

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur: Yes. They are repeatedly being urged to abolish capitation fees.

GRUEL CENTRES IN MADRAS

*1195. **Shri Balakrishnan:** (a) Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state whether the Central Government have given grants to the Madras State for running of gruel centres in the recent famine-affected areas?

(b) If so, how much amount was given?

The Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri M. V. Krishnappa): (a) Yes.

(b) Rs. 47 lakhs.

Shri Balakrishnan: May I know whether the Government has received any petition or memorandum from the people of Tamilnad, that the districts of Madura, Ramnad and Tinnevely are badly affected by famine, and if so, whether the Government have sent any relief?

Shri M. V. Krishnappa: Scarcity conditions are prevailing in the extreme south, in the districts of Tinnevely etc., mentioned by the hon. Member. Every week we will be getting reports. But, taking relief measures in the scarcity areas will be primarily the responsibility of the State Governments. The Centre has agreed to meet 50 per cent. of the cost incurred in running the gruel centres. The question refers to gruel centres. I have said that 47 lakhs of rupees have already been given to the Madras Government for running gruel centres.

Shri S. V. Ramaswamy: How many gruel centres were there and how many have been closed down this year?

Shri M. V. Krishnappa: While taking sum of Rs. 47 lakhs, they have given a list of gruel centres: 139 centres in Anantapur serving 66,000 people; Cuddappah: 164 gruel centres serving 73,000 people; Chittoor: 247 centres serving 130,000 people; Kur-nool—27 centres serving 3,000 people; Coimbatore—85 centres serving about 40,000 people. Salem they have not included.

Shrimati A. Kale: May I know whether similar gruel centres have been opened in famine areas of Maharashtra also?

Shri M. V. Krishnappa: It is the general commitment of the Central

Government that they will meet 50 per cent. of the cost. I think they might have been opened.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: If the hon. Minister knows, let him say. Otherwise, there is no point in replying.

Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava: What is the cost of one gruel meal, may I know?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Is there any standard cost of a gruel centre, or does it vary from place to place?

Shri M. V. Krishnappa: It may vary from place to place.

Shri Nambiar: May I know, Sir, whether the Government have got reports from certain districts in Tamilnad area that several gruel centres were closed recently and there was an agitation for reopening those gruel centres?

Shri M. V. Krishnappa: It is for the local Government to act, as I said already. It is their duty to look to the needs of the people there. Wherever necessary, they must open centres.

Shri N. M. Lingam: May I know the quantum of aid asked for by the Madras Government for running these gruel centres?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The hon. Minister has already stated that if the State Government opens one lakh gruel centres, half the cost will be borne by the Centre.

Shri M. V. Krishnappa: Up to a maximum of 47 lakhs.

Shri Nanadas: May I know, Sir, whether the Government are aware of the fact that there is large-scale mis-appropriation of...

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Order, order. We are not concerned with misappropriation in gruel centres in some part of the country.

Shri N. Sreekantan Nair: May I know whether there is any standard for running these gruel centres, such as a certain amount of rice for a single individual?

Shri M. V. Krishnappa: For the manufacture of gruel, they give rice plus some flour and salt and onions.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The hon. Minister need not give such answers as the Member himself can imagine. If he has got definite standards, he can answer or leave it. Sufficient gruel