

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Next question.

#### DEVALUATION OF STERLING

\*997. Sardar Hukam Singh: Will the Minister of Finance be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of the Government of India has been drawn to press reports published in July last regarding the further devaluation of Sterling, or its dislinking from the American Dollar;

(b) whether there is any agreement, understanding, or arrangement with Britain, regarding the course of the Exchange Ratio of the Indian Rupee with the Pound Sterling, in the event of any devaluation of the latter, in terms of the American Dollar or its dislinking from that standard of currency;

(c) whether any steps have been taken of provisions made, by the Government of India to guard against the unilateral devaluation of the Pound Sterling, which would adversely affect the value of India's Sterling Balances in terms of the American Dollar; and

(d) if so, what are those steps?

The Minister of Revenue and Expenditure (Shri Tyagi): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Sardar Hukam Singh: The hon. Minister must have noticed the speech of our hon. Finance Minister in London when he said that it requires the strengthening of the sterling. May I know whether any practical steps have been suggested for strengthening that?

Shri Tyagi: I cannot really recollect what my hon. friend means by reminding me of the speech. In his original question he wanted to know.....

Sardar Hukam Singh: The speech may be left alone. I want to know whether any practical steps have been suggested in that conference for strengthening the Pound.

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: The hon. Finance Minister is now in London. I think the House must be well assured that all possible steps in the direction the hon. Member has indicated would be taken by him.

Sardar Hukam Singh: I only wanted to draw the attention of the Government to the speech of the hon. Finance Minister because he had observed that the sterling had taken a plunge and we should see that it swims and not sinks. I wanted to know whether in that conference any concrete suggestions have been made.

Shri Tyagi: The Conference is being held in camera. In fact, as far as financial matters are concerned, they cannot be discussed in open. The proceedings of the conference are top secret. They are making efforts and I hope they will fructify. I am not in a position to disclose any secrets because they are not only the secrets of the Government of India, but the secrets of other Governments with which I cannot take liberties.

Sardar Hukam Singh: Are we to presume that the Government has that information and in the public interests, it is not going to disclose it, or that it has no information at all?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Really in such matters, if hon. Members want any more information about this matter, let us wait until the Finance Minister comes back. There is no good asking as to what is in his mind and what he has said there. The hon. Minister is not in a position to give those details or if he has then, he does not think it desirable to give them while the proceedings are going on there. As soon as we find there is some convenience, let us not pursue the matter and any that the hon. Minister has not got the information, etc.

श्री टी० एन० सिन्हा : क्या यह ठीक है कि जितने स्टर्लिंग कर्तृज है हिन्दुस्तान की ले कर के सोने की कीमत नीची करने की तरफ कोशिश हो रही है और यदि ऐसा है तो क्या इस से डीवैल्यूएशन पर और ज्यादा असर नहीं पड़ेगा ?

श्री स्वामी : मैंने अर्थ किया कि यह तमाम मसले इस वक्त तमाम मुल्क आपस में साथ मिल कर तय कर रहे हैं और इस वक्त यहाँ पर किसी एक सर्वेनमेंट का कुछ कमिट करना मेरे ह्याल में बहुत ज्यादा दमिनामःदी नहीं होगी ।

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: As soon as the hon. Finance Minister comes, certainly, I am sure, he will take the House into confidence if there is anything to inform the House.

Shri T. N. Singh: I put this question because reports are appearing in the papers that such and such things are being done. These reports are very dangerous and they affect the market. That is why I put this question to know whether there is any fact in the reports that steps are being taken by India as well as other sterling countries to raise the price of gold?

श्री त्यागी : बूकि प्रेस के अन्दर तरह तरह की रिपोर्ट्स आ रही हैं, इसलिए मैं समझता हूँ कि यह जरूरी है कि उन रिपोर्ट्स के ऊपर कुछ न कहा जाय और वेपस को उन के हाल पर छोड़ दिया जाय। जब तक कॉन्सेल्स अपनी कार्रवाई कर चुकेगी तो कॉन्फ्रेंस की तरफ से एक अधोराष्ट्र प्रयास साया कर दिया जायगा जिस से दुनिया को मालूम हो जायगा कि क्या हुआ ?

श्री बंसल : क्या यह बात सच नहीं है कि बाबजूद इन रिपोर्ट्स के सोने के दाम नीचे बिर रहे हैं ?

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** Let us not enter into a discussion. We know that even when top secret matters are being discussed, journalists have their own way of inferring things and then they come out. Next question.

#### DECREASE IN POPULATION (ANDAMANS)

\*998. **Shri S. C. Samanta:** (a) Will the Minister of Home Affairs be pleased to state what are the causes for the decrease in population in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands according to the Census of 1951 in comparison with the Census of 1941?

(b) How many new persons were added to the population there by the scheme for colonisation and settlement?

(c) Is it a fact that the non-agricultural population in the Islands is more than six times the agricultural population?

(d) If so, what steps have Government taken to encourage agricultural pursuits in order to make the Islands self-sufficient in food?

**The Deputy Minister of Home Affairs (Shri Ostar):** (a) The decrease in population is attributable to numerous deaths due to starvation, disease and hardship, during the Japanese occupation of the Islands from 1942 to 1945 and the repatriation of ex-convicts consequent on the abolition of the Penal Settlement in the Islands.

(b) 1,854 persons.

(c) The Census figures show a population of 4,411 agriculturists and 20,650 non-agriculturists, but the latter figure includes 12,000 Nicobarese who derive their livelihood from coconut plantations.

(d) The settlement of refugees from the mainland and other steps have increased the cultivable area in the Andamans from 2,500 acres in 1947 to over 5,000 in 1951. Under the proposed five-year colonization plan it is expected to add another 20,000 acres which should result in making the Islands not only self-sufficient but surplus in food.

**Shri S. C. Samanta:** May I know whether provisional census was taken in Andamans before the final census?

**Shri Datar:** Even final census has been taken, and the figures are as follows, for Andaman and Nicobar Islands:

Year	No.
1951	30,971
(1941)	33,768

**Shri S. C. Samanta:** May I know whether the disafforestation of the 20,000 acres of land mentioned by the hon. Minister has been started?

**Shri Datar:** That work has been started.

**Shri S. C. Samanta:** May I know whether 4,000 agricultural families are proposed to be taken to Andamans, and if so, how many have already been taken?

**Shri Datar:** So far as displaced persons are concerned, 359 displaced families comprising 1,289 persons have already been provided for there. Others are being gradually taken there.

**Shri S. C. Samanta:** May I know whether East Bengal refugees have been included in that number?

**Shri Datar:** They have been.

**Shri S. C. Samanta:** May I know, whether in order to improve agricultural facilities, any livestock census has been taken there and whether any improvements have been made as a result?

**Shri Datar:** Livestock census has not yet been taken, but other measures have been taken, such as the starting of experimental farms there.

**Shri K. G. Deshmukh:** May I know what is the deficit in foodgrains in this Island?

**Shri Ostar:** I have no information.

**Shri Chandras Menon:** May I know whether the Government have under contemplation any scheme to preserve one or two of these Islands for colonisation of people from the West Coast of India?