the index number of the bullocks—I doubt very much if the Government of India maintains that index number here—, he would have found that the price of the bullocks and buffaloes has gone up by 4 or 5 times. I am, very much dissatisfied with the announcement of the Honourable the Food Member that it would not be possible for him to increase the prices of the foodgrains. He said that he is in a difficulty. He is, Sir, like a man who has two wives. One of them represents the agriculturists and the other the consumers. In this connection, I would like to submit that the wife representing the consumers is very clever. She has got means of propaganda and she can adopt various ways and methods in order to please him. But the other wife representing the agriculturists, though faithful, is simple. She does not know the use of cosmetics and therefore it is not possible for her to please the Honourable the Food Member. Unconsciously, therefore, the Food Member is favouring the other wife.

Sir Cowasjee Jehangir (Nominated: Non-Official): You are afraid of the other wife.

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan (East Central Punjab: Muhammadan): Let him have the third wife.

Sardar Mangal Singh: I hope when things are brought home to him, he will consider the position calmly and try to encourage the cultivator to grow more food just as he has done in the case of sugar-cane growers. He has rightly increased the price of the sugar-cane in Bihar and the United Provinces and I hope he will similarly encourage the cultivators all over India to get a fair price for their produce. In this connection, while we should increase our produce, we should also take steps to avoid wastage. At the present moment, we are losing 3 million tons of foodgrains on account of their wastage by rats and other insects. This is a huge figure.

In this connection, although the wastage is comparatively small, I wish to bring to the notice of the Honourable the Food Member one small item of wastage which is now being carried on at Quetta. There is a Government-owned factory there which is manufacturing what is known as coal eggs. In that factory they are burning *ata*. I am told that during the last two years they have burnt about 20,000 maunds of *ata*. The Honourable the Food Secretary shakes his head. I will request him to make detailed inquiries. That factory is at Quetta and they are manufacturing coal eggs by mixing coal, coaltar and *ata* in some proportions. This coal egg is burnt in the cold weather for heating purposes. I hope the Honourable the Food Secretary will make note of it and make inquiries in the matter.

Mr. B. R. Sen: Is that *ata* unfit for human consumption?

Sardar Mangal Singh: That is the point I was coming to. It is said that that *ata* is a condemned *ata*. But I would like to invite the attention of the Food Secretary to the fact that Quetta has a cold climate and of all the cities why *ata* at Quetta should be condemned as unfit for human consumption. I am told there is some *gol-mal* about it. Somebody is selling and somebody is buying. I will request him to make inquiries into that matter. The whole affair appears to be fishy.

Then, again, Government in other countries helps the agriculturist in several ways. The Government of India here should make available tractors and petrol practically at a nominal price. Government should also make available electricity in the villages for agricultural purposes. Immediate steps can be taken by sinking tube wells which can be run with the aid of electricity and more food can be grown, particularly in villages near the cities.

About procurements, I am glad that the Government of India have, after all, succeeded in having the monopoly procurement practically all over the country. But there may be still some people who might be hoarding grains and they might be waiting for favourable prices. In this connection, I would submit that the Government can take over the grains lying with the cultivators and give them a receipt telling them that the cultivator should be at liberty to cash those receipts at any time whenever he thinks that the prices are favourable to him. This method has been used in the U. S. A. and it has brought very good results. At the present time, some people are keeping back the grains. They might think that in January or February or even in March just before the harvest, they might get higher prices. In order to allay their fears or apprehensions, I suggest that Government can say that they take over all the grains and give them receipts. Let them cash those receipts at any time they like. By this method you will be able to get more grains without offering any bonus or subsidy as has been suggested by my Honourable friend Mr. Masani. This will give confidence to agriculturists to part with their food grains.

Mr. Deputy President: The House will now adjourn.

The Assembly then adjourned till eleven of the Clock on Wednesday the 6th November 1946.