

approaching, Government are not talking to them. Even now, no approach is being made from the Government side, as far as the Famine Resistance Committee is concerned, they are all in jail, and they are not even talked to on this matter.

**Mr. Speaker:** Now, the hon Prime Minister

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** Mr Speaker, Sir, yesterday, after the question hour, when you were pleased not to allow those adjournment motions, some hon Members of the House on the other side approached me and spoke about this Calcutta situation. They said that the food situation there was very good now.

**Shrimati Renu Chakravarty (Basirhat):** Who said that?

**Shri Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri:** I repudiate that.

**Mr Speaker:** Let the hon Prime Minister go on. In the end, hon Members can have their say.

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** They said—I say so firmly—that the food situation had greatly improved.

**Shri Prabhat Kar:** That was not said by us.

**Shri Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri:** That is completely wrong. (*Interruptions*)

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** that prices had come down and that the harvest was very good, a promising one. In other words, there may be some difference of opinion in the measure of improvement, but there was no doubt that prices had come down by as much as Rs 3 to Rs 5 or Rs 7 per maund. This was not said by them. I am saying this. Prices had come down. There is no doubt about it, that is, about these facts whether they said them or not, that the prices have come down by Rs 3 to Rs 7 per maund in that area, that the harvest is a very good one, and perhaps that is the reason why the prices have come down.

Further, in Bengal, even previously, about 50 per cent. of the people were rationed, they got ration cards, the entire population of Calcutta and a good part of the rural population. That was so some time ago. Now, even this area has been expanded, it is much wider, that is, rationing has been extended in the rural areas, to the smaller peasants or farmers. Now, that is the position. I do not mean to say that everything is well in Bengal on the food front. But I would submit that it is not only improving, but is somewhat better than in some parts of India. That is, of course, nothing for me to be proud of, but it is so.

But I would submit that at the present moment we are not considering the food situation here only, the food situation is going to be considered in a big way tomorrow in Delhi by the National Development Council. We cannot consider the food situation in every bit of India, forgetting the rest of India, therefore, all the Chief Ministers of States are coming here, along with their Food Ministers, for, we consider it important to discuss this matter, not only from the point of view of the separate States but in its organic unity of India. There it is. But the present position to which the hon Member objects is relating to what is happening in Calcutta. The hon Member says that the army have taken charge of parts of Calcutta, parts of Bengal. As a matter of fact nothing of the kind has happened. The army was called in yesterday. I said at mid-day yesterday the army had not been called in. It was called in at 6 p.m. yesterday to Howrah parts of Howrah, because there was a very bad trouble there. I might mention that till three days ago the Chief Minister of Bengal deliberately did not issue firearms to the police, because he did not want the use of firearms. When ambulance cars, milk vans were burnt, apart from buses.

Several Hon. Members. Shame.

**Shri Muhammed Elias:** From them they were shooting people throughout the city.

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** Did the hon. Member say that ambulance cars were shooting people?

**Shri Nagi Reddy (Anantapur):** Is it not a fact that ambulance vans were used as police vans?

**Shri Muhammed Elias:** It has been agreed by the Mayor of Calcutta and he has agreed that he will make an enquiry into the matter.

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** Hon. Members have helped me—I thank them—that because the ambulance vans had policemen they had to be burnt, according to them. Is that the argument of hon. Members opposite?

**Shri Nagi Reddy:** When policemen began to shoot the people, naturally the people got angry. Are ambulance vans to be used as police vans?

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** Ambulance cars do not even belong to the Government. Ambulance is not a government organisation; it is a private organisation. Milk vans which were distributing milk, large numbers of them, were burnt, apart from other damage and arson done. When the situation had become so bad, then only the Chief Minister, under great pressure, agreed to the issue of fire-arms to the police, because the situation was getting bad with regard to arson, destruction, etc., not to mention other cars and buses which were burnt.

Yesterday in Howrah at first, in the course of the morning, there was some dispute between two sets of workers, one set, a large number of workers, who wanted to continue to work in the mills—and they did not approve of the hartal and, what is more, they did work for some time, for a good time—and another set which objected to their working. There was some trouble between them. And those workers did work in the mills for some time, I say. It was only after that. . . (Interruptions).

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, order.

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** It was only after that, when that set of workers finished their work that day, that the trouble became worse in Howrah, Howrah town and the neighbourhood of Howrah, and the forces were sent for, the army was called in in aid of the civil power, and they went only to Howrah.

And what they have done thus far is this. It is not a question of taking over the administration; very far from it. The troops carried out the following two things. They patrolled the Howrah police station area in vehicles, they laid a cordon round the jute mill in Dashnagar area etc. to enable the police to arrest miscreants suspected of causing loot, arson and murder. The police arrested a number

May I say that people die in these things, and it is not for us to shout too much about it. But it is a manner of doing things that is sometimes even worse than that. Today's paper announces that a policeman was killed. Well, a policeman was killed. There it is. But how was he killed? He was pulled out and an attempt was made to cut, to decapitate him with a sword. That is utter brutality, I say (Several Hon. Members: Shame). And I say it is utter, naked brutality. And this is the kind of brutality that is being encouraged by this behaviour and this action in Calcutta. (Interruptions).

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, order

**Shri Nagi Reddy:** The shooting of people is responsible for all these things

**Mr. Speaker:** I would request hon. Members to work as a team or as a party or as a group, the leader to command the rest of his following. Otherwise, I won't recognise the party as such.

**Shri Tangamani:** You need not tell us about it.

**Mr. Speaker:** I am here to tell it. Order please. Otherwise we cannot

control the House Any organised group, one after the other, the leaders are here, let them elect a leader for the day and speak through him, and if he wants some other person to speak, I have no objection, if he is in possession of better facts If all of them jointly want to speak, whom am I to call from the Communist Group? All of them simultaneously? Shri Hiren Mukerjee What does he want to say?

Shri H. N. Mukerjee (Calcutta-Central) Sir, on behalf of our Group

Mr. Speaker Just a minute Let the Prime Minister finish

An Hon Member What has he got to finish?

Shri Nagi Reddy: He has made the last insinuation

Shri M P Mishra (Begusarai) I want to ask a question

Mr. Speaker. Order, order

Shri M P Mishra I want to ask

Mr. Speaker Order, order The hon Member is irrepresible I will have to ask him to get out of the House Shri Hiren Mukerjee

Shri H. N. Mukerjee: Sir, you have permitted the Prime Minister to make certain circumstantial references on the basis of whatever information he has got in his possession, and that is why I am constrained also to have to refer to certain other things, and I hope you will permit me to make a reference to them

The Prime Minister has referred particularly to one case where a policeman was dragged out or something like that happened and he was killed under circumstances which, from the paper reports, were certainly very regrettable and gruesome, I might add But, Sir, the Prime Minister chose to omit any reference to the fact that in only two days' time as many as twenty-seven people have been killed in Calcutta and in Howrah If this account has any claim to

veracity, in a few hours' time eleven people were killed in a small town which has not more than a population of three hundred to four hundred thousand people

Now, what I want the government of this country always to bear in mind is this, that when in any particular part of the country, especially a strategic and a very important place like Calcutta, the greatest city in this country, when in that area there is a movement—for good reason or bad reason, it is not for us at this moment to decide upon—when in that city there is a movement of which the leaders are taken away altogether, it is completely decapitated of its leadership by means of Preventive Detention, the West Bengal Security Act and a hundred other devices which are in the armoury of the Government, the leadership is completely out of the picture, and second third and fourth rank leaders have also been taken away, Government itself in its press note says that as a result of the leadership not being there, the movement has got into the hands of anti-social elements—it may or may not be true—but the situation has arisen on account of a basic dissatisfaction with the food policy of the Government, and particularly the personal vanity of one particular Minister, the Food Minister there, who refuses to follow the example of Shri A P Jain in Calcutta, as I said the other day in a parenthesis which perhaps escaped you, even Congress newspapers like *Jugantar* are saying that a shameless policy is being pursued I am not going into the details of that policy, because at this point of time it is not for me to say anything about it But I am astounded to see the attitude that is being displayed by the Prime Minister of this country when twenty-seven people are killed in two days' firing in Calcutta, which shows that he is completely callous in this regard And I remember how in regard to Bombay he has come with sack cloth and ashes to give Samyukta Maha-

[Shri H. N. Mukerjee]

raashtra and Gujarat after he has killed more than two hundred people in the agitation over there. And he is supposed to be the most sensitive individual whom we are supposed to respect. We respect him a great deal, but he is forfeiting the respect of this country if he is going to adopt the attitude which he has done in this present debate

I tell you, I beg of you to remember this, that in a part of our country which you cannot ignore—you cannot wish Bengal off the map of India, you cannot desire Calcutta to be wiped out of the map of India, you cannot wish it, it is there, and we are here by the mandate of the people—I wish you, I beg of you to bear in mind that in Calcutta there is agony, there is distress, there is torture and if we in Delhi sit and do nothing because a policeman has been killed in gruesome circumstances, because Communists have got to be made the scape-goats, because the vendetta has to continue till the Kerala elections happen, then I say good-bye to all hopes of democracy and progress under the leadership of the Prime Minister.

I beg of you to allow discussion of this in calmer circumstances. But I have lost my equilibrium because of the attitude displayed by the Prime Minister.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: It is not necessary for me to say much because the hon. Member opposite has confessed that he lost his equilibrium. And I think he lost it unnecessarily because I would be inclined to agree with him even in respect of a great deal that he said. Nobody likes, or does not deplore, what has happened in Calcutta. I brought a case to the notice of the House because it was a very brutal and callous one; it is not a clash of people and people dying, which is unfortunate of course.

Now, the question is, there is a situation in Calcutta which has

arisen because of a movement,—if you like, I am prepared to admit it; it is not a matter for discussion. The hon. Member may be right in saying that the attitude of the West Bengal Government is not good or bad in regard to food. That is a matter for discussion. You can discuss it, if you like. But let us keep that separate.

The point is, that a movement was started. The reason for that movement, if it was the 'food' reason, no longer exists. That is my submission. Not finally, of course, but for the moment, it does not exist because the food situation is much better.

Now, certain conflicts have occurred between the government police forces and the rest, which is unfortunate always. We might really deplore them. But it passes my comprehension what the Government is expected to do in these circumstances when large-scale arson is being done all over. I do not know whether it was done more than necessary. I am no judge at the present moment. Anyhow, I do submit that even though it may be said—as has been said—that many of the leaders of the Communist Party or other groups who started this agitation are in prison or are detained, there are hon. Members opposite who can withdraw the agitation.

Some Hon. Members: No, no.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: How can we?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Why do they not say 'Withdraw the agitation'?

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: May I just make a submission? Even during the time of the British, when there was movement, the goods were delivered by the leaders of the Congress who were in jail. The British Government leaders went to the jails to discuss and settle with the leaders in jail. It is not open to individuals who are not on that Committee, it is