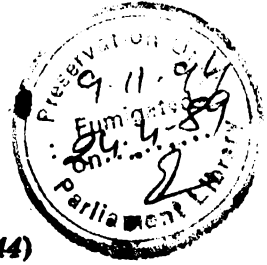


10th February 1944

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY DEBATES
Official Report

Volume I, 1944

(7th February to 28th February, 1944)



TWENTIETH SESSION
OF THE
FIFTH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,
1944



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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Mr. GOVIND V. DESHMUKH, M.L.A.

Sardar SANT SINGH, M.L.A.

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

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, 10th February, 1944.

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.

STARRED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

(a) ORAL ANSWERS.

LOWER WAGES, ETC., OF INDIAN SEAMEN EMPLOYED ON BRITISH-OWNED SHIPS.

71. *Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Will the Honourable Member for Commerce please state:

(a) if it is a fact that Indian seamen employed on British-owned ships are paid wages which are approximately only one-fourth of that paid to the Britishers employed on the same vessels and that the cubic space allowed to Indian seamen on those ships is approximately one-half of that allowed to the rest of the crew; and

(b) if he has devoted any serious consideration to matters mentioned, above; if so, what steps, if any, have been taken to remove inequality in pay and inconvenience and discomfort due to insufficient accommodation to Indian seamen?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: (a) and (b). So far as the inequality in wages is concerned, the position has been correctly stated by the Honourable Member. Government are, however, considering the question of increase in the wages of Indian seamen. As regards accommodation space allowed to lascars, there is no difference in the sleeping accommodation between lascars and European seamen, the sleeping accommodation being 12 superficial feet and 72 cubic feet for both.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Since when have Government been considering the increment of wages of Indian seamen?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: Well for some time.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: When is it going to stop this exploitation of Indian seamen?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: I cannot answer that. But I can say this much that the question is under active consideration and we hope further quick decisions will be arrived at.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Is the Government of India aware that Chinese seamen are paid the same wages as the British seamen, and it is only on account of the Government of India not being very active that the Indian seamen are not paid the same wages as the Chinese or the British seamen.

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: I can say that the Chinese seamen are not exactly paid the same as the British seamen. There is some difference.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Are they paid more than the Indian seamen?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: Yes.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Then why isn't the pay of the Indian seamen increased to the same level as the Chinese seamen?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: I said the question is under very active consideration of the Government of India.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Will the Honourable Member see that these Indian seamen get as much wages as the British people?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: I can assure the House that on the question of seamen, I have taken a personal interest for quite a long time and I will do everything possible in my power.

INTERVIEWS OF SIR SHAFAT AHMAD KHAN WITH FIELD MARSHAL SMUTS RE STATUS OF INDIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

72. *Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Will the Honourable Member for Indians Overseas please state:

(a) if Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan, the Indian High Commissioner in South Africa, had interviews with Field Marshal Smuts in the month of December, 1943; and

(b) if he had any discussion with him about the status of Indians in South Africa; if so, what the upshot of the whole discussion is?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: (a) On return from India Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan, High Commissioner for India in South Africa, called on Field Marshal Smuts on 18th December, 1943.

(b) I regret I am not in a position to make a statement on the nature or subject of the conversation.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Was there any interview?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: Yes.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Then was that not in connection with some Indian affairs? Was it a social interview?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: I cannot make a statement on what transpired at the interview because it is not in the public interest to do so.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: May I know from the Honourable Member whether the High Commissioner went into the question of the Pegging Bill and also suggested something to remove the difficulties?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: I have already given the answer. The main scope of the High Commissioner's duties is to look after Indian interests and it is reasonable to expect that he would be naturally interested in the status of Indians there.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Did the Honourable Member give him any instructions or any information about the discontent here and did he ask him to do something about it?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: He was here. He saw me.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Did the Honourable Member communicate to him anything and ask him to do something?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: Well, he saw me. That is all.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: I am not asking whether he came to see your face. I am asking whether you gave him any instructions? Did you tell him anything or did you keep mum?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: My face is not beautiful. Naturally a discussion must have taken place. The question interested both of us.

Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi: Has the Honourable Member received any communication from Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan, or has he any information as to what happened?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: Sir, I am constantly in communication with him.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: I may not be told the nature of the discussion but was any report of this interview made to the Honourable Member after the interview took place?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: I have already said that I am in communication with him.

✓ DELAY IN ENFORCING THE DRUG CONTROL ACT.

73. ***Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh:** Will the Secretary for Education, Health and Lands please explain the delay in enforcing the Drug Control Act passed more than three years ago?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: The Act has to be brought into force in all Provinces simultaneously. Provincial Governments were consulted in 1942 and the majority expressed the view that the enforcement of the Act should be deferred. Provincial Governments have been asked to agree to publication of the draft rules in March next.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Did the Provincial Government give any grounds as to why the enforcement should be deferred?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: Yes, Sir. They thought it was not a suitable time. Some Governments mentioned that there was a dearth of the requisite reagents and chemicals for use in the Drug control laboratories.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Did those Governments who favoured deferment on account of the time not being suitable explain what they meant?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: Sir, there are eleven provinces. I cannot answer that offhand.

TRADE MARKS LEGISLATION IN INDIAN STATES.

74. *Sir F. E. James: (a) Will the Honourable the Commerce Member be pleased to state if he is aware:

(i) that Travancore has enacted trade marks legislation based upon the British Indian Act;

(ii) that a draft Bill has been placed before the Cochin Legislative Council;

(iii) that other States, large and small, are contemplating similar legislation; and

(iv) that the result will be the establishment of many separate registering authorities involving companies operating in British India and the Indian States in the payment of a number of separate registration fees and other legal charges?

(b) What steps are being taken by the Government of India to approach the Indian States concerned, with a view to making reciprocal arrangements between them and British India which will avoid complicated procedure, duplication of registration fees, and other legal charges?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: (a) (i) Yes.

(ii) Government have no information so far.

(iii) Government are aware that certain other States are contemplating Trade Marks Legislation.

(iv) Yes.

(b) Question of reciprocal arrangements with the States concerned is already under active consideration of Government.

RAISING OF GOVERNMENT INTERMEDIATE COLLEGE, QUETTA, TO DEGREE COLLEGE.

75. *Mr. H. A. Sathar H. Essak Salt: Will the Secretary for Education, Health and Lands please state:

(a) whether the number of students in the Intermediate College Section of the Government Intermediate College at Quetta has reached 120; and

(b) whether, in view of this evidence of very keen demand for higher education, Government propose to raise it to the standard of a Degree College, especially as it involves no extra expenditure on buildings, and a further expenditure on additional staff is expected to be covered by the extra fee to be collected for the degree classes?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: (a) The actual number is 95.

(b) The question of raising the Sandeman Higher Secondary School, Quetta, to the Degree Standard will be considered in due course.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Will it be referred to Pakistan when it is established there or after?

(No answer.)

GRANTING PERMANENT RECOGNITION TO DENOMINATIONAL SCHOOLS IN BALUCHISTAN.

76. *Mr. H. A. Sathar H. Essak Salt: Will the Secretary for Education, Health and Lands please state whether he is aware of the fact that the year to year recognition granted to denominational schools in Baluchistan operates as a bar against the betterment of educational facilities in such schools, and whether Government propose to accord permanent recognition to such schools in Baluchistan?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: Government do not share the view the Honourable Member has expressed in the first part of his question. As regards the second part, the matter is receiving the attention of the Government of India.

Mr. H. A. Sathar H. Essak Salt: With regard to the first part, will the Honourable Member explain why he thinks it is advisable to have this recognition granted yearly rather than to keep it for a longer period?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: If the matter could be settled it would be better than giving recognition from year to year. But until it is settled it is better, for the institutions to have it yearly than not at all.

Mr. H. A. Sathar H. Essak Sait: What is the particular matter to be settled?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: The matter to be settled is whether recognition for these higher classes is to be given to a fairly large number of denominational schools who can each in the present state of development have only a small number of students in the higher classes; or whether the students in the higher classes should be concentrated in the Government schools which alone are properly equipped for dealing with them and could take them all in.

Mr. H. A. Sathar H. Essak Sait: Is the matter under active consideration now and when does my Honourable friend think it will be settled?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: The Educational Adviser hopes to go to Baluchistan and discuss the matter with the new Agent to the Governor General, who has just taken over-charge, when the latter has had time to form an opinion.

Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali: Is that a general rule of recognition or is it specially coined?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: The circumstances in Quetta are quite exceptional.

STATEMENTS BY SECRETARY OF STATE ON INDIAN FOOD SITUATION.

77. ***Mr. K. O. Neogy:** (a) With reference to the statements made by him in answer to supplementary questions in connection with starred question No. 24 on the 9th November, 1943, that the Secretary of State had "got so many sources of information" apart from the reports sent by the Government of India on the food situation, will the Honourable the Food Member be pleased to indicate whether there is any other official source of information open to the Secretary of State in such matters, to the knowledge of Government?

(b) Will the Honourable Member be pleased to refer to his answer to starred question No. 58 of the 9th November, 1943, stating that an enquiry had been made from His Majesty's Government in this connection, and that their reply was awaited, and state the purport of any reply that may have been received?

(c) Will the Honourable Member be pleased to refer to the various statements made by the Secretary of State in Parliament on the food situation during the last six months and indicate the points on which such statements were not fully in accord with the facts as known to the Government of India?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: (a) Yes.

(b) The Secretary of State, in reply to a question by Mr. Sorensen, gave what purported to be a very rough estimate of the death rate in Bengal, prefaced by the caution that reliable statistics of mortality were not available. This was later superseded by another reply to the same gentleman, in which the Secretary of State said that between August 15th and October 16th about 8,000 persons were estimated to have died in Calcutta from causes directly or indirectly due to malnutrition, and that no reliable figures were available for the districts, in some of which conditions were feared to be worse than in Calcutta.

(c) Apart from mortality statistics, of which full and reliable information has not been available either to Secretary of State or the Government of India, I am not aware of any statement made by the Secretary of State on food which does not correspond with the facts.

I should like, Sir, with your permission to take this opportunity to remove any misunderstanding which may have arisen from a reply which I gave to the recent supplementary question on mortality statistics. I said that I did not know how the figures given by the Secretary of State were obtained. I meant that we had indicated no precise figure. I now find, Sir, that we had on the basis of the best information then available to us expressed an opinion at the beginning of January that on the overall picture it was unlikely that exceptional mortality due to famine and disease had yet exceeded one million. I did not

have that communication before me when answering to the supplementary questions. It was no doubt to that expression of opinion which the Secretary of State referred when he quoted the figure one million in Parliament.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Does that mean that apart from the information which the Government of India supply to the Secretary of State on this as well as other matters, the Secretariat of the Governor General constitutes a rival source of information and inspiration for the Secretary of State?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I am not aware of that fact and I do not know all the official sources of information available to the Secretary of State; but I may say this, that the Government of India's reports from the Food Department are not the only sources of information available to the Secretary of State. I would like to indicate that the Secretary of State gets some kinds of reports from the Education, Health and Lands Department on mortality, and he gets direct from the Provincial Governments weekly or fortnightly reports, which give figures of mortality—two sources I can think of: but there may be others.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Will the Honourable Member make an attempt to get copies of all the reports that may have been sent to the Secretary of State from all these various other sources that he has mentioned for the purpose of ensuring the accuracy of the statements that he makes himself in this House?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I will endeavour to, but as I have indicated I do not know all the sources and I do not know where to fish for them.

Sir F. E. James: Will my Honourable friend explain whose is the primary responsibility for supplying information on a matter like this to the Secretary of State under the present constitution? There must be some primary responsibility fixed on some authority. Which is that authority?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: It is certainly not the Food Department. I will have to study the question; I do not know whose responsibility it is.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Is not the report of the Government of India based on the reports of the Provincial Governments?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: Yes, Sir, to a large extent. I may inform the House that the opinion expressed by us to the Secretary of State was based very largely on reports from the Regional Food Commissioner and also a report from the Government of Bengal. But no reliable figures were supplied to us by either of these parties. They were in the nature of estimates.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: The Honourable Member mentioned that the Education, Health and Lands Department may be sending reports to the Secretary of State; do I take it that one Department of the Government of India does not know what the other is doing?

Mr. N. M. Joshi: That is so.

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: That is not the implication.

Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta: Has the Government of India taken any steps up to now in order to prevent any incorrect or misleading statements by the Secretary of State to be made in Parliament?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: We are collecting reliable data. As soon as that data is received from the Bengal Government I hope the Secretary of State will be in possession of authentic figures.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Has the Secretary of State informed the Government of India that their reports are incorrect, or *vice versa* the Government of India told the Secretary of State that his reports are incorrect?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: No.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Why not?

Dr. P. N. Banerjea: Does not the Information Department of the Government of India send reports to the Secretary of State?

Nawabzada Muhammad Liaquat Ali Khan: Does the Secretary of State communicate directly with the Provincial Governments without the knowledge of the Government of India?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I am unable to say.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: May I ask what is the constitutional position, whether the Governor of Bengal cannot directly deal with the Secretary of State for India?

(No answer was given.)

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

APPLYING FAMINE CODE TO CERTAIN DISTRICTS IN BENGAL.

78. *Mr. K. C. Neogy: (a) With reference to his statement in answer to starred question No. 36 on the 9th November, 1943, that "the question of applying the Famine Code to certain districts is under the consideration of the Provincial Government", will the Honourable the Food Member be pleased to state in regard to which districts the question was under consideration, and what decision has been arrived at in the matter?

(b) What are the reasons for not applying the Famine Code to the famine affected areas in Bengal so long?

(c) Has the Honourable Member studied the provisions of the Bengal Famine Code and compared them with the system of relief that has been in operation in the rural areas of Bengal? If so, in what principal features do the former differ from the latter?

(d) Will the Honourable the Food Member be pleased to refer to his answer to parts (a), (c) and (d) of starred question No. 61 of the 9th November, 1943, in this connection and give a complete reply thereto?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: (a) and (b). The question was considered in relation to all districts of Bengal, and particularly Midnapore, the 24-Parganas, Burdwan, Chittagong and Noakhali. It was decided that the Bengal Famine Code was not applicable to the situation which required special measures. Instructions which in certain respects differed from and amplified the provisions of the Bengal Famine Code, were issued on the 20th August, 1943.

(c) and (d). Yes: a statement is laid on the table of the House.

Statement containing replies to parts (a), (c) and (d) of Starred Question No. 61 of the 9th November, 1943.

(a) The supplies of foodgrains during August, September and October, 1943 are shown in the annexed statement.

(c) The main points of difference between the Bengal Government's relief scheme and the Famine Code are as under:

(i) The difference with regard to the controlling organization is that the union and not the circle has been adopted as the unit of relief and relief officers have been substituted for charge Superintendents. Great responsibility is placed on village relief committees and the accounts of expenditure have been simplified to enable the work of distribution to be carried out by honorary agency so that Relief Officers may be set free for other duties.

The Relief Commissioner performs most of the functions of the Famine Commissioner though he has not the same powers over Railways, etc., which a Famine Commissioner could exercise under the old administration.

(ii) In regard to relief works the difference is that the method laid down in the Famine Code for the management of such works having been found too labourious, a simpler system has been adopted. Under this system instead of paying the earnings of individual labourers and endeavouring to exact from each labourer an appropriate task, the labourers are split up into sub-gangs and each of these sub-gangs is paid for the amount of work done by it after daily measure.

(iii) As to allowance of food to different classes of persons, the average rate—prescribed in the Famine Code is $7\frac{1}{2}$ chittacks per day. This rate was generally adopted previously but owing to the serious shortage of foodgrains in August the average rate was reduced to about 3 chittacks for dry grain doles and 2 chittacks for the *khihari* excluding vegetables. This rate was however increased to an average of four chittacks for both dry doles and cooked doles shortly afterward as soon as the supply position became slightly better. It is also to be noted in this connection that in view of the extent of distress that prevailed in the Province, gratuitous relief was given to more classes of persons than are mentioned in the Famine Code.

(iv) As regards relief of poorer families among the middle class, the Famine Code provides for free distribution of clothes and blankets and for sale of foodgrains at cheap rates from charitable funds only. But such relief is being given where necessary in Bengal at Government expense as well.

(d) As far as the standard gruel prescribed for Calcutta was concerned, one portion of it had a calorific value of about 750 calories and, although somewhat deficient in fats, was empirically found adequate to sustain idle destitutes. Specific instructions were given to all free kitchens in Calcutta that the gruel was not suitable for persons in any advanced state of starvation. A nutrition expert was consulted informally by the officer in charge of the work in Calcutta and he did not consider the gruel inadequate in the circumstances. The same remarks as made in regard to Calcutta apply more or less to the mofussil districts, except that in rural kitchens the average quantity of grains prescribed was 4 chhitaks per head instead of 3 chhitaks as in Calcutta.

Despatches made to districts from Calcutta in August, 1943.

	Tons.
Rice	1,691·47
Paddy	661·10
Gram	1,114·87
Pulses	642·33
Wheat	31,325·58
Wheat Products	4,231·06
Milletts	2,454·40
Maize	1·07
TOTAL	42,121·88

(Figures district by district not available).

Despatches to Districts from Calcutta.

Despatched during the period September, 1943.

To Districts.	(Figures in Tons)										
	Rice.	Paddy.	Wheat	Wheat	Jowar.	Bajra.	Maize.	Barley.	Gram.	Pulses.	Total.
	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	products.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.
24-Parganas	1,688	..	275	735	..	773	15	..	..	..	3,486
Nadia	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Murshidabad	..	..	..	220	..	..	..	..	..	..	220
Jessore	37	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	37
Khulna	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Burdwan	18	..	..	1,836	..	246	..	..	..	..	2,100
Birbhum	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Bankura	..	..	..	1,469	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,469
Midnapur	1,372	..	..	1,844	187	694	..	..	..	676	4,773
Hooghly	198	..	294	700	130	300	..	..	..	9	1,031
Howrah	690	..	..	690	..	574	..	..	..	..	1,954
Rajshahi	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Dinaajpur	..	..	..	73	..	..	..	..	..	..	73
Jalpaiguri	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Darjeeling	194	..	..	290	37	56	233	..	..	89	899
Rangpur	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Bogra	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Pabna	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Malda	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Dacca	318	..	..	3,243	..	588	..	..	..	520	4,669
Mymensingh	..	..	..	74	..	690	..	..	..	..	764
Faridpur	771	..	..	..	..	590	..	..	..	1,370	2,731
Bakarganj	331	..	..	..	..	184	..	..	..	..	515
Chittagong	124	..	..	1,469	..	1,059	..	..	..	..	2,662
Tippera	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Noakhali	..	..	..	735	..	..	..	..	..	..	735
TOTAL	5,751	..	509	13,377	355	5,754	247	..	..	2,664	28,717

Despatches to Districts from Calcutta.
Despatched during the period October, 1943.

(Figures in Tons)

To Districts.	Ex-Calcutta.				Ex-Punjab.				Total. Tons.
	Rice. Tons.	Pulses. Tons.	Jowar. Tons.	Bajra. Tons.	Wheat. Tons.	Wheat products. Tons.	Gram. Tons.	Pulses. Tons.	
24. Parganas	1,469	735		2,314	605	1,168		73	6,364
Nadia						37		18	55
Murshidabad						148			148
Jessore									
Khulna									
Burdwan	37							18	18
Birbhum								1,689	1,726
Bankura								239	239
Midnapur	1,023	1,397		481		486		753	753
Hooghly	488	202	73	468	213	248		992	4,989
Howrah	776	220		387	759	1,183		606	2,298
Rajshahi									3,325
Dinajpur								18	18
Jalpaiguri								73	73
Darjeeling					162			294	443
Rangpur					81			661	823
Bogra				56		111		937	1,185
Pabna									
Malda			122	77	263			73	1,230
Dacca	735	382		527		588		881	3,113
Mymensingh	160		308	228		646		18	1,360
Faridpur	367		372	3,275		1,199		55	6,133
Bakarganj	367	184			462	903			1,916
Chittagong	1,240	429	69	457	328	283		129	2,935
Tippera	220	27	396	1,558	552	658		73	3,484
Noakhali			221	154	160	469		331	1,335
Chittagong Hill Tracts.									
GRAND TOTAL	7,482	3,587	1,561	10,686	4,499	8,274	73	7,860	43,962

Mr. K. O. Neogy: Has the Honourable Member's attention been drawn to a statement that has appeared in the *Hindustan Times* this morning from the Honourable Pandit H. N. Kunzru to the effect that during his recent visit to some of the affected parts of Bengal, he found the fear that was being entertained, both among officials and non-officials, that another famine is impending?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: Well, Sir, I have read the letter to which the Honourable Member refers.

Dr. P. N. Banerjea: With reference to the answer to part (c) will the Honourable Member inform the House why it was not possible to give effect to the Famine Code? Was it because of the shortage of foodgrains or for any other cause?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: The reasons are explained in the statement which is attached to my reply. One of the main reasons, of course, was that you could not give relief in cash, cash relief would not have been of much use. There was no grain. We were obliged to find grain, and generally this famine was of such dimensions that it could not have been tackled by the ordinary provisions of the Famine Code.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: If the Honourable Member has read Pandit Kunzru's letter, may I know what steps the Honourable Member has taken or proposes to take to see that that disaster is averted?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: Well, we are working day and night to that end.

Mr. Hooseinbhoj A. Lalljee: Does the Honourable Member agree with the statement made by Pandit Kunzru?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: No. I think it is unnecessarily alarmist.

Dr. P. N. Banerjea: Can the Honourable Member assure this House that there is no possibility of another famine next year?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I am not a prophet.

Dr. P. N. Banerjea: Then why do you say he is alarmist?

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Is not the Honourable Member a food prophet?

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

STOCKS RELEASED FROM ARMY RESERVES FOR CIVILIANS IN BENGAL.

79. *Mr. K. O. Neogy: With reference to his answer to part (a) of unstarred question No. 7 of the 9th November, 1943, regarding stocks released from army reserves for civilians in Bengal, will the Honourable the Food Member be pleased to state the different periods during which 23,000 tons of wheat referred to by him had been released for the benefit of the civilian population in Bengal from imports ordered for the Defence Services, and indicate the quantities that were distributed out of this assignment in the different areas of Bengal at different times? Was this action taken in pursuance of a direction of the Government of India? Was the desirability of temporarily lending a portion of the army reserves of foodgrains held within Bengal at earlier stages, ever considered by the authorities concerned? If so, with what result?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: The wheat in question was imported for the defence services and released on various dates between the 1st January, and the 30th April, 1943. Its precise distribution in Bengal is not known to the Government of India. The action was taken at the request of the Government of India to His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief. The need for lending army stocks for civilian consumption had not arisen before, the dates in question.

Mr. K. O. Neogy: Is it not a fact that specific suggestions were made in the course of the debate in this House on the food situation in Bengal, that the military might be requested to temporarily lend as much as possible of their stocks held within Bengal to the Provincial Government for the purpose of meeting the situation, and, if so, what action was taken on those suggestions?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: To what debate is the Honourable Member referring?

Mr. K. C. Neogy: The first debate that took place here on the food situation, the very first debate that took place just a year ago.

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I was not present in that debate.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: The Honourable Member had not assumed charge of the portfolio.

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: but I believe the army had already done so as far as they could.

Mr. Hoosainbhoy A. Lalljee: 23,000 tons of wheat were imported for the Defence Services. I want to know whether the Defence Services indent separately or jointly with the Civil Services?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I want notice of that question. I will look into the position and let the Honourable Member know.

CONSERVATION OF COAL IN INDIA.

80. *Mr. K. C. Neogy: (a) Has the attention of the Honourable Member for Labour been drawn to the observations on the question of conservation of coal in India made by Dr. H. K. Sen, Director, Indian Lac Research Institute, Namkum, Ranchi, and Chairman of the Fuel Research Committee of the Board of Scientific and Industrial Research, in the course of certain lectures delivered in December, 1943, at the Patna University?

(b) Is it a fact that this question has from time to time been raised for the consideration of Government by different experts? If so, what action has so far been taken by Government in this matter?

(c) To what extent and in what manner has the larger utilisation of low grade coal, particularly on the part of the Railways, as suggested by Dr. Sen in his aforesaid lectures, been carried out or is proposed to be carried out in future?

(d) Are these questions being taken up for immediate consideration in view particularly of difficulties of the present coal position in the country?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: (a) No.

(b) Yes. (i) In 1939 the Government of India passed the Coal Mines Stowing Act. The Stowing Board has, by assistance given to voluntary stowing, achieved considerable success in the conservation of high quality coal.

(ii) Under certain regulations under the Indian Coal Mines Regulations passed in 1939 restrictions were imposed on the dimension of workings which, apart from their safety value, have led to the conservation of coal.

(c) Expert Combustion Engineers have been attached to the office of the Controller of Coal Distribution, one of whose duties will be to ensure that industries that can consume a lower grade of coal are not supplied with a higher grade. The assistance of Provincial Governments has been invited in conducting a survey of coal consuming factories through the agency of Boiler Inspectors in consultation with Combustion Engineers. Government attach importance to a vigorous fuel economy campaign and this is already receiving the attention of the Coal Commissioner. Low grade coal is supplied to the maximum extent possible for the various services against Railway demands.

(d) These questions are constantly under the attention of Government.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: I think the Honourable Member said that his attention has not been drawn to the observations to which I refer.

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: My attention has not been drawn to the lectures to which the Honourable Member refers.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: But they were reported in the press.

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: They might have been.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: But is it not expected that the Honourable Member should take some notice of such important observations?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: Not everything that appears in newspapers.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: But the gentleman holds rather a responsible position.

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: I would like the Honourable Member to send me a copy. I have not seen it.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: That is rather a pity. May I know whether in connection with the present coal drive he will see to it that as much as possible, and as high a proportion as possible, of the low grade coal is utilised for the purpose?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: I have already said that Government have undertaken measures in that direction.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: I was wanting the Honourable Member's assurance in connection with the present coal drive.

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: Certainly.

Mr. Hoosainbhoy A. Lalljee: May I ask how many experts have been employed?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: I must have notice of that question.

CINCHONA CULTIVATION AND PRODUCTION OF SYNTHETIC ANTI-MALARIAL DRUGS.

81. *Mr. K. C. Neogy: (a) Will the Secretary for Education, Health and Lands be pleased to refer to his answer to part (c) of starred question No. 144 on the 13th November, 1943, regarding cinchona cultivation in India, and state when the question of making India self-sufficient in the matter of quinine manufacture will be taken up for consideration by the Government of India "in the light of conditions likely to prevail after the war and of developments in the production of synthetic anti-malarial drugs"?

(b) Have Government any policy regarding encouragement of the production of synthetic anti-malarial drugs in India? Are any efforts being made to the knowledge of his Department towards such production in India? If so, does the Honourable Member propose to make a statement giving details of such efforts and the help, if any, sought from Government by those making such efforts, and the action taken by Government in rendering any help in the matter?

(c) Has the attention of the Honourable Member been drawn to a letter which appeared about the end of December, 1943, in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* from Dr. J. K. Ghosh, M.B., Calcutta, headed "Government's Malaria Policy", in which he has referred to the following facts:

(i) that a synthetic anti-malarial drug called 'Alecrin' was being manufactured in Bengal from May, 1942, and that this had been found by the School of Tropical Medicines to have an anti-malarial action similar to that of 'Atebrin'.

(ii) that the manufacturers took up production of this drug on a large scale and applied to the Government of India for a permit for importing a few of the chemicals needed for its manufacture from abroad; and

(iii) that after a lapse of about six months a reply was received to this request that Government were not able to grant any assistance in the matter?

Does the Honourable Member propose to place on the table the correspondence between the above manufacturers and the Government on this subject?

(d) Will the Honourable Member be pleased to refer in this connection to his reply to starred question No. 31, dated the 9th November, 1943, on the subject of manufacture of substitutes for 'Atebrin' in India, and state whether the British and American substitutes for Atebrin are being imported in sufficient quantities and are available at reasonable prices throughout the country?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: (a) The matter will be taken up as soon as sufficient information regarding probable post-war conditions and developments in the production of synthetic anti-malaria drugs is available.

(b) As some of the necessary chemicals are not available either in India or from any outside source, the Government of India have at present no measures in contemplation for the encouragement of the production of these drugs. The Bombay Government prepared a scheme for the manufacture of synthetic anti-malaria drugs at the Haffkine Institute and certain chemical manufacturers also proposed to undertake manufacture. Both the Bombay Government and the commercial concerns referred to applied for assistance in obtaining the imported chemicals required for the manufacture of the drug. The Government of India were unable to give assistance in the matter because of the necessity for economy in the use of shipping space. The weight of the imported

chemicals required for manufacture is about ten times that of the finished product and in view of wartime shipping difficulties it was decided to import the finished product. It was also ascertained that the chemicals required could not be obtained from the United Kingdom or the United States of America.

(c) The answer to the first part is in the affirmative and to the second part in the negative.

(d) Only comparatively small quantities have so far been received but large supplies are expected in the near future.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Is it not possible to get shipping space even for importing these chemicals?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: Not in the case of mass production.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: When shipping space is made available for importing beer and other drinks, is it suggested that no shipping space is available in the case of such important drugs?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: It runs into a large number of tons and, as I said, the chemicals themselves are not available for export.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Even from countries from which they are imported?

(No reply.)

COAL POSITION.

82. *Sir F. E. James: Will the Honourable Member for Labour be pleased to state:

(a) the latest position regarding coal production in India, and whether there has been any increase or reduction in raisings since the 1st December, 1943; and, if so, to what extent;

(b) if he is aware that a number of collieries are not working at all or not working to full capacity;

(c) what steps are being taken to enable colliery owners to work their mines to the fullest extent, with special reference to the provision of labour, foodgrains, mechanisation and taxation adjustments;

(d) what steps are being taken:

(i) to deal with recalcitrant colliery owners who are deliberately refraining from producing the maximum possible; and

(ii) to ensure the efficient distribution of coal, and to prevent its going into the black market; and

(e) whether Railway collieries are working to full capacity; and if not, why not?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: (a) Coal production has recently shown some improvement. Raisings in December, 1943, showed an increase of over 20 per cent. over November. January figures are not yet available; but it is believed that there has been a still further increase.

(b) Government are not aware of any mines which can be safely and economically worked and which have been closed down. A number of mines have not been able to work to full capacity due to shortage of labour or machinery or to their workings having become flooded during the last monsoon.

(c) (i) A Government labour force up to 10,000 men is being established in the Bengal and Bihar coalfields initially for work on quarrying or loading coal. It is hoped that after some experience it will work underground. The first 1,000 men have already arrived. A force of 1,000 men have also been provided temporarily by the military for coal loading. Government labour has also been provided for railway collieries and for the Singareni collieries in Hyderabad. Steps are also being taken to prevent colliery workers being employed on other works in the coalfields.

(ii) The mining associations have agreed to provide foodgrains to their labour at the rate of 6 seers to the rupee. The Government of India are arranging with Provincial Governments to provide foodgrains for miners and their depend-

ants in certain agreed quantities. In addition, wages together with dearness allowance have been raised to 50 per cent. above their 1939 level. Further, the Government of India are encouraging all collieries to introduce a production bonus based either on attendance or on out-put, and it is understood that many collieries have already introduced such a bonus.

(iii) Every effort is being made to obtain machinery from abroad. Government is prepared to allow depreciation both for Excess Profits Tax and Income-tax on new coal cutting machinery now to be purchased at an annual rate of 50 per cent. on the written down value of such machinery. The trade have been asked whether they will accept these terms and if so, to send details of the machinery they require. Their reactions are awaited.

(iv) A proposal to encourage production by granting bonuses on increased output free of Excess Profits Tax is under discussion with the trade.

(v) Steps are also being taken to provide consumer goods, standard cloth and medical stores in adequate quantities.

(d) (i) Government are not aware of any colliery owner who is deliberately refraining from producing the maximum possible. In order, however, to prevent any such possibility, a scheme is under consideration and is being discussed with the trade by the Coal Commissioner, whereby a target figure of production will be fixed for each colliery. It is proposed under the scheme that where a mine owner fails to produce the target tonnage, the Coal Commissioner will, unless he is satisfied that there is some good reason for such default, issue a formal warning to the mine owner that in the event of persistent default, Government will requisition his mines and may, if circumstances so require, acquire the mines outright.

(ii) The distribution of coal is made by the Controller of Coal Distribution working under the direction of the War Transport Department, in accordance with a rationing scheme approved by the War Resources Committee of Council. All coal despatches are made against licences or priority certificates issued from the Controller of Coal Distribution's office. These are based on the quotas fixed for each industry within the general rationing instructions and in line with the recommendations made by the Departments concerned with the various industries. Detailed day-to-day instructions are issued to each colliery as to the consignee against whom they should load. The actual loading on the part of the collieries receives a check at the weighment depot stations. The returns compiled by the depot stations are further scrutinised by the allotment offices. Inspectors working under the Railways and the Controller's organisation make frequent checks of actual booking at stations of arrival and at destination stations to ensure that collieries have booked the wagons to the consignee for whom the wagon has been allotted, in accordance with the priority certificate, and that at the destination stations the wagon is delivered to the proper consignee and not allowed to go into the open market. Several cases of coal having been sold in the black market have been detected and prosecutions have been launched.

(e) Every possible step is being taken to develop the capacity of the Railway collieries to their full extent as quickly as circumstances permit. Whilst considerable progress has been made I am not yet in a position to state that all Railway Collieries are being worked to their full capacity. Present difficulties are due to:

(i) shortage of labour,

(ii) unavoidable delay in the introduction of mechanical plant,

(iii) want of line capacity to move the increased output.

All these difficulties are expected to be overcome shortly.

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan: In reply to part (b), the Honourable Member said about the collieries which are not working to full capacity. How many of them are represented by European companies?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: I am unable to give any answer to that at this stage. I do not think we can have any information as to which

are not working to full capacity and which of them are European-owned and which Indian-owned.

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan: Will the Honourable Member be pleased to make an inquiry and inform this House during this session before the Railway Budget comes in?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: I do not think I can undertake to make such an inquiry.

Mr. K. O. Neogy: Is the Honourable Member in a position to give the information asked for by Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan, not with reference to the nationality of the owning interest but as to whether all the collieries, big and small, are doing the work properly, and whether the Honourable Member's scheme is intended to apply to the smaller collieries as much as to the larger?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: It is intended to apply to all collieries and with regard to the first part of the question put by my Honourable friend all I can say is that I am prepared to undertake an inquiry which will help in producing more coal. I do not want to hold any assize enquiry over the coal mines.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: May I ask, whenever the Honourable Member makes a statement that the wages of the miners have been increased by 50 per cent., he will also state at the same time that the cost of living in the colliery areas has increased three times the pre-war cost of living index, in order to avoid misunderstanding regarding the statement which he makes?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: I believe that this is a direction to me and not a question.

Nawabzada Muhammad Liaquat Ali Khan: Is any quantity of coal exported from India?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: No, except to Ceylon.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Is it a fact that the Honourable Member had stated that women miners are not compelled to go underground and if he has made such a statement, may I ask how he reconciles that fact with the statement which he has just now made that the Government of India are taking steps to refuse employment to miners elsewhere?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: I do not see any contradiction.

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan: In reply to part (c) of the question about the taxation adjustment, the Honourable Member has not explained what was the demand of the colliery owners—whether they were unwilling to pay the E. P. T. and whether they have wanted exemption from the payment of E. P. T. On what ground do they want to be exempted from E. P. T.?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: On the ground that coal was a wasting asset.

Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani: May I know the quantity of coal exported to Ceylon?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: I must have notice of that question.

EXPORT QUOTAS FOR COMMODITIES.

83. *Sardar Mangal Singh: Will the Honourable Member for Commerce please state:

(a) the conditions on which the export quotas for various commodities are determined;

(b) whether the claims of the manufacturers who expanded this business during the war, were also considered; and

(c) whether Government propose to grant quotas in future to manufacturers also, particularly to those who have orders from abroad for the supply of different commodities?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: (a) Export quotas for controlled goods are fixed with reference to the internal supply position of the commodities concerned and also in certain cases with reference to the minimum essential requirements of the importing countries and past exports for a basic period.

(b) and (c). Wherever restrictions are imposed on exports of a particular commodity the general policy of the Government is ordinarily to confine the

grant of export licences to those who were established in the trade prior to the imposition of the restrictions. Manufacturers who expanded their business during the war will be eligible for export licences only if they had established themselves in the export trade during the prescribed basic period which, in most cases, is the official year 1941-42.

Sardar Mangal Singh: Is it not a fact that Government is giving a practical monopoly to old exporters?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: I cannot understand how it can be called a monopoly. After all, if exports have to be restricted, we have to give them on a certain basis, and the basis which we have accepted is those who have been in business at the time the restrictions were put in. If you call it a monopoly, you might, but I do not think I can call it so.

Mr. Hooseinbhoj A. Lalljee: What is meant by the term "those who have been in business"?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: It is just what it conveys.

Mr. Hooseinbhoj A. Lalljee: Is it not a fact that many of those who were in business at that time have now ceased to be in business?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: For a vast country like India it is extremely difficult to find out individual cases who have ceased or not ceased to be in business. If individual cases are brought to our notice, we take steps to stop them. But I am merely enunciating the general principle that only those who have been in business are entitled to the quota.

Seth Yusuf Abdoola Haroon: Is it not a fact that those people who have come into business just now have been given quotas?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: As I have said, it is possible in exceptional circumstances to grant quotas to a few others who have come at a later stage, but each such individual case is examined on its merits. For example, if there is an industry that has got a surplus after meeting all the internal needs, we have to give it a quota in exceptional cases. But these quotas are given in absolutely exceptional cases.

Sardar Mangal Singh: May I ask whether the Government will consider the grant of quotas to those manufacturers who have got supply orders from abroad?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: I do not think we can be guided by the supply orders from abroad because in view of the inflationary position in some of the countries outside India any amount of supply orders will be coming to India and if we are to allow exports to these countries, I am sure the civilian consumption will be very badly affected.

EXPORTERS ON THE ESTABLISHED LIST OF SHIPPERS.

84. ***Sardar Mangal Singh:** (a) Will the Honourable Member for Commerce please lay on the table of the House the list of exporters who are on the established list of shippers?

(b) How many of these approved exporters belong to the Punjab?

(c) Were the Punjab Government consulted when this list was prepared?

(d) Did the Punjab Government recommend any firm or firms of manufacturers to be registered as exporters?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: (a) to (c). No "established list of shippers" is maintained by Government but Export Trade Controllers are generally guided in the issue of export licences by the evidence produced by shippers themselves regarding their exports during a prescribed basic period. It may, however, be added that the exporters are not classified on a provincial basis.

(d) A firm in Ludhiana has submitted a representation through the Punjab Government asking for special treatment outside the existing export control regulations. The representation is under consideration.

REJECTION OF CANADIAN GOVERNMENT'S OFFER OF WHEAT TO INDIA.

85. *Dr. P. N. Banerjee: (a) Has the attention of the Honourable the Food Member been drawn to the extract in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, dated the 9th December, 1943, from the newspaper *P.M.* which devoted two entire pages to a story headlined "Britain says 'no' to wheat gift for starving India—Canadian Government's offer of a hundred thousand tons rejected by Mr. Leopold Amery"? If so, is *P.M.*'s statement correct?

(b) If the *P.M.*'s statement be correct, does the Honourable Member propose to consider the desirability of taking steps towards the renewal of the rejected offer, in view of the fact that the food situation in India is not yet normal?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: (a) I have seen the statement. It is not correct.

(b) Does not arise.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Is the Honourable Member sure that he has got a full catalogue of all the acts of foolishness that Mr. Amery has committed?

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

SUPPLY AND RATIONING OF FOOD IN PROVINCES.

86. *Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: (a) Will the Honourable the Food Member be pleased to state the final adjustment made by the Government of India with Provinces for the procurement, distribution and rationing of food in each of the Provinces?

(b) What prices of rice in respect of the present *Kharif* have been finally fixed in each of the Provinces? Have Government accepted the requirement of the Sind Ministry to increase the price of rice in Sind, in spite of protests by consumers? If so, how?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: (a) There can be no finality at this stage of the development of India's Food Organisation. The policy of the Government of India with regard to procurement, distribution and rationing of foodgrains has been stated in the White Paper laid on the table of the House during the last session. No departure has been made from the declared policy.

(b) In view of the wide variations in the price of rice in different regions, the Government of India have deferred the fixation by statute of uniform or coordinated maximum prices for rice, until the ruling prices have been brought to an appropriate level. The answer to the second part of this question is in the negative.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: May I know what price of rice of the *Kharif* production has been fixed for Sind?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: We have not fixed any price yet, as I have said.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: In that case, may I know whether the price of rice that is already ruling there has not yet been interfered with?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: No; the price which was fixed by the Sind Government still holds.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Have not there been speculative forward contracts for the *Kharif* cultivation and some of the members of the Ministry themselves are anxious that the price should be increased? Are the Government of India aware of it?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: No, I am not aware of such an occurrence.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Will the Honourable Member make inquiries about it? There are forward contracts which will affect the consumers if the price is increased.

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I cannot make a roving inquiry like that on allegations which are not supported by facts.

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

APPOINTMENT OF AN AUSTRALIAN AS GOVERNOR OF BENGAL.

87. *Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta: (a) Will the Honourable the Leader of the House be pleased to state whether the Government of India were consulted in the matter of the recent appointment of the Governor of Bengal?

(b) Did the Government of India express any opinion in the matter?

(c) Did the Government of India know that the appointment of an Australian as Governor of Bengal is resented to by the people of India?

The Honourable Sir Sultan Ahmed: (a), (b) and (c). The subject matter of this question does not concern the Governor General in Council. Governors are appointed by His Majesty the King under section 48 of the Government of India Act, 1935.

Sardar Sant Singh: May I know if the Honourable Member is aware that this appointment has created a good deal of discontent and dissatisfaction over His Majesty's Government's policy with regard to India?

The Honourable Sir Sultan Ahmed: No, Sir.

Sardar Sant Singh: Have the Government of India tried to gauge the feelings of the country in respect of this appointment?

The Honourable Sir Sultan Ahmed: I have answered the question. We were not consulted in the matter and we have nothing to do with it.

UNSTARRED QUESTION AND ANSWER.

PUBLICATION OF CERTAIN ANNUAL REPORTS CONCERNING LABOUR ON RAILWAYS.

43. Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Will the Honourable Member for Labour be pleased to state if the following reports have since been issued? If not, why not, and when are they likely to be issued?

(i) Annual report on the working of the Payment of Wages Act, IV of 1936, by the Conciliation Officer (Railways) and Supervisor of Railway, Labour, Calcutta; and

(ii) Annual report on the working of the Hours of Employment Regulations on the Indian Railways during the year 1941-42?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: The last reports published were for the year 1940-41. Printing of future reports has been temporarily discontinued due to acute shortage of paper.

MOTIONS FOR ADJOURNMENT.

ORDERS PASSED ON *NATIONAL CALL* AND *HINDUSTAN TIMES* BY CHIEF COMMISSIONER OF DELHI.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Mr. Krishnamachari has given notice of an adjournment motion with respect to the orders passed by the Chief Commissioner of Delhi on the *National Call* and the *Hindustan Times* which is exactly the matter which has already been dealt with and so I rule it out of order.

DILATORY TACTICS OF GOVERNMENT IN ENFORCING THE RECIPROCITY ACT

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The next adjournment motion is in the name of Mr. Deshmukh. He wishes to adjourn the business of the Assembly for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, "the dilatory tactics of the Government to defeat the purpose of the Reciprocity Act as evidenced by the answers given on Monday to a question relating to the framing of rules to give effect to it".

Has the Government Member anything to say on this motion?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare (Member for Indians Overseas): As I explained the other day when a similar motion came up before the House it is inopportune in my opinion to raise this matter at present.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I want to know first of all whether the Government have any objection to this motion being moved on the ground that it is not in order.

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: There is nothing urgent; it is not of recent occurrence. I may inform the House that we have not been idle. I submit that nothing will be lost, and something positive will be gained if this motion is not taken up now. I hope my Honourable friend will accede to my request and I appeal to my Honourable friend to withdraw his motion.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh (Nagpur Division: Non-Muhammadan): I do not respond to any appeal. All appeals fall flat on me. If there is an assurance that in the very near future something will be gained for Indians who are in South Africa, then I might see my way to withdraw this adjournment motion. Otherwise, I must do what is my duty as a Member of this House.

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: I have already given the assurance here. I can assure my Honourable friend that nothing will be lost, but something might be gained by postponing this adjournment motion.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): As objection has been taken to leave being granted—that is what the Honourable Member for Government meant by his remarks—will those Honourable Members who are in favour of leave being granted rise in their places.

(Not less than 25 Honourable Members stood up in their places.)

As not less than 25 Honourable Members have stood up for leave being granted, the motion will be taken up for discussion at Four of the Clock today or earlier if the business of the House is finished before.

ELECTION OF A MEMBER TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE FOR ROADS.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I have to inform the Assembly that upto 12 Noon on Wednesday, the 9th February, 1944, the time fixed for receiving nominations for the Standing Committee for Roads one nomination was received. As there is only one vacancy I declare Mr. A. C. Inskip to be duly elected.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO THE DELHI UNIVERSITY COURT.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I have to inform the Assembly that upto 12 Noon on Wednesday, the 9th February, 1944, the time fixed for receiving nominations for the Court of the University of Delhi four nominations were received. As there are only four vacancies, I declare the following Members to be duly elected, namely, (1) Sir F. E. James, (2) Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad, (3) Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan, and (4) Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang.

THE COAL MINES SAFETY (STOWING) AMENDMENT BILL.

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar (Labour Member): Mr. President, in view of the desire expressed by some Honourable Members of the House that they would like to have some more time to consider the Bill, I do not propose to make the motion for consideration of the Bill which is put down against my name.

THE INDIAN COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque (Commerce Member): Sir, so far as the Bill further to amend the Indian Companies Act is concerned, there has been a feeling among various sections of the House that the notice given to them has been short. I therefore do not propose to move the motion for consideration of the Bill today.

THE COFFEE MARKET EXPANSION (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque (Commerce Member): Sir, I move: "That the Bill further to amend the Coffee Market Expansion Act, 1942, be taken into consideration."

Sir, this is a very simple measure. It has been found that there is some defect in the Act. Whereas in the Act there is a provision for the fixation of price, in the penal provision one section altogether escapes. It is with a view to remove the defect that I have brought in this Bill, namely, in the penal provision, the dealer also and not merely the licence securer or the owner shall be liable. So far as the first section is concerned, it is merely to define the dealer. Again at the present moment, any prosecution can only be at the instance of certain bodies. Here we propose that the Provincial Government or an officer of the Board can proceed. Otherwise, it is extremely difficult, if a dealer in an out of the way place, in Orissa or in Bihar, violates the provision of the law, for an officer of the Coffee Marketing Board to take steps to prosecute. My intention is merely to bring about these changes in the law. Sir, I move that the Bill be taken into consideration.

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

"That the Bill further to amend the Coffee Market Expansion Act, 1942, be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

Clauses 2, 3 and 4 were added to the Bill.

Clause 1 was added to the Bill.

The Title and the Preamble were added to the Bill.

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: Sir, I move that the Bill be passed.

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

"That the Bill be passed."

The motion was adopted.

THE INDIAN COCONUT CESS BILL.

Mr. J. D. Tyson (Secretary, Department of Education, Health and Lands).
Sir, I move:

"That the Bill to provide for the creation of a fund for the improvement and development of the cultivation, marketing and utilization of coconuts in India be referred to a Select Committee consisting of Mr. H. A. Sathar H. Essak Sait, Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali, Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra, Rai Bahadur Seth Bhagechand Soni, Sir F. E. James, Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi, Mr. Y. N. Sukthankar, and the Mover, with instructions to report on or before the 29th February, 1944, and that the number of Members whose presence shall be necessary to constitute a meeting of the Committee shall be five."

Time was, Sir, when India was one of the chief suppliers of coconuts and coconut products to the markets of the world. But, today, so far from exporting any appreciable quantity of either commodity, even in peace conditions, India is to a great extent dependent upon imports from abroad. Hence this Bill. It is only since the beginning of the century that India has become on balance an importing country. The extent of our import may be gauged from the fact that—I give it in terms of copra—in the period 1935-37, we were importing at the rate of 91,000 tons per annum from Ceylon, and that figure has doubled since then. The loss through enemy occupation of the principal coconut producing countries of the world, the Phillipine islands and the Netherland East Indies, has thrown a very heavy burden upon another principal producer, Ceylon, from which we have been supplementing our own indigenous supplies. The result is that at present we are able to obtain from that source only about one-third of the quantity we require to import for our own internal consumption.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra (Presidency Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Has the Honourable Member got any figure for our internal consumption?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: I have not got figures handy at present. I will try to get them.

Owing to increased industrialisation in India, our own demand for internal consumption is going up. The immediate thing, therefore, obviously is an intensification in the production of coconuts and a better utilisation of the coconut in manufacture. But though that can probably be brought about, the

time does also seem opportune, when competition from abroad has relaxed, to try to rehabilitate an industry which in the past did not apparently have scope for proper development owing to competition from abroad. The Bill seeks to establish a committee to do research and development for coconut and for its products and our idea is that the committee should operate both on the agricultural and on marketing and the technological side, as does its prototype the Indian Central Cotton Committee, and as do also the Indian Lac Cess Committee and the Indian Central Jute Committee. It will, I think, generally be admitted that these Committees have done very valuable work for the commodities in which they are interested, and we believe that the best way of helping the coconut industry,—by which I mean coconut “from the tree to the bottle”,—will be by setting up another such committee. I may mention that the Indian Central Cotton Committee was set up by an Act of this Legislature in 1922 and the Indian Lac Cess Committee by an Act of this Legislature in 1930. I mention that because Honourable Members will find that the Bill before the House follows one or other of those Acts, whichever happened to be the more appropriate, in substance and to a very great extent in wording. I might also mention that Ceylon has been before us in this matter. In the year 1935 they set up a Board with somewhat similar functions, which has, I believe, benefited the whole industry in Ceylon. Certainly in the matter of coconuts, Ceylon is far ahead of us in as regards cultivation, marketing and manufacture.

I do not propose to take the time of the House by recapitulating the functions of the proposed committee; they will be found in clause 9 of the Bill. I should, however, like to explain that it was our intention originally to bring coir, coir yarn and coir manufactures within the scope of this committee. This proposal met with strenuous opposition from the Government and the Chambers of Commerce in the State of Travancore, which is the principal centre of the coir industry. We are very anxious to have the co-operation of Travancore in the work of this committee for the reason that it has the second biggest acreage in coconuts in India and is the principal centre of the crushing industry in India. So out of deference to their very strongly held views in this matter we have decided to omit coir from the scope of the committee. Their wish was that coir should be dealt with, if at all, in some other committee which might perhaps deal with fibres of that kind,—a committee on which they would naturally expect, in view of their great interest in the matter, to have a higher representation than on a more general committee such as is proposed in our Bill.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: Did the mercantile community also oppose it?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: Yes, they did.

Coming now to the proposed composition of the committee, I should perhaps say that coconuts are grown commercially in Madras, Travancore, Mysore, Cochin, Bengal, Orissa and Bombay, in that order of importance; and on the commercial side they are crushed in Travancore, Bombay, Cochin, Sind and Madras,—again in the order given. Counting representation of every kind, Honourable Members will find that the committee can be distributed in the following way,—Two members from the Central Government, nine from the provinces concerned and nine from the States concerned; or, to look at it again in another way, Honourable Members will find that its number of 20 includes nine to represent the growers, six to represent manufacturers and five to represent the Governments,—and in that last five we hope to have some technical people at least, probably Directors of Agriculture. So the growers will have nine, manufacturers six and Government nominees (who, we hope, will include experts) five. We are anxious to keep the size of the committee small both for reasons of efficiency and of economy.

Mr. Muhammad Ashar Ali (Lucknow and Fyzabad Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): Is the Honourable Member referring to clause 4?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: Yes.

Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali: In sub-clause (f) only one person is to be appointed by the Central Government.

Mr. J. D. Tyson: Yes, but the Central Government also appoints the Chairman, who would be a member. So there are two.

Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali: There is none from the Central Assembly?

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I think the Honourable Member had better wait till the Mover has finished.

Mr. J. D. Tyson: The point I particularly wish to emphasise is that the distribution proposed in clause 4 reflects complete agreement among all the interests concerned, agreement not reached without a certain amount of travail but now wholeheartedly accepted. The intention is to set up the committee as soon as legislation is passed. The States are very keen on this committee and I think we can count on similar legislation being passed and put into effect in the States as soon as our Bill goes through.

Now, Sir, as regards finance, I venture to say that it is always desirable in setting up a committee of this kind to give it a regular and assured source of income. It is desirable in the interests of efficient planning, so that they may know what they have got to work on, and desirable also in the interest of execution of their plans. The Cotton Committee is financed by a cess on cotton consumed in the mills in India and by a duty on cotton exports; the Lac Cess Committee is financed by an export duty only. We propose, following in part the Cotton Act, to finance this committee with a cess on copra consumed in mills. The rate suggested is calculated to give the income we require with a margin for development. It works out to just over 1½ annas a maund, and I may say that this too has been accepted by all the Governments concerned.

I am asking for a select committee with a short date as both the Governments and the States concerned are in a hurry to have this committee, and I think that the quickest way of having the legislation passed through is to have a select committee with a short date to examine the Bill and recommend any changes that may be found necessary in a piece of legislation which is based largely on existing and successful precedents.

In conclusion, Sir, I would only say that coconut represents from time immemorial the mainstay of the people in the south-western coastal belt of India; and though it is to many of them practically the only source of their daily bread, the industry there has not been notable for any material progress or scientific development, and was before the war and the recent rise in prices in a most depressed state. With the higher prices now current there is a good chance to rehabilitate a very valuable industry. The coconut palm ought in fact to be a source of great wealth seeing that—to quote one writer on the subject—"every part of the tree is utilized in one manner or the other. Raw nuts and edible copra are important articles of food and the indispensable items of devine oblation, and the oil from the copra is utilized in cooking and in the making of vegetable ghee, soaps and toilet requisites". He might have added that the residue of the copra, when the oil has been extracted provides a valuable fertiliser, that the coconut has a war-time value as a source of glycerine for explosives, and, finally, that the "rare and refreshing fruit" of this tree has given to the English language one of its pithiest expressions,—“Which accounts for the milk in the coconut, if not for its hairy exterior”. Sir, I move.

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

“That the Bill to provide for the creation of a fund for the improvement and development of the cultivation, marketing and utilization of coconuts in India be referred to a Select Committee consisting of Mr. H. A. Sathar H. Essak Sait, Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali, Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra, Rai Bahadur Seth Bhagchand Soni, Sir F. E. James, Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi, Mr. Y. N. Sukthankar, and the Mover, with instructions to report on or before the 29th February, 1944, and that the number of Members whose presence shall be necessary to constitute a meeting of the Committee shall be five.”

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari (Tanjore *cum* Trichinopoly: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Mr. President. My object in rising is to ask the Mover of this motion for a few more particulars about this Bill. In fact, Sir, what he said about the

genesis of this Bill does not amount to anything more than what is to be found in the Statement of Objects and Reasons. I am afraid the House has been led to believe that the question of coconut is on a par with coffee, cotton, jute, rubber and the like. I think that is a fundamental misconception which I beg leave of the House to correct. The utility of coconuts, as the House knows, is largely due to the oil that is extracted from it, and the demand in the oil market does not really distinguish very much between coconut oil, groundnut oil, linseed oil, rape-seed oil, *muhua* oil and so on. After all today in this country the oil trade covers the whole lot of oils produced from out of the various oil seeds and coconut, and the question of the future of the coconut industry largely depends upon the control which the Government of India and the Provincial Governments and the States can have on oil seeds and the oil industry as a whole. It is a fundamental misconception to say that coconut growing and marketing is on a par with other commodities which the Government of India have, in collaboration with the Provinces and States, sought to control by means of committees like the one proposed in this Bill. I would like to ask the Honourable the Mover of this Bill if he expects to maintain the price of coconuts at a particular level at a time when the prices of groundnuts and the price of other oil seeds are dropping. Knowing something, as I do, about the oil trade in this country over the past 20 years, I am afraid that is not possible.

The Honourable the Mover of this Bill mentioned to the House that between the years 1935 and 1939 the price of coconuts had slumped. It slumped because the price of coconut oil has slumped. Why? Because of the serious competition from Ceylon for one thing and because the general oil seeds and oil prices all over the world had slumped.

Mr. J. D. Tyson: I do not wish to interrupt the Honourable Member, but evidently I did not make myself clear in this matter. I was not referring to *prices* between 1935 and 1937 but to a heavy and growing *import* of copra and coconut products from Ceylon.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: It is a distinction without a difference. Copra in Ceylon was cheaper than the copra which is produced in India. Naturally there being no ban on the importation of copra from Ceylon, copra from Ceylon came in and the plight of the coconut industry in India became very bad indeed. I do not think that the whole position could be covered merely by the constitution of the committee proposed in this Bill. I am not saying that the committee should not be constituted. I say that the committee must have a very much larger scope than what has been visualized in this Bill. Otherwise I cannot see how it is going to function effectively. It is therefore from that point of view I feel that it would have been of considerable assistance to this House if the Honourable the Mover of this Bill had taken us into confidence and told us more than the genesis of this Bill than what is contained in the Statement of Objects and Reasons. He should have told us all about the views of the various provinces and State Governments on this matter.

The price of copra can only be maintained at a particular level if the price of coconut oil can be maintained relatively at the same level. The price of coconut oil is dependent on other oils. The Honourable the Mover must be aware that today the largest consumers of oil in this country are the factories which are engaged in hydrogenation of oils. Their demand is growing. And it does not matter two hoots whether all they get is coconut oil, groundnut oil or some other oil. They can, by the chemical process through all oils pass in the process of hydrogenation, make all oils look alike, taste alike, smell alike and also reduce their calorific contents, if any, to one level. So coconut oil cannot be isolated and its future looked after by means of a committee. I think that is the first and chief lacuna in this Bill.

I would like the Honourable the Mover of this Bill to tell us how he proposes to circumvent the difficulty which inevitably will face any work that this committee undertakes. If as a result of increased coconut production the price of coconut oil comes down, the price of groundnut oil will go down, and if the

[Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari.]

price of groundnut oil goes down the price of other oils also goes down. Of course, we are now in a period when the oil market is bullish. But this state of things des not always stay. The oil market will slump sometime and consequently the price of coconut will also slump. Therefore, the committee which will encourage and perhaps control coconut growing should also include in its scope the growth of other oil seeds and fixation of their prices. Merely taking up one aspect of the coconut trade and saying that it corresponds to cotton, it corresponds to jute, it corresponds to coffee, it corresponds to tea and to rubber, I think, is telling this House a thing which is not true. I am not accusing the Honourable the Mover of any wilful intention of hiding the real facts, but I see from the very framework of this Bill that enough consideration has not been given to all aspects of the question and I cannot see how that lacuna can be adequately filled in while the Bill is in the process of investigation by a Select Committee.

Sir, I have no comments to make with regard to the format of the Bill. As the Honourable the Mover has said it is a copy of other Acts and experience of the Government of India probably supports them in copying the framework of these other Acts. I have not been briefed by any interests to oppose this motion of the Bill. But before I sit down I would like to ask this: What is going to be the policy of the Government of India in this matter? Do not look at it purely as a war need, after what the Honourable Member has said, coconut is very important from the point of view of glycerine, which commodity is a war necessity. But he forgets it is not coconut alone which produces glycerine. All oils do so when they go into the manufacture of soap. If it is merely a matter of obtaining glycerine it is again a matter of looking into all the oils. I think in trying to emphasise the importance of coconut he has lost sight of the other related facts. I firmly believe Sir, that control over the production and marketing and the fixation of prices for coconut and like products can be effective only if it takes into account all other oil producing commodities in this country. The Mover should also tell the House why there was intense opposition from producers and dealers in coir in Travancore. It would be a very interesting and revealing information.

Mr. Hoosainbhoj A. Lalljee (Bombay Central Division: Muhammadan Rural): I rise to support the Bill. I have very carefully listened to my friend from Madras, but I do feel that in introducing this Bill Government have done a thing which they ought to have done long ago. It is a very well known fact that the use of copra all over India is so vast that everything should be done to encourage the cultivation of this plant and to see that we get as much more copra as possible.

It was about 20 years ago (and my friend has not mentioned it) that the Kathiawar States realised that their people, as well as the people of Rajputana, were always short of copra and that they were paying large prices. In fact 15 years ago the Bhawanagar State spent lakhs of rupees and put down a plantation in Bhawanagar and Mowar, and today they are making no less than 3 to 4 lakhs of rupees for the State, besides helping the people of Rajputana, Cutch, Sind and other places where they are short of copra. Because of this coconut plantation you will find that in Mowar and other places quite a number of oil mills have sprung up, but I do not know whether my friend the Member in charge would like to get the cooperation of these oil mills in Kathiawar States. At the present moment they are producing very large quantities and very recently they have been sending the coconut oil right up to Delhi in large quantities where there is so much shortage at present. The coconut oil is really a sort of food. It is much better than the ground seed oil and the other oils. I quite agree with my friend from Madras that the price of the coconut oil will depend largely on the other oil-seed oils but I should like the other oil-seed oils to be regulated. We are doing nothing which is going against that. We ought to stop importation, if possible. But we ought not to rely on imported articles from Ceylon or other places.

My friend has said that vegetable oils are being prepared in the country. I wish they would be prepared more and more from the raw produce. If vegetable oils are produced from coconut oil, it is much better in quality as a food than other oils. Above all, it is also a well-known fact that so far as producing good soap goes—my friend is much more of an expert than myself. I believe he is an expert in the soap trade. I do not pretend to know anything about soap-making—as a businessman, who has been dealing with oils at times, I have found out that for manufacturing good soap, the coconut oil is the best oil that can be used in its manufacture, and we ought also to realise that hereafter the country must produce good soap: but a great deal depends upon the coconut oils as such.

As a lubricant, there is no doubt that it is one of the best. It is of course costlier than any other lubricant by about 25 per cent., but at the same time, Sir, we also want lubricants, without the necessity of importing large quantities of lubricants from outside—though we have been importing all sorts of mineral oils mixed with coconut from abroad and brought in in place of pure coconut oil. It is a fact, which any industrialist will tell you, that a large quantity of imported oil into this country as lubricants from abroad does contain, besides mineral oil, coconut oil and even sometimes castor oil. We are sending out seeds. Sometimes the coconuts are imported by the Foreign Companies not only from Ceylon but from other countries as well and they prepare and make mineral oils or lubricant oils for a large number of industries in this country.

I say that the move is in the right direction. The only thing that I wish the Government to provide is that they should see that cultivation is made all over India. India has got a lot of sea coast and this coconut grows well on the sea coast. The coconut plantation should be confined not only to the South but also towards the Bengal side, the Orissa side and in other places similarly situated.

With these words I support the motion.

Mr. H. A. Sathar H. Essak Sait (West Coast and Nilgiris: Muhammadan): I extend my wholehearted support to this measure. I come from a part of the country which produces the largest amount of coconut in the world. It has been stated that out of the 14 lakhs of acres under coconut cultivation in India, 18 lakhs acres are situated in that part of the country from which I come, that is the Malabar coast, comprising of the British District of Malabar and the Indian States of Cochin and Travancore.

This question of copra has a very painful history behind it, especially for the last 10 years. I certainly do not want to detain the House by going into the details of that history but I must remind the House that for the last ten years we on this side have been trying our best to get this government to take a sympathetic view of our difficulties and to help us by giving some protection to this produce which, as stated by my Honourable friend, is the mainstay of our people in that part of the country. We tried our best; we put questions and resolutions and cut motions were moved; but the Government was adamant. They somehow had a soft corner for the Ceylonese producers and they always stood up against any protection being granted to this industry; with the result that today when war needs our production they find that the production is not up to the mark. Had they been more alert in those days, probably there would not have been any need for them to face this difficulty. However, I am glad that my friend has realised the importance of copra even as a war measure, and he has come up with this measure. I agree with my friend, Mr. Krishnamachari, that he should not consider this question from the point of view of war needs alone. He must consider what the position of copra is going to be after this war is over. As stated by Mr. Krishnamachari the question is not only of helping the production of copra but we will have to face the question of what we will do with the increased production of a better variety of coconut that will come out as a result of this measure. As soon as the war is over, I am sure Ceylon will again begin to dump its subsidised copra in this country. What are we going to do for that? I agree with Mr. Krishnamachari that the committee that may be

[Mr. H. A. Sathar H. Essak Sait.]

appointed should have this question under its review and should have power to do whatever is necessary in the matter.

Then with regard to the other question raised by Mr. Krishnamachari, I too find it very difficult to reconcile myself with the view that coir and coir manufactures should be taken out of the purview of this committee. I do not see that my friend has given any reason—except this, that the Travancore and Cochin Governments wanted greater representation on this committee. I do not know why their demand for greater representation cannot be provided for, so that these important by-products may also be brought into the purview of this committee, and any benefit that may accrue from this measure may also come to these important manufactured by-products. But there is the other point also: If my Honourable friend submits to the pressure of the Travancore and Cochin Governments, what is to happen to my people in the district of Malabar? If an unnecessarily higher proportion of representation is given to the Travancore and Cochin states, and if they are allowed to exert undue pressure on the Central Government, my people in British Malabar and in South Canara will have to suffer. I, therefore, think that the Select Committee will have to go into this more carefully and see that the position is reversed, that is to say, that these manufactured by products. . . .

Dr. P. N. Banerjee (Calcutta Suburbs: Non-Muhammadan Urban): Coir is included.

Mr. H. A. Sathar H. Essak Sait: Yes, coir is included. There are certain other points but they are minor points, and because I am expected to be on the committee, I will not detain the House on those questions now. But I must call the attention of this House to one more difficulty in the Bill which I think is very important. When we come to the rule-making powers, which really give us an inkling as to what the Government expect this committee to do, it appears that the committee is merely to make rules for the appointment of officers, the emoluments of officers, pensions and such like. But so far as the main function of the committee is concerned, *viz.*, the improvement and development of the cultivation, marketing and utilization of coconuts in India, there is very little provided for. I want my Honourable friends to be careful to see that this does not become an official committee which provides for certain safe seats for officials and does nothing else. With these words I support the motion.

Mr. N. M. Joshi (Nominated Non-Official): Sir, I rise to support this measure. I have no doubt that if the Government of India passes this Bill and levy a cess and appoints a committee, it will lead to better cultivation and marketing and utilization of the coconut. But I want to make only a few remarks regarding the composition of the Central committee. Generally, whenever the Government of India introduces a measure of this kind for promoting the cultivation or marketing of certain articles, the Government of India take into consideration only the interests of the growers or of the industrialists. They forget all the time that an industry can only prosper if there are consumers for the articles of that industry and, as always, the Government of India on this occasion also have forgotten that no industry can prosper without consumers. I make that remark because in the composition of the Central committee there is no representation of the consumers. They have got representation of the growers, about which I shall have one more remark to make. There is representation of the industry. About that again, I shall offer a remark later. Then there is representation of the Governments of Travancore and Cochin and of other Governments; but I see no representation of the consumers on this committee at all. I would, therefore, suggest to the Government of India and to the Select Committee to give as much representation to the consumers of the articles of these industries as they have given to the growers and manufacturers. I feel that the consumers are of equal importance with the grower and the manufacturer put together. I would suggest that that should be provided and provided adequately. If the Government of India does not know how to get the consumers represented, for want of proper organisation, I would suggest that the Legislature which represents a fairly large body of consumers may be given representation. I am not suggesting that

that is a very proper method of representing the consumers, but if there is no other method available, the consumers may be represented by the Legislature: or I would make a better suggestion, that is, from the Trade Union movement in this country. It is a well organised movement consisting of individuals who are consumers, and, therefore, if representation is given to a body like the All-India Trade Union Congress for representing the interests of the consumers. . .

Dr. P. N. Banerjea: No, no.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: I am not suggesting that that is the best way but it is some way of securing representation of the consumers. . .

Dr. P. N. Banerjea: The Legislature is quite all right.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: All right; the Legislature then; I am not against it at all.

Then there is another remark which I want to make regarding the composition of the committee and that is that whenever Government thinks of either the growers of particular articles or the industry, they only think of one element, namely, the grower capitalist. Coconuts are not always grown by capitalists; I know that in India the coconut industry to some extent is still in the hands of small individual growers, but not entirely. But, Sir, in these modern times coconut growing is passing into the hands of capitalists and big coconut gardens are in the hands of capitalists and the cultivation is passing from the hands of small individual growers to the hands of big scale growers or capitalists. I, therefore, suggest to the Government of India they should provide for the representation of labour engaged as mere wage earners working under large growers of coconut. Similarly, when Government gives representation to the industry, they mean only giving representation to the capitalists in the industry. There again I say that industry consists not only of the capitalists; it consists of labour also. I would, therefore, suggest to the Government of India and to the Select Committee to provide by some means for the representation of labourers and workers who work in the growing of coconuts and also in the manufacture of the oil. If the Government of India want to find some organisation from which representatives of labour should be selected, I again suggest to them the name of the All-India Trade Union Congress as the best organisation from which workers may be represented. The Government of India, if they had considered the functions of this Committee, would have immediately found that the suggestions that I have made are very necessary. This Committee is going to consider the question of fixing the maximum and minimum prices. In fixing such prices you cannot omit the interests of the consumers and, therefore, it is wrong for the Government of India to have omitted that interest. Similarly, the Committee will encourage the adoption of improved methods of cultivation. If improved methods of cultivation are to be adopted, they are sure to affect the interests of the wage earners engaged in coconut cultivation. I, therefore, feel that the suggestions which I have made are necessary and are justified, and I hope that the Government of India will accept them, and that the Select Committee will accept them. As I am not in the Select Committee, I shall request the Honourable Secretary of the Department to act as my advocate on that Committee.

Mr. E. L. C. Gwilt (Bombay: European): In supporting this motion there is just one point I would like to make and which is consistent with the principle that I have proposed in regard to agriculture on previous occasions. I hope now that opportunity presents itself to the Government they will avail themselves of it and safeguard the interests of the individual cultivator, not only now but also after the war. I have no doubt but that at the moment the coconut cultivator together with so many other cultivators in the country is making a substantial amount of money. I hope that Government will take steps to see when the war is finished that the coconut cultivators will continue to get a fair share for their produce. Mr. Joshi referred just now to the interests of labour, he touched quite briefly on the individual owner cultivator but left him isolated. I hope his interests will also be safeguarded if only for the reason that there is such a very large number of people who are individual cultivators and dependent for their living upon coconuts in south India.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh (Nagpur Division: Non-Muhammadan): The Government propose to frame by this measure a body on the lines of the Indian Central Cotton Committee. I know something about the Indian Central Cotton Committee, and if the same procedure as regards the composition of the Committee that will manage all these affairs is to be adopted, then I can very well say that this Act is not likely to benefit the growers. What is the position so far as the Indian Central Cotton Committee is concerned? If you look into its composition, how many persons representing cotton growers are on the Committee? As a matter of fact, there are very few. The persons who benefit are the traders, the persons who benefit are the bankers. I have seen what happens on the Central Cotton Committee. The same person, once he represents the growers, the same person, at another time represents the bankers, again at another time the co-operative societies and so on. And what is more? There are very few persons who represent the cotton growers. They are always outvoted and, therefore, their interests are not properly looked after. If this Coconut Committee also is to be constituted and it is to function properly, then it is very necessary that the number of persons representing the coconut growers should be larger; if anything, their number should outweigh the banker, the trader and the consumer put together. I hope these suggestions will be borne in mind by the Select Committee.

Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali: I rise to support the motion for reference to Select Committee. It is a matter of gratification to find in the Statement of Objects and Reasons, "Even before the outbreak of the present war the supply of coconuts and coconut products from indigenous sources was insufficient to meet Indian's growing requirements". I am glad that it has dawned on the Government of India that those things which were imported from outside for such a long time should no more come into India and that production should be made of these things in India itself. It has dawned, though very late, but, of course, after all, better late than never. Whether it be the Central Cotton Committee or any other committee which is set up by this House, and whatever the rules and regulations framed by this House, I find that this House is very seldom represented on these committees. I find on the Central Cotton Committee there is only one member from the Council of State but none from this House. I do not know why. Mr. Deshmukh has just now said that representation is given to traders and to others, but, as Mr. Joshi says, the consumers are not represented at all. Again, in the composition of the proposed committee I do not find anything in the rules except that the Central Government will nominate one person; otherwise, there is no representation at all from the public on this Committee. I would request Members of this House to rise in a body and to ask Government to remove this very grave and serious defect on these committees. I do not see why Government should be so suspicious of Members of this Assembly and not give them any representation at all on such committees on behalf of consumers, and even on behalf of growers as Mr. Deshmukh has just now said. The Legislature represents all the interests and not to give any representation to the Legislature ought to be considered a very serious defect in the constitution of these committees. I want to ask the Mover of this motion why is it that only one member from the Central Government will be nominated and why no representation is given to the Assembly and the Central Legislature. With these words, I support the motion.

Sir F. E. James (Madras: European): I support the motion. The proposed Board is another useful example of the kind of federal statutory body which, in various directions, has proved to be very useful in this country. I have first hand experience of the value of such a body in the case of products grown in British India and the Indian States such as coffee, rubber and tea in South India. My Honourable friend, Mr. Essak Sait, probably confused the rule-making powers with the functions of the Board. If he will look at the clause dealing with the functions of the committee, he will see that they cover a very wide sphere of activities. The rules themselves merely provide for the actual machinery of the work of the Board.

I admire the persistence of my friend Mr. Joshi who is anxious to secure the representation of labour on these bodies. He is also anxious to secure the representation of the consumer. He did not say consumer of what?

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Consumer of oil, copra.

Sir F. E. James: The coconut industry produces a good many things, oil, copra, milk, food, medicine, coir yarn and so on and it will be difficult to have on the Board consumers of all these separate products. But in any case, the main consumers of the coconut are the producers, and we have already provided for a very large representation of them on the Board. He suggested that the Trade Union Congress was the proper body for providing the representation of the consumer. I venture to differ, but in any case it should be remembered that this body is a federal body and I do not know whether the activities of the Trade Union Congress cover the Indian States. We must bear that in mind. That is also the objection to the representation of the consumers by representatives from this Legislature, because this Legislature only covers British India and if we were to provide in this Bill for representation of Members from the Legislature we should immediately have requests from the legislatures of the Indian States concerned for representation also, and the result would be a body which would be unwieldy. I think the interests of the consumers as such will be safeguarded by the representatives of the Governments of the States and the Provinces and the Centre.

An Honourable Member: Not necessarily.

Sir F. E. James: The only other point I would mention is the exclusion from the Bill, as now presented to the House, of any reference to the coir industry and coir yarn. I share the regret which has been expressed by Members of the House that this industry and its by-products are not included in the scope of the Bill. I know that the industry itself was anxious to be excluded because they feared that this measure implied some degree of control. That was a fundamental misunderstanding as to the purpose of the Committee. The Committee is not set up to control either production or the industry. It is set up essentially to improve the methods of production and although it is being financed by one section of the industry I am quite sure that the funds which are raised will be used to very good advantage in connection with the improvement of the yield. Although India is the largest coconut producer in the world, I believe the yield of the Indian coconut is the lowest in the world and it is in order to improve that yield and make India self-supporting in the matter of her produce that this committee is really being set up.

I have no time to tell the House of the great value of the work of the Coconut Board set up in Ceylon some years ago. In a sense, there was less need for such a Board in Ceylon where the coconut industry is organised on a plantation basis. And here let me assure my Honourable friend, Mr. Joshi, that there are no capitalists as such engaged in producing coconuts in this country. If the experience of Ceylon is anything to go by, I am perfectly certain that this committee which is to be set up under this Bill will mark the turning point in the attitude of the Governments concerned towards one of India's greatest productive industries, the coconut industry.

Mr. J. D. Tyson: In the first place, I should like to thank this Honourable House for the reception which it has given to this measure which, I am perfectly sure, will prove a beneficial one for the coconut industry and the coconut growers in the various parts of India.

I will now refer very briefly to one or two points that have been raised. My friend, Mr. Krishnamachari, raised certain points which I shall certainly study when a transcript of his speech becomes available to me. I gather that he does not oppose the Bill. I think his feeling is that it does not go far enough. I am not sure whether he complains that we are going to control the industry, because there is a reference under the head of 'Functions of the Committee' to the recommendation of maximum and minimum prices to be fixed for copra. There is no question of controlling the industry. The Committee will only advise on maximum and minimum prices. I think perhaps my friend complains that we are not going far enough in the matter of controlling

[Mr. J. D. Tyson.]

the industry. I would only say that this is a beginning. We know very little about the industry at the moment. When a report was made in 1934, one of the things that came out in that report was the difficulty of obtaining any real statistics: and I feel sure that the setting up of this committee will be a step towards finding out much about the industry and the ways in which protection can be given, if a case can be made out to protect the industry in India.

I should also like to correct any impression that I have brought this measure forward simply as a war measure. I have mentioned the fact that the war has brought home to us the need for such a measure. My only reason for mentioning the war in this connection, however, was to explain the urgency of doing something now. But quite definitely our hope is that this Bill, besides meeting the immediate emergency by stepping up the production of coconuts, will also do a great deal in the long run to rehabilitate the industry as a whole.

As regards the exclusion of coir and its derivatives from the scope of the Committee, I did say something before. I, too, regret that it has

1 P.M. been omitted, but the attitude of the trade and of the Government of Travancore was that coir is very much their concern and if they are going to have coir looked after by a Committee, they would like to have a Committee devoted to coir itself, on which they would have a voice corresponding to the size of their commitments in coir. They did not wish to have it dealt with by a Committee of this kind which is going to have a wider purview and therefore draws on a much wider circle for its membership. I think that the Honourable Member, Sir Frederick James, was right in his belief that they have misunderstood to some extent the object and powers of the Committee. But I would repeat that we are very anxious to have Travancore in the Committee. As I have said already, they are second only to Madras by a very narrow margin in the matter of acreage and the crushing industry is located more in Travancore than all the rest of India put together. We should not like to set up this Committee without them. We believe that when we have got the Committee set up and going, they will in time see the advantage of coming in even as regards coir.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee: Its scope may be widened later on.

Mr. J. D. Tyson: That is what we would hope.

What I have said about our hoping for progress not only as a war measure but in future, for the industry as a whole, covers really one of the points made both by Mr. Gwilt and by Mr. Essak Sait.

As regards the representation of the consumer, it is very difficult to find a way in which the consumer can be put in. As Sir Frederick James has pointed out, the principal consumer is the grower himself. He consumes the contents of the coconut. Then, the Mills are the consumers of that part which comes forward as copra. There is also the difficulty that this will in a way be a Federal body, but it is a point that we shall have to consider in the Select Committee.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: What about labour?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: Mr. Joshi asks about labour. That will also be considered in the Select Committee. My Honourable friend, Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra, asked what the total consumption of copra in mills in India is. The only figure that I have got is 163,000 tons but I give it with some diffidence. This, however, is the figure which we used in trying to consider what we might expect from the cess at the rate which we have proposed. But the capacity is probably at least double that.

Well, Sir, I think I have answered, at least in a preliminary way, the points that have been made. It only remains for me to thank the House once again for the reception accorded to the measure.

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

"That the Bill to provide for the creation of a fund for the improvement and development of the cultivation, marketing and utilization of coconuts in India be referred to a

Select Committee consisting of Mr. H. A. Sathar H. Essak Sait, Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali, Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra, Rai Bahadur Seth Bhagchand Soni, Sir F. E. James, Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi, Mr. Y. N. Sukthankar, and the Mover, with instructions to report on or before the 29th February, 1944, and that the number of Members whose presence shall be necessary to constitute a meeting of the Committee shall be five."

The motion was adopted.

THE CANTONMENTS (AMENDMENT) BILL.

Mr. C. M. G. Ogilvie (Secretary, Defence Department): Sir, I move:

"That the Bill further to amend the Cantonments Act, 1924, be referred to a Select Committee consisting of Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang, Nawab Siddique Ali Khan, Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh, Mr. Hooseinbhoj A. Lalljee, Mr. C. P. Lawson, Sir Ratanji Dinshaw Dalal and the Mover, with instructions to report on or before the 3rd March, 1944, and that the number of members whose presence shall be necessary to constitute a meeting of the Committee shall be five."

The object of these amendments has been briefly described in the Statement of Objects and Reasons and it is perhaps not necessary for me at this stage to go very deeply into them. They are, in the main, questions of detail—in some cases very important details—connected with a wide area of the field of cantonment administration. The first two amendments to sections 3 and 15 are rendered necessary by the altered circumstances caused by the war. Others are due to faults and lacunæ which have been detected during the course of administration. The remaining section 3 is perhaps the most important as it seeks to show that in the new cantonments, of which there are now several, there shall be no clash of local authorities. It holds it to be wrong that local authorities should be able to exercise similar powers within the same area, and the proper authority to exercise those powers should be the Cantonment Board. On the other hand, as drafted, the section does not exclude the operation of provincial local authorities entirely as it merely allows Government to state by notification which of them it does not wish to apply. The amendment to section 15 has also been rendered necessary by the war and it is considered that the circumstances which have already caused Government, with the consent of Provincial Governments, to extend the life of Cantonment Boards by a year will not come to an end within that time, but the same difficulties, which we now experience will go on until the end of the war. The amendment to section 28 is due to a decision of a Subordinate Court that an Honorary Magistrate is a civil servant of the Crown and the idea of the Government is to make it clear that that is not so. The amendment to section 31 allows the Government to appoint a provincial judicial officer to carry out the duties of arbitration in election petitions. At present this is done by the President of the Board, and he is normally not a person with legal or judicial experience and is also himself a member of the Board. It is thought, therefore, better that these petitions which often embrace fairly intricate questions of fact and also of law should be decided by competent judicial authority. Section 126 has been the subject of conflicting decisions of two High Courts. It is desired to make it clear that in the case of a building becoming ruinous or dangerous, the Board may have power to order the owner to remove it if he sees fit, or in the alternative to repair it. All these questions which I have briefly indicated are matters requiring detailed consideration and Government has therefore decided to ask the House to agree to the appointment of a Select Committee to consider them. Sir, I move.

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

"That the Bill further to amend the Cantonments Act, 1924, be referred to a Select Committee consisting of Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang, Nawab Siddique Ali Khan, Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh, Mr. Hooseinbhoj A. Lalljee, Mr. C. P. Lawson, Sir Ratanji Dinshaw Dalal and the Mover, with instructions to report on or before the 3rd March, 1944, and that the number of members whose presence shall be necessary to constitute a meeting of the Committee shall be five."

The motion was adopted.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

DILATORY TACTICS OF GOVERNMENT IN ENFORCING THE RECIPROCITY ACT.

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare (Member for Indians Overseas): Sir, I understand that my Honourable friend, Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh, is not anxious to move his motion. I can give a further assurance to this House that the Government of India are doing their best in this matter and will continue to do all that they can in securing a satisfactory result. Negotiations are going on between the Governments concerned; and nothing will be lost, but something may be gained if this motion is not moved.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh (Nagpur Division: Non-Muhammadan): In view of the statement made and the assurance which that statement carries, I do not wish to move the adjournment motion.

STATEMENT OF BUSINESS.

The Honourable Sir Sultan Ahmed (Leader of the House): Sir, I have to inform you that there is no official business for tomorrow, and I would, therefore, request you to cancel the sitting for tomorrow. This matter has also been mentioned to Leaders of Parties.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Under the circumstances, there will be no meeting of the Assembly tomorrow. The answers to questions set down for tomorrow will be printed in the usual course. The Assembly will adjourn till Monday next.

The Assembly then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Monday, the 14th February, 1944.