

22nd February 1943

THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY DEBATES

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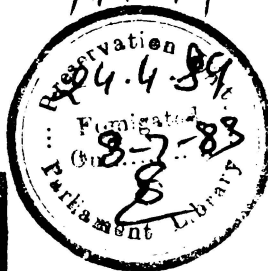
(10th February to 2nd April, 1943)

SEVENTEENTH SESSION

OF THE

FIFTH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,

1943



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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

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Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Monday, 22nd February, 1943.

The Assembly met in the Assembly Chamber of the Council House at Eleven of the Clock, Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim) in the Chair.

MEMBER SWORN:

Mr. John Dawson Tyson, M.L.A. (Secretary, Department of Education, Health and Lands).

STARRED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

(a) ORAL ANSWERS.

MARTIAL LAW AND CONTROL OF HUR MENACE IN SIND.

155. *Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: (a) Will the War Secretary be pleased to state when Martial Law now in force in parts of Sind will be rescinded?

(b) Has Martial Law in Sind brought under control the Hur menace and the activities of the followers of Pir Pagaro? If so, how far?

(c) What is the approximate number of Hurs in Sind? How many of them have been arrested and brought to book and how many have been killed, hanged or sentenced to long terms of imprisonment?

(d) How many Hurs approximately are supposed to be in hiding in Sind and in the adjoining Indian States, separately, and what steps have the Martial Law authorities taken to secure them?

(e) How many Hurs have been found in the area on the right bank of the river Indus within 5 miles from the railway line to which Martial Law had been subsequently extended, and how were they dealt with?

(f) Is there any further necessity for continuing Martial Law in the aforesaid area on the right bank of the river? If so, for how long?

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: (a) and (f). Martial Law will be abrogated in the parts of Sind where it is now in force as soon as the situation permits.

(b) The imposition of Martial Law has made possible very considerable progress in curbing the activities of the Hurs.

(c) The term "Hur" is strictly speaking only applicable to those among the followers of the Pir Pagaro who belong to the "Farqi Jamait" and they are believed to number about 80,000 men and as many women. In addition, a considerable number of those belonging to the second group of the Pir's followers namely the "Salim Jamait" have also been involved in these disturbances. "Salim Jamait" is believed to include between 150,000 and 200,000 men not counting women. About 4,000 persons have been arrested under either the Defence of India Rules or the Hur Act but not all these are Hurs. In addition about 70 women have been called on to give security under the Hur Act and about 2,500 are confined in settlement for Hur women near Sanghar. 81 persons are known to have been killed in addition to 79 hanged. 924 persons have been sentenced to imprisonment for more than one year.

(d) It is not possible to ascertain the number of Hurs hiding in Sind or in the adjoining States. Operations are being undertaken for the rounding up of active followers of the Pir both in Sind and the States.

(e) So far 24 Hurs have been captured west of the Indus since last August. Heavy floods have hampered operations in this direction, for which the area is only now becoming fit. These 24 persons are about to be brought before military courts.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: May I know when the situation is likely to be eased so that Martial Law may be withdrawn? I want an approximate time.

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: It is not possible for me to give an approximate idea of the time.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Will it be six years, or five years or six months?

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: I have nothing to add to what I have said.

Qari Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi: Will the Honourable Member inform the House how Government are in a position to identify the Hurs? Is it or is it not

a fact that a large number of peaceful citizens are being prosecuted under Martial Law in the name of Hurs?

Mr. O. M. Trivedi: It is not a fact that a large number of peaceful citizens have been prosecuted in the name of Hurs.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: The Honourable Member said that when the situation has eased with regard to Hurs, Martial Law will be withdrawn. May I ask why in the meantime Martial Law should not be withdrawn with respect to offences under the Defence of India Act which are against civil population?

Mr. O. M. Trivedi: I do not see how it arises out of this question.

Sardar Sant Singh: May I know how long Martial Law has been in force?

Mr. O. M. Trivedi: Since 1st June, 1942.

Sardar Sant Singh: Is there any precedent where Martial Law has been kept in force for such a long time?

Mr. O. M. Trivedi: I do not know, Sir.

Sardar Sant Singh: Do the Government consider that administration by Martial Law is very odious to the people generally?

Mr. O. M. Trivedi: That is a matter of opinion.

Sardar Sant Singh: What is the opinion of the Government in this matter?

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim), Order order.

Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi: Will the Honourable Member let us know whether it is a fact that persons are being prosecuted without doing any act against public safety, but only on account of being named "Hurs"?

Mr. O. M. Trivedi: I have no information.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Does the Honourable Member know that the Sind Government have now installed a constabulary for the areas in which there are Hurs and will the Martial Law be withdrawn when that constabulary is formed?

Mr. O. M. Trivedi: I know that the Sind Government are making efforts to enroll a constabulary. I have said that Martial Law will be withdrawn as soon as the situation permits.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: May I know if the Sind Government has been consulted with regard to the continuance of Martial Law?

Mr. O. M. Trivedi: I am not in a position to answer that question.

Seth Yusuf Abdoola Haroon: Is the Honourable Member aware that some title holders are proceeded against simply because they are relations of some Hurs who are followers of Pir Pagaro?

Mr. O. M. Trivedi: I am not aware of that.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Will the Honourable Member enquire from the Sind Government whether they still want Martial Law to continue or whether they will make their own arrangements?

Mr. O. M. Trivedi: We are in consultation with the Sind Government, and all necessary steps will be taken.

Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi: In view of the fact that the Honourable Member has not been able to give specific replies to many of the supplementary questions put just now, will he be prepared to make enquiries as to the correctness or otherwise of the allegations made by Honourable Members of this House?

Mr. O. M. Trivedi: If specific allegations are made, I will certainly have enquiries made.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: With respect to questions to which answers have not been given or to which vague answers have been given, will the Honourable Member make enquiries from the Martial Law authorities and find out the answers and then place them on the table of the House or give them in the House orally.

Mr. O. M. Trivedi: If the Honourable Member or other Honourable Members put down specific questions, I would certainly undertake to give answers.

CONCESSIONS FOR SALT COLLECTION ON MADRAS COAST.

156. **Mr. Lalchand Navalrai:** (a) Will the Honourable the Finance Member be pleased to state if salt concessions under the Irwin-Gandhi Pact for the

poor people on the sea coasts are in force at present? If so, on what coasts and to what extent and during which periods of the year?

(b) Is it a fact that the people on the coast of Madras made applications to the Collector of Salt Revenue and Customs to increase the existing concessions for salt and to permit them to collect the salt naturally formed on the pools on the coast for several reasons? If so, what further reliefs other than those already existing have been given to those poor people? If none, why?

(c) Do Government propose to revise the concessions on more liberal scales and afford sufficient facilities to the poor people to take sufficient advantage of them in these difficult times? If not, why not?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: (a) Yes. Local residents in all villages immediately adjoining areas where salt can be collected or made, are allowed to collect or make salt for domestic consumption or sale within the villages. A quota is fixed for each village based on the population and the average consumption. Different times for manufacture or collection are fixed for the different districts according to the period of the year at which manufacture is possible or salt is available. I may add for the Honourable Member's information that the concession is not restricted to the sea coast only but is allowed wherever natural facilities for the collection of spontaneous salt and earth salt are available.

(b) Yes. Applications have been received from the inhabitants of certain villages and relief has been given in all cases in which the circumstances justified it. Relief was granted by extension of the period for collection and of the area in which advantage may be taken of the concession.

(c) Government consider that the scale on which these concessions are admissible is liberal enough and that sufficient facilities for taking advantage of these concessions are available to the poor.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: With regard to part (b) of the question, may I know from the Honourable Member whether replies stating reasons for refusal to give further concessions have been given to those persons who made applications for concessions?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: Relief has been given in all cases in which the circumstances justified it.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: I am asking whether reasons for not accepting . . .

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: I am not prepared to enter into individual discussion with individual applicants.

Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali: Does the Honourable Member mean that this order of Government to make salt applies to the whole of India in all the villages?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: The Pact contemplates that inhabitants of villages adjoining salt areas will be permitted to make or collect salt for domestic use and sale in their respective villages.

PERMISSION TO ENGLISHMEN FOR CORRESPONDENCE WITH DETAINED
INDIAN LEADERS.*

157. ***Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh:** Will the Honourable the Home Member please state if permission was asked for by private persons or members of Parliament in England to correspond with Indian leaders now detained or by Indian leaders to correspond with members of Parliament? If so, was such permission granted? If not, what were the reasons?

The Honourable Sir Sultan Ahmed: The answer to the first part of the question is in the negative. The other parts do not arise.

CONVERSION OF RESIDENTIAL HOUSES INTO BROTHELS FOR SOLDIERS IN CALCUTTA.

158. ***Mr. Amarendra Nath Chattopadhyaya:** (a) Will the Honourable the Defence Member be pleased to state if he is aware of the fact that residential houses in Calcutta near about Chowringhee have been transformed into brothels for soldiers in Calcutta by evicting residents with their families from these houses? If not, will he be pleased to read the observations relating to this matter as published in the Modern Review of January, 1948?

(b) Did the residents voluntarily vacate their residential houses with a view to support the war efforts? If not, how have they been evicted? Was it by legal process or by Ordinances under the Defence of India Rules?

(c) How many houses in London, or in any other town of the United Kingdom have been transformed into brothels for soldiers in the United Kingdom during the war period? If no such houses have been requisitioned in the United Kingdom, why were they needed in India? Have such houses been requisitioned in Bombay, Madras and Patna? If not, why has this been done in Calcutta?

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: (a) and (b). I would refer the Honourable Member to the reply given by me in this House to Mr. K. C. Neogy's starred question No. 59 on the 12th February, 1943.

(c) I have no information regarding the first part. As regards the remaining parts, no houses have been requisitioned in Calcutta or elsewhere.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: May I ask, Sir, whether the Honourable Member has seen the statement made by the Bishop of Calcutta and the Metropolitan of India repudiating the statement made by Government and saying that the statement made by Government was inaccurate?

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: I have seen the statement.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: May I ask, Sir, whether the Government of India will issue another statement dealing with the Metropolitan's statement?

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: The reply given by me in the Assembly on the 12th February, 1948 was based on the report of the Provincial Government. In fact the reply to part (b) of Mr. Neogy's question quoted the Bengal Government's report word for word. After seeing the Metropolitan's statement I have asked the Bengal Government for further comments, but these have not been received as yet.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: May I ask whether the Government of India will consider the suggestion made by the Metropolitan that all brothel areas should be out of bounds for soldiers?

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: Brothels in Calcutta have all along been out of bounds to troops and an old order to that effect was re-affirmed as recently as 13th June, 1942.

Sardar Sant Singh: May I know if the Honourable Member will place a modified reply after consulting the Provincial Government on the table of the House?

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: I think the Honourable Member is assuming a lot of things in his question to me.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: With regard to part (c) of the reply, may I know from the Honourable Member what he means by "I have no information"? Has the Honourable Member made enquiries from London to get that information, or without making any enquiries he says "I have no information"?

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: I have made no enquiries from London.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Then how does the Honourable Member say "I have no information"?

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: I have no information.

Sardar Sant Singh: May I know if the Honourable Member will be prepared to issue a statement when he receives a reply from the Bengal Government in answer to the statement issued by the Metropolitan of India and say whether it confirms the previous statement or modifies it in any way?

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: I will consider this suggestion.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Next question.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Sir, I rise on a point of order. In reply to many questions the Honourable Member has been saying he has no information. If the Honourable Member says he is not prepared to give answer for certain reasons it is a different thing, but to say he has no information is very vague, and I think the Honourable Member

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): It is not a point of order at all. Order, order. Next question.

INDIAN ARMY CORPS OF CLERKS AT THE GENERAL HEADQUARTERS.

159. *Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang: Will the War Secretary please state:
- (a) the permanent strength of the British and Indian personnel in the Indian Army Corps of Clerks at the General Headquarters, separately;
 - (b) the highest rank appointment and maximum emoluments to which the British and Indian clerks of this Corps at the General Headquarters have attained, separately;
 - (c) the total actual expenditure incurred by Government in January, 1943, on account of pay and allowances (including compensatory allowances) on:
 - (i) the permanent British personnel (all ranks) of the Indian Army Corps of Clerks at the General Headquarters; and
 - (ii) the permanent Indian personnel (all grades) of the Indian Army Corps of Clerks at the General Headquarters;
 - (d) the average incidence of expenditure per head on account of the permanent British and Indian personnel, separately, of the Indian Army Corps of Clerks at the General Headquarters;
 - (e) the starting salary of an Indian clerk of the Indian Army Corps of Clerks at the General Headquarters (including allowances, if any);
 - (f) the monthly rate of the following allowances admissible to British clerks of the Indian Army Corps of Clerks:
 - (i) Ration Allowance;
 - (ii) house-rent in lieu of free quarters and connected amenities for married and unmarried personnel;
 - (iii) Marriage Allowance; and
 - (iv) Children's Allowance per child;
 - (g) the starting pay of a British clerk of the Indian Army Corps of Clerks including allowances other than those mentioned in (f) above;
 - (h) the excess of the allowances in (f) above as for a married British clerk with one child over the gross starting emoluments of an Indian clerk; and
 - (j) The difference and ratio between the gross starting emoluments of a married British and an Indian clerk of the Indian Army Corps of Clerks having one child?

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: I lay on the Table a statement giving the information required by the Honourable Member.

Statement.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>(a) B. O. Rs.—46.
Indian.—122.</p> <p>(b) British.—Highest rank—Captain.
Appointment—Officer Supervisor.
Emoluments—Rs. 325.
Indian—Upper Division Clerk,
Selection Grade—Rs. 300.</p> <p>(c) (i) Rs. 21,013.
(ii) Rs. 19,230.
(d) British—Rs. 457.
Indian—Rs. 157.</p> <p>(g) Under peace conditions a consolidated pay of Rs. 190 p. m. for the first year. This consolidated pay includes the allowances under (f) above other than marriage and children's allowance.</p> <p>After one year, if confirmed in his appointment his pay is Rs. 221-10-0 p. m. plus such allowances as are admissible under (f) above.</p> <p>(h) Rs. 114.
(i) Rs. 179. but preference was given to single man and there is not one instance where a married man was appointed on probation.</p> <p>7 : 2 approximately.</p> | <p>(e) Rs. 69 (including Rs. 9, dearness allowance).</p> <p>(f) (i) Rs. 45 per mensem.
(ii) Rs. 80 per mensem (Married).
Rs. 40 per mensem (Unmarried).
(iii) Rs. 30 per mensem.
(iv) Rs. 28 for one child.
Rs. 53 for two children.
Rs. 78-8-0 for three children.
Rs. 22-8-0 for every additional child</p> |
|---|---|

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan: Will the Honourable Member read it out so that we may put supplementary questions?

Mr. O. M. Trivedi: It is a long statement.

Dr. P. N. Banerjea: But a gist of the statement may be given.

Mr. O. M. Trivedi: There are 24 sets of figures, but I am prepared to read it if the Honourable Member wants me to.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): If the Honourable Member wants it, it can be read out.

Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang: Yes, Sir. It should be read out.

(Mr. O. M. Trivedi then read out the statement.)

Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang: May I know with reference to his answer to part (b), is it a fact that there is a Major with only seven years service getting Rs. 1,300? It is not included in the reply.

Mr. O. M. Trivedi: I have said the highest rank is Captain.

Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang: Not a Major?

Mr. O. M. Trivedi: No, Sir. That is not my information.

Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang: Is it a fact that another gentleman is now a Colonel getting Rs. 1,600 after only seven years' service?

Mr. O. M. Trivedi: No, Sir.

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan: With regard to part (f), may I know whether the allowances which the Honourable Member has said are given to the British personnel, are also admissible to the Indian clerks?

Mr. O. M. Trivedi: No, Sir. Those allowances are not admissible to Indian clerks.

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan: Why?

Mr. O. M. Trivedi: The two wings of the I.A.C.C. are quite different. The B.O.R. gets his allowances according to what he would have got in the Army. He retains his military rank.

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan: These rules are made by whom?

Mr. O. M. Trivedi: The Regulations are made by His Majesty's Government.

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan: I am asking why has not the Government of India made the same rules in respect of Indian clerks?

Mr. O. M. Trivedi: The two cadres are quite different. The rates of pay for B.O.R. are governed by considerations different from those on which the rates of pay for civilian clerks are based.

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan: May I know if the rates of pay given to the Indian and European clerks in the Defence Department are the same, or do they differ?

Mr. O. M. Trivedi: The rates are different. I have already said that the B.O.R. are drawn from the Army and they get the Army rates of pay.

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan: My enquiry refers to civilian typists and clerks—not the British Officers—recruited in India. Do these European and Indian typists and clerks get the same starting salary as well as the same maximum pay, or is there any difference in pay between these two sets of clerks doing the same job?

Mr. O. M. Trivedi: I should like to have notice of that question.

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan: This question is given here.

Mr. O. M. Trivedi: This question relates to the Indian Army Corps of Clerks.

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan: But this also includes the question regarding the maximum emoluments to which the British and Indian clerks are entitled.

Mr. O. M. Trivedi: Sir, the information I have given relates to the B.O.Rs. in the Indian Corps of Clerks, and the British wing of the Corps of Clerks consists only of B.O.Rs.

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan: But here it is given about the Indian clerks. I do appeal to the Honourable Member.

Mr. O. M. Trivedi: Question (b), in the Indian Army Corps of Clerks?

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan: Yes, it is so.

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: Yes, Indian personnel.

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan: In that respect the Honourable Member ought to have gathered all the information.

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: I have collected all the information and given it.

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan: I am asking this: whether an Indian in the same service, doing the same work, and the civilian British girls and men who are recruited here, get the same salary, or they get different salaries for doing the same work.

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: The question relates to the Indian Corps of Clerks and I have given the information. The British Wing consists of B.O.Rs.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: May I know from the Honourable Member if before the war there were these British clerks in the Army as clerks?

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Any difference with regard to Indian and British pay?

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: With respect to (b), may I know on what grounds these different emoluments are justified? May I know what the answer is?

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: The answer I gave referred to the pay of B.O.Rs. in the Corps of Clerks. Their conditions differ.

Sardar Sant Singh: In view of the enormous difference in the emoluments between these two grades, does the Government propose to reduce the British element in order to effect economy in these days of stringency?

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: The proportion of B. O. Rs. in the Corps is only 25.

Sardar Sant Singh: I say that in view of this enormous difference, and in view of the need for economy in war time, will the Government consider the necessity of reducing the British element and making it entirely Indian?

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: I want notice of that question.

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan: I should like to know whether it has been taken for granted that the Indian is always less efficient as compared with the Britisher.

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: No, Sir.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: What is the object of employing B.O.Rs. as clerks when there is so much dearth of man-power for the defence of the country?

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: I should be replying to that part of the question later on. There is another question about this to-day.

INDIAN ARMY CORPS OF CLERKS AT THE GENERAL HEADQUARTERS.

160. ***Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang:** Will the War Secretary please state if it is a fact that:

- (a) the British clerks of the Indian Army Corps of Clerks are selected from amongst soldiers of the British Army who show aptitude for clerical work and the Indian clerks of this Corps at the General Headquarters are recruited through an all-India competitive examination held by the Federal Public Service Commission;
- (b) the Indian clerks of this Corps have to pass a departmental examination before they are considered eligible for promotion to the upper grade, which they get only when there are vacancies, and that they are required to produce three consecutive good reports for becoming eligible for the said examination;
- (c) the British clerks of this Corps are not required to sit at any examination for promotion, which they get on completion of specified years of service without any condition as regards the existence of a vacancy, etc.;
- (d) all service limits referred to in (c) above for promotion of the British clerks have been suspended for the duration of the war;
- (e) the Indian clerks of the Indian Army Corps of Clerks at the General Headquarters are not eligible for an Emergency Commission; and

(f) the British clerks of this Corps are not only eligible for a commission within the Corps but are also eligible for an Emergency Commission in other corps of the Army?

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: (a) In so far as appointments in the permanent cadre are concerned, yes.

(b) Formerly this was so. Under war conditions they pass the G. H. Q. Trade Testing School examination but are not required to produce three consecutive good reports.

(c) They are not required to pass any promotion examination but promotion is not automatic under the time-scale. It depends on a man being recommended and fit in all respects and there being a vacancy in the authorized establishment.

(d) Not in so far as substantive rank is concerned.

(e) The Honourable Member presumably refers to commissions in the I.A.C.C. If so, there are no commissioned posts in the Indian Wing of the I.A.C.C. Those clerks employed at G.H.Q are however eligible for the gazetted posts of Officer Supervisors.

(f) No. They are normally deemed eligible only for commissions in their own corps.

Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang: With reference to the reply to (c), is it not a fact that a new entrant, a Britisher, after three years automatically becomes Staff Sergeant? Automatically! Merely by lapse of three years!

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: No, Sir.

Sardar Sant Singh: Will the Government please state the reasons why the British personnel have not been withdrawn from civil employment in view of the war conditions prevailing in the country and sent to the front?

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: I think, Sir, in another question I am answering later on, I will be covering the same ground.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: With regard to (a), may I know from the Honourable Member if these soldiers who are now working as clerks are disabled and therefore unfit for field service, or are they being given a rest as clerks?

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: I would not say that they are, unfit for the front.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Why are they put on clerk's business when they are fitted for soldier's business?

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: The nature of the work in General Headquarters requires clerks with military and clerical experience.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Is there a great paucity of Indian clerks in the Army?

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Is not this also a sort of racial discrimination which will come in the way of recruitment?

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: I am not sure of this.

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan: Does the Defence Department recruit these people as clerks or does the Army Department recruit them?

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: I have not been able to follow that.

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan: Does the recruitment to the clerical jobs in General Headquarters lie in the hands of the Defence Department, which my Honourable friend represents, or does it lie in the hands of the Army people? Who is responsible for these appointments?

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: General Headquarters are responsible for these appointments.

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan: What does he mean by General Headquarters? Not the Defence Department?

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: No, not the Defence Department.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: May I know from the Honourable Member if there are several soldiers, some of them officers also, enjoying their rest in Western Court and passing their time? Why are they not being sent to the front? Are they not necessarily required there?

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Next question. That does not arise.

INDIAN ARMY CORPS OF CLERKS AT THE GENERAL HEADQUARTERS.

181. ***Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang**: (a) Will the War Secretary please state how many British clerks of the Indian Army Corps of Clerks are holding officers appointments in the General Headquarters and what is their ratio to the total permanent establishment of the British clerks of this Corps?

(b) How many Indian clerks of the Indian Army Corps of Clerks are holding officers appointments at the General Headquarters and what is their ratio to the total permanent establishment of the Indian clerks of this Corps at the General Headquarters?

(c) How many temporary British clerks who have been admitted into the Indian Army Corps of Clerks in connection with the war are holding charge of Sections at the General Headquarters?

(d) How many permanent Indian clerks of the Indian Army Corps of Clerks are not holding charge of Sections at the General Headquarters?

(e) Were any of the Indian clerks referred to in (d) above given trial for appointments held by the British clerks mentioned in (c) above? If not, why were they superseded?

(f) Is it a fact that a British clerk of the Indian Army Corps of Clerks on holding charge of a Section is immediately promoted to warrant rank irrespective of the length of service or whether he is permanent or temporary, while an Indian clerk gets only Rs. 50 extra for holding charge of a Section?

(g) Is it a fact that a superintendent's scale is under consideration for the Indian clerks of the Indian Army Corps of Clerks?

(h) If the answer to (g) be in the affirmative, will that scale apply to all Indian clerks holding charge of Sections just as the British clerks get promotion to warrant ranks when holding charge of a Section? If not, why not?

Mr. O. M. Trivedi: (a) 15. 1:3 approximately.

(b) Nil, because they have not yet sufficient seniority to come into the selection zone. It may, however, interest the Honourable Member to know that out of a total of 106 Officer Supervisor (gazetted) appointments 52 are filled by Indians.

(c) 31.

(d) 97.

(e) No. As they are not on a common roster the question of supersession does not arise. Again, it may interest the Honourable Member to know that of a total of 271 Superintendents and Assistant-in-Charge appointments 172 are held by Indians.

(f) Yes. This is because the position of a B. O. R. at General Headquarters is directly related to the position which he would hold in any other military formation in India whereas the position of the Indian clerk is regulated by the charge pay fixed for a civilian placed in charge of a section.

(g) and (h). Both these questions are under consideration. I might add that a decision will be reached shortly.

Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang: With reference to his reply to (b), may I know whether these Indian members of the Indian Army Corps of Clerks have all the liabilities attached to military employment without any of the privileges enjoyed by the British members of the same service? Is it not a fact that they have all the liabilities minus all the privileges.

Mr. O. M. Trivedi: They have the liability to serve overseas as far as I know.

Sir Ghulam Bhik Nairang: Is there any liability to the British member of the same Army Corps which does not attach to an Indian member of the Army Corps?

Mr. O. M. Trivedi: I have not been able to get the Honourable Member.

Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang: I want to know whether there are any greater responsibilities and liabilities attached to a British Member of the

Indian Army Corps of Clerks than to an Indian member, so as to justify larger emoluments and greater chances of promotion?

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: The Indian clerk gets several allowances when he goes overseas.

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan: The question is whether in India the British clerks, who get larger benefits and larger salaries and larger allowances, have also got larger responsibilities than the Indian clerks or not?

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: As I have explained, the pay of the British clerks in this Corps is really determined by the pay they are eligible to draw if they had been in the army.

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan: Is the Honourable Member aware of these things or not himself? Or is he replying on behalf of the War Department to which he has no access? Who represents the War Department.

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: I do; and I am giving this information on behalf of that Department.

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan: If that is so, then the question is very plain: what is the justification for giving different salaries for the same work to an Indian and to a Britisher? We want to know why is this differentiation made by the Government of India?

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: I thought I had already answered that when I said that the pay of the B. O. R. in this Corps is governed by the pay which the B. O. R. would have received had they been in the army and they are recruited from amongst the army. They are drafted from the army and they get the same pay had they been in the army.

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan: Does the Honourable Member justify this very excessive expenditure during the war when he knows it is difficult to make the two ends meet financially?

(No answer was given.)

MEMORIALS BY INDIAN CLERKS OF THE GENERAL HEADQUARTERS.

162. ***Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang:** Will the War Secretary please state if it is a fact that a large number of memorials and representations have been submitted recently by the Indian clerks of the General Headquarters asking for the amelioration of their condition? If so, what action has been taken on those memorials?

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: The answer to the first part is in the affirmative.

As regards the second part, the memorials were considered by the Government of India and the rate of dearness allowance was increased. I may add that Home Department are initiating arrangements designed to secure supplies of basic commodities at reasonable prices for all Secretariat civil personnel including the staff of General Headquarters.

Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang: Will the Honourable Member state whether the representations made are confined only to the supply of these necessities or whether they seek to get the entire scheme, embracing their emoluments and promotion and all that, to be reconsidered?

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: I think the representations asked for increase of pay also.

Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang: How long does the Honourable Member expect that matter to remain hanging fire? Is it going to be speedily decided or merely kept on with the consoling assurance that has been repeated in this House that very soon the matter will be decided?

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: I said the representations were considered and the rate of dearness allowance was increased.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: May I know the date when this representation was received?

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: Speaking from memory, it was received some time either towards the end of November or the beginning of December.

Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang: Is not that time sufficient to arrive at a

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): That is a matter of argument.

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: Decisions have been taken on the representations.

INDIAN ARMY CORPS OF CLERKS AT THE GENERAL HEADQUARTERS.

163. ***Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang:** Will the War Secretary please state:

- (a) whether there was any difference between the rates of pay and prospects for promotion of the British and Indian clerks of the General Headquarters (late Army Headquarters) before the introduction of the Indian Army Corps of Clerks in 1934? If not, what were the special reasons for making this departure from the most elementary principle of wage and work; and
- (b) whether he proposes to take immediate steps to remove this racial inequity by either:
 - (i) amalgamating the British and Indian wings of the Indian Army Corps of Clerks into one cadre and gradually mustering out of service all such individuals as may not elect to serve in the combined cadre, or
 - (ii) by enforcing very clear and strict rules for seniority and promotion so that Indian clerks may have parallel steps of promotion with their British colleagues and are not superseded simply because the latter are British?

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: (a) and (b). The answer to the first part of (a) is in the negative. With regard to the remainder of the question, the position is that in 1933, it was decided that the former system of recruiting British clerks direct from the army and turning them into civilians was not satisfactory since they came to G. H. Q. with no clerical training. It was, therefore, decided to recruit to G. H. Q. B. O. Rs. who had already served in the offices of lower military formations and who would thus have some years of clerical training in addition to military experience. These personnel are a part of what is known as the British Wing of the I. A. C. C. The Indian Wing of the I. A. C. C. is recruited by enrolling, through the Federal Public Service Commission, young men who normally have had no previous military or clerical training. The terms and conditions of the two Wings are not determined by racial considerations. G. H. Q. requires personnel of different types to deal with its business. It requires British military personnel, which is drawn from the British army and paid in consequence at rates which are related to the pays laid down for British soldiers by His Majesty's Government. It also requires Indian clerks drawn from civilian sources and the rates of pays offered to these are fixed with reference to the standard of remuneration usual for the same class of work in the civil departments of Government. The present system provides a constitution which is best suited to an organisation such as G. H. Q., and there is no immediate intention of changing that constitution.

Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang: With reference to the statement that the British and Indian cadres are required to do different kinds of work. May I know whether it is a fact that in certain office arrangements they take each other's place, doing exactly the same kind of work?

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: No; I think certain types of work are performed by the B. O. R.

Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang: Is it not a fact that with the exception of posts carrying higher emoluments and posts in the nature of key posts, every post is held by a clerk of the I. A. C. C. without regard to whether he is Indian or British and that the above mentioned posts are kept as a preserve for the British members of the cadre?

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: If the Honourable Member suggests that all the posts are inter-changeable—every one of them—I do not think he is correct.

UTILIZATION OF INDIA'S STEELING IN LONDON.

164. ***Mr. Muhammad Ashar Ali:** Will the Honourable the Finance Member

please state if it is a fact that India has about 400 crores worth sterling in London? If so, has any amount out of that been utilized for the purchase of foreign business? If not, why not?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: I would invite the Honourable Member's attention to the reply given to Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad's starred question No. 120 on the 17th February, 1946.

GOVERNMENT PAYMENTS TO THE ASSOCIATED PRESS OF INDIA, AND THE REUTERS.

165. *Mr. H. A. Sathar H. Essak Salt: Will the Honourable Member for Information and Broadcasting be pleased to state the amount of money paid, (i) to the Associated Press of India, and (ii) to Reuters, by way of:

(a) subsidy;

(b) subscription for news service supplied to various Departments, Provincial Governments, Governors and the Governor-General; and

(c) for any other reason?

The Honourable Sir Sultan Ahmed: (a) Nil.

(b) The Government of India pay the Associated Press of India and Reuters, as also other Indian News Agencies, a subscription for the supply of their news service to various officers in the Government of India. Subscriptions paid in 1941-42 to the Associated Press of India and to Reuters amount to Rs. 11,400 and Rs. 1,37,347-9-0 respectively. The cost of supply to Provincial Governments and Governors is met by the Provincial Governments concerned.

(c) Nil.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: May I ask what is the object of supplying free of cost these news sheets to officers of the Government of India? Other people have to pay for their newspapers. Why should not the Government officers pay?

The Honourable Sir Sultan Ahmed: Because Government consider it necessary that their officers should be up to date in the informations which are given.

Mr. H. A. Sathar H. Essak Salt: What is the answer to (c)?

The Honourable Sir Sultan Ahmed: Nil.

Seth Yusuf Abdoolo Haroon: May I ask whether the Orient Press and the United Press are also being subscribed to?

The Honourable Sir Sultan Ahmed: Besides the Associated Press of India and Reuters, Government also subscribe to the United Press and the Orient Press. The rate of subscription paid to these agencies is the same as is paid to the Associated Press—viz., Rs. 30 per copy per month.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

FAILURE TO RELEASE MAHATMA GANDHI UNCONDITIONALLY.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I have received notice of a motion of adjournment from Dr. P. N. Banerjea; he wishes to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, the failure of the Government of India to release Mahatma Gandhi unconditionally in spite of the grave condition of his life. This is the very question which was discussed only the other day on an adjournment motion.

Dr. P. N. Banerjea (Calcutta Suburbs: Non-Muhammadan Urban): Sir, the new factor is the grave condition of his health. If you consider that sufficient

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): All that was fully anticipated in the previous motion. The very object of that adjournment motion was to secure his release, because the fast might endanger his health and his life. I rule that the motion is not urgent within the meaning of the rules and Standing Orders; and is out of order.

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA AND THE CEYLON GOVERNMENT.

Mr. A. V. Pal (Government of India: Nominated Official): Sir, I lay on

the table copies of the correspondence between the Government of India and the Government of Ceylon mentioned in the Agenda :

List of papers.

1. Telegram to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Ceylon, Colombo. No. 1493, dated the 26th February, 1942.
 2. Telegram from His Excellency the Governor of Ceylon, No. nil, dated the 18th March, 1942.
 3. Telegram to His Excellency the Governor of Ceylon, No. 2474, dated the 29th March, 1942.
 4. Telegram from His Excellency the Governor of Ceylon, No. nil, dated the 13th April, 1942.
 5. Telegram to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Ceylon, Colombo, No. 3006, dated the 15th April, 1942.
 6. Telegram from His Excellency the Governor of Ceylon, No. 4, dated the 22nd April, 1942.
 7. Telegram to His Excellency the Governor of Ceylon, No. 1258-S., dated the 7th May, 1942.
 8. Telegram from His Excellency the Governor of Ceylon, No. 19, dated the 3rd June, 1942.
 9. Letter to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Ceylon, No. F. 35/42-O. S., dated the 20th August, 1942.
 10. Letter from the Chief Secretary to the Government of Ceylon, No. CF. A. 121/40, dated the 4th September, 1942.
 11. Telegram from His Excellency the Governor of Ceylon to His Excellency the Governor General of India, No. 16, dated the 8th December, 1942.
 12. Telegram to His Excellency the Governor of Ceylon, No. 9817, dated the 10th December, 1942.
 13. Telegram from His Excellency the Governor of Ceylon, No. 139, dated the 16th December, 1942.
 14. Telegram from His Excellency the Governor of Ceylon, No. 141, dated the 1st January, 1943.
 15. D. O. letter from the Hon'ble Mr. G. S. Bozman, Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Indians Overseas, New Delhi, to Sir Don Baron Jayatilaka, Representative of the Government of Ceylon in India, New Delhi, No. nil, dated the 18th January, 1943.
 16. D. O. letter from the Hon'ble Mr. G. S. Bozman, Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Indians Overseas, New Delhi, to Sir Don Baron Jayatilaka, Representative of the Government of Ceylon in India, New Delhi, No. nil, dated the 20th January, 1943.
 17. D. O. letter from Sir Don Baron Jayatilaka, Representative of the Government of Ceylon in India, New Delhi, to Mr. G. S. Bozman, Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Indians Overseas, New Delhi, No. nil, dated the 3rd February, 1943.
 18. D. O. letter from the Hon'ble Mr. G. S. Bozman, Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Indians Overseas, New Delhi, to Sir Don Baron Jayatilaka, Representative of the Government of Ceylon in India, New Delhi, No. nil, dated the 8th February, 1943.
 19. D. O. letter from Sir Don Baron Jayatilaka, Representative of the Government of Ceylon in India, New Delhi, to the Hon'ble Mr. G. S. Bozman, Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Indians Overseas, New Delhi, No. nil, dated the 12th February, 1943.
1. TELEGRAM TO THE CHIEF SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF CEYLON, COLOMBO, NO. 1493, DATED THE 26TH FEBRUARY, 1942.

Government of India have given most careful consideration to proposals contained in Joint Report of Indian and Ceylonese Delegations regarding restrictions upon Indian Immigration into Ceylon. They have consulted Indian Legislature and ascertained reactions of Indian public opinion in general. As a result it was their intention to suggest certain modifications in draft agreement contained in Joint Report. Great change in course of war has however, supervened which in opinion of Government of India renders further examination of this problem undesirable and inconsistent with requirements of war situation. They, therefore, suggest that further consideration of proposals should be suspended and problem re-examined in light of post war conditions.

This involves maintenance for period of war *status quo* as before introduction of Immigration Ordinance in Ceylon and Government of India earnestly trust that Ceylon Government will agree that this is proper course in best interests of successful prosecution of war.

Government of India are anxious that two Governments should achieve fullest possible measure of co-operation in common object of ensuring early victory. They appreciate that existence of artificial barriers between two countries may prove obstruction to such co-operation. Should Ceylon Government find that for war purposes it may be necessary to seek labour from India, Government of India are willing to consider relaxation or removal of existing ban on emigration of unskilled labour provided that Ceylon Government agree to proposals set out in preceding paragraph.

2. TELEGRAM FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR OF CEYLON, NO. NIL, DATED THE 18TH MARCH, 1942.

Your telegram of 26th February. Ceylon Government agree that the present circumstances demand that further consideration of the Joint Report should be suspended until conditions favourable to its resumption recur. Government also agree to continue of *status quo* on the understanding that the *status quo* includes maintenance of your ban on emigration of unskilled labour. Should circumstances arise in which the Ceylon Government might find it necessary and possible to recruit labour for the duration of War for War purpose this Government would ask for relaxation of the ban for that purpose.

3. TELEGRAM TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR OF CEYLON, NO. 2474, DATED THE 29TH MARCH, 1942.

Your telegram No. nil, dated 18th March.

Government of India greatly appreciate ready response of Ceylon Government to their request that restrictive measures should be held in abeyance during period of war. They believe that cordial relations engendered by willingness of each Government to consider difficulties of other will lay surest foundation for equitable solution of all differences.

2. Government of India wish to invite attention of Government of Ceylon to certain considerations relating to ban now imposed in India on emigration of unskilled labour. They have no desire to stimulate emigration of persons whom Ceylon does not require or cannot absorb. In war conditions such emigration becomes highly improbable. True position rather is that ban is to some extent operating to prevent return from Ceylon to India of some whom Ceylon does not now need to keep and may have difficulty in feeding. If ban on their subsequent return to Ceylon were removed there is reason to believe that not a few would take present opportunity of coming to India and would thus relieve Ceylon of some portion of problems arising from difficulty of adjusting war time economy to total population. In addition as indicated in your telegram Ceylon Government themselves may feel need of labour from India for essential war purposes. Government of India, therefore, feel that they must reserve right to lift ban as circumstances require and propose now to make it inapplicable to all Indians at present in Ceylon. They firmly believe that this will result in immediate temporary reduction in population of Ceylon and will themselves take administrative action in India to provide all those now coming away with a certificate of date of arrival in India. Unless Ceylon Government make application no unskilled labourers not in possession of such certificates will be permitted proceed Ceylon. Government of India earnestly trust that measure proposed will commend itself to Government of Ceylon as calculated to relieve some existing difficulties and designed to prevent any new influx and will on this basis confirm the agreement in other respects as set out in their telegram under reply.

Grateful for answer by telegram.

4. TELEGRAM FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR OF CEYLON, NO. NIL, DATED THE 13TH APRIL, 1942

Your telegram No. 2474, March 29th.

Board of Ministers point out existence of ban constitutes part *status quo* and its maintenance contributed largely to Board's refraining from taking any of measures which formed the subject of recent negotiations and to their suspending action on bills which have already been introduced into State Council. Furthermore the acceptance by Board of proposal of Government of India to allow recent negotiations to remain in abeyance was based on assumption that ban would be continued. The Board therefore cannot agree to ban being lifted and request that decision to raise it should not be implemented.

5. TELEGRAM TO THE CHIEF SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF CEYLON, COLOMBO, NO. 3006, DATED THE 15TH APRIL, 1942.

Your telegram No. Nil, dated 13th April. Before sending final reply we wish to make quite certain Ministers have fully understood our proposal which is to maintain ban for all unskilled labour which has not previously been in Ceylon but to relax it in case of labour now in Ceylon. It appears to us that this should meet the point taken by Board of Ministers namely that their suspension of action regarding immigration restrictions is largely in recognition of fact that action taken by India prevents any addition to Indian labour force in Ceylon. Fact that during war period those now in Ceylon can move freely between two countries does not in our opinion prejudice decision to be taken after war on various issues raised during recent negotiations.

6. TELEGRAM FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR OF CEYLON, NO. 4, DATED THE 22ND APRIL, 1942.

Your telegram No. 3006 of 15th April.

Ministers who have fully understood proposal of Government of India represent that effect of raising ban so far as unskilled labour now in Ceylon is concerned might well be to cause efflux of labour employed in tea and rubber industries. Such labour is now in area which are relatively safe. Efflux in considerable numbers would cause serious loss to two vital war efforts. Both industries have been declared essential services. Owing to demands on labour for war purposes replacement of any considerable number of Indians labourers on estates would be very difficult in present circumstances. There is no surplus labour either on estates or in other essential services. Furthermore both tea and rubber industries are being required to increase their production considerably. The reabsorption after war of Indians who have left these industries and returned to India and have been replaced during the war by local labour would be impossible. Ministers feel that Government of India

would not wish tea and rubber industries to be seriously embarrassed and therefore request that the ban be not lifted.

7. TELEGRAM TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR OF CEYLON, No. 1258-S., DATED THE 7TH MAY, 1942.

Your telegram No. 4, dated 22nd April. Argument now advanced by Ministers appears to us to give wholly new turn to correspondence which arose from suggestion in our telegram No. 1493, dated 26th February that further consideration of Joint Report of Immigration should be suspended for period of war and *status quo ante* negotiations leading to that Report should be maintained. Ministers' reply in your telegram No. nil, dated 18th March was favourable provided India in return for Ceylon not proceeding with Immigration Ordinance agreed to maintain probation on emigration of unskilled Indian labour to Ceylon. This India agreed to do in respect of unskilled Indian labour not already in Ceylon but not in respect of labour already in Ceylon which might come away to India for temporary purposes.

2. Ministers will appreciate that prohibition was imposed by India in August 1939 for purpose of preventing new labour going to Ceylon. Prohibition was not intended to prevent Indian labour leaving Ceylon and Government of India do not feel it is appropriate to ask them to maintain their prohibition for that purpose. If it is Ceylon's desire to retain Indian labour for certain purpose method of doing so should be method designed to that end and not fortuitous result, upon which incidentally no great reliance can be placed, arising from action designed for different reason involving different considerations. Government of India regret therefore that they are unable to forego right to relax prohibition to the extent suggested by them. They earnestly trust that Ministers will appreciate Government of India's position in this respect and will now agree to the suggestion made in our telegram No. 2474, dated 29th March. Government of India are most anxious to avoid any development which might make it difficult for them to afford Ceylon fullest possible assistance for prosecution of war both in men and materials.

8. TELEGRAM FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR OF CEYLON, No. 19. DATED THE 3RD JUNE 1942.

Your telegram No. 1258S., dated May 7th. The Board of Minister(s) is being asked to agree not only to a postponement of indefinite period of consideration of Indo-Ceylon Report and, as a consequence to maintenance of *status quo* prior to introduction of Immigration Bill but also allow variation of that *status quo* namely the lifting of ban as regards all unskilled workers now in Ceylon.

2. Board desires to point out that in the negotiations of last September it was made clear that ban would remain until Political and Economic position of Indians in Ceylon had been settled and that Immigration Ordinance was not therefore urgent. In other words the argument was that ban not only operated, to a large extent, as an Immigration Ordinance as regards first entrant but also restricted return to Ceylon of unskilled workers. Board therefore find it impossible to agree at the same time both to lifting of ban in respect of all labour now in Ceylon and also to postpone legislation which would control right of re-entry into Ceylon of unskilled labour now in Ceylon.

3. Board of Ministers feel that Government of India will appreciate difficulty of Board when they are asked to admit the right to return of all Indians now in Ceylon who leave Ceylon during war however long their absence from Ceylon may be.

9. LETTER TO THE CHIEF SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF CEYLON, No. F.35/42-O. S., DATED THE 20TH AUGUST, 1942.

I am directed to refer to the telegram from the Governor of Ceylon, No. 19, dated June 3, 1942, and to say that the Government of India do not feel that they would be justified in continuing to impose upon the Indian labourer in Ceylon the hardship caused to him by the ban which has now been in existence for three years and which deters him from coming to India on short visits for social and domestic purposes, for fear that his return to the island will be prevented by the operation of the ban. They have therefore decided to relax the ban so as to permit the return to Ceylon of Indian labourers now in the island who may come to India on or after September 1, 1942. They greatly regret that the Government of Ceylon have not found it possible to accept the Government of India's view in this matter.

2. A copy of the press note which the Government of India propose to issue for publication on the morning of September 1, 1942, is enclosed. The Agent of the Government of India in Ceylon is being asked to publish a translation of it in the Tamil newspapers in Ceylon on the same date.

PRESS NOTE.

Emigration of unskilled labourers to Ceylon.

The Government of India have decided to relax with effect from September 1, 1942, their prohibition of the emigration of unskilled labourers to Ceylon so far as it affects labourers now in Ceylon. The effect of the ban on such labourers has been that, since its imposition three years ago, they have been prevented from paying their normal visits to India, for social and domestic purposes, for fear of not being allowed to return to their employment in Ceylon. The uncertainty about employment in Ceylon, which was the reason for the ban being imposed, cannot be considered to subsist in wartime, when practically all Indian labour in Ceylon is employed on work essential to the war effort. The Government of India are therefore of opinion that there is no justification for continuing to place any obstacle in the way of labourers wishing to pay their normal visits to India. The prohibition will continue to operate as heretofore in regard to labour not already in Ceylon.

Estate labourers who obtain leave to visit India should get their identity certificate endorsed with the date of their arrival by the Protector of Emigrants at Mandapam or Tuticorin. Non-Estate labourers who obtain leave should obtain identity certificate from the Agent of the Government of India in Ceylon before leaving and get them similarly endorsed on arrival in India.

DEPARTMENT OF INDIANS OVERSEAS,
New Delhi, August 28, 1942.

10. LETTER FROM THE CHIEF SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF CEYLON, No. CF-A.121/40, DATED THE 4TH SEPTEMBER, 1942.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. F-35/42-O.S., dated the 20th August, 1942, and to state that your letter has been considered by the Board of Ministers who have asked me to reply as follows:

The Board regret that the Government of India has not found it possible to meet the wishes of the Ceylon Government and has felt compelled to take unilateral action. The Board have already stated that, in their opinion, lifting the ban whether, wholly or partially, does change the *status quo*. Furthermore it may create economic and other problems in Ceylon which, in the interests of the war effort of Ceylon alone, apart from any other consideration, will have to be solved. The Board may therefore be compelled to take action which will change the *status quo*. They will keep the Government of India informed of any such action but they must reserve the right to deal with such problems if they arise notwithstanding that the solution of any such problem may cause further changes in the *status quo* and may not have the concurrence of the Government of India. The Board earnestly trust that no such action will become necessary.

11. TELEGRAM FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR OF CEYLON, TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR GENERAL OF INDIA, No. 16, DATED THE 8TH DECEMBER, 1942.

Adequate supply of estate labour is under urgent consideration by Board of Minister(s) with special reference to production of rubber and Ceylon's basic quota represents 85 per cent. of production left in the control of the allied nations. In these circumstances Ceylon must resort to most intensive tapping possible including slaughter tapping in order to increase production to at least 30 per cent above basic quota. This will entail the employment of additional labour during the war and less than normal amount of labour after the war when areas have been exhausted. Estates are also required by law for period of war to produce food stuffs in addition to plantation commodity and this also requires abnormal *ad hoc* increase in labour force. Demands on local labour for military units, defence works, essential services and rural food production have been and are very heavy and consequently there is no surplus available for diversion to estates. Production of tea must not be allowed to decrease below present necessary level. It will be realised that now that Indian ban on emigration has been relaxed in respect of labourers now in this Island there is likely to be usual exodus on holidays to India during early months of next year. In these circumstances Board of Ministers has asked me to ascertain whether Government of India notwithstanding their ban on emigration to Ceylon of unskilled labour other than labourers already in the Island would consider special recruitment of labour to meet present war emergency on the following points: (a) Pay and conditions of employment identical with those of other Indian labour; (b) repatriation to India at the end of the war or other period stipulated by agreement. Board of Ministers consider arrangement on these lines to be right one to meet position with which they are confronted which is that (a) demand for extra estate labour is abnormal and only temporary although essential to prosecution of the war and (b) status of Indians in Ceylon is one of the questions which at the request of the Indian Government has been postponed for consideration at a future un-determined date. Grateful for earliest possible reply to this telegram in order that if your Government approves principle of recruitment on the lines proposed, details of method and machinery may be immediately worked out in consultation between our two administrations through Ceylon's newly appointed representative in India. Paramount essentiality of maximum production of our plantation crops especially rubber to supply position of Allied Nations has caused me to head this telegram "Most Immediate".

12. TELEGRAM TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR OF CEYLON, No. 9817, DATED THE 10TH DECEMBER, 1942.

Your most immediate telegram 00016, dated 8th December. Grateful if you would let us know present basic quota for Ceylon, acreage under rubber, number of labourers Indian and other employed, and estimate of additional numbers required with basis of calculation. Also extra numbers you consider needed for food production on estates.

13. TELEGRAM FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR OF CEYLON, No. 139, DATED THE 16TH DECEMBER, 1942.

Your telegram No. 9817. Present basic quota 110,000 tons. Acreage under rubber excluding new plantings 604,000 acres of which small holding, i.e., properties under 10 acres account for 132,000 acres small estates, i.e., properties between 10 and 100 acres account for 123,000 acres and large estates, i.e., properties over 100 acres account for 349,000 acres. The acreage required by law to be cultivated with food crops by rubber proprietors is approximately 36,000 acres but little of this acreage is found within the boundaries of the rubber estates: consequently bulk of persons employed on food production is non-resident and non-Indian labour. The number so employed may vary from a few thousand at one time of the year to as many as thirty to forty thousand at another. Very few of the tappers employed on the small holdings and the small estates are resident labourers and still fewer are Indians.

It is therefore substantially correct to say that any increase in the labour force of small holdings and small estates must be obtained from the locality and not Indian labour. Approximately 80,000 tappers are employed on large estates. Exact proportion of Indian to non-Indian cannot be stated but for reasons already given it is clear that there is no hope of perceptibly increasing local labour force on large estates. Required increased Indian labour so far as rubber production is concerned therefore relates to an increase of tappers on large estates on which 80,000 tappers are employed. Suggested methods of intensive tapping will increase number of tappers required by 15-20 per cent. There must also be taken into account additional tappers required for slaughter tapping and an allowance must be made for wastage and absence on holiday. Returns labour employed output and other statistics are being obtained from each estate for the purpose of ensuring maximum production but these returns are not yet complete. Estimate of additional number of tappers must therefore be provisional at present. The figure given by Planters Association is 20,000. I will telegraph later details of position in regard to labour on tea estates.

14. TELEGRAM FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR OF CEYLON, No. 141, DATED THE 1ST JANUARY, 1943.

In continuation of my telegram No. 139 of December 16th. Estimate of Planters' Association is that approximately 30,000 additional adult labourers may be required for tea estates but actual figure must depend on extent to which manuring programme has to be restricted and to which present labourers take holidays in India. No estate would of course be permitted to indent for additional labour without proving case for it.

15. D. O. LETTER FROM THE HON'BLE MR. G. S. BOZMAN, SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, DEPARTMENT OF INDIANS OVERSEAS, NEW DELHI, TO SIR DON BARON JAYATILAKA, REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF CEYLON IN INDIA, NEW DELHI, No. NIL, DATED THE 18TH JANUARY, 1943.

You will remember that at the discussion which took place in Mr. Aney's house on the 16th January, 1943, Mr. Aney suggested that before reaching a decision on the supply of additional labour now required by Ceylon for rubber estates we should attempt to determine the main principles in accordance with which a settlement of immigration and status problems should be negotiated. You said that if we would put concrete proposals before you, you would give them your closest consideration.

I enclose a statement which will, I hope, explain the lines upon which our minds are working. It has been drafted in the form in which an agreed statement might be issued by both Governments, should an agreement in fact be reached. Mr. Aney would be glad to discuss with you any points you may wish to raise if you will be so good as to propose a convenient time.

Statement.

Owing to Japan's entry into the war the Government of India informed the Ceylon Government that in their opinion the proposals contained in the Indo-Ceylon Joint Report, presented in September 1941, should not be further considered during the war and that the problems of immigration into Ceylon from India and of the status of Indians in Ceylon should be re-examined in the light of post-war conditions. Subsequent developments have made it clear that Ceylon cannot herself provide sufficient labour for the maximum utilisation of her natural resources and for her fullest contribution to the united war effort. She has therefore asked India to permit the emigration of additional unskilled labour.

In these altered circumstances the Government of India have proposed and the Ceylon Government have agreed that the broad principles which will govern a detailed settlement should now be determined.

These principles are as follows :

- (i) It is agreed that Ceylon has the right to determine the future composition of her population by the imposition of such restrictions as she may deem necessary upon the entry of newcomers;
- (ii) It is agreed that all Indians who have entered or may enter Ceylon, without infringing any existing statute, before a future post-war date to be prescribed will be eligible to qualify for all the rights of citizenship now accruing to persons possessing a Ceylon domicile of origin;
- (iii) It is agreed that the qualification for such citizenship shall be such as can be determined by simple administrative process without recourse, except for the legalisation of documents or by way of appeal, to a court of law;
- (iv) It is agreed that, except for unskilled labour, Indians admitted to such citizenship shall have no right to any special protection by the Government of India;
- (v) It is agreed that the existing agreements between the two Governments regarding unskilled labour shall be maintained, subject only to such modifications as may become necessary by reason of restrictions being placed upon the entry of newcomers;
- (vi) It is agreed that any restrictions that may be placed upon the entry of newcomers shall not be such as :
 - (a) to prevent Indians already in Ceylon introducing upon equal terms wives, children and recognised dependants.
 - (b) to interfere with normal commercial practice between the two countries or to prevent the continuation of Indian business already legitimately established in Ceylon or

(c) to impose upon newcomers of Indian nationality any greater restrictions than may be imposed upon newcomers of other nationalities.

16. D. O. LETTER FROM THE HON'BLE MR. G. S. BOZMAN, SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, DEPARTMENT OF INDIANS OVERSEAS, NEW DELHI, TO SIR DON BARON JAYATILAKA, REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF CEYLON IN INDIA, NEW DELHI, NO. NIL, DATED THE 20TH JANUARY, 1943.

I have now consulted Mr. Aney regarding the points which we discussed yesterday. He sees the force of your comments regarding clause (iv) of our proposals and we therefore suggest that clauses (iv) and (v) should be redrafted as follows:

"(iv) It is agreed that Indians admitted to such citizenship shall have no right to any special protection by the Government of India but that, in the case of unskilled labour, there shall be no deduction from the conditions of work, wages, medical attention and housing already agreed between the two Governments.

(v) It is agreed that the existing agreements between the two Governments regarding conditions of work, wages, medical attention and housing for unskilled labour shall be maintained in respect of any new immigrant labour or any unskilled labourers who are not admitted to full citizenship, subject only to such modifications as may become necessary by reason of restrictions being placed upon the entry of newcomers."

Mr. Aney also agrees that in clause (vi) (a) the phrase "recognised dependants" should be altered to read "such dependants as may be agreed between the two Governments."

He has understood the point made by you in respect of the phrase "normal commercial practice" in clause (vi) (b), but we have not yet been able to evolve a re-draft. He suggests therefore that you might, if you so wish, inform your Government that the point has been brought to our notice and that we are considering it.

17. D. O. LETTER FROM SIR DON BARON JAYATILAKA, REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF CEYLON IN INDIA, NEW DELHI, TO MR. G. S. BOZMAN, SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, DEPARTMENT OF INDIANS OVERSEAS, NEW DELHI, NO. NIL, DATED THE 3RD FEBRUARY, 1943.

With reference to your letters of the 18th and 20th January, 1943, forwarding me the Draft Statement and the amendments thereto, I may inform you that I sent the Draft Statement as amended to His Excellency the Governor of Ceylon and have now heard that, before the documents could be placed before the Board of Ministers, it is considered necessary to have fuller information with regard to the proposals.

I shall therefore be grateful if you will be good enough to state whether the acceptance of the proposed statement would or would not involve the rejection or modification of the following sections and paragraphs of the Joint Report by the Delegations from India and Ceylon, dated 21st September, 1941, at Colombo:

(1) The Draft Statement would appear to radically modify Part I, Section A, of the Joint Report by the substitution of an unspecified postwar date for date of coming into force of the Immigration Ordinance, which would have been passed immediately after the endorsement of the Joint Report by both Governments. The first effect of such substitution is that labour for war purposes could not, as requested, be recruited on a temporary basis because repatriation after the war would be precluded.

It may be recalled in this connection that by External Affairs Department telegram of 26th February, 1942, addressed to the Ceylon Government, the Government of India expressed its readiness to consider the relaxation or removal of the ban in respect of labour necessary for war purposes.

(2) The basis of Part I, Section B, of the Joint Report would be modified in the same sense and with the same effect as Section A. Sub-sections (2), (3), (5), (6), (7), (8) and (11) appear to be rejected by paragraph (i) of the Statement. The rejection of sub-section (11) is, of course, tantamount to the rejection of the principles underlying the whole of the Joint Report.

(3) The whole of Part II of the Joint Report would appear to be rejected from:

(i) substitution of the vague word "citizenship" (studiously avoided by the signatories to the Joint Report) for the careful categorization of rights in this section;

(ii) avoidance of all reference to domicile of choice or period of residence as qualifying for immunity from quota legislation; and

(iii) paragraph (vi) of the proposed Statement.

(4) The proposed change in date of the coming into force of the Immigration Ordinance referred to above would appear to adversely affect Part III, Section A, of the Joint Report. Also paragraphs (ii) and (iii) of the proposed Statement would appear to wholly reject Section B, sub-sections (2), (3) and (4).

(5) Part V, paragraphs (1) and (2), of the Joint Report appear to be rejected by paragraphs (ii) and (iii) of the proposed Statement.

(6) Part VI, paragraphs (1), (2), (3) and (4), of the Joint Report are rejected or rendered irrelevant by paragraph (iii) of the proposed Statement.

An early reply will be much appreciated.

18. D. O. LETTER FROM THE HON'BLE MR. G. S. BOZMAN, SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, DEPARTMENT OF INDIANS OVERSEAS, NEW DELHI, TO SIR BARON JAYATILAKA, REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF CEYLON IN INDIA, NEW DELHI, NO. NIL, DATED THE 8TH FEBRUARY, 1943.

I am grateful for your letter, dated the 3rd February 1943, in which you have forwarded certain enquiries made by His Excellency the Governor of Ceylon regarding our proposals. It is most unfortunate that the original has not even yet been delivered to me, but I have your signed copy which reached me today.

I trust that His Excellency is not under any misapprehension as to the object with which we put those proposals forward. As you will remember the Hon'ble Mr. Aney informed you specifically that we could not accept the original suggestion from Ceylon that labour should be recruited subject to compulsory repatriation. That being so we suggested that it might expedite consideration of Ceylon's request for labour if we could first agree upon the main principles which should govern subsequent detailed negotiations regarding the immigration and status of Indians in Ceylon. It was not our intention that the details of such negotiations should be considered now, nor did we envisage the Joint Report of 1941 being the basis of such negotiations. Should it be possible to reach an agreement upon these principles now the detailed settlement would be a fresh settlement utilising if necessary only such portions of the draft Report as either party to the agreement might find useful in accordance with the agreed principles.

Since, however, His Excellency the Governor has asked specific questions regarding items in the Joint Report I should be failing in my duty if I did not reply to them individually. I should point out, however, that there are certain other items in that Report not covered by the present answers to which the Government of India raise certain objections. The answers to the individual points raised are as follows :

(1) The modification of the date upon which immigration restrictions might come into force was in fact suggested in our telegram No. 1493 of the 26th February, 1942, to which reference is made in the question. It also appears to have been accepted at least by implication by the Ceylon Government in the Governor's telegram of the 18th of March, 1942, in reply to our telegram. It is correct, therefore, to say that our present proposals suggest a modification of date. As regards its effect upon the labour now required by Ceylon this is covered by the reference I have made above to the Government of India's view on compulsory repatriation. The reference to the Government of India's readiness to consider the relaxation or removal of the ban in respect of labour necessary for war purposes is correct. It should be observed, however, that relaxation of the ban for a specific period or under such conditions as would permit of compulsory repatriation or be in any way inconsistent with the declared policy of the Government of India in the matter of emigration, was not suggested.

(2) With regard to the change in date the same remarks apply as under (1) above. It would hardly be correct to say that sub-sections (2) and (3) of Part I, Section B, of the Joint Report are necessarily rejected by paragraph (ii) of our proposals. That paragraph merely states that those who remain in Ceylon should be eligible to qualify for full rights of citizenship. This might in certain circumstances include some who have already been repatriated provided their repatriation does not act as a ban against their re-entry into Ceylon. It is correct to say that sub-sections (5), (6), (7), (8) and (11) are rejected. Whether sub-section (11) is a matter of principle is clearly open to argument.

(3) It is correct to say that the whole of Part II of the Joint Report is rejected though the reference to paragraph (vi) of our proposals is not wholly understood. The Government of India take objection to the whole proposal for internal quotas.

(4) As regards the proposed change in date the remarks under (1) above apply. It is correct to say that paragraphs (ii) and (iii) of our proposals reject sub-sections (2), (3) and (4) of Section B, Part IV, in so far as those sub-sections require reference to a Court and that they render the other provisions of those sub-sections, namely, the prescriptions regarding domicile of choice and certificate of permanent settlement, unnecessary.

(5) It is correct to say that Sections (1) and (2) of Part V become unnecessary.

(6) Sub-sections (1), (2) and (4) of Part VI also become unnecessary. The necessity for retaining sub-section (3) in any form would depend upon the qualifications prescribed in accordance with paragraphs (ii) and (iii) of our proposals.

19. D. O. LETTER FROM SIR DON BARON JAYATILAKA, REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF CEYLON IN INDIA, NEW DELHI, TO THE HON'BLE MR. G. S. BOZMAN, SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, DEPARTMENT OF INDIANS OVERSEAS, NEW DELHI, NO. NIL, DATED THE 12TH FEBRUARY, 1943.

With reference to your letter, dated 8th February, 1943, contents of which I communicated to H. E. the Governor of Ceylon by telegram, I have been instructed to state for the information of the Government of India that the Governor has placed before the Board of Ministers :

- (a) the Draft Statement forwarded with your letter, dated 18th January, 1943,
- (b) the amendments thereto contained in your letter of 20th January, 1943, and
- (c) my telegram conveying the substance of your letter under reference.

2. I am to state that the Board of Ministers regret that the Government of India have found themselves unable to consider the proposals contained in the Governor's telegram No. 16 of 8th December, 1942, addressed to His Excellency the Governor-General of India

and that the Board of Ministers themselves are quite unable to consider any counter proposals on the basis of the Draft Statement referred to above.

3. I am also to add that the Board of Ministers note with surprise that the Joint Report of 1941 is no longer envisaged by the Government of India as the basis of any future negotiations regarding immigration and status of Indians in Ceylon in spite of the fact that—

- (a) the Government of India by telegram of February 26, 1942, suggested postponement of the consideration of the proposals in that Report until after the war, and,
- (b) the Government of Ceylon by telegram, dated March 18, 1942, agreed to the maintenance of the *status quo* on that understanding.

ELECTION OF THE STANDING FINANCE COMMITTEE.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman (Finance Member): I move:

“That this Assembly do proceed to the election, for the financial year 1943-44, in such method as may be approved by the Honourable the President, of a Standing Finance Committee of the Assembly not exceeding fourteen in number, to which shall be added a Member of the Assembly to be nominated by the Governor General. The Member so nominated shall be the Chairman of the Committee.”

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Motion moved:

“That this Assembly do proceed to the election, for the financial year 1943-44, in such method as may be approved by the Honourable the President, of a Standing Finance Committee of the Assembly not exceeding fourteen in number, to which shall be added a Member of the Assembly to be nominated by the Governor General. The Member so nominated shall be the Chairman of the Committee.”

Dr. P. N. Banerjee (Calcutta Suburbs: Non-Muhammadan Urban): Sir, on many occasions I have raised my voice of protest against the manner in which the business of the Standing Finance Committee is conducted. Several times in the past I have pointed out that the functions originally allotted to the Standing Finance Committee were diminished and curtailed, and that even the few functions which were actually exercised by that body were not exercised in the manner in which they ought to have been exercised. At the present moment new items of expenditure are placed before this Committee above certain limits, but most often these new items of expenditure are placed before the Committee after the expenditure has already been incurred. What then is the utility of the appointment of this Committee? I see none, unless the Government change their mind and agree to give us an undertaking to the effect that in future all new items of expenditure will be placed before the Committee before any new expenditure is incurred, and also if they agree to amplify the powers and functions of this Committee in the light of the observations made by Sir Malcolm Hailey in 1921. Last year I pointed out that Sir Malcolm Hailey said, when the Committee was going to be constituted for the first time definitely that this Committee would be entrusted with very important functions. But afterwards Government made a change in the functions of the Committee. Are you prepared, I ask, to restore the original functions of this Committee, and are you prepared to say that you will not incur any expenditure before the sanction of the Standing Finance Committee is obtained? If so, I shall support this motion; otherwise I will oppose it.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: Sir, the question of the functions and scope of the Standing Finance Committee has been raised more than once in recent years in this House and the position has been explained. I do not think that I can add anything to what I have said on previous occasions. It is a fact that, when the conception of a Standing Finance Committee was first put before this House, the scope as indicated by Sir Malcolm (later Lord) Hailey was somewhat wider than that which has since been found practicable, but the change in the conception of the functions of the Standing Finance Committee has been dictated by hard practical considerations. The position is that Sir Malcolm Hailey was under a misapprehension in thinking that it would be practicable for the Standing Finance Committee to be associated with certain processes in the making of the budget, etc., which he then foreshadowed to this House. The position has been fully laid out in the memorandum on the functions of the Standing Finance Committee which was actually placed before the Committee and accepted and admitted by them on 21st January, 1937. I will say no more about the committee and the scope of its functions except this, that even in

England where the same problem has arisen, it has been found impossible,* for precisely the same reason, to give a larger scope to a body of this nature.

Dr. Banerjea's second objection is one which deserves serious attention. He protests that it frequently happens that proposals for expenditure are placed before the Standing Finance Committee and that a certain amount of expenditure has already been incurred by the time these proposals are placed before the Committee. In normal times that is a matter which Government are exceedingly anxious to avoid and the Finance Department has repeatedly and constantly impressed on the departments that expenditure should not be incurred on proposals which are to come before the Standing Finance Committee before the Committee has had an opportunity of considering those proposals. But my Honourable friend must recognise that we live in very abnormal times. Practically all the new expenditure of the Government is incurred, on measures necessitated by the war. The necessity for these measures springs up from day to day, often with a rapidity which we are unable to control. Unless, therefore, the Committee is to take over the executive functions of the Government and sit day by day at headquarters, or unless, on the other hand, action which is absolutely necessary in the interests of the country is to be delayed until the Committee can be called,—unless I say these conditions can be accepted, it is inevitable in times such as the present that proposals should come before the Committee after a certain amount of expenditure has been incurred, and I for my part would not be prepared to take the responsibility of asking the Departments of the Government of India never to incur expenditure in present circumstances until they have been able to get the Committee called together and their proposals approved.

Mr. Hoosainbhoj A. Lalljee (Bombay Central Division: Muhammadan Rural): I quite agree with the reasons that the Honourable the Finance Member has given, but I should certainly like to appeal to the Government on another important point, and that is this. If you are required to make expenditure owing to the war without obtaining the sanction of the Standing Finance Committee, will it not be possible for Government to hold more frequent meetings of the Standing Finance Committee than they have hitherto done? That will certainly help a great deal. If such an assurance is given, I am sure my Honourable friends, realising the present position, will certainly not take objection to this motion.

Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali (Lucknow and Fyzabad Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): I agree to a certain extent with what was said by the Honourable the Finance Member as regards war expenditure, but I would ask him to consider this point, whether those items of expenditure which do not relate to the war cannot be stayed and placed before the Standing Finance Committee before incurring any expenditure. The point made by my Honourable friend, Mr. Lalljee, that the meetings of the Committee should be more frequent, is a weighty one. It may be said that these are urgent times and that Government may have to spend money, crores and crores and lakhs and lakhs, in a minute's time. It may be all right, but Government have their responsibility to the House and ought to call more meetings of the Committee. At the same time those items which do not relate to the war and are not so very necessary and urgent should be put before the Committee and their sanction obtained before incurring expenditure.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The question is: "That this Assembly do proceed to the election, for the financial year 1943-44, in such method as may be approved by the Honourable the President, of a Standing Finance Committee of the Assembly not exceeding fourteen in number, to which shall be added a Member of the Assembly to be nominated by the Governor General. The Member so nominated shall be the Chairman of the Committee."

The motion was adopted.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I may inform Honourable Members that for the purpose of election of members for the Standing Finance Committee the Notice Office will be open to receive nominations up to 12 O'clock

[Mr. President.]

on Wednesday, the 24th February, 1943, and that the election, if necessary, will be held on Monday, the 1st March, 1943. The election, which will be conducted in accordance with the principle of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote, will be held in the Assistant Secretary's room in the Council House, New Delhi, between the hours of 10-30 A.M. and 1 P.M.

THE CODE OF CIVIL PROCEDURE (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The Honourable Sir Sultan Ahmed (Law Member): Sir, I move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908."

The motion was adopted.

The Honourable Sir Sultan Ahmed: Sir, I introduce the Bill.

THE ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY (AMENDMENT) BILL.

Mr. J. D. Tyson (Secretary, Department of Education, Health and Lands): Sir, I move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the Aligarh Muslim University Act, 1920.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the Aligarh Muslim University Act, 1920."

The motion was adopted.

Mr. J. D. Tyson: Sir, I introduce the Bill.

MOTION RE THE SITUATION AS REGARDS FOOD AND OTHER NECESSARIES—*concl'd.*

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Further consideration of the motion moved by the Honourable Mr. N. R. Sarker on Monday, the 15th February, 1943, regarding the food situation.

Seth Yusuf Abdoola Haroon (Sind: Muhammadan Rural): Mr. President, the prophecy I made the other day about the empty Treasury Benches has come true and today I find myself still in greater difficult position in not knowing who the Commerce Member is. I think I have to address the Secretaries of the Departments.

The other day I spoke regarding the distribution of sugar and how the quotas are distributed to the provinces. I wish to make a suggestion regarding this. The Sugar Controller distributes his quotas and asks factories to send their sugar to the different provinces but somehow or other, factories which are not prepared to send their sugar to provinces manage to delay in sending this sugar to the different provinces. I do not know how they manage it. For example, last December when representation was made by the Sugar Mill Owners Association to the Government, they were convinced that the price of sugar was going to be raised in the month of January. When quotas were allotted to these sugar factories, they refused to send their quotas to the different provinces. Some factories came to an arrangement with the provinces that sugar will be sent to them when the price will be raised but not until then. Somehow or other, Sind was the only lucky province which came to an arrangement and said "We will give you the prices which are raised after the 1st of January". Those provinces which did not make such an arrangement did not get the sugar. So, I would like to make a suggestion that when allotting sugar quotas to the different factories, the Controller of Sugar Supplies should be given the power of giving them the wagons also and the factories should send their sugar within the time specified by the Sugar Controller.

Sir, we have been hearing a lot about standard cloth for the last two years. Early in February a conference was held in Bombay between the Textile Association and the Government and there was no reference made here regarding standard cloth. When the *Indian Finance* wrote about this and other papers also,

the Government came out with a reference about this and said that fifteen hundred million yards of standard cloth is to be produced and that fifteen million yards will be marketed early next month. So far so good; but what about the distribution? I must congratulate the Government on one thing that they have turned down the suggestion of the Mill Owners Association for distributing. If the Mill Owners Association were given the task of distributing, I assure you that this cloth would never reach the consumers. I believe that the Government has now approached the Provincial Governments for the distribution but I would suggest that the Provincial Governments should set up an Advisory Board consisting of some business men and leading persons in the province. The function of the Advisory Board should be to prepare a list of those dealers who are going to sell this cloth in the market and this list should be made according to the ratio of the communal population and those dealers should be warned that if they do not sell this cloth according to the terms, their names will be struck off and they will be penalised. I would like to draw the attention of the Government to the scheme of standard cloth distribution in force in Indore. The Indore State takes a personal interest in this, whereas we have none to look after us. This is the Indore Scheme:

"The Standard Cloth Scheme for supply of cheap cloth to the poor at rates 40 per cent. below the prevailing market ones was put into operation in Indore City from the 15th December, 1942. Four shops are working in the city and six more will be opened in suitable localities as demand for the cloth increases. The total supply of cloth for sale to the shops up to the 15th January amounted to 31,735 yards and the actual sale to 99,541 yards. This cloth is manufactured in the local mills and sold at Government shops run in the city by the local licensee. It can be purchased by persons whose monthly income does not exceed Rs. 60 per month on presentation of coupons that are delivered at the residences of applicants for them after verification of their income and number of family members. 2,500 applications have so far been verified and coupons for 76,104 yards for 6,342 persons issued, each person being eligible for getting 12 yards of Standard Cloth per year *per capita* for himself and his immediate dependents. The varieties of cloth that will be available consist of *Satan*, long cloth, *rangawat*, *dhoti* and *chadar*."

This is the scheme put forward by the Indore Government and I hope the Government will go into it or ask the State as to how they have made this arrangement and try to put into force this arrangement in British India also.

12 Noon.

Sir, I now come to wheat. I admit that Sind has also felt a great deal in not being able to fulfil the demands of its people, but who is to blame for it? Sind grows its own wheat and is a surplus province so far as wheat is concerned and yet Sind people were deprived of it because of the policy of the Government of India. Last year my father, who was a Member of this Honourable House, told the Commerce Member, Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar, in Food meetings, in private interviews and by letters asking the Government to look into this affair. At that time the Government was involved in many other things and did not have time to look into this food question. Sir, then they were settling the needs of other countries because it was going to be an essential element in the strategy of this war. In return we were to have the goodwill and good gesture of those countries, but now pure strategy should be kept aside and the Government should look after the hungry people of this country. They should consider them first. Is the Government now prepared to give us an assurance that they will get the quotas of different provinces and only the surplus will be sent out?

Sir, I find from the *Capital*, which is the leading Indian financial paper, that the Government has evolved a scheme of purchasing wheat through the Provinces and are appointing their agents for purchasing the same. I would again sound a note of warning to the Government that this is not the right system. When there is a demand for a commodity which is small in quantity and for which the Government and the people are struggling, Government should try to have the confidence of the grower. They should try and form a sort of co-operative system of the zamindars in which the produce should be pooled. The zamindars should be asked to inform the Government as to their

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production and the Government, instead of appointing one of their favourites as a purchasing agent, appoint co-operative societies and ask these co-operative societies to sell their produce to the Government and direct them to distribute it. Of course, commissions and other advantages should be given to these co-operative societies. If the Government will try to have the confidence of the growers, then and then alone we will be able to solve this problem. The appointments of the purchasing agents, who are naturally the favourites of the Government, should be abandoned and the system that I have suggested should be introduced.

Sir, I would like to point out another thing to the Government, namely, the rise in the price of groundnuts. The price of groundnut today is about Rs. 67/8 and last year it was Rs. 31. The price has gone up because the import of coconut oil from other countries has been stopped altogether. This is also a very essential commodity. It is used for the manufacture of soap, etc. The price has been more than doubled and it is high time that Government should look into this matter and do something.

If I am heard and attention is paid, I will ask the Government to let us know as to what they want—control, partial control, de-control, secession of orders, amendment of orders or the re-amendment of orders have left us all dizzy. We do not know where we are. The producer does not know what is happening and that is why there is hoarding. The Government should decide its policy and let us know once for all as to what they are going to do and what are their intentions for the future. Once this is done and the Government comes out with a scheme before the country, I am sure all the communities and all the producers will co-operate with them and there will be no hoarding.

Mr. T. S. Pillay (Government of India: Nominated Official):—Sir, I rise from my seat not to offer apologies for any one. I am not here to justify the mill-owners' case or to justify the Government's action or to justify what is known as negligence regarding the consumers' interests and demands. I wish to place on behalf of the Commerce Department one or two major facts and to narrate the events that have occurred for the last two years in respect of the two commodities that have been referred to, namely, kerosene and standard cloth. As regards others, my Honourable friend, Major General Wood, will inform the House in due course. It is somewhat unfortunate that when I have ventured to place before the House the views of the Commerce Department some of the leading Members who made trenchant criticisms on certain aspects of Commerce Department's policy are absent. I refer to my Honourable friends, Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad and Mr. Jamnadas Mehta. I am sure my Honourable friends in this House will bear with me for a few minutes when I narrate the events and will give us their beneficial advice which we are always willing to receive and consider.

Now, Sir, to take first the question of kerosene. I was unfortunately not present when my Honourable friend, Mr. Muhammad Nauman, made certain remarks about the kerosene supplies in Bihar. The position about kerosene is this. Soon after the fall of Burma, the question of the supply of kerosene to this country became rather acute. India was never self-sufficient in respect of this oil. We had to import considerable quantities, mostly from Burma. As the Honourable Members are aware, after Japan joined the war the position of shipping became very acute. These oils are transported in what are known as tankers, which are certainly not adequate for transporting oils of the character which are required for war purposes, namely, aviation spirit and petrol. We had to economise in tankers and so in consultation with the suppliers and in consultation with all the authorities who have command over the tankers, we had to decide that certain cuts will have to be imposed on the supply of kerosene to this country. It was done gradually; it was done in consultation with those who know the markets inside out. The first cut came to about 10 to 20 per cent. of the normal supply of a normal year, but gradually we had

to increase it till, it now stands at about 50 per cent. of the level of supply to the various markets for corresponding periods in the year 1941. Fortunately in respect of this commodity there is a well organized organisation that has complete command over the distribution of this article. In close consultation with this organisation, and, I am glad to say, with the fullest co-operation of this organisation, Provincial Governments are advised and asked to set up some sort of rationing, not exactly on coupon, etc., methods, but on certain well known principles and system under which this article would reach the most essential consumer. Several Provinces have adopted several systems, but we are sure that consistent with the limitations of supply, consistent with the nature of the market and consistent with the nature of the article, the distribution of this commodity is not as bad as one would expect under war conditions.

Now, Sir, about Prices: Sir, as early as December, 1939, the Government of India realized that the price of kerosene will be one which will evoke public attention sooner than later. It was possible for Government, after carefully examining the situation, to adopt measures to control prices on the basis of certain increases in the cost of production. I feel sure the House will agree that the Government of India had taken firm action under which speculative factors were not allowed to play. Prices have been kept at a level which, I believe the House will agree, in the present circumstance is fairly reasonable. The Government of India make careful examination of the costs placed before them. Prices are fixed with their concurrence from period to period, generally for six months at a time.

Sir, I will now proceed to give my story about standard cloth. As early as September, 1941, when there was no public demand for standard cloth, and I venture to say the name of the standard cloth was not even mentioned in any way, the question was raised by Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar at the Cotton Textile Conference at Bombay. He indicated that sooner than later the Cotton Textile industry will have to be prepared for the manufacture of standard cloth and supply it at a fairly reasonable price to the consumer. It was agreed that this kind of cloth could be manufactured and supplied provided there was reasonable public demand. It was agreed that Government could not accept financial risk involved if there were no genuine demand. Sir, this was in September, 1941. Then, within a fortnight, the Honourable the Commerce Member placed the case for standard cloth before the Price Control Conference and representatives of all the Provinces, who were present at that Conference, were invited to state their wishes. The whole case was explained. It was also explained that the distribution of standard cloth might have to be undertaken by Provincial Governments. But in view of the situation at that time Provincial Governments' representatives did not think that the standard cloth should be manufactured and put on the market immediately. They evinced no enthusiasm for the supply of standard cloth at all.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee: (Calcutta Suburbs: Non-Muhammadan Urban): Did the Provincial Governments say that?

Mr. T. S. Pillay: I may now digress for a moment. It has been said that the manufacture of standard cloth might affect the central finances adversely and hence the Central Government was apathetic. Sir, I must say in view of certain allegations made in this House the other day that the Honourable the Finance Member categorically said at the Conference, I have referred to that he was not interested in cloth prices; if the Mills sold them cheaply and thus earned less profits he would be content to take his share. Only if they actually made Excess Profits he would claim his share. As I said before, Sir, Provincial Governments from whom we wanted to know whether there was any genuine public demand for this kind of article, indicated that there was no general demand and there was no likelihood of the scheme being accepted. What did the Government of India do? They did not rest there. They suggested that there should be further examination of the scheme. Immediately a second

[Mr. T. S. Pillay.]

Congress of the Cotton Textile Representatives was convened in January, 1942. The Conference briefly came to the conclusion that under the then circumstances they would be prepared to devote 5 per cent. of their productive capacity to the manufacture of standard cloth. They would be prepared to deliver this at nominal profit to Governments concerned who on their part should be prepared to make adequate distribution arrangements so that this cloth actually reached the consumers. Soon after this agreement was reached the Commerce Department appointed two technical committees to go into the question of standard cloth and also to reach an agreement as to the prices for which this cloth had to be sold. Sir, these two Committees were quick in their work and again the scheme was put forward before Provincial Governments and samples of standard cloths were also placed before them in April, 1942. The response was not encouraging. Despite a great deal of correspondence as regards various matters only a few Provincial Governments placed orders under the scheme then propounded and expressed willingness to undertake distribution to consumers within their own areas. By this time it was November, 1942, and it was thought by many that when a scheme of this character was not accepted and adopted on an All-India basis it was not likely to serve the object for which it was created. In spite of all these difficulties the Central Government considered that they thought it necessary that some amount of cloth should be produced and placed in the market. In November, 1942, special steps were taken to convince the industry that in spite of the deficiencies of the scheme and as it was, though about 70 per cent. of the Indian Provinces did not accept the scheme, it was incumbent on them to manufacture the standard cloth already asked for by some provinces.

Well, Sir, they agree to do so, be it recorded to their credit, and as it has been already announced in the opening speech, I believe, of the Honourable the Commerce Member, certain orders are being executed and distributed to certain Provinces. The Central Government at this stage realised that it is not enough to go on putting the scheme on a sort of voluntary co-operation from certain Provinces and also certain features that were then a part of it. They held two further consultations with the industry and it is now more or less settled that on the side of manufacture, the industry would devote as much as 60 per cent. of its productive capacity, if necessary, to manufacture cloth to the order of the Supply Department and/or of the Commerce Department, for standard cloth. That is the agreement which they reached willingly and voluntarily at the conference held at Bombay on 30th January. As regards the question of price, they agreed that the price should be fixed quarterly by the Central Government on the advice of the representatives of the industry, and the price fixed will only take into account certain features which go to increase the cost of production. Sir, some Honourable Members, I believe Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad mentioned the other day that the prices are being fixed by the industry itself and that they are quite happy about it. I do not know whether they are happy, Sir, but I know that the prices are not fixed by the industry, but that the prices are certainly fixed by the Central Government. That applies both to the price of standard cloth and the price of cloth supplied to the Supply Department, ordered by the Supply Department for war purposes. I may tell the House that the Honourable the Finance Member's very watchful watch-dogs are always present at the panel meetings and they see to it that no price elements which are not justified by the factors which we consider reasonable are allowed to be included in these prices. As regards qualities, we have also taken into account, that on the plea of standard cloth, cheap cloth of inferior qualities are not passed on. There is a specification Committee at which the experts of the industries and also experts of Government are associated, and the specifications are so framed as to make the cloth durable, if not exactly attractive.

Now, Sir, one further point. The Central Government have also taken the entire responsibility to purchase the cloth from the mills for which they place

orders and then to make allocation of these to the Provincial Governments who are willing to participate in the scheme. It has also been arranged that the distribution arrangements should be made up in various places in such a manner as to satisfy the Central Government that the cloth actually reaches the consumer at the prices scheduled.

Sir, I have nothing much more to add to the citation of events I had given so far. We have already appointed a Standard Cloth Commissioner who has taken charge of his duties at Bombay. He is busy arranging for the manufacture of about 50 million yards of cloth which we hope to allocate to various Provinces in the course of a month or two. We had hoped that with the co-operation of all who are interested in this scheme we are well on our way in solving this most difficult problem.

Before I close, I only want to refer to one point which my Honourable friend, Mr. Jamnadas Mehta, referred to the other day. He referred to a certain correspondence between an Ahmedabad Association and the Honourable the Finance Member. That correspondence had been with the Commerce Department. A certain Association at Ahmedabad had referred to certain alleged repudiation of contracts by the Ahmedabad millowners about certain contracts for delivery of piece goods. The matter was investigated and as far as my present information goes, it referred to certain contracts between two private bodies. Government consider that, as at present advised, it is not for them to interfere in the contractual negotiations between two private parties. Sir, I wish to close with a word of appeal that in these matters of production of cloth, of distribution of kerosene, and all such matters that affect the social economy of the people, it is not the Defence of India Rule, it is not certain governmental authority that can secure adequate results, but it is the willing co-operation of people, and the appeal and association of Members of the Legislature who are here to the various people, to help Government in securing the objects, that will serve more than mere demand that certain coercive measures and that certain coercive action should be taken. We in the Commerce Department are keen to help and do our best and shall appreciate, at all times, any constructive suggestions offered.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I might mention to the House that notices of three amendments to this motion were given, but none were moved. It was the duty of the Honourable Members who gave notices, if they wanted to move these amendments, to rise in their places and move them immediately after the motion was made. I am rather doubtful that to a motion like this, any amendment can be moved. The motion merely wants that certain situation should be discussed and, therefore, no action is to be taken. Anyway, I do not wish to give any ruling on this point at present, because it is too late for any amendment to be moved now.

Mr. H. A. Sathar H. Essak Sait (West Coast and Nilgris: Muhammadan): Sir, as one of the Members who gave notice of an amendment, I submit that I was told that as notice was not given of the amendment before the motion itself was moved, this will be held not in order. That was why I did not move.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member ought to have, at any rate, made an attempt to move it after the motion was moved. It cannot be moved now, at any rate.

Mr. O. P. Lawson (Bengal: European): Sir, this debate coming into the third day has covered a very wide field and I could have wished that its scope has been rather more limited so that we might have come to less diverse conclusions and possibly have supplied the Honourable Member for Food with some more definite suggestions. I propose in the few remarks that I have to make today to deal with that particular side and in particular with the recommendations of the Central Food Advisory Council which might well have formed a basis for a debate of this nature. This Advisory Council put forward a number of very useful suggestions to Government and equally pointed to a number of deficiencies in the make-up of the food situation which require very careful attention. In the first place, I cannot see how the Honourable Member for Food can possibly know where all his produce is going unless he has reasonable

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statistics before him to say how much he has got to account for. In this respect, I would like to quote the Royal Commission on Agriculture. In April, 1928, the Commission gave it as their opinion that agricultural statistics were admittedly often mere guesses and not infrequently demonstrably absurd guesses. Even, today, Sir, Appendix II of the Government of India Crops Statistics published in 1942 describes Bengal figures as "more or less conjectural". It points, I think, to a somewhat serious situation that at this stage in our evolution in India and indeed at this stage of the war, it should be necessary for the Advisory Council to point out to the Government of India that there are really no reliable and correct statistics upon which to work.

Now, Sir, some of my Honourable colleagues on this side were questioning the Honourable and Gallant Member for Food somewhat severely the other day on the question of activated sludge. The Gallant Member had to confess to a certain amount of ignorance on the point, but if it is any comfort to him, may I say now that I do not think that my Colleagues were in any very much better position? Activated sludge produced by the treatment of town sewage is certainly a method of fertilising, but the disposal of town sewage is generally conducted through rivers or the sea, because most of our great towns and cities are situated near big rivers or near the sea which will carry away the sewage. Sometimes where towns are not so situated, it pays to treat the sewage rather than to carry out a somewhat expensive disposal scheme. But all organic matter if treated, can by producing bacterial action become a fertilizer. I mention the point principally because on pre-war prices for food crops there was literally no return on any kind of fertilizer, and if any enquiry is to be made into the treating of sewage it will need to be made on the understanding that unless the price for food crops can be kept up, the cost which the treatment of that sewage will involve will make it an extremely doubtful proposition. Indeed, there are several other methods of fertilizing which lie very much nearer to the cultivator. Green manuring, for instance, would probably be far cheaper, unless the sewage scheme was an enormous scheme. In America, I believe, there is treatment of certain sewage, but I think that it has to be a sewage farm serving something like half a million people before it really turns out to be a paying proposition.

Well, Sir, the question which confronts us is whether Government will be successful in encouraging and ensuring a free flow of food grains all over India. It is, in my opinion, very necessary that the normal methods of distribution should be used in the first place. If Government attempts to substitute the intricate avenues by which food reaches the people they will undertake an extremely large job. In the first place obviously it is up to them to try and get normal avenues working, and working as freely as possible. Now, how can this free flow be ensured? The Advisory Council made certain recommendations in this respect, but the recommendations were by no means exhaustive. They pointed to the fact that publicity was necessary. They said "that all measures be taken by the Central Government that would operate to restore public confidence and in particular the true facts concerning army consumption, of food stocks, the amount of reserves, and the degree of deterioration." Certainly, that should be made known, but other things should, I think, be made known also. The first point that, I think, the Government should make absolutely clear—and I am glad to see that the Member for Food has already been undertaking these publicity endeavours by press conferences and so on,—the first point to be get over is that unless sellers exercise their function of distributing their stocks, Government will compete with them. As soon as that point is generally known and is clearly understood I think that sellers will get on with selling. They would naturally get the best price they can but they will not hold up the stocks. And may I here just give a tip which may possibly be teaching my grandmother to suck eggs but which I have always found to be very effective and that is to keep what I might call a mobile reserve in hand and whenever a district is found to be short of stuff because the dealers are not operating properly, to send down a substantial consignment of the stuff of

which they are short and flood the market. If the dealers hold up their stock they deserve to be put out of business and they know that Government can put them out of business.

Crop statistics should certainly be made known. The effect of new sowings on the price of a crop is invariably very effective. If your grain prices are high, the information to the effect that the sowings of that particular crop are far above normal almost invariably leads to a drop in prices, and provided that information can be got round and got round quickly fresh sowings are an additional factor and a factor which, I think, has not been made sufficient use of. The large *rabi* sowings this year have not been advertised to the extent that they should have been advertised. Crop planning, of course, should be publicised and uneconomic crops discouraged. The enormous production of *gur* in this country—I think I am right in saying that only about ten per cent. of the sugarcane grown is finally used in the production of white sugar—is a most uneconomic method of producing sugar, and often the type of sugarcane grown in Bihar and elsewhere is growing not in its indigenous country and takes far more out of the soil than the soil was ever intended to give it. I will doubtless be told that these are matters for Provincial Governments. Indeed they are, but I suggest that it all brings home to us how much some co-ordination between provinces is required. We are now faced with a war situation where we find ourselves a very little short of normal consumption (not as short as we have been in a number of previous years) but we face it with no co-ordination between the provinces and I suggest that Provincial Agricultural Departments have gone to sleep. They are not active; they are not in a position to get their propaganda round and to make their reciprocal arrangements so that the emergency is met: If it is necessary to produce an emergency before there is any central co-ordination, the argument equally applies in the case of normal economy. Had there been any kind of central co-ordination and reciprocal arrangements regarding crops between provinces, there might not now be this immediate war difficulty and equally there might be some more economic arrangements for the production of crops among the provinces.

Now, Sir, the points that I put forward, I put forward with the intention of indicating means whereby the free flow of food may be induced. But as I know from experience, the Honourable the Food Member has to deal with some pretty hard nuts. He has to deal with the middle man who has adopted a "bull" policy and he won't drop it very easily. Once people run into stocks it is a very difficult job to get them to start unloading. If a free flow cannot be assured, what are we to do? There are, of course, constitutional means whereby the Centre can impose its will upon provinces and force them to disgorge. Penalties should be standardised on a very high standard and should certainly be made public in every possible province. It may be disagreeable to resort to the common informer; but, if necessary, information regarding stocks of food stuffs must be obtained by people who will be rewarded for giving that information. And above all, if we are faced with this situation, Government must come into the market and compete with the seller.

Another point which I think would help the situation very much, but is possibly rather more remote than the points I have mentioned, is that if we could only get the people into the habit of exposing the profiteer instead of paying his price for fear they will not get supplies, the situation would be much better. The trouble is that when something starts to be short and an excessive price is demanded, although the buyer knows that that price is unreasonable, he will pay it because he says that "this is so short that if I do not pay his price he won't sell to me next time. He will say he has not got it". That can only be dealt with in the first instance by making it absolutely clear that the food is there and that they will get that food: and if they can be convinced of that, if the buyers can be convinced of that, it is possible that we may get them to come forward and to give evidence against the profiteer. I say it with all diffidence because I know how difficult it is from experience to

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get information of this nature: but unless there is that feeling that they will get the stuff, the situation then becomes hopeless. Even the smallest consumers are well considered when a situation like this arises. Even if a small village is confronted with a situation in which the normal dealers are holding up supplies, I think it pays to make special arrangements for that small village. My reason is this: that the news gets round very very quickly that such and such a thing has been done, and the dealer thinks twice before he does it again. I have indeed had experience of a certain commodity in which, although dealing entirely on wholesale lines, it has been found worthwhile to sell retail to small consumers, so that the larger dealer who was holding up supplies got frightened and started to let his supplies go. My point, therefore, is that once again the mobile reserve comes into action and can be shot to any point where there is holding up of supplies for the people.

Now, Sir, that brings me to the end of my time, and may I say that while we naturally regret the delay that there has been in taking up this matter vigorously, I am myself convinced that it is now being attacked with vigour, and I should like to congratulate the Member for Food on the publicity that he is giving to the steps that Government is taking; I should like to congratulate him also on the immediate success that appears to be attending his efforts.

Mr. H. M. Abdullah (West Central Punjab: Muhammadan): Sir, I rise to take part in this very important debate to voice the feelings of the wheat growers of the Punjab. At the outset I have to say that I regret that the Central Government have always tried to help other interests and have consistently overlooked the welfare of the peasants, who are the backbone of the country. They always try to pamper the millowners and the industrialists but ignore the needs of the agriculturists. The one obvious reason is that the agricultural classes are not well represented in this House and the subject of agriculture is the sole concern of Provincial Governments. But as the agricultural classes form the majority of the population in the country, it is the duty of any Government who claim to be representative and democratic, to pay special attention to the betterment and advancement of the rural people, who are very loyal to the Government. It was rather very unsympathetic on the part of the Central Government to have controlled the wholesale price of wheat. Their action did harm to the poor cultivator, who was required to dispose of his crop at a very uneconomical price, whereas nothing was done to procure for him his necessities at equally cheap-rates. Sir, I am glad that the Government have at last realized the unwisdom of their action and have abolished control on the wholesale price. One beneficial result of this removal has been that stocks of wheat, which were hoarded, have started flowing into the market. The Government agents who could with difficulty purchase 8,000 tons have now been able to procure 60,000 tons of wheat. Sir, I am sure that Government will not listen to the counsel of those who suggest the reintroduction of wheat control. I admit that after the removal of control on the wholesale price of wheat, the price of wheat has gone up. But it is now showing signs of a downward trend. If left to the natural law of supply and demand, it will come to Rs. 9 or Rs. 10 a maund; which will not compare unfavourably with the price of other commodities that are required daily. Thus, there will be no necessity for imposing any control on wheat. Control will again lead to the hoarding of stocks. The cultivators are finding great difficulty in purchasing their cloth and agricultural tools. Nobody in the House has so far suggested that the price of agricultural tools should be controlled. I do not see why of all commodities, wheat should be singled out for control. Although the price of rice which also forms the staple article of food of the people of some provinces is soaring high, no steps have been taken to bring it under control. I would, therefore, in the end suggest to the Government that if they want that the stocks of wheat and other agricultural commodities should flow freely into the market, they should under no circumstances resort to control of the wholesale prices, but should leave them

to be adjusted by the natural economic forces. Sir, the best remedy for controlling the purchase and distribution of wheat is that the Government should purchase all surplus stocks of wheat and other grains in the country at the time of the new crop and then distribute them to all provinces according to their needs. As regards the "grow more food" campaign, I would say that although Government have allotted some waste lands to cultivators for growing more food, they have not issued orders to the Irrigation Department to supply more canal water for cultivating those waste lands. Without water it is not possible to grow anything on such lands. I am sure that Government will soon write to the Provincial Governments to supply canal water for irrigating waste lands for growing more food.

Before concluding my speech, I would like to invite the attention of the Government to one more omission on their part. From the statement laid on the table of the House in reply to a question, I have discovered that the zamindars are not generally invited to attend the wheat conferences which are convened by the Government to consider the wheat situation. In this way, their views are not properly placed before the Government. I am sure that in future conferences Government will see that the wheat growers of the Punjab are well represented.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai (Sind: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, it appears to me that this is a most important subject—its importance cannot be underrated: it is more important even than the political deadlock, and there ought to be more sympathy from the Government side on this. We have discussed this for three days and several Members have expressed their views, and shown the extreme necessity of meeting the demands of the people in this scarcity. The Honourable the Commerce Member, who is not now in the Executive Council, has given some of his views; but I find no definite policy or statistics were given to us and I do not know to whom to appeal to now. I do not know who will come forward to tell us the definite policy of Government on this subject and also statistics as to how much food they have got and are going to give to the people. There should be no carelessness in the matter. It cannot be denied that there is an intense scarcity of food stuffs, coal and several other commodities in India. I was very sorry to find that the British Cabinet represented by the Secretary of State is not merely not sympathetic but most apathetic. It was adding insult to injury when Mr. Amery said in the House of Commons that there is no widespread scarcity or acute shortage. Is this the condition under which we are meeting? Is this the way in which the Secretary of State should deal with the people of India? It shows sufficiently the heartlessness of outlook under which we are working. But in respect of food he is even more heartless. He ought to show that people can live without food—that he himself can do so first. What has the British Government done to help the Indian Government to meet this very critical situation? Scarcity exists not only in the urban areas, as was said by the Government of India the other day, but in the rural areas as well. The people in the rural areas are crying and demonstrating how the scarcity is there, how they have not got sufficient wheat or other commodities, like coal, etc. I come from a rural area myself and I know how things are in Sind. There was an unprecedented mishap in Sind—breaches which led to much of the land in upper Sind being inundated and the crops were damaged, nay destroyed. Because of this, the district officers there thought of introducing the ration card system. But how has it worked? The Government should consider whether the system should work in the manner in which it is now working. We get ration cards for wheat: one is allowed about $3\frac{1}{2}$ seers of wheat every week, some sugar and some coal. But what happens? We take the ration cards to one of the four shops that have been established there. When we go to these shops what do we find? We tell them, we want wheat. They say, not available to-day. All right, we go the next day. They say, we will give you only sugar to-day. Very well. We go the next day. We are told this is not your week day, come the next week day. When

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we go on the next week day, what are we given? We are given only that week's ration, and not the previous week's and we are told we have thus lost the previous week's quota. Who is to blame for this? Is this the rationing that was going on in Russia? No. It was well regulated and was well worth being tried. The rationing is not being properly tried here. Regarding rural areas, in even the Indian Princes territories I find this. In the State of Sangli it is said:

"About 2,000 to 3,000 ryots from Kavalpur and the neighbouring villages marched to the Assembly Hall to-day to see the Raja Sahib of Sangli State and placed before him their grievances about shortage of food supply in their villages and requested him to arrange for food supply as early as possible."

This is sufficient evidence about the state of affairs in rural areas. Therefore, Government should not feel complacent and think that they have only to deal with urban areas and not with rural areas. It is the rural areas that should first of all be attended to; otherwise, there would be no production. The cultivators cannot cultivate or grow any food if they have not got anything to eat. Where did all this production of India go which has always been self-sufficient—not only self-sufficient, but there have been exports as well? Government lays the blame upon the people and say that people when they saw that Japan was trying to make war on India lost their confidence, naturally. Even the Government lost confidence, even the military lost confidence! The military hoarded beyond their needs. Even Government officers thought that they might not be able to get food and, therefore, went on keeping something for the rainy day. Therefore, the fault is as much of the Government as of the people. Government should have assured people, not to be frightened, not to hoard or do anything of the kind. Did they do that? No. On the other hand, they themselves set an example in hoarding and they were exporting outside. They have done all this with a short-sightedness. Now, there is no use quarrelling about that. What we want to know is, how are you going to meet this situation? We want a definite policy on the part of the Government. It is no use saying, rest assured we will meet it. These assurances will not restore confidence at all. A man who wants to have food cannot wait for it indefinitely. Mahatma Gandhi can wait, he can fast for many days, but we are not all Mahatma Gandhis and so, as far as the ordinary people are concerned, it is the duty of the Government to make arrangements for them. And they have not shown upto now any definite policy, though for the last three days we have been discussing the question. The Commerce Member said that there was deficit of rice, there was a deficit in wheat. So far as wheat was concerned, the Honourable Member said he could not give definite figures because it was only at the end of February when the produce was stored that they could find out the statistics. Until then on what basis can we say that the Government will be able to supply wheat which is their duty? So far as rice is concerned we do not find that any remedy has been suggested or that they are importing from anywhere. So far as wheat is concerned, I think an assurance has been given that they are importing from outside, but did they say, from where, how much and whether it will be sufficient.

Mr. J. D. Tyson (Secretary, Department of Education, Health and Lands): Can the Honourable Member suggest where from we could import rice?

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: I am talking of wheat.

Mr. J. D. Tyson: The Honourable Member was referring to rice.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: I say with regard to rice also, there are serious deficiencies. So far as wheat was concerned, the Honourable the Commerce Member has not given us statistics and he has asked us to wait till the end of February. In the meantime he said that wheat is going to be imported. Wherefrom it is going to be imported he has not told us. Meanwhile I find that the Jam Sahib, when he returned from England, in his speech made here, has said that the British Government discussed this question of Indian food, the shortage of it and agreed to provide the necessary shipping for transporting several lakhs tons of wheat. Where is that? What has the Government done to ask

the British Government to do so? Why have they waited? My question is a definite one, whether they have asked the British Government to come to their rescue and in that way and see that several lakhs tons of wheat are imported into India? That has not yet been done and we are waiting for that. There ought not to be mere lip sympathy, there must be substantial help, and that help we can get only from Government. We cannot go round to each Provincial Government and ask, what help are you giving; how much production will there be in your province and so on. The Central Government, when it sees that there is some wheat or rice extra at a certain place, comes forward and orders the Provincial Government to send some wheat or rice to other provinces. All this should be done under a definite policy. The policy should start from the Central Government. We should know it and when we see that anything is being done against it, then we will be in a position to blame the Government and come forward to advise that that should not be done.

Coming to the question of control, I am entirely against complete removal of the control. If you remove the control what happens? You give a blank cheque to the traders to sell at any price they please. Should Government do that? Government has already experienced its effects. In the beginning, long, long ago when we asked that there should be control, did Government do anything? No. In this very House we asked that there should be no control but it was not done. They have now thought fit to remove control. I have no objection if the control is removed, but do not give liberty to these people to do as they like. You must appoint your own agents or your own officers to see that at any rate the prices do not go beyond a reasonable limit, and put a check on the rising prices. What have you done with regard to that? Two provinces have not yet removed control, because they fully see that there the prices would at once rise and rise so abnormally that the consumer and even the grower will suffer. On that point also, there should be a definite policy of the Government and control should not be removed without proper safeguards, as otherwise it would be harmful. I do not think that any Member of the House would suggest that a free hand should be given to the traders.

Coming to the coal question, it is not only in Delhi that we do not get coal. Even in places where there is card rationing, we do not get coal and Government have done nothing. So far as coal for Delhi is concerned, I have come to know that the Controller of Coal in Calcutta used to distribute the coal in Delhi and it was supplied directly to the persons who were dealing in coal here. They were called the depot holders. That system was going on very well. Government interfered with that. They thought that if they got the coal booked from Calcutta and then distributed it in Delhi, that would be better. In my humble opinion, it is not better at all. What has happened? We find that the Chief Commissioner of Delhi has taken the whole thing in his hands and created a syndicate called Banyan. The whole of the coal goes under the control of one or two *banyas* who form this syndicate. This private agency first of all supplies to the mills. That is the information I have got and it is for the Government to reply on that point.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member's time is up.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Then, Sir, I would say that Government should place before this House a definite policy and let us know how they are dealing with this important and delicate question.

Mr. Amarendra Nath Chattopadhyaya (Burdwan Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): The most important problem that has cropped up today is the food problem. Food being life, it is the problem of life, which we have been discussing for three days. In this country of ours, 160 years ago, we had eight maunds of rice for one rupee and today we are getting two seers per rupee. That means in 160 years we are paying 160 times more. The present situation is now drawing the attention of every one.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honorable Member may continue his speech after lunch.

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

The Assembly re-assembled after Lunch at Half Past Two of the Clock, Sir Henry Richardson (one of the Panel of Chairmen) in the Chair.

Mr. Amarendra Nath Chattopadhyaya: Mr. Chairman, I made an observation before the House adjourned for lunch, that 160 years ago, when the powers were being transferred from the Muslim Rulers to the British, our motherland was practically the shelter of all western nations who came to India in quest of food. In Bengal, when the satrapy was practically on the point of insolvency and when the finances had collapsed, the last Muslim Ruler was asked to export rice from Chittagong but he refused. He said he would not export rice until his subjects had eight maunds of rice for a rupee, which means 320 seers for a rupee. Today the same province is getting rice at two seers per rupee. It is not because of the present emergency or because of hoarding but it has been caused by a policy of exploitation and exportation for centuries. Sir, the present situation requires very drastic steps. We have neglected the peasantry for very many years and, therefore, the production of foodgrains has dwindled down to a very small quantity as compared with the previous productivity. Land has lost its fertility and the peasantry has become weak. So, when the Honourable the Commerce Member started the "grow more food" campaign, we welcomed it. But this campaign could not be successful if it was not well organised. A good organisation was required if the Government of India seriously meant to grow more food. By simply advertising in the papers, it would not be possible to grow more food. The peasantry has lost all impetus to grow more food because they have been exploited all along. They were the primary producers of wealth and they had been impoverished. All the money has gone to a few capitalists, the zamindars, the merchants and the commercial people and the poor peasants have been denuded of all their wealth. Consequently, in order to give an impetus, a new legislation should have been resorted to and must be resorted to even now. Unless Legislatures legislate to give them the ownership of the land, they cannot really get that encouragement to go back to the land and labour hard with heart for it. Without some sort of change in the land legislation and in the revenue system, you cannot make the peasantry work with their heart and soul to grow more food. Before we go into the question of hoarding or shortage or transport or take any drastic measure, we should first think of organising the whole show.

First of all, take the question of procurement. If we want to procure all that has been stored, we must have an organisation based on the theory of making the whole of India as one unit. The Central Government must take up the responsibility of co-ordinating all the Provincial Governments with the Centre, so that the Centre can guide all the Provinces in the matter of organisation. In addition to the Central Advisory Committee, the Central Government should have a Standing Committee on Food, consisting of non-official legislators and there should be similar Standing Committees on Food in the Provinces and they should be linked with the Central Standing Committee on Food. Not only that, they will have to think also of organising the provinces district by district, decentralising the whole organisation so that there may not be any possibility of corruption. If one man is allowed to purchase for the whole of the province, there may be corruption. Therefore, the purchase should be distributed to several agencies and these agencies should be under the Standing Committees, and after the purchase, stores should also be set up district by district in every province. This will involve a certain amount of expense, but the problem is so important and the solution of it is so urgent that the question of expense should not stand in our way. If at this critical juncture people do not get food and if we cannot supply food to the people who are fighting, the whole war effort will collapse, which is not desired by anybody. Therefore, first of all, the organisation should

be taken up at once, before going into the question of freezing the hoarded stores or penalising the hoarders. Having completed the organisation, the Government might think of finding out the stores wherever they are hoarded. Hoarders are the worst criminals today. Those who can think of keeping food for themselves or for their profit at the cost of millions of starving men all around them, are unpardonable sinners and criminals. They require to be punished: but by merely punishing the hoarders Government cannot give food to the people. They will have to make arrangements for distribution, and will have to make food supply squads. Sir, with a view to making a successful organisation the officials and non-officials must co-operate. If there is no co-operation between them, unfortunately, the whole effort is bound to fail. Consequently, there must be an appeal to the people who are ready to co-operate and then, to all social service institutions of the country without any difference in the creed and community. All these institutions which are ready to co-operate with a view to help the people to get their food must be invited by Government and those political parties who are already working and who are working to help in the war effort should be taken into confidence and should be given the opportunity to organize. Sir, it is not at all impossible to organize this distribution of food if Government take it up seriously. By organizing the food supply squads in the districts in the provinces with liaison officer between the Provincial Governments and the Central Government, I believe, they can solve this question within a few days, and having those parties who are already co-operating, like the Communist and Radical Parties, and who are already working for setting up some co-operative societies in some districts in the United Provinces and some other provinces, I believe, Government can get the whole country organized and the food problem solved in no time. After that if the hoarders do not come out with their stores, then will come the question of freezing them and penalising them. It is not by penalising or freezing of hoarders that you can solve the problem, as without organizing the distribution the whole thing is bound to fail. Therefore, first of all organize yourselves, then serve short notice on those who are suspected of hoarding, so that they might come out with their stores, and then invite the distributors to take up the matter of distribution. Mohalla Committees may be formed for the convenience of customers and they should take charge of distribution. There should be no question about specialising somebody with licence. Those persons who are already trading should be permitted to carry on this work. With regard to control, I may say that the control of prices so far as purchase price is concerned, is not so much necessary as the control of prices for retail, because if the retail prices are not controlled, the controlled wholesale prices will be of no use. By controlling prices at the source and not controlling prices of retail sellers, Government will not be able to solve this question. The retail sellers will go on increasing prices. They cannot be prevented by this sort of control. Control there must be, because without control, the capitalists and those who are big financiers can make profit. Profiteering must be stopped. With a view to stop profiteering control of retail sellers' prices must be there, as without this the whole effort for solution of this problem will fail. We have lost three years without taking any effective steps about this food problem. We cannot lose even single moment now without coming to a certain decision and without coming to a certain policy and without coming to a certain programme. This decision, this policy and this programme, should have the acquiescence of this House and of the public as a whole, so that co-operation may come without being asked for. People are feeling the pinch of this want of food at every stage. Those who can afford to purchase from the black market may not be feeling it too much: but the poor people and the middle class people who are earning between rupees two hundred and two hundred and fifty or even three hundred cannot afford to live from hand to mouth. They cannot get two square meals. First these people did not feel the pinch but now they are realizing the difficulties in procuring food stuff. Now, if the Government do not take up this question in their hands very early I am

[Mr. Amarendra Nath Chattopadhyaya.]

afraid, food riots are likely to occur and food riots will run like fire. I am sure Government will not take much time in coming to the right solution of the matter and I hope the Honourable Member in charge of this question, will take up this matter in all earnestness. Unfortunately, the Honourable Mr. Sarker, who had taken up this matter in all earnestness had to go away and the reasons for his resignation are known to everybody. Government have failed to comply with the public opinion regarding Mahatma Gandhi. At this moment if the Government of India had complied with the wishes of the three Members and with the wishes of the public, I think, the situation would have been much better.

Mr. Chairman: (Sir Henry Richardson): The Honourable member's time is up.

Mr. Amarendra Nath Chattopadhyaya: However, I believe, every thing including organisation must be taken up in right earnest.

Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani (Tirhut Division: Muhammadan): Sir, the problem concerning food has already become so serious that it requires the utmost consideration of the Government of India. There are several elements which stand in the way of free distribution of the food as well as of the fuel. First is the defective control, second is want of facilities for transport and the third is discrimination. The fourth is export, the fifth is decrease in import, the sixth is the failure of "grow more food" campaign and the seventh and the last is the misuse of the powers of the various Government officers.

These are days when Government should look to the gravity of the situation and they should try to stop exports. Of course, imports of foodstuffs have decreased by 88.7 per cent. Exports of foodstuffs to other countries are still going on. Concerning that, I elicited certain information from the Government, and I got in reply that exports of rice during the twelve months ending 30th November, 1942, were 1,76,576 tons. This quantity was exported to Ceylon only. The quantity of other foodstuffs exported to Ceylon was about 29,000 tons. Taking all together, the total stood at 2,05,871 tons. So far as the export of rice is concerned during the period of the war, ending 30th September, 1942, the quantity of rice exported outside the country is 9,65,555 tons, and the quantity of wheat exported during the same period was 4,43,489 tons. You may very well guess from this what acute scarcity should be regarding our food position.

Government have urged the "grow more food" campaign. I find from the estimate made by the authorities that during the period 1938-39 to 1941-42, there is a decrease of 2,10,000 acres. In 1938-39, the figure of acreage of rice cultivation was 7,83,75,000 and it is now down to 7,31,65,000 acres. As regards wheat, there also I find there is a decrease of acreage. It came down from 3,54,41,000 to 3,39,79,000 acres. There also there is a deficit of 14,62,000 acres. I find that for the year under report, 1942-43, the wheat cultivation is estimated to be about 7,17,00,000 acres. But on the contrary I also find that the Honourable Sir Jogendra Singh's estimate is 7,56,00,000 acres under wheat cultivation. I cannot say what are the factors which comprise his estimate. I find that generally this information is collected through the agency of village chaukidars and we do not know how far their information can be relied upon. That is for the consideration of the House. However, the "grow more food" campaign is also proving a failure. The Central Government should grant some subsidy to the Provincial Governments and unless the poor cultivators are given something out of those subsidies, it would not help them to increase the fertility of the soil under cultivation. The total export made during the period of the war, ending 30th November, 1942, comes up to 14,74,727 tons. So the country is on the verge of starvation now. I think the sooner the export of food stuffs is stopped, the better for the country.

The other day I urged in a Resolution which I moved that textile export should be stopped, so long as the needs of the country are not fulfilled. The Honourable the Joint Secretary of the Commerce Department who has spoken

on behalf of the Government just a few minutes before pointed only to the necessity of kerosene and standard cloth. As regards standard cloth, I want to tell him that it has not yet reached the Provinces. Do you know what is happening in the Provinces and in the interior? The Government officials of high standing compel the cloth dealers to pay large sums, say of Rs. 1,000 and over, for war contribution before they could be given license to deal in standard cloth. In my own locality and elsewhere I found this. The result is that the cloth merchants refuse to deal in standard cloths. The same thing is going on with regard to kerosene also, and also other necessities of life. At every stage, war contribution is levied. You may very well consider that the licensees who pay large sums as war contribution pass them on to the purchasers, the consumers, otherwise they cannot make good the war subscription which they paid before getting their licenses. I submit these things should be stopped.

About price control, I want to cite the instance of the local place, Delhi. As soon as we the Members of the Legislative Assembly came here, we could not get coal, or wheat flour and we were forced to rely on the hotel food, no matter whether it was bad or worse. It is said that rationing system will be introduced. Here there is already a petrol rationing system. We are given

3 P. M. our quota. Do you know what happens when we ask for coupons? I sent a note to the rationing authority; they sent words that the Member must come before them and then he will be supplied. That is how they deal with us. You can well imagine, Sir, what will be the condition of other people in this country when they know that; after all, we carry some importance. I have told you how we are ignored. In everything the Control authorities are making discrimination. Sometimes in the mofussil *purzis* are issued and when people belonging to certain communities, say Muslims, go, the dealer refuses to give any ration.

As regards transport facilities, I say that my Honourable friend, Mr. Neogy, has exposed the hollowness of this system very well. I cannot see why the Government is in favour of giving higher percentage of profits to the dealers—to the licencees. As regards coal, it was pointed out that about 28 per cent. profit was allowed on coal by the Government to the local coal dealers. Is it the time for any dealer or any licencee to make such a heavy profit? Large profit is rampant in all spheres of the food supply activities.

My Honourable friend, who has just spoken before me, has made certain suggestions regarding the system to be introduced. I think that there is some force in it. We may dispense with trading agencies as far as possible; it will be to the interest of the people of this country. I remember last year Government of India fixed the price of wheat at five rupees to a maund but the Punjab Government purchased at the rate of Rs. 5-8-0 per maund within their province. Is it the co-operation or co-ordination between the Central controlling authority and the Provincial Governments? If such a state of things will continue, God knows where this will lead the country to.

I would like to add one point more: Government fixes certain prices, say at the beginning of the harvest season or just after the harvest season. The dealers as well as Government agencies purchase almost the whole stock of food—rice, wheat and other necessities of life—at a price then fixed. I have just said that the price of wheat fixed by the Government at the beginning of last year was rupees five and now after the purchases have been made by the various Government agencies and the trading agencies it has come up to Rs. 10 per maund. And even at that rate we are not able to get any wheat here. But as you see, the original grower—the cultivator—who took all the trouble to grow the crop got Rs. 5-8-0 per maund in the beginning, and now the middlemen are getting more than double the price. Is there any system which will benefit those poor people who grow more food? Unless they are encouraged, I do not think they will take much pain to grow more food. A measure, I am afraid, is going to be introduced very shortly under which the cultivator shall have to give away all the surplus food grains to the authorities, retaining a small

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portion for their own family consumption. But if they have to surrender the surplus at a lower price, they will surely be discouraged to grow more food in the country. Efforts should be made in this direction to see that the price once fixed remains at the same level throughout the year, and in the fixation of price due regard should be given to the state of things which may prevail at the end of the harvest season, so that the cultivator may also get some benefit and may be encouraged to grow more food.

I agree with the suggestion made by the last speaker that there should be a committee of the Central Legislature here as well as in the provinces and all the local political institutions like Congress and Muslim League which have influence over the masses should be given effective representation in matters of arrangement and distribution of food grains and fuel. The trading interests should be discouraged as far as possible and unless this is done, I am afraid, that any system, howsoever hard, which may be introduced by the Central Government, will lead to nothing but failure.

Raj Balladur Seth Bhagchand Soni (Ajmer-Merwara: General): Sir, I have read with very great interest the publication of the recommendations of the Central Food Advisory Council. It is generally felt that if the Government of India will adopt these recommendations, an entirely new era of food administration will commence in our country. It is gratifying to see that the Central Food Advisory Council has specially stressed that central control and co-ordination is most necessary and that the Central Government should be the sole authority in the country, to exercise the statutory powers necessary to ensure a common plan for the solution of India's food problem.

I do hope that the Government of India will with all its concentrated energies assume this central control, for I am sure that in a total war, a central control alone can solve the most important problem of food, which is so essential for victory.

Being the sole representative of Ajmer-Merwara, it is my duty to draw the attention of the Government of India to the deplorable food position of my province, which is a Centrally Administered Area, directly under the Government of India, who should consider it as their special responsibility. Under normal peace time conditions, Ajmer-Merwara has to import 84 per cent. of its food requirements from neighbouring provinces and States, whereas only 16 per cent. is grown locally. The population is about 5½ lakhs and not less than 67,000 persons out of the total are workers and dependants of the B., B. & C. I. Railway and chiefly of its workshops, so essential for war transport and other important war work. Normally, the consumption of food grains was about 7½ lakhs maunds yearly, of which one lakh twenty thousand maunds were grown locally in the best case, apart from the many years of drought and famine. I am sure that a detailed survey would reveal rather worse figures than I have just quoted. It is also my duty to draw the special attention of the Government to the peaceful conditions prevailing hitherto in my province. and I am sure, that the half-hearted treatment at the hands of the Central Government would go far in disturbing the peaceful minds of our population. I hope the Government will be the last to allow such an event to take place. It is regrettable that up to now we were not treated fairly by Government: no quota was fixed for us, and after great difficulties we got permits for very small quantities. At the same time, His Highness the Maharaja of Jodhpur and his Government, were kind enough to release some of their grain stocks for Ajmer-Merwara, when we were in an exceptionally distressed condition, and for which we are most grateful. Should a central body be constituted for the co-ordination of an all-India food administration, I trust that my province will not be forgotten.

Concluding, Sir, I emphasise again that my province being a Centrally Administered Area should not be in a worse position than other deficit provinces and that we can depend on the Central Government to look after us.

Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi (Meerut Division : Muhammadan Rural) :

Sir, this debate on the food problem is completely exhausted and I do not propose to say much except to pay a compliment to the incompetency shown by Government in managing this whole business. Sir, no doubt it is very difficult for us, at least for me, to indulge in any high oratory on economics. But as a layman, what I know of the extreme cases of mismanagement by this Department, I want to bring to the notice of this House. Sir, I know of an instance of a big food merchant, a grain merchant who purchased about 50 thousand maunds of wheat in the Punjab in April last. He had purchased it at different grain centres in the Punjab and the grain was lying at different railway stations. Now, knowing the condition of shortage of grains in the United Provinces, in Delhi and other places, the merchant wanted the permission of the Wheat Commissioner to take away that grain from those different centres. In September last, when I came to this place, I was told by him that he had seen the Wheat Commissioner several times and promises had been held out to him that he would be allowed to export, but no permit was given. I referred him to the Commerce Member, Mr. Sarker, at that time, and the matter was referred to the Wheat Commissioner. About November last I received a reply from the Wheat Commissioner saying that representations made that "I had promised to give him permission was based on a misunderstanding. We never hold out any such promise. We are always reluctant to give permits for the export of wheat from the Punjab to the United Provinces, which normally is considered to be a wheat exporting province itself. Still what I have told this man again and again was only this much, that if conditions become easier in the Punjab then we will consider the question of giving you permission to export wheat from the Punjab to the United Provinces". By that time, I mean September, I was told that about 15 per cent. of the wheat had deteriorated. It was lying in the open and it was bound to deteriorate. This is one of the instances. I do not know if the permit has been given up till now. I do not myself understand the meaning of the words "If conditions become easier in the Punjab then Government will consider the question of giving a permit for the export of wheat". Now, we know the extreme difficulties of getting grain in Delhi and in the United Provinces; and yet the Government allowed the wheat to deteriorate at those stations rather than give a permit. What I have concluded is that this department, unfortunately for us, has been meddling with economic problems without having a comprehensive knowledge of the same, and it is on account of that meddling and dabbling that this mismanagement has taken place.

Now, Sir, I will give only one more example and finish, and that example is of sugar. We know the difficulties in which we have been placed for obtaining sugar. But the House will be astonished to know that places which have been producing sugar have not been able to find a market for the sale of their product. What the Government have been doing is to forbid the export of sugar from the sugar producing districts. What I mean to say is this: that the Government want to force the agriculturists to sell whatever cane they have grown to the mills at rates which have been fixed by them. The mills themselves are not in a position to absorb the whole quantity of sugar which is produced in those districts. The only natural thing for the poor agriculturists is to prepare sugar in their ordinary *desi* way. Now that they can get good prices on account of the shortage of sugar, and they can carry on the manufacture of the sugar in their villages, Government felt that they might come into competition with the mill-made sugar, and there might be some difficulty. The best way they could think of was to prohibit the export of *gur* from one district to another—not merely from one province to another, but from one district to another. Muzaffarnagar and Saharanpur are two adjoining districts, which grow sugarcane in large quantities and a number of the villages in Saharanpur district are near the Muzaffarnagar border than others, as so often happens, and

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they used to sell their *gur* and *desi* sugar to Muzaffarnagar. What was done was that constables were posted on the boundary line between Saharanpur and Muzaffarnagar and any person who wanted to cross that boundary line could not do so without a permit, which was never granted by anybody. The result was that any person who manufactured *desi* sugar in a village in Saharanpur district was confined and had to keep his sugar in the district of Saharanpur. So far as mill-made sugar is concerned it can be easily stored; but as you know *gur* cannot be so easily stored; when the rains come, it is liable to get mixed with water and to get spoiled. The result was that the poor agriculturist could neither sell sugarcane nor sell his *gur* in the market. Persons in Allahabad itself were deprived of mill-made sugar, *desi* sugar and every kind of sugar. Allahabad is considered and is as a matter of fact the capital of the United Provinces and I do not know what is happening in the villages; but in Allahabad it was not easy for us to get a seer or two of sugar. People sometimes thought that the A. R. P. officer was the agent who had a stock of sugar and wheat and they used to get recommendations for getting a pound or two of sugar or wheat: some shops were opened in Allahabad in Canning Road and I know that persons who went to purchase wheat at the controlled rate had to wait for five or six hours before they could get, if they were fortunate, wheat for even a rupee . . .

Sir Syed Raza Ali (Cities of the United Provinces : Muhammadan Urban) :
Make friends with the control officer: that is the best way, you know.

Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi: We have tried that also, but every officer says "I have nothing to do with it." They know the difficulties involved in friendship in these days of difficulty, and every officer whom you meet says "I was in charge of this only a few days ago, but it has been taken away from me only recently"; with the result that you cannot even find the person in charge. These are the difficulties which persons of position and influence find in cities. Now, what about the poor people who cannot get any recommendation or certificates? What are we to do with them?

These are the problems to be solved. I cannot say whether the Provincial Governments or the Central Government can solve them, because though it is said that the functions of the two are absolutely separate from each other, we do not know in practice where the one ends and the other begins. I want to know what is going to happen to the future distribution of food grains. If the Government are incapable of managing it, it is high time for them to declare that they cannot manage the thing and allow the economic forces to be set free and leave everything out of control and let matters settle themselves. But if you really want to solve the matter, you must know how you are going to do it.

That brings me to the close of my short remarks and I would only ask what is going to happen to this standard cloth, how it is to be distributed. It is not only a question of manufacturing the cloth, but also of its distribution and making it available to the consumer. That is of the greatest importance; and unless that is solved, the whole problem remains where it was. I hope I will be able to hear from the Honourable the Government Member if they have any solution in their minds for the distribution of these controlled things—whether it is sugar or standard cloth or anything else.

Some Honourable Members: The question may now be put.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee: Sir, the food problem is the most important of all the problems with which the country is faced today. My Honourable friend, the Leader of the European Group, remarked the other day that the food problem was the most important problem next to the war effort. I disagree with him slightly and I wish to point out that the food problem is even more than or at least equally as important as, the war effort because people must eat first and then fight. Unfortunately, this problem has not been handled by Government with the seriousness which its importance demands. This food crisis did not come upon us all on a sudden, like a cyclone or an earthquake. In fact

the signs of a food shortage made themselves manifest more than a year and a half ago; but the Government were unable to read the signs and to take adequate measures to prevent the crisis. Accordingly the food situation deteriorated. Last year this subject was debated in this Assembly and we all urged the Government to take serious steps in this matter. Since then the food situation has worsened day by day until we have reached the present crisis. For a long time the Government did not intervene at all and when it did intervene the action taken by it was unintelligent and ill-conceived. Crude methods of price control and restrictions on the movements of food grains and other essential articles of consumption were the main features of their efforts and the inefficiency and incompetence of their officers added to the difficulty.

Now, who are the persons to blame in this matter? I do not think we ought to blame this person or that person in the Government entirely, or this department or that department; but we should hold the Government as a whole responsible for the present state of things. The Provincial Governments are also to a considerable extent responsible, but it will not do to throw the whole or even a greater portion of the responsibility on the shoulders of the provinces, because, as we all know, it is only in a minority of the provinces of India that responsible Government prevails at the present moment. The majority of the provinces are being governed under section 93 of the Government of India Act and they are not autonomous. Therefore, the Central Government must take responsibility for their action or inaction, for what they do or fail to do.

The Government have analysed the causes of the food crisis. Some of the causes which they have mentioned are quite accurate, but Government have not viewed the situation with that perspicacity which was expected of them. They have mentioned that the present food position has been due not so much to shortage as to maldistribution. That is true, but how has this maldistribution come to exist? They have not pointed out the exact steps they have taken during the last 18 or 20 months to remove this maldistribution. The Government have pointed out that there have been many cases of hoarding and profiteering. But why did not Government take resolute action in preventing hoarding and profiteering? They have ample powers not only under the ordinary laws of the land but under the Defence of India Act and the rules framed thereunder. Therefore, the responsibility lies mainly with the Central Government and partly with the Provincial Governments. Some of the Provincial Governments have been very selfish and they have tried to prevent the movement of crops and other articles of food and other necessities of life from their provinces. This is not right. India should be looked upon as one single unit and the surplus provinces should not have been allowed to prevent the movement of crops from their provinces to the deficit provinces.

What about the remedies to be applied to the disease which I have mentioned? I would not have dwelt at length on the past, but I have dwelt on the failures of the past in order to point a way to the future. The past is important to us as a guide to the future. Now, what is the attitude of the Government towards the future. They have prepared a scheme, but the scheme appears to me to be incomplete. There are many good points in the scheme no doubt, but it is not quite complete in itself and proper emphasis has not been laid on the different parts of the scheme. To me it seems that this is a subject which should be considered in a well-thought out manner which has not so far been done.

Now, the case on behalf of the Government was made out by the Food Member who has now resigned his place in the Government. He said that the shortage in food was not such as to cause panic or alarm; it amounted only to 4 or 5 per cent. That view may be technically correct, but this will give no consolation to the consumer who goes without food. The food shortage may not be acute, but the food problem is acute. What the Government has to do is to supply the people with food. That is one of the first duties of any Government, not to speak of a civilised government. The Government have pointed out that statistics enabled them to come to this conclusion. We all know how

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statistics are collected in this country and how defective is the whole organisation of statistics in India. My Honourable friend, Mr. Lawson, of the European Group said that statistics in this country are very inaccurate and it would be unwise to rely on them. I fully agree with him. We all know that there are two important popular sayings about statistics. One is that statistics may be made to prove anything. I do not know whether it is the intention of Government to get hold of these statistics to prove their case in the present instance. There is also another saying that there are three categories of falsehood,—lie, damned lie and statistics, statistics being the worst of these categories. Now, Sir, there may be truth or untruth in this popular saying, but I must say that the collection of statistics which depends on the village chowkidar alone is not satisfactory. Then also, the compilation, the presentation and the use that is made of these statistics are not made on a scientific basis. I am myself a firm believer in the proper use of statistics which have now become the subject of an important science. I was one of the founders of the Indian Statistical Institute, of which my Honourable friend, Sir Edward Benthall, was also an important member and President for a number of years. If we have to rely on Government statistics, the statistics themselves will have to be placed on a sound footing. That is what I urge, but before you do that, you must not rely completely on the figures that are supplied to you by the chowkidar.

Sir, another observation which came from the Government related to price control. The Government now say that price control by itself is not sufficient to meet the food problem but anybody who has any knowledge, I will not say of Economics, an elementary knowledge of the present state of things with regard to the food problem would have told the Government that price control by itself is not sufficient and the method of price control which they adopted was of the crude sort. Price control can be adopted along with control of the whole supply of food grains; only in that case it would prove adequate. The Government did nothing of that kind and the unintelligent, ill-planned and ill-conceived method was the principal cause for making the problem more complex than it was. Now, to what extent have prices risen we all know. We know that prices in some cases have risen fourfold or fivefold. That has been due partly to the price control policy adopted by the Government and partly to the unnecessary restrictions which have been imposed on the movements of crops and other articles from one province to another. In some of the provinces restrictions have been imposed on the movement of crops from one district to another. In Bihar, for instance, I found that there were barriers created between one district and another. This was surely ill-conceived. Bihar is directly under the control of the Central Government. You cannot say that Bihar is an autonomous Government and that you cannot interfere. Bihar is being governed under section 93 of the Government of India Act. The real thing is that the Government did not know their own mind. They had no plan, no well thought-out policy of their own and therefore they allowed the provinces under their control to go as they liked.

Another point raised by the Government was the question of confidence. I did not exactly follow what was meant by this question of confidence. Was it lack of confidence in the stability of the British Government in India? Or was it lack of confidence in the ability of Government to face the food situation. Perhaps the Government had in mind both these factors. Now, as regards the first, an ounce of fact, as they say, is more important than a ton of argument and if the Government have to inspire confidence in the minds of the people with regard to the stability of the present Government, they will have to prove that the Government can take steps which will lead to the removal of all difficulties. I need not say much more about the handling of the food situation by the Government, but I must emphasise that mere statements by Government officers will not help us. They must prove their case to the people by showing that the price of food articles is diminishing and that articles of food are available throughout the country. Before they do that, they will not be able

to enjoy the confidence of the public. It is my firm conviction that the present state of things has come about because the present Government is not responsible to the people. Such callousness, such thoughtlessness and such inefficiency would never have occurred if the Government of India were responsible to the people of the country. I am sure that there will be lack of confidence so long as a National Government is not established in this country.

The Government has placed a scheme before us. This scheme is good in parts, like the Curate's egg. What I urge is that there should be a well-conceived policy, complete in itself. I suggest that the Government programme should consist of two parts. The first part should consist of measures which are required to meet the immediate situation which may be called a short-range programme and the other part would be a long-range programme which would be effective in the course of, say, six months to one year.

With regard to the first, I would suggest that the Government should remove the impediments which lie at the present moment in the way of the movement of crops from province to province. By their own purchases and by price control and various other wrong methods, they have impeded the normal movement. Those impediments should be removed. Not only should price control be abolished, as has been suggested by the Government spokesman, but also the impediments imposed upon the movements of crops and other necessities of life imposed by the Provincial Governments.

Then, the Government should prevent exports of foodgrains from this country to other countries during the period of the crisis. That would be the second step to be taken. Now, the Government say that they are going to scale down the exports. The situation in India is so bad, at the present moment that the people are going without food. Therefore, you should not speak of scaling down of exports; you should prevent exports altogether until the food situation substantially improves.

The third step which should be taken is to obtain imports from other countries. I am glad to be able to note that arrangements have now been made for the importation of wheat from Australia. I hope that adequate quantities of wheat will be obtained by this means.

The fourth step which the Government should take will be to prevent hoarding. As I pointed out only a short while ago, the Government possess ample power in this respect and what is needed is resolute action on the part of the Government and that will provide the necessary remedy. Now, who are the persons who hoard? The producers hoard very little—not to a very large extent, if at all—because the producers are all small cultivators and they have not the means at their command to hoard large quantities of crops for future savings. Then, it is said that the consumers also hoard. Only a few rich persons can afford to spend the amount that is necessary to buy large quantities of food. Therefore, the consumers can also be ignored. Then we come to the retail sellers of food. They work with small amounts of capital and the paucity of capital does not enable them to hoard large quantities of food for sale in future. Lastly, we come to the fourth category, namely, the large dealers. It is these persons who are responsible for hoarding and it is not impossible for the Government to get hold of these large dealers, rather the speculators. Many of them are not perhaps the dealers; they do not actually deal, but they speculate on the sale of food crops; and it is they who are mainly responsible for creating this difficulty. The Government of India can take resolute action against such people.

Fifthly, the Government should prevent profiteering. Even if food is made available, the middle class people and the poorer sections of the people have not the resources to purchase the food because the prices of food are abnormally high. Therefore, profiteering must be stopped, and profiteering also can be stopped by getting hold of the large dealers and speculators. What is needed is firm action. I am not one of those who say that vindictive action should be taken, that every hoarder and every profiteer should be hanged by the neck

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as was suggested by some of our friends. When these dealers and speculators find that the Government is resolute and the Government will punish adequately all offenders, then hoarding and profiteering will cease.

[At this stage, Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim) resumed the Chair.]

Lastly, the Government must afford greater facilities for the transport of food articles from one place to another. My Honourable friend, Sir Edward Benthall, pointed out the other day that food articles have a priority and he gave certain figures.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Honourable Member's time is up.

Dr. P. N. Banerjea: I will finish in a minute, Sir. But unless he is able to point out that the situation has been improved by affording greater facilities to the public, we will not be satisfied. I hold in my hand certain telegrams which show that in the matter of wagon supply, the account which was given by the Honourable Member is not substantiated.

Sir, the second part of the policy which I have enunciated is a long range policy. This long-range policy consists of greater food production. It will not do only to read essays or to make statements to the press, but it will be necessary for the Government to send out agricultural experts to the villages and teach the cultivator how to use better manures, how to have a better rotation of crops and how to bring under cultivation land which is now waste. Lastly, Government will have to provide them with finance. If these steps are taken, there will, I think, not only be an improvement of the present position but a permanent improvement. And if the Government aims at producing 15 per cent. more food in the country, that will redound to the credit of the Government and confer lasting benefit on the people. Food supply in India, even in normal times, is very inadequate; a substantial augmentation of the supply is needed.

Major-General E. Wood (Government of India: Nominated Official): Sir, none can be more keenly aware than myself that the reply to this important debate should have fallen on ampler shoulders than mine. I shall confine myself to the subject of food. The subject is one of the utmost gravity and the speeches of the Honourable Members have but reflected the anxiety on food matters of the country as a whole. My task, however, has been made considerably lighter because the majority of Members have put forward constructive and helpful contributions on a large variety of matters. The great majority of the Honourable Members are not inclined to dispute that the statistical position is not unfavourable. The Honourable Dr. Banerjea treats these figures with reserve; so does the Food Department. And of all the statistics we deal with, we take the most conservative interpretation of them. If it is true that the statistical position is not unfavourable, then the measure of the success that Government will secure by their policies and plans will be directly related to the degree in which they can stimulate the normal flow of the trade in its normal directions and to its normal level.

In pursuance of this it is the Government intention to ensure that any degree of stringency or austerity will be spread equally. With

4 P.M. equality all round there will be no difficulties. But it is to be appreciated that this is not merely a matter of surplus areas surrendering adequate quotas. The obligation lies heavy on deficit areas to make the most of their inadequate domestic resources. In the matter of procuring the normal average surpluses, it is to be appreciated that we are faced with a problem of peculiar difficulty. Comparisons with what is done in Western countries to secure the surpluses do not assist us. We, unfortunately, have not the position in which the foodgrains can be brought, forthwith and directly, into Government hands and under governmental control as is the case of countries that import the bulk of their requirements or where farming operations are conducted on a

basis of tens, hundreds or even thousands of acres by one farmer. India's surplus with which to feed her urban populations is derived from the small margins of tens of millions of small subsistence farmers each cultivating very small holdings. As Government see the solution to this problem, it is that there should be the minimum of impediment and obstacle to the farmer bringing his produce to the markets. One thing more than another that would dissuade him from bringing his surpluses into the trade channels is for him not to be satisfied with the price. Having regard to this, as also to the fact that the cultivator is entitled to a reasonable recompense for his labours—even a slightly generous recompense—it is the Government policy that the price in the primary wholesale market, which means the price that is available to the cultivator, shall be such as would induce him to bring his full surpluses to the market. It is at this point where the Central Government propose to acquire the surpluses and it is from this point onwards that the Central Government intend there shall be a control over both prices as well as movement and distribution. Throughout all stages down to the consumer the controlled prices will be related to the prices paid in the primary wholesale market and such prices will only permit of the normal reasonable profits being paid at this stage. These prices can be made effective in practice because Government will own the goods. This accords with the views expressed by many speakers. The Honourable Mr. Lawson has referred to what he called the need of "mobile reserves". I should like him to know that Government are fully seized of the potentialities of ideas and have indeed themselves operated to such principle on several occasions already. The purchase of the surpluses will be substantial in the glut months after the harvests. Thus considerable reserves will come into the hands of Government, which will be not only on behalf of the Central Government but of the Provinces in which the surpluses have been obtained. We do not share the Honourable Mr. Navalrai's fear that because the control price in the primary market has been removed therefore we are bound to pay any price that may be asked. By our commercial methods of purchase it will be possible to set limits from time to time on what we are prepared to pay and how much we are prepared to buy at a given price. The application of this system to the buying of wheat in the Punjab during the last three weeks or so may be noted. There has been a steady retrogression of prices from Rs. 12/8 to Rs. 10.

An Honourable Member: They have risen again.

Major-General E. Wood: I can inform the Honourable Member that the last five hundred tons purchased by Government, on Saturday last were purchased at less than Rs. 10 a maund.

Both in the sphere of procurement as well as in distribution the Government policy is to ensure the maximum use of the normal machinery of the trade. It is no part of the policies of the Government to deprive the trade of the legitimate business and the extent to which the trade will receive business will be the extent to which it will be prepared to work under the control and on the terms of the Government. We will welcome the help of those who are prepared to co-operate. Those who cannot and will not work under those conditions can stand outside.

Reference has been made to railway transport and I can positively state that there is no hindrance in the matter of railway transport for the movement of food and that high priority for its movement is accorded. It is part of the Government plans to develop this position further and provide for railway movements schedules for periods ahead. On the matter of exports the Honourable the Mover of the Resolution has already informed you that today exports are substantially lower. The Honourable Mr. Jajnadas Mehta quoted certain figures for exports. I have had these figures again examined and can inform the house as follows:

If we take calendar years, the average of 1936, 1937 and 1938 amounted to 720,000 tons. The figure for 1942 was 455,000 tons. If we take financial years 1936-37, 1937-38 and 1938-39, the average works out at 770,000 tons whilst the

[Major-General E. Wood.]

figure for the 9 months of this financial year, *i.e.*, April, 1942, to December, 1942, and as far as can be estimated from available data is some 300,000 tons.

The Honourable Member Maulana Zafar Ali Khan claimed that all export should be stopped. Other speakers made the same claim. The Honourable the Mover of the Resolution has stated the steps Government are taking to restrict exports to a bare minimum and the anxious consideration that is being given to this matter. The House will appreciate that we have obligations that cannot lightly be laid aside. Certain portions of these exports will go to sustain the Indians overseas. Certain portions are going to people who are in danger of facing not stringency but starvation conditions. But the Honourable Member Dr. Banerjea, strangely enough, whilst advocating cessation of exports, put in a claim for imports.

Dr. P. N. Banerjea: Not as a normal part of the policy, but in the present circumstances, a short range policy.

Major-General E. Wood: To those who claim that all exports should be stopped

Dr. P. N. Banerjea: I do not.

Major-General E. Wood: Short range or long range policy, I would ask what is India to expect if she just bans all exports and then gets into difficulties? If we stop all our exports now, what answer will be given to us if we get into difficulties which we hope will never occur?

Dr. P. N. Banerjea: We are in great difficulties at the present time.

Major-General E. Wood: The Honourable Member Babu Baijnath Bajoria raised the question of military hoarding and he inferred that on the whole the military stocks were so heavy that deterioration was very high indeed. In dealing with military affairs, great circumspection is necessary if valuable information is to be denied to the enemy. I content myself with these remarks: the totality of the annual defence requirements today, *plus* the diminishing exports of today are comparable in terms with the average of the pre-war exports. The defence authorities do not hold large reserves. Their stocks can be counted in terms of weeks and that the idea that they hoard large reserves of one or two or even three years stocks is entirely false. As regards deterioration, I am in a position to say from very close association with these problems that many a commercial undertaking would be pleased indeed if their percentage of losses were so small.

It is clear from the course of the debate that the House in all its parts is at least united on one matter and that is in their views on hoarding. Several Honourable Members have made reference to the light sentences hitherto inflicted that can but be described as derisory. It is the Government's hope that the new penalty of confiscation, in conjunction with the existing penalties of imprisonment and fine, will be used in a salutary and effective manner. The Government is at one with the feelings expressed by the House on this matter. These anti-social activities must be visited with the full force of law. It is the Government's hope that these penalties will be visited with full weight on the larger and more serious offenders and that they will not result in condign punishment being given to hosts of small dealers. In voicing this opinion, generally, the House had in mind hoarding by dealers. The Honourable Members, Sir Cowasji Jehangir and Mr. Jamnadas Mehta, among others, also referred to the tendency of certain Provinces to hoard and they also dwelt on the extent of consumer hoarding. As regards Provinces, I shall refer to them later. As regards the consumer hoarder, I would say that the Food Department regard his position far more seriously than the House seem to have in mind. It is the consumer hoarder who is specially dangerous. It is he who removes the working balances from the retail trade. By his panic-buying, he removes the working balances of the trade. The consumer hoarder is in a very substantial measure responsible for the state of affairs that have set in and it is in the cessation of consumer hoarding that we are to look for substantial relief in our problem. It

is a fact that is too little realised and too little emphasised. Those participating in these anti-social activities have merely to pay a little more for the goods. Money they can find. But what of those who have no money to build up domestic hoards? What of those who can only buy their day to day needs from the daily pittance they earn. What about the poor? It is on them that the full weight of the difficulties are falling. In making these observations, I would suggest that it has not passed un-noticed by the House that certain Honourable Members by their own words have indicated that some of us are not, shall we say, doubtfully suspect having more stocks than we might. How many of us are consumer hoarders?

The Government's action in removing the control price of wheat could scarcely have escaped criticism. I will not go into the arguments that led the Government to determine their action but will satisfy myself by reminding the House of certain consequences that have ensued. Firstly, the black market price for wheat, of Rs. 15, Rs. 16, Rs. 17 and even Rs. 18 broke by Rs. 5. Next the prices of *Bajra* and *Jowar* have subsided by Rs. 2 to 3. Thirdly, the conditions in the retail market have definitely become easier. Stocks have come to light in the retail markets that have no relation to those that could have come in from outside. Lastly, the Central Government have at last obtained certain valuable stocks with which to govern events. Whether all these beneficial results are directly attributable to the removal of control price of wheat is not claimed, but it is at least claimed that certain stocks are progressively coming into circulation and that prices of different food grains are coming more into reasonable relationship and parity.

My Honourable friend, Mr. Hooseinbhoj Laljee, has placed me in the position of explaining the factors of deterioration and storage, but I must demur from being classified as an expert in this matter. He was of course referring to wheat. Now, Sir, wheat storage is entirely a matter of conditions. No doubt Honourable Members are aware that wheat taken from Tutenkhaman's Tomb in Egypt was sown and germinated after lying for 4,000 years in storage. But we have no such climate in India, nor do we possess the silos of the western countries. As stored in *kothas* and pits in this country, wheat will undergo no violent deterioration inside two years. It will, of course, suffer from damp, mould, fungus and rot. Rats and mice play their part. Considering the crop of the country as a whole, the loss is very serious, but the loss within two years is not such as to cause the hoarder to disgorge his stored stocks because he is likely to suffer great financial loss. But after two years he certainly will suffer serious loss. Once the normal storage in the *kothas* or pits has been opened; even if only a few pounds have been taken out, the whole lot has got to go immediately into circulation. From then onwards deterioration is rapid. Wheat is anhydrous, Weeviling starts at once, and in the monsoon and in damp climates this weeviling can be very rapid and very serious. This is one of the most serious dangers arising from consumer hoarding and I hope it will not pass unnoticed by consumer hoarders. Milled products react in the same way and much of the flour and *ata* that is sent from the Punjab to Bombay and Calcutta is very frequently re-milled to refresh it on arrival.

The Honourable Mr. Lawson raised a question of the Central Food Advisory Council. He has drawn the attention of the House to the valuable recommendations that have been put forward. Those recommendations are now under the consideration of Government and it is hoped they will shortly be acted on. But with regard to the matter which seems to be enjoying almost undue prominence in the House—the matter of activated sludge—I am now in a position to explain what it means (*An Honourable Member*: "For our information") for your information and mine. Activated sludge merely concerns the odoriferous refuse that traffics by night and in the early morning. The Bangalore process on which people are, we hope, to be trained, combines that raw material with the ordinary town refuse.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee: Compost?

Major-General E. Wood: The Bangalore process of compost. It takes all refuse and deals with it more quickly and with less danger to public health than the activated sludge process that requires a very considerable and expensive plant and chemicals in quantities that we could not afford today.

The Honourable Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan made certain criticisms concerning the control of salt and sugar. As regards sugar, the price of both cane and sugar have always been regulated and fixed in consultation with the major producing provinces and with reference to the anticipated price of *gur*. Control arrangements are being perfected each day and with more satisfactory distribution schemes the position can only improve. As regards Mr. Haroon's statement about delays in the despatch of sugar, I am afraid, there is considerable truth in the matter and we hope that if such a situation should recur we shall be able to take anticipatory steps to prevent shortage of supplies.

As regards salt, the complaint was not so much that of system as that the nominees of the District Magistrate were not always capable of handling the business. Honourable Members should realize that there is a certain amount of inconsistency in the claims of the House that hoarding must be put down at all costs and that Government are wrong occasionally in taking certain unusual steps in the distribution of goods. The following will illustrate what I mean. We have here a commodity the manufacture of which is virtually a Government monopoly. The normal profit in ordinary times varies from Rs. 30 to Rs. 40 a Railway wagon and last year, without any increase in the primary wholesale prices, profiteering became so flagrant that profits of Rs. 500 to Rs. 1,000 per wagon were being made. This occurred in the temporary crisis of our worst transport difficulties, and by an onset of hoarding for black market operations. A salt trader could, and did, demand any price he liked from the local dealer. It was in these circumstances that Government adopted the obvious expedient of consigning its own salt to its own representatives who were to nominate their own local dealers. Whatever criticism may be made on this step, there can be no doubt at all that prices have been brought down substantially and very considerable easement of the position has been brought about.

The Honourable Mr. Chattopadhyaya has asked the Government to set up a Standing Committee of this Legislature for the Food Department. Government would be prepared to accept such motion if placed before the House.

As regards Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan's statement about rationing in Meerut, I have made enquiries and I find that his information is slightly inaccurate on two points. First, what he was referring to was some certain surplus Government stocks available for distribution to the public in circumstances where there was no food shortage and, secondly, that what the public were entitled to was twice what he stated.

The Honourable Mr. Joshi has criticised Government for failing to plan a control of food supplies from the outset of the war. This criticism has also been voiced by other speakers. To speculate on whether Government should properly have taken action before is not very fruitful and what we have before us now is the problem of how we are going to solve our current and future difficulties. On the long view the need to increase our production is obvious. It is the Government claim that significant results have already been secured in the last *kharif* crop. It is estimated that upwards of two-and-a-half million tons of additional production over last year's *kharif* crop has been secured, and, if all goes well commensurate results will be achieved in coming *rabi* crop. Honourable Members have been informed of the arrangements under which all provinces have been given "target" figures for their production for the coming new *kharif* crop. They have been told to prepare schemes—many of them have already arrived—and these schemes are for the purpose of laying claim on the Central Government for the finance that is necessary. The amount of money that would be made available for this purpose will, of course, be disclosed in the Budget speech. It is the Government claim that substantial benefits and significant results have already been secured in the "Grow More Food" campaign.

and that the effort is now being mounted for the future on broader and more positive basis.

The Honourable Mr. Maitra and the Honourable Mr. Chattopadhyaya, among other speakers, stated both directly and inferentially that never before was there available to the Government of this country a cause that would draw the people to their support. The suggestions made for enlisting public and non-official support in an active form will be pursued with all energy. It is one that will be considered at the forthcoming conference with the provinces that commences this day after to-morrow in New Delhi.

The Honourable the Mover of the Resolution has explained to you the general policy and plans on which Government are proceeding. The Provinces and States in India are to accept the functions for the procurement of the surpluses. The Central Government, whose property these surpluses become, are responsible for dividing them between the deficit areas.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee: On what basis?

Major-General E. Wood: On the basis of actual requirements as modified by any current considerations which vary past actuals.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee: And the population will be taken into consideration?

Major-General E. Wood: That is merely one of the dozen or more factors that will be taken into consideration.

The Government that are to receive the surpluses will have the responsibility for insuring a controlled distribution of these surpluses right down into consumption by the consumer.

Little criticism of the general policy has been made by the Honourable Members. The details of the plan to carry out that policy are to be discussed in the conference in two days' time: a conference which is going to meet to resolve, we hope, our difficulties, and which would only cease to meet when the greatest common measure of agreement has been reached. I can, however, assure the House of the very marked anxiety of all Provincial Governments to play their part in solving what all realize is an all-India problem. With this firm foundation for co-operation we are hopeful of bringing our divergencies of method into line and shortly replace our extemporised arrangements with permanent machinery.

As regards the States, we conceive it to be proper that we should just resolve with Provinces a general plan before bringing them into the scheme. The place and part they would play has already been sketched out. I should like to mention to the Honourable Mr. Banerjee that it is not six months or a year: we are aiming to have our machinery for collection of surpluses in working order by not later than the 15th of April.

As regards our relationships between the Centre and the Provinces, I should like to remind the Honourable Members of two statements made in this connection by the Honourable the Mover of the Resolution. Firstly, the cordial co-operation and understanding between all Governments is vital, as it is only through the other Governments that the plans and policies of the Centre can be enforced. As the Honourable Babu Baijnath Bajoria stated, the Central Government may have a head, but it has no limbs. Secondly, the Mover mentioned the steps Government are prepared to take if necessary.

In conclusion, may I give hearty endorsement to the sentiments expressed by the Honourable Sir Henry Richardson and others. I quote: "No Government can by itself defeat the hoarder, the profiteer and the black market. Only public opinion can do that." It is undeniably true that the Government's best efforts must be supported not merely by public opinion but by public action also. To harness that support and action, Government is now embarking on a widespread publicity campaign. We require, and we shall seek, all the non-official help we can get, and when we have secured the help that we hope for, then this Government's firm determination to see to it that the peoples of India shall not starve will not remain an expression of their resolution but will become an established and an assured fact.

The Assembly then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Tuesday, the 23rd February, 1943.

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