

destroyed. There is no hope for the crops. This may result into a famine. I, therefore, would like to request hon. Prime Minister and the Minister of Agriculture to immediately provide funds from calamity relief fund to save the poor labourers and farmers from starvation. With this, I would like to conclude.

SHRI MANOJ KUMAR SINHA (GHAZIPUR): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, some political parties and social organisations have been demanding to form a separate State of eastern Uttar Pradesh for the last one year. We do not support the idea either at the personal level or the party level. But I can say it without any hesitation that the area which has contributed a lot in the freedom movement has been totally neglected by the Central Government.

Late Vishwanath Gehmari ji who was a M.P. from our area, had stated about the miserable condition of that area in the House. The Hon. Prime Minister Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru constituted the Patel Commission for the purpose. The recommendations of Patel Commission have not been implemented till date. Through you, I would like to request the Government to clear the schemes and projects pertaining to roads, irrigation and electricity in the most backward divisions of Gajipur, Balia, Varanasi, Azamgarh and Gorakhpur. The Government should provide special assistance package to complete these schemes. I would like to request you to kindly take an appropriate action in this regard.

I would like to request Shri Chandra Shekharji and the leader of Opposition to draw the attention of the Govt. for the upliftment of these backward areas.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR: This issue was also raised by Shri Gahmari ji in this House. Atal ji was also present in the House. He can verify it that while describing the situation, Shri Gahmari started crying and the Hon. Shri Nehru ordered the constitution of Patel Commission, but the recommendation made by the Commission have not been implemented till date. The people of this area are a distressed lot. This is the golden jubilee year of Independence and I would like to remind you that people of these districts of Poorvanchal played a leading role in the freedom struggle.

Through you, I would like to request the Government to pay attention to the point raised by Shri Manoj Sinha as there was a plan to form a special development board for this region, which could not be implemented. Shri Atal ji was present there, I therefore, would request him to kindly support this issue.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: He is also present today.

13.00 hrs.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE (LUCKNOW): This is true. I was present in the House at that time when Shri Gahmari had told about the miserable condition of the districts of eastern Uttar Pradesh and while doing so, he started crying. Shri Nehru was also present in the House as the Prime Minister. He was also moved by this speech. As a result, a commission was set up to assess the backwardness of Eastern Uttar Pradesh and thereby

suggest remedies to solve this problem. The report came in but was not implemented. The development Board was not constituted. Even today, this region of Uttar Pradesh is considered amongst the poorest region. That is why, a demand for a separate state is raised by the people of this region. The Central Government is making a large scale spending for the Golden Jubilee celebration of Independence. Such spending can be justified upto some extent but it would be more appropriate if funds are allotted for certain scheme meant for backward areas in the Golden Jubilee year of our Independence.

SHRI MOHAN SINGH (FEROZPUR): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to draw the attention of the House towards the miserable condition of the farmers of Punjab. The farmers of Punjab who produce the largest quantity of paddy and other crops are a worried lot. The PR 106 paddy which the Govt. have been purchasing as super fine quality for the last thirty years, now being purchased as a fine quality. Thus the farmers are not being paid the right price for their produce. I had raised their issue last year also in the House. The Government has not issued any directions to put an end to their woes. This is very unfortunate that the PR 106 quality produced in Punjab is being purchased as fine quality but the same quality gets the rate of super fine quality in the markets of Haryana, J & K or Himachal Pradesh. The Government agencies are just looking the farmers on the pretext of presence of moisture and the size of rice. But the same paddy gets higher rate in the market of Haryana and other states. The Government should immediately take corrective steps to stop this loot and pay the farmers adequately, during the present paddy seasons.

13.04 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha then Adjourned for Lunch till Fourteen of the clock*

14.34 hrs.

[English]

*The Lok Sabha re-assembled at Thirty-Four\* Minutes past Fourteen of the Clock.*

(SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE IN THE CHAIR)

DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 193

NEED FOR STREAMLINING THE PUBLIC  
DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members, the time allotted for the discussion on Public Distribution System under Rule 193

\*At 14.03 hours quorum bell was rung. No quorum was made. At 14.06 hours quorum bell was rung again and no quorum was made. At 14.09 hours once again quorum bell was rung and no quorum was made. Thereafter, the Additional Secretary informed the Members present as follows:

"There is no quorum. So, the House cannot meet; and we cannot start the House till there is a quorum. Hon. Chairman has directed that the House will reassemble at twenty-five minutes past Fourteen of the Clock."

was two hours. We have already taken three hours. Therefore, by 3.30 p.m. we must finish this item because at 3.30 p.m. we have to take up Private Members' Business. So let us be brief.

14.35 hrs.

[English]

SHRI ANANT GANGARAM GEETE (RATNAGIRI): Mr. Chairman, Madam, the problem of Public Distribution System (PDS) has acquired serious dimensions in the country today. It has left no state untouched. That is why it is being discussed under Rule 193 today. Many times the Government has issued statements through newspapers that there is no dearth of food-grains in the country and the House has also discussed it. We have been exporting wheat and raw sugar to foreign countries. Despite the fact that we are exporting wheat and declaring that there is no dearth of foodgrains, the people of the country are facing starvation due to non-availability of foodgrains. We are proudly saying that the poor man will survive on 'dal-roti' but 'dal' costs Rs. 40 per kg. in big cities and may be Rs. 25-30 per kg. in rural areas today. The poor would have hoped to survive on 'roti' alone but even foodgrains are not available at subsidised rates in the market.

Mr. Chairman, the poor man hoped to get wheat and rice at subsidised rates through PDS but what is the condition of Fair Price Shops today? The foodgrains are not available at subsidised rates at Fair Price Shops in any state though people can be seen standing in queues for wheat, rice, edible or kerosene oil. We are exporting foodgrains to earn foreign exchange for the progress of the country. Despite living in a scientific age and treading towards listcountry. We are not able to provide two square meals to the poor. The country is not going to be strong by earning foreign exchange or by talking of 'Prithvi' or 'Agni' missiles. The country's strength is inherent in the common man's strength and in order to make a common man strong and powerful, we shall have to provide him at least two square meals. Today, different policies are pursued to implement Public Distribution System in the country. This system is torn by irregularities and the States have to bear the brunt of the mistakes committed by the Central Government. The State have to face a lot of criticism due to non-supply of foodgrains by the Centre well on time. In this connection, I would like to place on record some figures with regard to Maharashtra for the information of the hon. Minister. In February-March, 1997 one lakh metric tonnes of wheat was allocated to Maharashtra which was reduced by 5,000 metric tonnes in April-May and further went down to 80,000 metric tonnes between June to August. In other words, the allocation of wheat was cut down by 20,000 metric tonnes likewise, 71,500 metric tonnes of rice was allocated per month in Feb-March to April-May but in August only 43,500 tonnes of rice was allocated to Maharashtra, as compared to February. 28,000 tonnes less rice and 15,000 metric tonnes less wheat was allocated to Maharashtra. I fail to understand the policy behind cutting down the allocation. T.P.D.S. Scheme has

been implemented in the States since June, 1997. As per the rules enforced by the Central Government under T.P.D.S., we shall have to provide 10 Kg. foodgrains at half the rate to 60,45,000 families in the State. My State is facing the problem of non-availability of foodgrains in P.D.S. because of the Central Government's policy of slashing down the allocation of wheat by 20,000 tonnes whereas the demand is increasing, the allocation is being cut.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the position of edible oils is no different from that of wheat and rice. The Centre allocated 2000 in tonnes of edible oil to the State in January-February which was reduced to 1000 metric tonnes in March and since April not a single kg. of edible oil was allocated to Maharashtra though edible oil is an important component of food as wheat and rice. A poor man cannot afford to buy edible oil from the open market at higher prices. One kg. Palm oil is distributed at subsidised rates to every family on a ration card in Maharashtra but no palm oil has been allocated to the State since April. With the onset of the month of 'Shravana' now, the cultural festivity season has commenced. The situation gets worsened during the festival season and every item of day to day consumption like sugar, edible oil, wheat etc. disappear from the market. There are the items allocated by the Centre to the States and the later is responsible for the distribution thereof. The State Government can not supply the local produce to the people. Maharashtra is a big producer of sugar but the State is not authorised to make it available at subsidised rates to its people. It is only after the Centre allocates foodgrains, sugar and kerosene that the States can distribute them. Our State is, today, faced with a grave problem of shortage of edible oil and kerosene oil.

I am surprised to see the trend of adopting of different policies here. Till 1995 the allocation of kerosene oil to Maharashtra was made under different policies or rules. An allocation of 1,50,814 kiloliters per month during summer, from March 1994 to June, 1994; 1,60,075 kiloliters per month during rainy season, i.e. July-October, 1994; 1,74,522 kilo liter during winter, i.e. November 1994 to Feb., 1995 per month was made to Maharashtra. Mr. Chairman, Sir, consumption of kerosene oil is less during summer as preparation of food does not take much time and there is no need to warm water for bathing purposes. During rainy season, its consumption increases and during winter it almost doubles. Earlier, allocation of kerosene oil was made as per the requirements of the season but since 1995 allocation has been made on an average basis, i.e. 1,63,000 kilo liter in April, 1995, 1,65,000 kilo liter in 1996-97 and 1,67,000 kilo liter in 1997-98. The policy of distribution of kerosene oil leaves its impact not only on the rates but also on the people living there, the consumers and the citizens. Sufficient allocation of kerosene oil in one season and no allocation in the following season makes people bewildered.

In rural areas there is one Fair Price Shop for 5-6 villages and during rains, the villagers are often unable to reach those shops as a result of which the shop owners

[Shri Anant Gangaram Geete]

sell commodities in black market. I demand that foodgrains and oils etc. be allocated to all the States on time as per demand.

Maharashtra has a population of 10 crores of which 1.20 crores live in Mumbai alone. 38 per cent or 1.20 crores Mumbaitees are native Maharashtra and the rest 62 per cent have migrated from other States which account for 70-75 lakh people. The Maharashtra Government is keen to provide ration on subsidised rates to every poor man of the State. 60 per cent of Mumbai's population lives in slums areas and this chunk of 70-80 lakh people are labourers and workers who toil from morning till night to earn a two square meal. They deserve to be provided food items on subsidised rates but they are unable to fetch their rations under PDS due to non-availability of sufficient central allocation.

Mr. Chairman, Madam, my point is that the effective implementation of PDS system is must which is an important and useful part of society. We shall have to ensure that we are able to distribute foodgrains under PDS and the new TPDS system to the deserving families.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, targets are, of course, achieved in such schemes for the poor but the persons whom these are meant do not get the desired benefit. This can be checked from the figures of any State that targets are fully achieved but the poor people for whom the schemes are floated hardly get its benefits in full. The consumer is not benefited. Therefore, the centre should monitor the scheme to ensure that its benefit reaches the targeted person. This is a very good scheme of the centre and I appreciate it.

[English]

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): Madam, can I intervene just for a minute?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, please.

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: Madam, I have heard a part of my hon. friend's observations and I agree with it because it is very important for us to have the Public Distribution System which can come to the help and rescue of the very poor sections of the society, and that is what the primary reason was for the Public Distribution System. With the passage of time, we noticed that the prices were going up primarily because the price paid to the producer was going up. Last year, for instance, the Government of India paid higher prices to the farming community, and rightly so. I have no grievance on that because I think that was the right thing we had to do. After all, the farming community constitutes the majority of the country and they must get their due for all the labour put in by them. Naturally that raised the price for the Government's purchase also.

Now, the question before the Government—not my Government but the previous Government, of which I was a member—was how do we come to the rescue of the poorer sections. We always were conscious of the fact that for those people particularly who live below poverty line, it is a terrible burden. My hon. friend has rightly pointed

out that those who live in *Jhuggi-jhonparis* or those who live on the roadside, who are a segment of the urban poor, suffer a great deal, not the rural poor or the better off. This is something which we have to keep in mind all the time. Therefore, this new Public Distribution System was devised. The idea was that we give at least some portion of the needs at a highly subsidised price. So, the scheme was that ten kilograms per family we give at half the economic price. That meant a burden on the finances of about Rs. 9,000 crore annually. The Scheme has been implemented. It is being distributed.

Now, with the passage of time—I have been travelling in various States, particularly in the backward States, and particularly the North-Eastern States, and also I have been talking to the Chief Ministers of various States, including their own Chief Ministers—it has been brought to our notice that there are certain distortions in the system. One distortion is that we give ten kilograms at fifty per cent of the price, but no family can live with ten kilograms. Therefore, it will be very wrong to assume that a family of four or five people will consume only ten kilograms per month. It is not sufficient. It is a very correct objection. For the rest of the need, they buy at the market price which is high. Therefore, ultimately the relief which is intended for them becomes very limited. Relief is there but not to the extent that one would like it to be. Keeping in mind the fact that these things have been brought to my notice, we have discussed it amongst ourselves and I am going to call very soon a meeting of the Chief Ministers to evolve a new scheme. In the mean time, we are trying to work out as to what other alternatives we can have. Naturally, my hon. friends will agree that we can have subsidising up to an extent not because subsidy is not needed but because subsidy has a certain sort of a weight on the finances and we have to decide how much we can afford.

I said that a subsidy of Rs. 9,000 crore is already there. Well, perhaps, marginally it can be increased also. Perhaps, we can do something different.

Therefore, keeping all this in mind, the Ministry has been instructed to work out alternatives and, I think, in the very near future I should be able to meet the Chief Ministers and sort it out. But before I sit down I must repeat what I said in the beginning that our sympathy is entirely with the suffering sections of the society. We do want to do something, particularly in this 50th year of Independence. It is a matter of regret and shame sometime that a very large number of people in this country are still below the poverty line. It is of no satisfaction to me that their number has decreased or the percentage has decreased. And to use Gandhiji's words, "As long as there is a tear in even one eye the country cannot consider itself free". Therefore, I share that. I think whether you are there or the friend sitting behind you, Shri George Fernandes and others, are there, we have spent all our lives feeling like this. I am saying that we did not go to the freedom struggle for the sake of a few who may be affluent. We wanted to build a system where more fair deals should be given to the poor.



Well, partly it may have been achieved but, I think, there is still much to be done and I think this Parliament, by and large, whether sitting on this side or on that side, is simply with a cause and, therefore, we share this. It is not a question of party. ...*(Interruptions)* It is a question of general policy.

*[Translation]*

VAIDYA DAU DAYAL JOSHI (KOTA): Please formulate some concrete plan ...*(Interruptions)*

*[English]*

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: Therefore, I think, it is important for us to keep in mind the fact. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please do not disturb him.

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: Therefore, it is not a question of party. ...*(Interruptions)* The main point is, therefore, it is important for all of us to share this. I assure the House that the moment we have worked out alternatives we will come back to the House, discuss with all of you, both in the Leaders' meeting as well as in the House and evolve a scheme which can be more beneficial to the poor.

Thank you very much.

*[Translation]*

SHRI VIJAY GOEL (SADAR-DELHI): I had made a request in this regard that when you provide subsidy for public Distribution System it is not necessary that the subsidy be provided to that section which is not in need of it.

SHRI MAHENDRA SINGH BHATI (BIKANER): Mr. Chairman, Sir, thank you very much for giving me a chance to speak. Yesterday Shri Panigrahi presented a motion for discussion on P.D.S. under Rule 193 and this discussion is continuously going on. The M.Ps. of different constituencies, the M.Ps. of different states are expressing their views. The hon'ble Prime Minister has intervened in the discussion and he has agreed to our apprehensions. It is, definitely a happy state of affairs. We have been highlighting this matter time and again and the discussion on this matter has been going on since yesterday in the house that under the T.P.D.S. scheme 10 k.g. of wheat is being provided to each family which is in-fact inadequate quantity for a family.

30 k.g. of wheat was being allotted to each family under the previous P.D.S. scheme but consequent upon the implementation of the existing scheme, poor family has not been benefited. May be that former Prime Minister, Shri Devegauda has the plan in his mind to provide benefit to them but the scheme is being implemented in such a way that 10 k.g. of wheat would be provided at the rate of rupees 3 per kg to each family, the Minister of Food is sitting here. Before launching this scheme former Prime Minister held a discussion in this regard at the Chief Minister's Conference. Thereafter, this matter was discussed at the food Ministers' Conference and after that Prime Minister has announced this scheme from the

rampart of Red Fort. The objectives of the scheme were good. The Government thought that the poor should get the benefit of this scheme. The person belonging to lowest strata would get the benefit of it but they have not got proper benefit of this scheme.

It is not fair to presume that there would be four members in family of a poor man. It may have even upto seven members. As such, this quantity of wheat is not adequate for a family. Several people are saying 30 k.g. per family is sufficient but I think and my state has also demanded that it will require 40 k.g. per family.

15.00 hrs.

If his requirement is 40 k.g. government will provide 10 k.g. of food grains under P.D.S. scheme and he will have to purchase remaining 30 k.g. of food grains from open market at the rate of Rs. 7.60 per k.g. I would like to cite an example. If there are 4 to 7 members in a family, they will have to spend about Rs. 258 on this item. If we study the previous scheme, we find that under that scheme they were getting 30 k.g. of food grains for only Rs. 153. In this way they will have to spend additional Rs. 100 only and then they can meet their requirement. I and other members have given the same suggestions. The Prime Minister have admitted that this scheme is impractical. He said that to give it a practical shape we will change it again by holding Chief Minister's Conference in future. Finally, we have come to this conclusion that the earlier scheme was impractical, the stand of the opposing this scheme was justified.

I belong to Rajasthan and my constituency falls in Bikaner. Our Chief Minister of Rajasthan honourable Bhairon Singhji had written letters to Prime Minister from time to time. He was apprised of this types of apprehensions before implementing this scheme. He has put this demand, I think he has also sent a letter to Union Minister in this connection, he expressed the fear that if the quantity of food grains is not increased to 40 k.g. for each family, the poor people will be deprived of the benefits which we want to give them. Therefore, earlier Rajasthan was being allotted 13,57,670 metric tonnes, but after the implementation of this new scheme, only 6,61,900 metric tonnes is being allotted to my State. One thing is clear that more allocation was being made to Rajasthan under the previous scheme but half of that allocation is being made under the existing scheme. It is a matter of grave concern. The Government has not allotted even one metric tonne extra before implementing this scheme. No any additional allotment has been made for the entire country this same scheme has been given new name of P.D.S. scheme by making minor changes only on papers.

I would like to put a suggestion, and the Rajasthan Government has also demanded it, in the previous scheme of 30 k.g. or as the Prime Minister has said that he wanted some amendments in it, we would like to submit that if you want to supply the foodgrains at the rate Rs. 3.00 per kg. then you should allot upto 40 k.g. per family only then the poor person will be benefited, and his whole family will get food.



[Shri Mehendra Singh Bhat]

We implement the scheme but we are unable to make full arrangement for its monitoring. It is also a fact that the monitoring work is having with the State Governments. Yesterday Shivraj Singhji was telling that he made complaints to his State Government regarding the arrangements for distribution. There is no such type of problem in our state. Distribution arrangements in Rajasthan have been made properly. But I would like to say generally that Central Government should monitor the distribution arrangement. The Central Government had stated one thing while implementing this scheme and instructions were issued to State Governments that monitoring committees should be constituted for this purpose at shop, Panchayat Committee, Tehsil and District levels. These committees have been constituted in Rajasthan. I would like to know from the hon'ble Minister while he will give reply whether these committees have constituted in the remaining states except Rajasthan. In the same way at shops, whether it is a question of grains, sugar, kerosene, the whole quantity should be made available to them, these items are lifted from the depots in full quantity but more than half of it is diverted to black markets before reaching the villages. It is a serious matter. The Government have expressed concern over it from time to time. I would like to submit that no problem can be solved just by expressing concern. Hon'ble Minister would definitely give information that what steps the Government will take for solving these problems in practice. At the same time the quantity of ration should be increased keeping in view of the requirements of all states because you had decided before implementing this scheme that we would allocate the foodgrains as per the average of allocation made for last 10 years, but in real term, keeping in view the problems faced by them in lifting the allocation, we should make fresh allocation. For this we expect that as Prime Minister has said in the Chief Minister conference that this scheme will be announced by you in a new form. It seems to me that T.P.D.S. which has been discussed here would remain in force or not after holding talks with the Chief Minister. I fear what he has said. He was giving the impression that now he wants to implement T.P.D.S. in any other amended form. He is also not satisfied with this.

He agreed what our friend Geeteji had said. The wheat meant for Public Distribution System allocated by you is lifted from the godowns of F.C.I., we have been discussing here since yesterday about the functioning of F.C.I. I would like to give an example in this regard.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, do not give so much examples. Otherwise your time would be over.

SHRI MAHENDRA SINGH BHATI: Hon'ble Chairman, Sir, I have got a chance first time, I am new member ...*(Interruptions)* if I get the chance, that would be given by the public.

There are three F.C.I. Godowns in Bikaner. The three platforms at Dahnok, Udasar and Nakha in Bikaner where about one lac 20 thousands metric tonnes of inconsumable wheat was lying out of which 8000 metric tonne wheat was sold at the rate of Rs. 305 per quintal and the remaining

one lac 12 thousand metric tonne of wheat, you will be surprised to know, was sold just at the rate of Rs. 90 per quintal. I estimated that government had suffered loss about Rs. 3.72 crores. This was a big scam. This was the result of connivance with the officers. When they were having one lac twenty thousands of inconsumable wheat and at that time they were getting the rate of Rs. 305, they should have sold the whole quantity of wheat, which is used for feeding the cattles. It is, certainly a major scam. I expect from hon'ble Minister that if he would probe into this scam definitely all the officers working there would be found guilty, therefore hon'ble Minister should take it seriously.

At the end, I agree to all these things which have been expressed here by other members regarding T.P.D.S. and hope that the grievances of Rajasthan would be redressed by hon'ble Minister of food.

Thank you very much for giving me time to speak.

VAIDYA DAU DAYAL JOSHI (KOTA): I would like to draw the attention of hon'ble Minister of food. Hon'ble Minister of food I would like to draw your attention. The F.C.I. in Rajasthan ...*(Interruptions)*

*[English]*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Narayana Swamy to speak now. Nothing else, except what Shri Narayana Swamy is saying, will go on record.

*(Interruptions)\**

SHRI C. NARAYANA SWAMY (BANGALORE NORTH): Mr. Chairman, the hon. Prime Minister has already ...*(Interruptions)*

*[Translation]*

SHRI VIJAY GOEL: He is expressing his views.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, there is no time for expressing views also. I have given him much time. He should also get time.

*(Interruptions)*

*[English]*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nothing goes on record except what Shri Narayana Swamy is saying.

*(Interruptions)\**

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members, I am sorry to say that if you behave like this, then nobody will be able to speak.

*(Interruptions)*

*[Translation]*

SHRI VIJAY GOEL: He is expressing his views.

\*Not Recorded

MR. CHAIRMAN: There is a proper time for expressing views, I have given him much time.

(Interruptions)\*

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Minister has to reply before 15.30 hours. Nothing is going on record.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: You cannot do that. Please sit down.

SHRI C. NARAYANA SWAMY: Mr. Chairperson, I would not like to take much time of this august House since our Leader, the hon. Prime Minister has already expressed certain views regarding the proposal of the Government to look into the problems in the matter of foodgrain distribution and restructuring of the Targeted Public Distribution System in the country. I would only refer to certain aspects of the PDS. The foodgrains that are required for distribution under the system are mostly procured by the Food Corporation of India in many States with the cooperation of the State Civil Supplies Corporations. I have time and again said in this august House that the foodgrains now supplied under the system are mainly rice and wheat in addition to sugar, kerosene and edible oil. There are areas in our country where food habits of the people differ. There are places where wheat is not consumed by the common man.

I come from the State of Karnataka where the food of the local people is *ragi*. *Jowar* is also consumed in certain part of the country. I believe *jowar* is consumed in parts of Maharashtra also. I would urge upon the Government, especially the hon. Food Minister to see that these foodgrains are made available to the people under the system. This will benefit the people in two ways; one, people will get the foodgrains they want; and two, when both the Centre and the States procure foodgrains, the farmers growing these foodgrains will be benefited. Then they get remunerative price for their produce. Before the public distribution system is streamlined, the operations of the Food Corporation of India must be streamlined. There have been many complaints about the functioning of this Corporation. Food Corporation procures, stores the foodgrains and distributes foodgrains to different parts of the country. The wholesale nominees in different States take delivery of the foodgrains through the godowns of the Food Corporation of India. In most of the cases—I have personally come across instances because I was heading the Food and Civil Supplies Corporation of our State for some time—sub-standard foodgrains are issued from the FCI godowns to the wholesale nominees in the States. There were allegations—I feel some instances were also true—that foodgrains of a substandard quality, foodgrains which were declared unfit for human consumption and which are supposed to be disposed of for non-human consumption for poultry and dairy purposes are also distributed to the wholesale nominees for public distribution.

\*Not Recorded

This anomaly has to be set right. These allegations must be looked into.

And there is a glaring problem of adulteration. Kerosene that is released for distribution in the country is in sufficient quantity in many places is adulterated with other petroleum products. Much of the kerosene that should go to the families living below the poverty line through the PDS is being adulterated with other petroleum products especially petrol and diesel. I feel there is a collusion of the Department. There must be coordination between the Centre and the States especially with the Ministry of Petroleum, Food Departments of the States and also the Department of Weights and Measures which are expected to certify the quality of the petroleum products.

Edible oil is also misutilised and it reaches the private oil mills in many cases. In Karnataka, an effort was made to supply edible oil in sachets. Now that this PDS is introduced throughout the country, oil should be supplied to the families in a container with sachets so that it is not adulterated.

Another aspect is about monitoring and supervision of the distribution of foodgrains including kerosene. Now, there is a provision stipulated for setting up Vigilance Committees at various levels. The local bodies both in rural and urban areas like the panchayats, the municipalities, the corporations, the elected representatives in these local bodies, must be completely involved in the matter of distribution and supervision of the essential commodities. Sometimes the problem comes when allocation is made to a particular State. It was referred to yesterday also. There is a shortfall in lifting of foodgrains. The reasons for this are many. There should be credit facilities made available to the wholesale nominees who are expected to lift the commodity from the godown and distribute to the fair price shops or the retail vendors. This has to be looked into.

Moreover, there has been a delay in the release of subsidy amount by the Centre. The transportation cost involved in this, has also to be reimbursed to the State Governments. There has been many instances of delay in the release of funds to the States. This has been causing delay in lifting of foodgrains allocated to them.

These are some of the points I would like to make and I am sure, the hon. Food Minister will look into these matters personally. While restructuring of PDS is done, the other issues relating to procurement, storage and also distribution through the wholesale nominees, should also be taken into consideration.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV (PATNA): Mr. Chairman, Sir, today we are discussing a very important issue. The Government intend to supply foodgrains to the poor people through Public Distribution System. There is no doubt in it, that this system was started with a good motive but as some hon. Members have rightly said that this system is not working and proper supplies of food are not being

[Shri Ram Kripal Yadav]

made. The Government should definitely give it a serious consideration. We cannot save our skin by simply saying that the responsibility of supplying foodgrains to poor rests with the State Government only. The Central Government should make such an arrangement which may ensure its control over the system upto some extent so that the aim behind this system could be achieved. The Government so far has taken a number of measures. Recently the United front Government have taken certain measures to supply ration to the people, living below the poverty line. The Government have been spending a lofty amount on this account and also taken initiative in this direction. But I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether or not cards have been issued under this system? If cards have been issued under this then the number of those states where these have been issued and whether the proper distribution of foodgrains is being done? If you kindly provide data in this regard also then it will be good because through cards ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI ILIYAS AZMI (SHAHABAD): The rate of card has also increased ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAMKRIPAL YADAV: Even the proper distribution of cards is not being done. The objective of providing ration to poor at half rates is unfulfilled, therefore, the Government should take it seriously and take some concrete steps in order to provide ration to the poor, for whom the Government have made available a sum of Rupees 8000 to 9000.

I would also like to submit to the hon. Minister that about 54 per cent population of Bihar live below poverty line. They even lack a shelter and even after toiling hard the whole day they are unable to make their both ends meet. The number of such persons is 86 lakhs in Bihar. We find that the Central Government have adopted two different view points. Even such situation exists in the cases of most backward areas of Bihar and Orissa, where most of the people live below poverty line. I would like to cite an example in this regard, the Government provide seven litres of Kerosene oil for each person in Bihar and Orissa, whereas in other states it provide 10, 11 and 12 litres per person. Why such step motherly treatment is being meted out with Bihar and Orissa. I urge upon the Government to shun such practice and instead adopt uniformity, in dealing with states so that more and more facilities could be provided to the poor. There are many lacune in the distribution system of P.D.S. Just now Joshiji was talking about large scale corruption. Our Government is determined to root out this corruption. Joshiji demanded that the Government should furnish details about the action taken in this regard. By doing this you can satisfy the House. Such lacune need to be removed. You have been an honest and industrious Minister and you are known for this. I believe that you would work towards removing allegations levelled against you during your Ministership so that you may provide a neat and clean administration to the people of this country and also to distribute foodgrains properly.

Sir, there are some practical difficulties in the distri-

bution system and P.D.S. The shopkeepers get a meagre commission under P.D.S. Which is a cause of corruption. If you want to ensure proper distribution then you will have to give it a consideration. Unless you became practical you cannot stop large scale corruption. They are bound to adopt unfair means. Besides, there is an alarming increase in bogus cards as a result of which ration cannot be distributed properly and moreover the foodgrains are sold in the black market. I would urge upon the Government to consider such things and remove the shortcomings. By taking account of the feeling expressed by our Prime Minister, steps should be taken for the upliftment of the people. Living below the poverty line. Our United Front Government is determined that no poor person will die due to hunger. You are requested to work with this spirit so that ration could be provided to the poor.

In the last, I would like to submit that the Government would take steps to remove these shortcomings mentioned by the hon. Members. With these words, I hope that Government would take effective measures to streamline the PDS keeping in view its importance so as to provide relief to the poor.

SHRI RAMBAHADUR SINGH (MAHARAJGANJ): Mr. Chairman Sir,—PDS is meant for public in general. The object behind it is to facilitate the consumer.....

*[English]*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Since it is nearly 3.30 p.m., I would take the sense of the House that after Shri Ram Bahadur Singh finishes his speech, till the Minister's reply is over, this subject will go on.

*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: I am just asking the House. If all of you start speaking together, then whom am I speaking to? I have just asked you.

*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: He is the last speaker before the Minister replies to the debate. Therefore, if the House allows, then I would like to extend the time for this debate till it is finished and then take up the Private Members' Business.

SHRI JAGAT VIR SINGH DRONA (KANPUR): At 3.30 p.m. the Private Members' Business should be taken up and there should be no disturbance to it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If that be so, then Shri Ram Bahadur Singh will speak for two minutes now and then we will go over to the Private Members' Business.

*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just have a look at the clock. There are only two minutes left.

*[Translation]*

SHRI RAMBAHADUR SINGH: Sir, two minutes time is insufficient. I have to take up a number of issues.



*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN; Parliamentary Business would be taken up at 3.30 pm.

*[English]*

It is 3.30 p.m. now. The House will take up Private Members' Business now. After that is finished, at six o'clock, this discussion can be continued.

SHRI JAGAT VIR SINGH DRONA: Madam, today is a Friday and hon. Members would like to go soon.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We will settle that at that time.

SHRI VIJAY GOEL: Already, there is no quorum.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nobody has raised the issue of absence of quorum.

SHRI JAGAT VIR SINGH DRONA: And, nobody will raise it. ...*(Interruptions)*

My submission is this. Today is a Friday and we have to go to our constituencies. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: I understand the problem. Let us finish the Private Members' Business first. After that, the House can take a decision. All the Party Leaders have agreed to sit up to seven o'clock daily.

SHRI JAGAT VIR SINGH DRONA: That decision was not to be applied in respect of Fridays.

*[Translation]*

SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI (JHANSI): Sir, This is a very important issue. ...*(Interruptions)*

*[English]*

MR. CHAIRMAN: I was present in that meeting when that decision was taken.

Anyway, the House will take up Private Members Business now. I now call Shri Surendra Yadav to move his motion.

15.31 hrs.

*[English]*

MOTION RE: ELEVENTH REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS AND RESOLUTION

SHRI SURENDRA YADAV (KHALILABAD): I beg to move:

"That this House do agree with the Eleventh Report of the Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolution presented to the House on the 6th August, 1997."

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That this House do agree with the Eleventh Report of the Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolution presented to the House on the 6th August, 1997."

*The motion was adopted.*

15.32 hrs.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS INTRODUCED

(i) **High Court of Gujarat (Establishment of a permanent Bench at Rajkot) Bill\***

*[English]*

SHRI DILEEP SANGHANI (AMERELI): Madam, I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill to provide for the establishment of a permanent Bench of the High Court of Gujarat at Rajkot.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill to provide for the establishment of a permanent Bench of the High Court of Gujarat at Rajkot."

*The motion was adopted.*

SHRI DILEEP SANGHANI: I introduce the Bill.

15.33 hrs.

*[Translation]*

(ii) **Siddheswar National Technical University Bill\***

SHRI LINGARAJ VALYAL (SOLAPUR): Sir, I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill to establish and incorporate a University at the National level for the promotion of technical education and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

*[English]*

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"The leave be granted to introduce a Bill to establish and incorporate a University at the National level for the promotion of technical education and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto."

*The motion was adopted.*

*[Translation]*

SHRI LINGARAJ VALYAL: Sir, I introduce the Bill.

15.34 hrs.

(iii) **Constitution (Amendment) Bill\***

**(Amendment of article 311)**

*[English]*

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (BANKURA): I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the Constitution of India.