

Wednesday, 15th November, 1944

COUNCIL OF STATE DEBATES

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

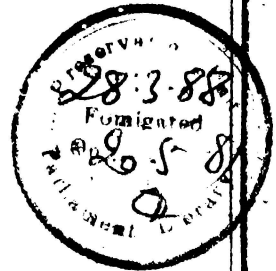
VOLUME II, 1944

(8th to 21st November, 1944)

SEVENTEENTH SESSION

OF THE

FOURTH COUNCIL OF STATE, 1944



PUBLISHED BY THE MANAGER OF PUBLICATIONS, DELHI.
PRINTED BY THE MANAGER, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PRESS, NEW DELHI
1945

CONTENTS

	PAGES.		
Monday, 8th November, 1944—		Wednesday, 15th November, 1944—	
Members Sworn	1	Questions and Answers	157—164
Questions and Answers	1—13	Motion <i>re</i> Food situation— <i>Continued</i>	165—207
Notices of Motions for Adjournment— Disallowed	13—16	Thursday, 16th November, 1944—	
Information promised in reply to questions laid on the table	16—19	Members Sworn	21
Statements, etc., laid on the table	19—35	Questions and Answers	209—21
Advisory Board of Archaeology	35—38	Bills passed by the Legislative As- sembly laid on the table	229
Message from His Excellency the Governor General	36	Resolution <i>re</i> Rights of Indians do- micated in Dominions, Colonies, etc.— <i>Continued</i> —Adopted	229—236
Committee of Petitions	36	Resolution <i>re</i> Recruitment of offi- cers for civil administration dur- ing the war—Negatived	236—253
Congratulations to recipients of Honours	37	Resolution <i>re</i> North Bihar epidemic—Adopted	253—260
Governor General's Assent to Bills <i>Death of the Honourable Mr. Kumarsankar Ray Chaudhury</i>	37—38	Friday, 17th November, 1944—	
Statement of Business	39	Questions and Answers	261—271
Thursday, 9th November, 1944—		Short Notice Question and Answer	271
Members Sworn	41	Statements, etc., laid on the table	271—278
Questions and Answers	41—46	Standing Committee for the Depart- ment of Industries and Civil Sup- plies	278
Resolution <i>re</i> Temporary withhold- ing of a part of the pay of all persons in military service— Withdrawn	46—53	Motion <i>re</i> Position of India s in South Africa—Adopted	279—283
Resolution <i>re</i> Coal situation— Negatived	54—71	Statement of Business	303—304
Resolution <i>re</i> Placing of all Special Tribunals under the control of High Courts or of a neutral De- partment—Withdrawn	72—75	Monday, 20th November, 1944—	
Resolution <i>re</i> Rights of Indians do- micated in Dominions, Colonies, etc.— <i>To be continued</i>	75—79	Questions and Answers	305—315
Statement of Business	79	Short Notice Question and Answer	315—316
Monday, 13th November, 1944—		Statement, etc., laid on the table	316
Bill passed by the Legislative As- sembly laid on the table	81	Indian Patents and Designs (Tem- porary Amendment) Bill, 1944— Considered and passed	316
Resolution <i>re</i> Industrial Commis- sion to review existing industrial situation, etc.—Negatived	81—105	Coffee Market Expansion (Second Amendment) Bill, 1944—Consi- dered and passed	316—317
Tuesday, 14th November, 1944—		Delhi Joint Water and Sewage Board (Amendment) Bill, 1944—Consi- dered and passed	317
Members Sworn	107	Public Debt (Central Government) Bill, 1944—Considered and passed	317—324
Questions and Answers	107—118	Tuesday, 21st November, 1944—	
Notice of Motion for Adjournment— Disallowed	118—120	Members Sworn	325
Bills passed by the Legislative As- sembly laid on the table	120	Questions and Answers	325—332
Standing Committee for the Depart- ment of Industries and Civil Sup- plies	120	Short Notice Question and Answer	332
Advisory Board of Archaeology	120	Information promised in reply to questions laid on the table	332—354
Motion <i>re</i> Food situatio— <i>To be continued</i>	120—156	Statements, etc., laid on the table	354—361
		Resolution <i>re</i> Permanent food and agriculture organisation of the United Nations—Adopted	361—378

COUNCIL OF STATE

Wednesday, 15th November, 1944

The Council met in the Council Chamber of the Council House at Eleven of the Clock, the Honourable the President in the Chair.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(The Honourable Raja Yuveraj Dutta Singh was absent when he was called by the Honourable the President to put his questions.)

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: The Honourable Member is not present, so I rule out the questions.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: May I put the questions: otherwise we are deprived of our right of putting supplementary questions.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: I understand he has been authorised to put the questions.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Unless he has authority he cannot do so. I have given the ruling several times, and we have a long debate this morning.

Yesterday I made a suggestion to Honourable Members, but many of the Members were absent yesterday, and therefore I repeat the suggestion today. I want Honourable Members to be as brief as possible. Through the courtesy of the Leader of the House we got a second day for the debate, which is today. There are many speakers today—I understand most of the important speakers have reserved their speeches till today—and everybody should have an opportunity to speak. It is impossible to finish the work today unless Honourable Members promise to be very brief. I said yesterday I would call upon the Honourable Food Member to reply to the debate at 4 P.M.

UNITED KINGDOM COMMERCIAL CORPORATION

52. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: Will Government state what steps have been taken, if any, to terminate the commercial activities of the United Kingdom Commercial Corporation, and to give to an Indian agency the operations now conducted by the U. K. C. C. in this country?

THE HONOURABLE MR. RAM CHANDRA: The Honourable Member's attention is invited to the reply given in this House on the 2nd March 1943 to part (a) of his question No. 76 regarding the duration of the activities of the United Kingdom Commercial Corporation. The Government of India do not consider that a new organisation need be set up to undertake the operations at present performed by the Corporation.

INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION CONFERENCE

53. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: (a) When was the International Civil Aviation Conference held or when is it likely to be held in the near future? Has India been invited to this Conference?

(b) Has India been given her own system of cabotage the right of a nation to carry its own air traffic within its own territory?

(c) What is the broad purpose of the International Conference; and what measures are under contemplation for implementing it, so far as the interests of India are concerned?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN: (a) An International Civil Aviation Conference is now in session in Chicago. It commenced on the 1st November 1944. The Government of India received an invitation to the Conference and its representatives are taking part in it.

(b) India always had, and continues to have, the right of reserving 'cabotage' traffic to her national aircraft.

[Sir Mahomed Usman.]

(c) I lay on the table an extract from the text of the United States Government's invitation which gives the objectives of the conference. The question of implementation will arise only after the Conference has concluded.

Extracts from letter No. 173, dated New Delhi, the 14th September 1944 from the personal Representative of the President of the United States to the Secretary to the Government of India in the External Affairs Department, New Delhi.

I. (a) The establishment of provisional world route arrangements by general agreement to be reached at the conference. These arrangements would form the basis for the prompt establishment of international air transport services by the appropriate countries.

(b) The countries participating in the conference would also be asked to agree to grant the landing and transit rights necessary for establishing the provisional route arrangements and air services referred to above.

It would be highly desirable if each delegation were sufficiently familiar with its country's plans for international air services to permit formulation of an international air transport pattern referred to in paragraphs (a) and (b) above.

II. The establishment of an interim council to act as the clearing house and advisory agency during the transitional period. It would receive and consider recommendations from each of the working committees referred to in item III. It would report upon desirable revisions in routes and services during the interim period subject to the approval of the countries served by these routes and services. It would maintain liaison with each of the participating countries. It would supervise studies and submit information to the interested governments concerning the development of air transport during the transitional period and would make recommendations to be considered at any subsequent international conference.

III. Agreement upon the principles to be followed in setting up a permanent international aeronautical body and a multilateral aviation convention dealing with the fields of air transport, air navigation and aviation technical subjects, and for the purpose of developing the details and making proposals for carrying into effect the principles so agreed.

The establishment of the following working committees which would be under the supervision of the interim council.

(a) A committee to follow developments relating to the establishment of the routes and services to be established under item I to co-relate traffic data, to study related problems, and to recommend desirable revisions in routes and services. This committee would also make studies and recommendations concerning the future pattern of these routes and services.

(b) A central technical committee with subordinate sub-committees which would work closely with the committee described in sub-paragraph (c) below to consider the whole field of technical matters including standards, procedures and minimum requirements, and to make recommendations for their application and adoption at the earliest practicable time.

(c) A committee to draft a proposal with respect to the constitution of a permanent international aeronautical body and a new multilateral aviation convention.

PROTEST AGAINST PRIZE BONDS

54. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH : (a) Will Government make a statement relating to the institution of Prize Bonds for raising money ; the purposes to which the money is devoted and the amount of collection so far made ?

(b) Have Government received any protests from religious leaders, including the Metropolitan, and other bodies and individuals with regard to this method of raising money ?

And do Government propose to abandon this method for raising money ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR CYRIL JONES : (a) As was mentioned by the Honourable the Finance Member in his budget Speech last February, Prize Bonds form part of Government's borrowing programme which has been undertaken to meet our budgetary deficits and to combat inflation. The Bonds have been on sale since the 15th January 1944, and their features have been fully explained in the various government announcements made from time to time. The total collections have so far amounted to about Rs. 315 lakhs.

(b) Government have received in all, three protests against the introduction of the Prize Bond scheme. They do not propose, at any rate for the present, to withdraw it.

REPRESENTATIVE OF INDIA ON THE ORGANISATION OF THE "UNIO"

55. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH : Will Government state whether India is also represented on the organisation of the "Unio" the United Nations Information Organisation, on which about 18 Governments are represented ? If so, who is the representative of India ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN: Yes, Mr. S. N. Dutt, Private Secretary to the High Commissioner for India in London.

SUPPLIES TO INDIAN PRISONERS OF WAR AND INTERNEES IN JAPANESE HANDS

56. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: (a) As announced by Mr. Anthony Eden, in the House of Commons on or about the 17th May last, are Government aware that by an agreement with the United States Government, arrangements for despatching supplies to prisoners of war and internees in Japanese hands *via* Vladivostok, would apply equally to British and American subjects?

(b) Since there are a large number of Indian prisoners of war, and internees in Japanese hands will Government state whether the arrangements for despatching supplies referred to in (a) above would apply equally to Indians as to British and American subjects?

THE HONOURABLE SIR FIROZ KHAN NOON: (a) Yes.

(b) Yes.

POSITION OF INDIA IN THE NET WORK OF WORLD AIR ROUTES PROPOSED IN THE CIVIL AERONAUTICS BOARD, WASHINGTON.

57. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: Are Government aware that world air routes radiating from Washington, New York and Chicago to Africa, India, Sweden, Russia, Finland, Spain, France, China and Japan were proposed to the Civil Aeronautics Board, Washington, on or about the 31st July last, in applications filed by the Pennsylvania Central Lines? What will be the position of India, and what will be her international obligations, if any, in this net work of world air routes, and her rights of control, and cabotage, if any, over the air traffic passing over or touching her territory?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN: The Government of India have no information with regard to specific applications filed with the Civil Aeronautics Board of the United States Government. The Board have however announced a list of international air routes which they consider desirable for post-war operation by United States air carriers. The air routes mentioned by the Honourable Member are included in that list.

As regards the second part of the question, the terms of operation of international services will form the subject of discussion at the International Civil Aviation Conference which is in session in Chicago from the 1st November 1944. In this connection the Honourable Member is referred to the statement of the Government of India's policy in the Press Communiqué, issued on the 27th July 1944.

PROPOSAL TO PLACE A CHRISTIAN LIBRARY IN EACH INDIAN VILLAGES

58. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: (a) Are Government aware that the Foreign Missions Conference, New York, has launched a proposal to place a Christian Library of 60 simple readers in each of India's 700,000 villages and that the books each set of which will cost slightly over three dollars, will have simple vocabularies and the contents will be related to the life of the Indian masses?

(b) Will Government make an enquiry into the above and take necessary steps to prevent foreign or indigenous Mission organisations from flooding the Indian villages with Christian literature, and other forms of proselytizing methods?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH: (a) and (b). No.

POST-WAR MEASURE OF RAILWAY TRAFFIC

59. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: (a) Is it a fact that as a post-war measure of railway traffic it is proposed to eliminate inter class and retain first, second and third classes only of passenger traffic on Indian railways?

(b) What modifications and improvements are contemplated in Railway service in post-war period?

THE HONOURABLE MR. D. D. WARREN: (a) No. The proposal under consideration is, firstly, to retain the inter and third classes, secondly, to amalgamate the first and second classes into an upper class and thirdly to provide airconditioned coaches wherever they may be sufficiently in demand.

(b) The modifications and the improvements in Railway service included in the plans for the post-war period have not yet been finalised.

PLANS TO INSTAL MORE RADIO STATIONS IN INDIA

60. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: Will Government state whether plans are under examination to instal ten more radio stations in India? If so, where the radio stations will be located and when?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN: The post-war development scheme of Broadcasting in India is under preparation and it is premature to give any indication of the number of stations or of the places where they would be located.

EXECUTION OF SPIES UNDER THE ENEMY AGENTS ORDINANCE

61. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: Will Government state the facts and circumstances so far as possible relating to the executions in October last year, of four enemy agents who were members of a party landed by a Japanese submarine, on the west coast of India; and the execution after trial under the Enemy Agents Ordinance of two more spies, who had entered India by a different route; as well as the case under the Enemy Agents Ordinance in which five persons who had been landed by parachute in India with money and equipment including wireless transmission sets?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH: The facts of all the three cases referred to were stated in two Press Communiqués which the Honourable Member has doubtless seen. The Honourable Member will appreciate that it would not be in the interest of security to disclose any further details.

POST-WAR ROAD DEVELOPMENT PLANS

62. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: Will Government make a statement regarding the question of Post-War Road Development plans, and their financial implications?

THE HONOURABLE MR. D. D. WARREN: The Honourable Member is probably aware that a conference of Chief Engineers of Provinces and major States was convened in December 1943 at Nagpur to consider ways and means of planning future road development. The report of the conference, often referred to as the Nagpur plan, is available in the Library. The report recommends classification of roads into four classes, *viz.*—

- (1) National highways.
- (2) Provincial highways.
- (3) District roads, and
- (4) Village roads,

and that the financial responsibility for the first should be that of the Centre both for construction and maintenance in return for the Centre having an effective voice in the use and control of these roads. The cost of the whole programme has been estimated to be 450 crores and that of maintenance at 16 crores a year.

This report has been accepted generally as a suitable working basis by the provinces upon whom devolves the responsibility for detailed planning. This work is now going on and there are a large number of financial and other issues to be settled before a detailed post-war plan can emerge. A suitable organisation for dealing with the post-war plan of reconstruction is now in course of being set up under the War Transport Department. Meanwhile the Chief Controller of Road Transport and Development and his colleagues have started touring the provinces for detailed discussions with the Provincial Governments.

MEMORANDUM FROM THE REFUGEE GOVERNMENT OF BURMA

63. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: Is it a fact that the refugee Government of Burma sent a memorandum last summer to the Government of India containing outstanding issues on which agreement was to be reached between the two countries? If so, do Government propose to publish the memorandum together with other connected papers in order to elicit public opinion before final decisions are reached?

THE HONOURABLE MR. R. N. BANERJEE: Certain proposals of this kind have been received from the Government of Burma. The Government of India have placed them confidentially before the Standing Emigration Committee and representatives of Indian interests in Burma and obtained their views. No further publication or discussion of these proposals at this stage will be in the public interest.

SUBVENTION FOR NORTH-WEST FRONTIER PROVINCE

64. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: Will Government state whether there is a proposal to raise the annual subvention of one crore of rupees, which the N.-W. F. Province receives from the Central Government? If so, why should not the Frontier Province be made self-supporting; and why should not the rest of India be made to pay for the maintenance of the Provincial Government?

THE HONOURABLE SIR CYRIL JONES: The Government of India are aware that the Government of the North-West Frontier Province regard their existing subvention of Rs. 1 crore per annum as inadequate to their needs, and have the matter under their consideration. As regards the latter part of the question, I would refer the Honourable Member to the relevant portions of the Niemeyer Report.

EXPANSION OF POST AND TELEGRAPH FACILITIES IN POST-WAR PERIOD

65. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: Will Government state the main outlines of the scheme for the expansion of postal and telegraph facilities planned by Government in post-war period, for urban and rural services?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN: The post-war plans of the Posts and Telegraphs Department are under preparation and it is not possible to indicate at this stage what their final shape will be. The following are the broad outlines on which the plans are being prepared and the idea is to spread the scheme over a period of 15 years.

1. *Post Offices.*—It is proposed to increase the number of urban post offices by about 30 per cent and to increase the number and frequency of despatches and deliveries of mails in urban areas, especially in big cities. Full advantage will also be taken in the post-war period of air services for the transmission of mails.

So far as rural areas are concerned, we hope to provide a post office for every village with a population of 2,000 and over and to increase the frequency of deliveries in other villages. In addition, an attempt will be made to provide at least one delivery a week for every village having a population of 500 and over.

2. *Telegraph.*—It is proposed to provide telegraph facilities at every place where the population is 5,000 and over.

3. *Telephone.*—The aim is to provide ultimately a telephone exchange at every town with a population of 50,000 and over and to link all the telephone exchanges to the trunk system.

PRISONERS OF WAR AT GOTHENBURG

66. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: Will Government state the number of Indian troops included in the exchange of Allied repatriates from Germany, and prisoners of war at Gothenburg, or Gothenzurg in September?

THE HONOURABLE SIR FIROZ KHAN NOON: 97 Indian Army personnel and 28 Indian Merchant Seamen.

INDIAN PRISONERS OF WAR RELEASED IN BULGARIA

67. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: Is it a fact that a party of 342 Allied airmen including 29 Britons and 305 Americans, who had been held as prisoners of war in Bulgaria were released following her declaration of war on Germany; and if so, how many of them were Indians?

THE HONOURABLE SIR FIROZ KHAN NOON: Yes. There were no Indians among them.

SINKING OF THE "CORMORANT" IN THE GANGES

68. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: Will Government make a full statement relating to the circumstances attending the sinking of the "Cormorant" the double decker passenger steamer belonging to the Oudh and Tirhut State Railway in the Ganges at Paleza Ghat (Bihar) in September, 1944, and the cause of the mishap, the number of casualties and the steps taken to save life and property?

THE HONOURABLE MR. D. D. WARREN: In view of the length of the statement for which the Honourable Member has asked, I will, Sir, with your permission and in order to save the time of the House, lay the statement on the table.

Statement

On the 12th September 1944, the Steamer Cormorant was proceeding along the usual main channel from Dighaghat to Palezaghat. When opposite the Paleza village and about 800 ft. from the northern bank of the Ganges the bow of the steamer suddenly struck against some hard substance—supposed to be a submerged tree trunk—there was a severe bump, and suspecting that the Steamer had collided with some submerged object, the Commander ordered the Steamer to be stopped and backed towards the bank and, at the same time, sounded the danger whistle. The steamer was moved backward to the northern bank which it not only touched, but the stern penetrated to a distance of about 6 to 10 ft. into the bank. While the steamer was being backed all the pumps had been put into action to empty it of any river water that had got in. It remained in contact with the bank for about 20 minutes during which period the lower deck was on the same level as the bank. This enabled the passengers to land without difficulty. The fact that all the 37 lifebuoys which were on the steamer were subsequently found intact shows that the passengers found no need to use them, and there was no occasion for any one to jump into the stream. The country boats in the vicinity immediately came to the rescue and were wedged in between the steamer and the bank thus enabling all remaining passengers to get ashore safely. They were later picked up by other Railway steamers and taken on to Palezaghat.

The danger whistle was heard both at Palezaghat and Dighaghat and the Railway, the Police and the Medical staff quickly arrived on the scene and rendered all possible assistance. The only loss of life which has so far been reported was that of a girl of about six years. The girl got separated from her mother in the confusion which followed the accident and fell into the river. The fact that no one has so far come forward to enquire about any missing friend or relation, although several passengers subsequently came in search of their belongings amongst the salvaged property, also goes to show that no one other than the child mentioned above lost life.

S. S. Cormorant had a carrying capacity of 1,000 and, at the time of the accident, was carrying about 600 passengers.

On the 18th September 1944, a joint enquiry was held by a Committee which consisted of the Divisional Traffic Superintendent, the Divisional Loco. Officer and the Resident Engineer, Gorakhpur. The enquiry was also attended by the Superintendent, Government Railway Police, Samastipur, and the Sub-Divisional Officer, Chapra. The enquiry committee, after inspecting the site of the occurrence and examining a number of witnesses, came to the conclusion that the accident was not due to any rash or negligent act on the part of the Commander.

It is reported that there are some submerged tree trunks in the bed of the river. The channel is swept every now and then and dangerous spots are buoyed. These submerged tree trunks gradually roll on, and if the water level is high it is difficult to locate them. There was no such obstruction in the route when the previous steamer had passed. It is believed that the force of the current moved the tree trunk from its position during the interval between the passing of the previous steamer and the arrival of the Cormorant.

In these circumstances, Government are satisfied that the occurrence was an accident and no one could be held responsible for it.

OPERATION OF U. K. C. C. IN INDIA

69. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: Will Government state why they have taken no steps to put a stop to the operation of the U. K. C. C. in India?

THE HONOURABLE MR. RAM CHANDRA: The Honourable Member's attention is invited to the reply given in this House on the 2nd March, 1948 to part (a) of his question No. 76, regarding the duration of the activities of the United Kingdom Commercial Corporation.

WASTAGE OF WHEAT PRODUCT IN CALCUTTA

70. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: Is it a fact that over 75,000 maunds of *Atta* and 71,000 maunds of flour which were considered unfit for human consumption are now lying with Government stockists in Calcutta? If so, have Government ascertained why this valuable food was allowed to rot? Who is responsible for this wastage?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: Yes. This quantity represents 2 per cent. of the turnover in 8 months, since the commencement of rationing in Calcutta, on 31st January 1944, the turnover being approximately 1,60,000 tons. Reconditioning of these stocks was not found to be practicable and it was accordingly decided to sell them to starch makers, and jute mills for the manufacture of sizing—this being the normal trade method of disposing of condemned *atta* and flour. A certain amount of deterioration is incidental to storage on a large scale. Steps are being taken by the Bengal Government to improve their storage arrangements, so that losses by deterioration may be reduced further.

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE VICEROY AND MR. GANDHI

71. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: (a) Is it a fact that Government of India publication "Correspondence with Mr. Gandhi" contains only a portion of the correspondence that passed between Gandhi Jee and the Viceroy and other officials of the Government of India and a bulk of correspondence still remains unpublished?

(b) Is it a fact that a Bombay publisher had undertaken publication of the whole correspondence and had sought permission of Government but Government have refused to grant it? If so, why?

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. CONRAN-SMITH: (a) The publication in question contains all the important correspondence that passed between Mr. Gandhi and His Excellency the Viceroy or the Government of India. There were some other letters which it was not thought necessary to publish but I believe that most of them also have appeared in the newspapers.

(b) Government have not refused permission. Certain publishers have been informed in response to enquiries that the copy-right of those letters which were published in the official pamphlet remains with Government.

BRETTON WOODS CONFERENCE

72. THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH: Will Government lay on the table the full report of what happened at the Bretton Woods Conference of the United and Associated Nations which was attended by the nominees of the Government of India?

THE HONOURABLE SIR CYRIL JONES: The results of the Bretton Woods Monetary Conference have been embodied in a document called the "Final Act" two copies of which have been placed in the Library of the House. The Report of the Indian Delegation to the Conference is not yet in the hands of Government.

U. N. R. R. A. AND INDIA

73. **THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH:** (a) Is it a fact that the plans of the U. N. R. R. A. do not include provision for aid in connection with the food shortage in India?

(b) Is not the food shortage in India mainly due to war exigencies; and if so, is not India entitled under the constitution of the U. N. R. R. A. to receive food supplies?

(c) Have Government pressed the claims for food supply before the U. N. R. R. A. If so, with what result?

THE HONOURABLE MR. RAM CHANDRA: (a) The Honourable Member's attention is invited to the answer given to his question No. 10 on the 8th November, 1944. Famine stricken areas in India may be included in the scope of the U. N. R. R. A.'s activities.

(b) The answer to the first part is in the affirmative. As regards the second part, the Combined Food Board, Washington is the authority for allocating food supplies to India as well as those countries receiving relief from the U. N. R. R. A.

(c) No, Sir. The second part does not arise.

LEND-LEASE AGREEMENT BETWEEN CANADA AND INDIA

74. **THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH:** Has India entered into any lend-lease agreement with Canada? If so, what are the main features of the agreement?

THE HONOURABLE SIR CYRIL JONES: It is believed that the agreement has by now been actually signed. I am seeking confirmation of this and will, on receiving confirmation, lay a copy of the agreement on the table.

LEND-LEASE AGREEMENT BETWEEN CANADA AND INDIA

75. **THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH:** (a) Have Government entered into or are about to enter into a lend-lease agreement with Canada; if so, will Government state the main provisions of the agreement with special reference to its economic and financial implications?

(b) What will be the position of the manufacture of locomotives, wagons, and the development of heavy industries in India with reference to this agreement?

(c) Will Government give an undertaking that no such agreement will be valid and operative without giving full publicity to its terms and without obtaining beforehand the approval of the Central Legislature?

(d) If the agreement has already been entered into, will Government lay a copy of it on the table? If not, why not?

THE HONOURABLE SIR CYRIL JONES: (a) and (d) I invite the Honourable Member's attention to my reply to his Question No. 74 given today.

(b) Capital goods such as locomotives and wagons will not be provided under the agreement and the position in respect of them will therefore not be affected by the agreement.

(c) I regret that no such undertaking can be given.

LOSS OF FRANCHISE QUALIFICATIONS OF SOLDIERS ON ACTIVE SERVICE

76. **THE HONOURABLE RAJA YUVERAJ DUTTA SINGH:** Are Government aware that there is a number of officers, and men both Indian and British domiciled or resident in India who are deprived of their right to vote at elections in India because of the loss of their residential qualifications through absence from home on active service? What steps have Government taken or propose to take to ensure that they are not deprived of their franchise by reason of their absence from home in the military service of His Majesty?

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN: The answer to the first part of the question is "yes". As regards the second part I am to inform the Honourable Member that the question is engaging the attention of the Government.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: (Education, Health and Lands Member): Sir, the Honourable Mr. Sen in his lucid speech has explained the procurement and distribution policy of the Government of India, its present and future aims and its final objective, to ascertain the nutritive needs of our growing population and to plan to provide a balanced diet.

I speak with some diffidence of our agricultural programme. Agriculture is a long-term business. A single crop experiment takes a year; the requirements of crops in the matter of irrigation and manure require time and money and leadership which is wanting in our 7 lakh villages. We have, however, worked out a programme which, if carried out in 15 years, promises to substantially increase both the cereals and the protective foods, such as milk, fish, eggs, vegetables, fruits, etc. Our Honourable friend Sir Gopalaswami Iyengar has taken upon himself to lay down the lines how a Land Utilisation Commission should proceed so that all the available land may be utilised by growing crops, trees, grass, etc.

Now coming to the situation which arose immediately after the war broke out, I must confess that we were without a Technical personnel and other equipment which was available in some of the Western countries.

I wish to acknowledge freely the debt we owe to our sturdy peasantry whose unremitting labours have enabled the country to feed itself and to a merciful providence for the bumper crop we harvested in the year 1943-1944. I have heard it said that the Grow More Food campaign has achieved little. I would do no more but to let the figures speak for themselves.

* In the immediate pre-war period the average acreage under rice in India was 73.8 million acres.

After one year of Grow More Food campaign the area under rice rose to nearly 75 million acres.

Last year 1943-44, the acreage was practically 80 million acres, *i.e.*, nearly $6\frac{1}{2}$ million acres over the immediately pre-war acreage of 73.8 million.

Take the case of the area under all the major foodgrains:

The total average acreage under all the major foodgrains in the 3 years before the war was about 195 million acres.

After one year of Grow More Food campaign the figure was 204.5 million acres and last year (1943-44) it was 206.3 million acres. Thus there is an increase of 6 per cent. of land under cultivation.

These figures relate to all those areas which report the statistics. There are some areas in India which do not report statistics of acreage and production, but the figures supplied are comparable with reference to the same tract in the pre-war period.

I may straightaway say that the increased production is primarily due to the bounties of Providence. No matter what we plan and project, agriculture in India depends on un-predictable and un-controllable weather conditions. The Honourable Mr. Sen and the Honourable Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru found some difficulty in reconciling production estimates with procurement figures. The fact is that $\frac{2}{3}$ ths of the population lives in the villages and has to meet its own consumption needs. The people in Bengal were without any carryover from the last crop, but from the new crop have met all their needs and now rice is finding its way into the market. I trust the need of the largest consuming population carrying some reserves would be recognised.

Regarding protective foods, there have been unprecedented demands on the resources of the country, but thanks to the efforts made particularly in respect of vegetables, there has been a considerable increase in the acreage under vegetable production. At a time when unprecedented demands arose, this country found itself cut off from all sources of vegetable seed supply from abroad. Thanks to our efforts, we are now producing all the vegetable seeds that we need in this country. There are numerous schemes running in all the provinces of the country, for the supply of vegetables to the Army, so that the weight of the supplies to the Army may be taken off from the civilian markets.

[Sir Jogendra Singh.]

Regarding fish, the country was badly prepared for developing its fish resources, but we have now got a number of schemes going in all the provinces. Arrangements are being made for the stocking of ponds with fry and fingerlings and we are making arrangements for the procurement of diesel engines which will be fitted in country-made crafts for the quick transport of fish along the coastal belt to the consuming centres from areas suitable for fishing. We have asked for a large measure of assistance in respect of cold storage accommodation at consuming centres. Our main difficulty is about the shortage of trained personnel. We have made arrangements for the training of personnel also. The effect of these measures will be visible in the course of time.

Regarding milk, we have a number of schemes under consideration. The problem of augmenting milk supply in the towns, as the House will realise, is not a very easy matter to handle. We are making arrangements for the importing of dairy machinery. Here again gradually we hope to ease the situation though it is extremely unlikely that during the war, we shall be able to say that we have completely met the demands of the situation. For some years we shall have to popularise the use of oil fats, and crush all the oil seed in the country itself to produce the fats.

I should like to mention that we are making attempts to procure about 1,700 tractors for the reclamation of waste land. I cannot with any confidence say when these tractors will arrive but we are doing our best to procure them as early as possible.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Equitable distribution among the Provinces, Sir?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: No: these are for special purposes. We have schemes in the U. P., etc. We have schemes in U. P., in Bombay and in certain other areas where by means of tractor ploughing under Government supervision and with expert staff deep rooted weeds will be controlled. This will, as the schemes develop, gradually bring large tracts under cultivation and they will lead to augmenting the food resources of the country permanently

The Honourable Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru asked as to the financial assistance which we have given to the provinces. I have not been able to put together detailed information, but I will lay it on the table as early as possible. We have been assisting in the shape of loans, grants from Central Revenues and grant from Cotton Fund for the following purposes:—

1. Irrigation facilities, *e.g.*, tube wells, tanks, wells, etc., and drainage schemes.
2. Land clearance and improvement.
3. Distribution of manures at concessional rates.
4. Encouragement of the production and utilisation of compost from village waste and town refuse.
5. Seed multiplication schemes.
6. Distribution of improved seeds at concessional rates.
7. Bonus to cultivators for growing food crops instead of cotton.
8. Other miscellaneous schemes, *e.g.*, opening of seed stores, construction of field embankment, etc.
9. Fish production schemes.

And so far we have assisted the Provinces by giving nearly 5½ crores of rupees.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: This information will be welcome but what I particularly asked for was information relating to the help given to the Provinces to compensate them for the loss incurred by them in the storage or sale of foodgrains.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: Storage is the concern of the Food Department.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: My question was not addressed in particular to your Department. It was addressed to the Government.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: I think we will be able to give you the information.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: You should wait till the Honourable the Food Member speaks.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: Pandit H. N. Kunzru rightly laid stress on processing millets to make them palatable to people not accustomed to their use. I had a *gur* cake made at the Food Laboratory, Kasauli, composed of roasted gram, groundnut and *gur*. It cost about Rs. 11 a maund and contained about 2,000 calories. I am now making experiments with mixtures of millets wheat and rice and *gur* to be made available in a form which would be readily acceptable to rice-eating people. I may say that food to feed our population was and is available. I also wish to say that I do not wish to depend on imports in the matter of food. India is in a position and can produce all the food that it needs within the country itself.

Take the problem of land and its development. Less than 1 acre per head of population is under cultivation and this one acre has to feed not only the cultivator himself but his bullocks and his cow. There is however urgent need to find industrial occupation for at least 80 per cent. of our population. In ancient India there was a balanced economy and the whole of the population did not depend on land. India has been wrongly called an agricultural country. It became purely agricultural with the advent of the machine age when our cottage industries died out. Take any village even now and you will find that the population is divided between agricultural workers and non-agricultural artisans. The proportion may be fixed roughly at 70 to 30 per cent. In old days every village was a self-governing economic unit and imported very little from outside; the women spun, the weaver wove, the village tanner cured the hides and the cobbler made them into shoes, the village artisans were engaged in manufacturing and catering for all the needs of the village. They shared with the village all that it produced. The wages were paid in kind. The commodities were cheap but the economy of the country rested more on barter than on money transactions. There was no paper money and the values were not at the mercy of money changers. My point is that Government is now preparing plans both for the development of agriculture and industry to improve the living standard.

Then our most important and urgent need is to improve the physical and mental health of our men, so that they could double the production and make the best use of opportunities.

We have with us to advise us on health matters experts who are now going round the provinces and will meet the Health Survey Committee next month and give it the advantage of their knowledge and their experience.

Their names are:—

Sir Weldon Dalrymple Champneys, Deputy Chief Medical Officer, British Ministry of Health;

Dr. Janet M. Vaughan, Member of the Goodenough Committee;

Prof. J. A. Ryle, Professor of Social Medicine, Oxford;

Dr. Joseph W. Mountin, Medical Director in the U. S. Public Health Service.

Dr. Henry F. Stgerist, Professor and Director, Institute of the History of Medicine, John Hopkins, Baltimore;

Dr. John Howard Lidgett Cumpston, Director General of Health in Australia.

I wish our newspapers devoted 3 to 4 columns a month to problems of health, education, agriculture and industry and secured contributions from those with knowledge of these subjects, and our Legislature devoted at least a day each to discuss problems of health, education and agriculture, not to condemn but to make constructive proposals to improve the living standard, to bring the

[Sir Jogendra Singh.]

day of self-government nearer, and to raise India, politically, economically and socially to a position of equality with the other countries of the world. Need I assure my friend Honourable Pandit H. N. Kunzru, who has travelled from one end of India to the other that we have a common objective and that we need thousands of unselfish workers inspired by a missionary spirit to preach the gospel of education and health and of making every clod productive.

*THE HONOURABLE SARDAR BAHADUR SIR SOBHA SINGH (Nominated Non-official): Mr. President, yesterday after listening to the Honourable Mr. Sen's speech, I must say that he has made a very good case of a bad case, rather a very bad case. He has tried to tell us that everything in the Food Department is being planned and planned well. I should like to start first with the basic plan on which the whole structure is based. There are only, Sir, four staple grains to be controlled in the basic plan, wheat, rice, gram and millet, Bajra and Jawar. The control on gram is entirely unnecessary as the supply is sufficient to meet the demand. The market at present in gram is glutted. Last year the price of gram was fixed at Rs. 7 while the market in India never went up more than Rs. 6-8-0 or 7. It is Rs. 5-4-0. The control on gram is entirely a waste and it is really harming the agriculturist instead of doing any good to the country and I will request the Government to remove the control on gram immediately—

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: It has already been removed.

THE HONOURABLE SARDAR BAHADUR SIR SOBHA SINGH: — and allow free movement of gram to deficit provinces. At present you have removed the control but you are allowing under central control to certain destinations.

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: The present arrangement is that there will be free trade in gram, but if gram is sent to the provinces which according to our information require certain quantities, then high priority will be given for movements of those quantities. There is free trade for the rest of the surplus.

THE HONOURABLE SARDAR BAHADUR SIR SOBHA SINGH: Last year the country has lost several lakhs of rupees by gram being spoiled either at the railway stations or at the destination because there was not sufficient demand for it. Also the control on pulses is also unnecessary. The supply of pulses throughout the country is sufficient to meet the demand of the country. To control things which are sufficient for the consumption of the population creates unnecessary hardship on one province or the other or on one district or the other. Like gram I request Government to allow free movement of pulses in the country.

Secondly, the programme of the Food Department about the procurement scheme also requires consideration and change. At present there is no thought out scheme of procurement. In one or two provinces there is compulsory procurement, in Bombay and the Central Provinces as far as I know, and in others there is no scheme at all. This is a half-hearted way of doing things. In one or two the Provincial Governments are not taking any interest and they are only taking the surplus which comes into the market. I think the trade should be allowed to function freely. Where restrictions come, the people begin to doubt and they think that there is a very serious shortage. Either prices go up or people do not like to part with their goods and the result is that the man who wants 10 maunds for his own consumption likes to keep 15. I request the Government to let trade take its course freely wherever it is possible and take the people into confidence. Without the confidence of the people at large no control can succeed. The difficulty in these controls either in the towns or in the villages is that the population at large is not co-operating as it should. Either they lack confidence or knowledge. I do not know what it is. But there is very little co-operation. Everybody likes to have as much as possible and the

result is that there is a shortage at one end and a surplus at the other. I think railways also are equally responsible for creating all this shortage as transport difficulties at every step come in the way. Regional controls also are bad. They are creating more difficulty than help. The idea of regional control was that prices should as far as possible be on a uniform level. There were 200,000 maunds of *gur* surplus in the United Provinces last year and the rate was from Rs. 4-8-0 to Rs. 5. Zamindars did not know what to do with this *gur* while in Delhi and just within 5 miles from Meerut District the price was Rs. 8-8-0 and Rs. 10 and in the Punjab also the rate was high. The result was that by the time Government prepared its scheme quite a good quantity was smuggled or had started changing hands and by the time Government allowed export of *gur* the price went up to Rs. 8-8-0. Neither the zamindar nor the actual consumer got the advantage. The whole profit was distributed amongst middlemen. They were changing hands by speculation or other ways and the result was when it reached the consumer the price was double or more than double.

I would like to congratulate Government on the success which sugar control has proved. That proves that if articles are controlled at the source of supply and manufacture as well as in distribution, control can be made a very good success. Sugar is one example of which Government should be proud. The success which the Food Department has achieved in the matter of sugar control is well merited.

Then, Sir, there are one or two legitimate grievances on the part of the country—I mean small areas like Delhi. We are sandwiched between the United Provinces and the Punjab, and for some things we have to depend on the U. P. and for others on the Punjab. Just now wheat in the Punjab is being sold at Rs. 8 or Rs. 7-8-0, and in Delhi the controlled price of wheat is a little less than Rs. 11. I think this price is very high compared with the price ruling in the Punjab and other nearby provinces. The quality is also very poor. I realise that one of the causes may be that the quality is affected by weather conditions and transport difficulties; it is possible that good wheat is spoiled in transit or on the roadside. But Government should take immediate steps to make available proper storage accommodation for foodgrains at appropriate places. The Food Department should take immediate steps in this direction. They have by now gained sufficient experience, and they know where the difficulty lies. They know where surplus foodgrains are available, and they should not lose any time in having storage godowns so that this difficulty does not arise again.

The Honourable Mr. Sen owes us an explanation on one point, and that is the transaction on which it is said that Government lost Rs. 50 to 60 lakhs—I mean the Nepal rice transaction. I hope that the Honourable Member Mr. Sen will enlighten the House on the point whether there is any truth in the allegation that the Government of India has lost, by negligence or failure to take prompt action, a sum of Rs. 50 to 60 lakhs.

I am sure that the efforts which the Food Department are making to render the country safe from any further calamities will succeed. But they will only succeed if they plan beforehand.

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL (Bombay: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, our colleague Mr. Sen presented in a very lucid speech yesterday what I should consider an objective picture of the food situation as it exists in the country today. The picture which he presented is to my mind still an incomplete picture, and he probably expects that this side of the House will add those colours and lines to the picture which will go some way to complete it. It is our business on this side to make an effort to—(An Honourable Member: Paint it.)—to paint it—or, I was going to say, to add some more lines which will go to make it a picture which will help the Government in finding food for our people.

First of all, we have been given some estimates of improved production. I very much wish that these figures were accurate. I have some experience in this matter, not in Bombay, but in Hyderabad, where

[Mr. G. S. Motilal.]

we have some agricultural lands; and the reports which we receive from patils and patwaris from year to year are of a nature which I should like to describe. They will say one year: "Thanks to Providence, the crop this year is *sawai*—25 per cent better." Another year they will say that it is 12 annas in the rupee, and another year it is 16 annas in the rupee, and another year it is 8 annas. I used to hear these reports being made to my grandfather, and after hearing these reports for some years, I wondered whether God made coins only in four-anna units and nothing more nor less, because it is either 8 annas or 12 annas or 16 annas or 20 annas; has He not made a *doani*. Why does He reduce or increase the crop always in units of four annas? That is the type of report more or less which Governments also receive from the revenue officers. A very distinguished civilian I was talking to about two years ago told me, when I said I was relying on Government figures relating to production, "Don't you attach importance to these figures. After all, I know; I was a district officer—and used to go round, take it from me the method of collecting these figures is really very crude." That is what he told me. The village officer just goes round and makes a report based on a rough-and-ready method of his own imagination. I do not say that it is very wrong. It may be right. It has not been tested. The accuracy of this method has not yet been tested as it should be from time to time. So, he told me, these figures are mere guesswork, and are not based on any test of accuracy carried out over many years. I suppose the crisis which came after the loss of Burma has awakened the Governments and they will now try to use some method which will give them more accurate figures of production of the land.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: May I give the Honourable Member a piece of information? We have had crop experiments carried out in the Punjab under controlled conditions, and I am glad to say that the figures supplied by the Revenue Department in the Punjab have been found very nearly accurate.

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL: When was this done?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: Last season.

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL: I am happy to learn that more scientific method has been used and that this will be recommended to other provinces, and I hope that they will also adopt the more scientific method of estimating crops.

Well, Sir, the real test is—how much food is available to the people of this country, and that is the problem we have to grapple with and solve. Even this morning when I turned over my papers I found a report of deaths of destitutes in Calcutta. Is that still continuing? Government of India has taken upon itself the responsibility of feeding Calcutta. It is distressing, to read day after day in the papers, as we have been doing recently, that deaths of destitutes are taking place in a modern city like Calcutta on account of starvation. In the hospitals it is not the medicine, but the food that has been given to them that has cured them of their disease and illness and put some life into them. Such is the press report.

Sir, I will now take one point of general interest, and then I shall relate my experience in the province from which I come. I will refer to the point of imports of food. That is a point which has got to be stressed. The Government of India, I believe, are doing their best, but will all the best that they are doing, they have not been able to get the imports required. Is it merely the shipping difficulty? I think it is more than that. We know there is shipping difficulty, but His Majesty's Government have not accepted the word of the Government of India, and that seems to be the point which is a sore point with me even as it would be with Government. We were told yesterday by Mr. San that the permanent Secretary of the Home Government, Sir Henry French, was sent to India to inquire into the food situation in this country, and that he was satisfied that there was a need for import of

foodstuffs. What does it show? It shows that the word of this Government was not given due credit. His Majesty's Government were not satisfied with the despatches and reports of this Government, and sent one of their own officers here, a Permanent Secretary, during these critical days of war, to study the situation here and report to them whether the Government of India was right and was justified in its demand.

There was some discussion about the accuracy of the figures of imports of foodstuffs, but I would not now go into it. In the earlier years, before the loss of Burma, at a time when we could hardly spare them, foodstuffs were exported from this country, and now when India is in dire need herself His Majesty's Government should at least do a turn to India by sending her what she needs. Even the deaths and famine, death of millions in Bengal and continued death of destitutes in Calcutta, have not gone to convince His Majesty's Government, I can only say that the statesmen of the present day have lost all imagination. It cannot be explained otherwise. It is simple logic that India which used to import so much of rice from Burma is unable to import that rice now, and that if that rice is not imported there would be a deficit which has to be made good, and that if it is not made up, there would be starvation and death: and in fact no greater demonstration of India's need could be produced than the Bengal famine. But there is scarcity if not famine in the other parts of India also, particularly in the rural areas. In the urban areas food is being supplied now in what I should say barely sufficient quantity —.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Insufficient quantity.

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL: I wish to speak only of my experience in my province. So far as office workers are concerned the cereals they get are just sufficient: if they get a little more there may be a little more waste. Therefore I would not say that in those areas where they find that the food is sufficient, although it is not plentiful, it should be increased. I do not want waste on the one hand and starvation on the other. In Bombay under Government orders manual workers or labourers who really need more food, get a little more food on application. There are places in each province where people require a little more food on account of climatic conditions. Poona is one of them. There one lb. is not quite sufficient as it would be in Bombay. I recently had occasion to visit Nasik, and there also I found that the food supplied to the people is less than a lb. Although on paper it is a lb. when it is brought home and weighed, it turns out to be something less than a lb. This should not be allowed and all those responsible for it should be severely dealt with.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: This is universal.

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL: It is said to be universal, but there is great complaint about the quality of food also. What are the arrangements in different provinces for purchasing food? Are they centrally purchased? Are the purchases made by Government servants, or are they made by businessmen? And in what way are they making the purchases. More strict control is necessary over the purchases because what we get now is more or less of inferior quality. There is universal complaint about quality. When I came to Delhi and got my ration cereals, I had them brought before me to see what they were like. They were in no way better than what are available in Bombay. Merchants keep in different bags different qualities, I do not know what Government do. I think purchases are made on a large scale, and differentiation of qualities is not given sufficient attention. It does require a certain amount of attention. In this war we have reconciled ourselves to share our food with the less fortunate members of the community so far as the quality goes. But if Government give attention to it, they will be able to improve the quality of the food. At present the quality is such that several people complain of some physical trouble or other.

[Mr. G. S. Motilal.]

The Honourable Mr. Sen told us yesterday that 3,000,000 tons of food, he was informed, is wasted yearly in this country. I should like to know in what way it is being wasted. Is that waste avoidable or is it something which is unavoidable? If he has that information, I should certainly like to have it.

Another thing which I should like to impress upon the Government is what States like Cochin and Travancore, who claim to be leading States and to be in advance of British India by about 25 years, have done to produce more rice in their own States. As far as I know, that part of the country is very fertile. There is plenty of land there. They must have also done something and they must inform the Government of India of what they have done if they want Government to help them in this matter.

I should also like to know how much of land under jute cultivation has been turned to rice cultivation. The people of Bengal must first live and subsist and have better food and then only can they export commodities like jute. I should like to know what steps have been taken by Government in that direction.

So far as the storage arrangements are concerned, we have been told that Government are considering a plan. Of course there must be plans and it does take time, but in this case you should not go about in red tape fashion, as has been done in other cases. These are matters which require prompt attention and measures should be taken which will result in better arrangements for storage of food materials. Very often the complaint is that goods come from one place to another and they are lying and rotting and germinating there. I can understand these difficulties because Government have not handled this sort of trade business before. But as experience is gained they should look to these things. They will not know about them unless they are told about it.

I have been given some figures with regard to Ajmer-Merwara. The information supplied to me is that Kekri district in that province is a surplus district. Measures taken there were such that there is restricted movement of goods from the producing centre to the consuming centre which you may describe as a deficit place and the result was that whereas prices in the consuming centres were higher, the prices in the producing centres were so low that it was becoming unremunerative and the peasant was suffering consequently. I would just refer to a portion of the report of the Regional Food Commissioner who, I understand, recently inspected the godowns and ration shops in Ajmer-Merwara. He is reported to have said that most of the grain was unfit for human consumption and had deteriorated in Government godowns due to bad and insufficient storage arrangements. The Civil Surgeon of that place also has gone to the length of saying that the quality of the food supplied was poor. This province is under the administration of the Centre. Unfortunately, public opinion there does not get an opportunity of developing as it does in Bombay where immediately a question is ventilated, and thus the attention of the Government is drawn to it. Government's particular attention is necessary in this case. You have to enlist public opinion in these places, not the public opinion of *ji hussure* and *jo hukums* but of men who would genuinely help the Government and the people in solving these problems. It is in this spirit, Sir, that the problem has been solved in Bombay. When Government ration shops were started in Bombay, men, women and ladies of respectable families volunteered to supervise these shops. When I was talking to a friend of mine yesterday who related the difficulties in Delhi, I said to him, "Why can't you do the same that has been done in Bombay? Why do you leave it to the police officer? Why don't you go and supervise these shops as we did in Bombay? If you do that, you will be helping our people." It is in this spirit, Sir, that I make this suggestion.

THE HONOURABLE MR. M. N. DALAL (Bombay: Non-Muhammadan): Mr. President, Sir John Megaw and Dr. Akroyd have given us recently illustrating facts and arresting statistics to show to what extent there is malnutrition and starvation in this country. Mr. Kirby, the Rationing Expert of the Food

Department, has recently told us that 1,600 calories per head per day is the minimum requirement for human consumption. There are millions and millions of people in this country who have never had 1,600 calories per head per day even during the pre-war time. With such dominant starvation in this country and the influx of war conditions it is difficult for any Government, however, efficient, to prevent the situation from getting aggravated. The Food Department this year, has a much better case than last year and from the statistics given the Food Department and the E., H. & L. Department are endeavouring to face the problem in a realistic spirit. The Honourable Sir Jogendra Singh said this morning on account of Governmental measures, the area under rice cultivation in India for the three pre-war years was 73.8 million acres, after one year of the "Grow More Food" campaign, it was 75 million acres and last year it extended to 80 million acres; the pre-war average of the area under all foodgrains was 198 million acres and as a result of the campaign last year it increased to 206.3 million acres. In regard to production we have been informed that rice production has risen from 26.5 million tons to 30.6 million

tons, in other words, an increase of 4 million tons, which is about 21 Noon. twice the quantity that we used to import from Burma. Statistics has shown that this is a case for congratulating Government. But I would like to ask Government how the improvement in statistics of area under the plough and the improvement in production, effect the acute problem of food shortage as felt by the average man in the street. There are parts in Orissa, Madras, and a few other provinces where malnutrition and starvation is still creating havoc. I feel, Sir, that unless the Government of India gives heavy subsidies to the agriculturist there is no hope of a steady and progressive increase in the production of the country. In the United States of America millions and millions of dollars have been spent in giving subsidies to the agriculturist. In the United Kingdom only last year a very heavy subsidy of £205 millions have been given to the agriculturist. In comparison to this, Sir, I would like to ask what has happened in this country?

Then, Sir, the Foodgrains Policy Committee recommended, knowing that the production in the country is not sufficient, that 10 lakhs of tons should be annually imported into this country. Out of the 10 lakhs tons only 6½ lakhs tons have arrived by the end of September and we are told that there is a possibility of the balance of 3½ lakhs tons by the end of this year.

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: Not a possibility but a certainty.

THE HONOURABLE MR. M. N. DALAL: By the end of December 1944?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: Yes.

THE HONOURABLE MR. M. N. DALAL: Then I would like to ask Government what has happened to all that tall talk as per suggestion of the Gregory Committee for 5 lakhs tons for Central reserves this year. Is that never coming! I would impress upon Government to go on pressing their demand to His Majesty's Government until they receive the full quota of the central reserves.

Then, Sir, under the monopoly purchase system which exists in certain Provinces, a portion of the agriculturist's crop has been requisitioned by the Government. We are told that this requisitioning has been done at a low rate and the agriculturist himself has to pay a much higher rate when he goes into the open market to buy for his own requirements. This anomaly should be removed, especially when it is not equitable in principle as compared to the luke warm and hesitant attitude of the Government in not being able to make the Punjab disgorge its hoards. The Policy Committee also laid stress on control and regulation of prices. I must say that wherever the rationing system exists in the urban areas, there is a certain amount of control. So far as the Bombay city is concerned, things are controlled. But in the rural areas there is hardly any control, or if there is control, the control is very slack. We must not forget, Mr. President, that out of the 400 millions of people in this country 360 millions belong to the rural areas. In spite of the

[Mr. M. N. Dalal.]

fact that there is not sufficient food in this country 40,000 tons of wheat have been allowed to rot and 18,000 tons of dehydrated potatoes are unfit for human consumption.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: In what province?

THE HONOURABLE MR. M. N. DALAL: In the whole of India. The place does not matter. However, I would impress upon Government to be more careful in the future about their storage and preservation of foodgrains. Then, Sir, a large quantity of groundnuts and edible oil seeds have been recently exported from Indian States. I would request Government to put a total embargo on these exports as groundnuts form a kind of subsidiary food both for human as well as animal consumption.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: It is almost as rich as soya beans.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU (United Provinces Southern: Non-Muhammadan): In the very lucid speech which the Honourable Mr. Sen delivered in this House yesterday he stated that if the food problem was to be solved it was necessary that there should be co-operation between the Government and the people. With that sentiment I agree. But he would agree with me that we have to create the conditions for that co-operation and the question that I would like the House to consider is whether Government have created the conditions for that co-operation which is essential for a right solution of the food problem. Sir, it would be unfair to go into high questions of politics on a food debate. But I think it is permissible to comment on the manner in which Food Councils are supposed to be working in districts and provinces. We have in our province—the Honourable Mr. Kalikar has in his province—District Food Councils and the type of man who is wanted for a membership of this Council is not exactly the type of person who comes bubbling in this country. The Honourable Raja Govindlal who is a Leader of the Congress Party and who I suppose is suffering from a defeatist mentality, talked of the manner in which rationing has been made a success in Bombay by the voluntary effort of the women of Bombay.

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL: Every one.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: I do not know whether in section 93 provinces, whether at all events in the province from which the Food Member hails, such voluntary co-operation on the part of people willing, eager and desirous of co-operating with the Government would be welcomed; and unless you change the atmosphere in some of these section 93 provinces you will not get that confidence which is essential for the solution of the food problem. In democratic countries there is no antithesis between the State and the community. The hoarder and the profiteer therefore are regarded rightly as social enemies No. 1. Here there is antithesis between the Government and the people and whatever we may do we cannot get rid of this psychological fact. If you want this country to put forth its maximum effort so far as the food production drive is concerned, so far as the fight against hoarding and profiteering is concerned, so far as anti-social activities are concerned, you must create the right psychological atmosphere. In all humility I would say that the present agency you have either at the centre or in the provinces is not the right kind of agency for creating that psychological atmosphere. May I say that in stating my proposition in this manner I am not reflecting in the slightest manner upon the Honourable the Food Member. I know that he took over charge of the Food Department at a very difficult time in the history of this country. He took it over in August 1943, when we had the Bengal famine. I do not wish to grudge him that meed of praise. He is entitled to say "I have somehow evolved some sort of a policy, good, bad or indifferent and the position today is at all events somewhat better than it was say a year back. But when we say that the position is somewhat better than it was a year ago, what is it exactly that we mean? You say there is no scarcity or that there is plenty

of food going round. I was talking to a high official of the Food Department the other day, and he said there was no scarcity. If you have the purchasing power, you can purchase anything that you want in this world. That is to say, if you get Rs. 3,000 a month or Rs. 4,000 a month, you can get even Scotch whisky. It is quite true these days. But I do not know whether we should import Scotch whisky at the present time; I suppose the tonnage which was wasted in importing Scotch whisky and cosmetics and other luxuries could well have been used in importing some foodgrains. But, Sir, if you have Rs. 2,000 or Rs. 3,000 or Rs. 4,000, then you can get what you want. But you cannot get food with the wages that you are receiving today.

Now, Sir, I was in Calcutta in September of this year and I just tried to find out what the prices in Calcutta were. I was staying with a friend, and I took some interest in the question; as a matter of fact, we were going round the mills and seeing certain industrial conditions for ourselves. I was interested in the question of protective foods and calories. I found that the position in Calcutta was that you could not get fish for anything less than Rs. 3 per seer, or meat for anything less than Rs. 3-8-0 or Rs. 3 per seer, or potatoes for anything less than a rupee or a rupee and eight annas per seer, or milk at eight annas per seer—(An Honourable Member: Twelve annas.)—my host said that he was able to get it at eight annas; he may have had some special arrangement. Now, I should like to know how many of us who have got fairly decent incomes can afford to have protective food at those prices. Even we would think twice before we had fish twice in the day or meat twice in the day. The real problem therefore is this. Have you been able to bring down prices to a level which would enable the average man to purchase food and have it in sufficient quantities to keep his body and soul together? I am sure that the answer to this question must be in the negative. In so far as we have not been able to get that objective achieved, it must be admitted that our food policy has not succeeded to the extent that it should have succeeded.

Of course the question of prices is connected with high questions of inflation, but I am not an expert on finance, and the Honourable Mr. Hossain Imam will be able to deal with these questions in a much abler manner than I can. But I know that when we went to this war the idea was this: Civilian consumption does not matter; we must go on reducing as far as possible the consumer goods for civilian consumption; at the same time we must go on inflating currency. The natural result is that you have high prices, and you are finding the problem of dealing with those high prices difficult. If you have high prices and if you have speculative markets, inevitably you get hoarding and profiteering. It is your policy, therefore, which has led to all this. In England and other countries the Governments adopted with regard to food a very different policy from the very start of the war. Even before the war, I think from 1937, the Ministry of Food was functioning. I venture to assert with confidence that Britain would have been lost but for the good work of Lord Woolton's Ministry of Food. They had vision; they had foresight; they planned. We had no vision; we had no imagination; we had no foresight; and we are where we are today because the administration did not think that food was of any consequence—

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: The leaders refused to co-operate. You have forgotten that.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: Sir, if I enter into the question why we refused to co-operate, then it may take me hours to explain our attitude, and I am not going to be drawn into that question. We have never refused to co-operate. We have always been willing to co-operate on terms consistent with the self-respect of this great country. But what we have refused to do is to co-operate on subordinate terms. We do not wish to co-operate as mere advisers or as mere subordinates of His Majesty's Government. This, after all, is a political question, and I wanted to avoid being drawn into it.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: You mentioned England and other countries. You mentioned that the Food Ministry did not start its work in time in this country. That is why I gave the reason.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: Sir, so far as India is concerned, it is under one-man rule today. I make this statement as a student of constitutional law. It is, under the Act of 1935, as modified and amended by various statutes which have been passed in war-time, under one-man rule today. The Food Member may delude himself with the belief that he controls the food situation in India, but we know who controls the Food Department. Therefore, for every blessed thing that happens in this country we are entitled to lay the blame upon that one man, or upon the system which allows personal autocracy in this country. I do not believe in mincing words, and I think that we should, in this House at all events, talk without mental reservations.

What I was saying was that imagination was not shown in dealing with the subject. The European Group, be it said to its credit, went on asking for a Food Department, but it was not considered advisable to have a Food Department. Now, Sir, we have started a grow more food campaign. May I ask what subsidies you have been giving to them? If you could give the Indian cultivator better seed—it may need a little finance to do so—you are spending over 800 crores over the war, and it might be regarded as part of the war effort—if you were able to give him better seed, probably his production would go up by 5 or 10 per cent.; and if you get more production, there would be more food available, and to a certain extent the prices of commodities would come down. Similarly we have to deal with the problem of profiteers, hoarders, and so on. If His Majesty's Government had made available to us in time the one million tons of foodgrains which was recommended by the Gregory Committee, and if they had made available to us the 500,000 tons of foodgrains for a central reserve which also the Gregory Committee recommended, we could have dealt with all these anti-social activities. We have been able to bring down prices to the normal level. The great point is you want to inspire confidence in the poor man. Why is it that the cultivator wants to hold back his stock. He is not sure of the morrow. You want him to part with his stock, you give him currency notes which may be eaten away by rats or white ants, and he does not know where he will be able in times of scarcity to get his two square meals a day. It is a concrete suggestion that I must make: I would purchase cereals at a price which will be fair to the cultivator. Government, when they purchase from surplus provinces, should leave enough for the needs of the cultivator. Then you have to move what you have purchased in surplus provinces to deficit provinces: bear the cost of transport yourself and overhead charges, and make what you have purchased in the surplus provinces available for the people in the deficit areas. Well, Sir, it will be said that Provincial Governments will not co-operate. Provincial Governments have become a convenient excuse for not doing what the Government of India does not want to do. I am no defender of Provincial Governments, I think they have much to account for, but I do not know whether the Provincial Governments which are autonomous Governments, were consulted in regard to the various ordinances regarding law and order which emanated from the high and mighty in this land. I do not know whether much respect was shown to constitutional forms, but I know this, that when it comes to feeding the people of this country, you start at once talking of provincial autonomy, although all the time you are planning to undermine provincial autonomy by showing too excessive a bias in favour of central guidance. Therefore, there is an alternative policy which needs to be tried.

You have got to look at the question of food both from the qualitative and quantitative point of view. So far as the qualitative point of view is concerned, the man simply fills his stomach with rice—if he happens to be a Madrasi or Bengali—and a little salt. So far as Dr. Akroyd's researches into dietetics are concerned, they might well be thrown into the wastepaper basket. I have very great regard for the Doctor's researches and for all his excellent work which have not been brought home to the masses but you cannot bring home his researches to the people. If you tell them "this is balanced diet and you must adopt it," the simple answer that they will give you is "give me money to purchase

this valuable diet, and then I will have it. "It is no use telling me that I must have this balanced diet when my wages are inadequate for a balanced diet."

In some parts of the country you have ration of as low as 8 ozs. a day. In South Canara you have the lowest ration, and I wonder, Sir, whether a man who does about 12 to 13 hours a day of hard physical work could live on that ration. It is not fair. Compare the ration that you give him in rice or in *atta* with the ration that you give to a man of higher status in life. We take lots of food, we may have even three courses which will mean probably soup, fish, may be some vegetables or chicken or duck or mutton, there may also be pudding.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: May I correct one statement made by you: nowhere is the ration so low as 8 ozs.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: What is the minimum ration that you have?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: 12 ozs. is the least.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: I was supplied this figure by a South Indian gentleman.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: It is entirely wrong.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: I am sure the Honourable Food Member who is a very good judge of food himself, will recognise and admit that 12 ozs. is not sufficient for a normal working man, and I think he will not take any credit to himself for supplying this amount to South Canara, Cochin and Malabar, which can only enable them to exist.

Now, Sir, before I close, I should also like to say how rationing is working. I have some experience of it in Delhi itself. I arrived here on the 7th. I did not get my ration card on the 7th, I did not get it until the 13th of this month: I am sorry I got it on the 13th, as if I had not got it, it would have enabled me to say that I had not got it. I was mentioning to an officer of the Legislative Department that I had not got my card and was going to mention it in the House, when the card was handed to me.

Now that we have heard a great deal about the sins of commission and omission of the Provinces I should like to refer to what is happening in this centrally administered area which ought to be an ideally administered area. If these delays can take place in rationing in the case of men who belong to the Legislature and can move adjournment motions, what about the plight of the poor workers? I know, Sir, that sometimes a man has got to waste a whole day in getting his rations for the week. I am telling you something from experience of my own Province, where we have got partial rationing. There, a man goes to the ration shop in the morning and he has to spend the whole day. That means he gets no wages for that day. He has not done any work. He is planning for the week which is ahead of him. He says, "I will strike work. Instead of working 6 days, I will work only five days, and I reserve one day for obtaining my rations". That is really what is happening.

Another point is this. There is a very great deal of prejudice today against Government ration shops. I think that that prejudice is to a very large extent justified. The quality of food supplied in some of these ration shops is absolutely abominable. I have seen that quality myself. I do not know whether there was more dust or more wheat, more dust or more rice, in the stuff that was shown to us. I do not know if Dr. Akroyd or anybody else has examined what the vitamin qualities of dust are. It may be that the latest scientific researches will disclose that the Food Department is quite right in encouraging this kind of food being supplied to the poor man because this dust has got some vitamin property which scientific experts have not been able to discover so far. Sir, the fact of the matter is—let us be quite frank about it—that there is a good deal of corruption in the Purchase Branch of the Food Department and there is no proper supervision over this Purchase Branch. It

[Mr. P. N. Sapru.]

is very difficult to give proof but we have heard stories of this corruption, and from our personal knowledge we know that this corruption exists because, I may say without meaning offence, that the superior officers are indifferent to it. I do not say that they are corrupt, but the political system is such that perforce they have to overlook many things. If the police officer or sanitary inspector of food broker in a certain town is good in some other ways, why should they bar him if he gets a little from the people for whom he is responsible? That is the mentality which the present system breeds. I hope that the Honourable the Food Member will look into this question of corruption in the Food Department. It is a very important question. I hope he will also look into the question of the rations that are supplied. So far as the general principle of rationing is concerned, support was given to it by the Honourable Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru in his speech yesterday and I do not wish to repeat what he said yesterday. Dark days are ahead of us. After the German war is over we shall have to think of the Japanese war. India will be the base of operations against Japan. Don't think only in terms of maintaining military morale. Don't think in terms only of keeping the military services. Attach some importance to the needs of the civilian population. The morale of the civil population is vital for the success of the war effort. It is vital for the establishment of a just, enduring and honourable peace in the world. If you think along these lines, your food policy will succeed. If you do not think on these lines, then your food policy is doomed to failure.

THE HONOURABLE BRIGADIER SIR S. HISSAMUDDIN BAHADUR (Nominated Non-official): Mr. President, Sir, I have listened with great interest to the most lucid and illuminating speech of the Honourable Mr. Sen, and congratulate him for giving such a vivid picture of the steps already taken and proposed to be taken by the Government of India for the solution of the Food Problem. Thanks to the prudence and vigilance of the Government that the situation was kept under control and safe from deterioration in face of unscrupulous Hoarders and Profiteers. All the pros and cons of the problem have been considered and every possible precaution taken in the interest of the public.

It is apparent that since the last session the Food Department has left no stone unturned in solving the problem and the position has considerably improved and tends to improve. Effective steps are being taken to export food-grains from surplus areas to the deficit areas; about 40 to 50 Committees have been constituted for controlling food problems; the prices of food-grains fixed in each Province are practically at par with each other, thereby ensuring uniformity of rates; the results of "Grow-More-Food" campaign are encouraging. It has been made clear that Government are making no profits whatsoever. If at all there is any saving in some particular transaction, that saving is utilized elsewhere for the common good of the Food Department. The transport facilities for food-grains are also arranged. It is a matter of highest satisfaction that the badly affected areas like Cochin and Travancore will be supplied full scale rations. To sum up the whole position, I must say that greater improvement is visible now all round and that the Government are taking all necessary steps to mitigate the sufferings and to see that food-grains are within the purchaseable power of the poor people.

There is a prevalent apprehension in the minds of the public about the misuse of the Permits for exporting food-grains, etc., from one Province to another. It is hoped that the Government will take the public into confidence and ensure that no misuse of the Permits is to be done.

There should be a severe check on the Hoarders and Profiteers. It has so often transpired that when the shop-keepers have been asked to supply certain articles they deny having them in stock but behind the back doors they are selling in the Black-market at much higher prices and abnormal profits. Has the Government devised any ways and means so far to put a stop to the black-marketing?

We should like to know clearly the basis of fixation of prices of food-grains between the Producer and Consumer. It is strongly commended to the Government that while fixing prices due regard may be paid to the fact that the Producer has to pay higher prices for his ploughing implements and other commodities of daily life.

Stringent measure should be taken to ensure the sale of pure unadulterated flour in the Rationing Shops. I have experience that certain individuals crush to powder very poor quality maize, *bajra*, *chana* and *bhosa*. This stuff is purchased by the *Bania* and mixed into the flour, which is sold as 1st class flour in the market. This type of flour is very bad for human consumption. A Government Officer should be appointed to examine the flour in the markets. Deterrent exemplary punishment should be met for such malpractices.

There should be separate Rationing Shops for the women and men as the poor women have to undergo hardships and wait for long hours among the men, for purchasing their rations.

Keeping in mind the happenings in Bengal in regard to the famine and toll of life taken thereby, people are rather anxious to know whether sufficient reserve stocks exist with the Government or any concrete arrangements have been made to cope with any similar emergency, should it, may God forbid, arise in any part of the country?

Sir, let us all strive and offer feasible proposals for the common good. Let us offer our support and co-operation to the Government in tackling this common problem instead of criticising and creating unhealthy atmosphere. It is often said a large quantity of food-grains is taken over by the Army. I am positive in saying that the soldiers who are fighting against the aggressive Japanese and defending India should not be grudging their share of food-grains. Our aim and main object should be—"food for all". Politics is entirely outside this sacred sphere. Let us all mobilise and direct all our energies towards its solution and do real honest and constructive work for the common good.

With these words, Sir, I support the Motion.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM (Bihar and Orissa: Muhammadan). Mr. President, in a country suffering from the manifold handicaps of slavery to the foreign domination, illiteracy, poverty, over-population and an unsympathetic pseudo-Indian Government, it is no wonder that food is a subject of bi-annual and perpetual interest and discussion in this House and the country at large.

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN (Leader of the House): What is the object in calling this Government a pseudo-Indian Government? Whose mistake is it if Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah would not come to an agreement. I strongly object to the statement.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: I meant particularly the composition of the Food Department.

THE HONOURABLE SIR MAHOMED USMAN: Instead of accusing the Government, the Honourable Member should deplore the fact that Mr. Jinnah and Mr. Gandhi have not come to terms. There is no point in abusing the Government and calling it a pseudo-Indian Government.

THE HONOURABLE SIR DAVID DEVADOSS: Leave out the preface.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: I shall leave it out. I have very little time.

The past history of the handling or the mishandling of the food situation is an absorbing subject. But as I rise at a quarter to one, I do not think it would be fair to waste my time or the time of the House by delving into past history, but I cannot pass without referring to one or two subjects. Firstly, the appointment of the Famine Commission. The Government, when we moved our amendment, brought forward the thin excuse of war engagement and other preoccupation which would prevent them from appointing a Commission immediately. Nevertheless the pressure of public opinion was so great that even this Government

[Mr. Hossain Imam.]

could not evade the issue and they had to appoint a Commission but not of that composite character which we had asked. I hope, Sir, that this mistake of theirs will not result in a bad report.

Sir, I am glad that the Government of India has taken upon itself the responsibility for the calamity that befell Bengal. The help which the Centre has promised in the shape of monetary grant is a belated admission that all that happened in Bengal was not only God-made but man-made and war-made. The denial policy which was pursued in the areas of Bengal resulting in the destruction of 86,000 boats, the removal and loss of hundreds of thousands of maunds of foodgrains and the dislocation of traffic was primarily responsible for what happened there and I have been strengthened by the report of the Public Accounts Committee on the Accounts of 1942-43 where they have stigmatized the administration of the denial policy in no uncertain terms.

"It is, however, the expenditure in Bengal on the Denial policy and other similar measures which has caused us the greatest misgiving,"

It is in paragraph 11 on page 5. I will not read out the whole of it. It is bad enough. I would just give you the concluding portion.

"At the same time, however, we feel it our duty to place on record our view that if this further investigation reveals that the control of the Bengal Government was, through negligence, so lax as to give rise to serious doubts as to whether the money was actually spent on the purposes for which it was meant, we shall hold ourselves at liberty to recommend that the Central Government should not accept debits which do not satisfy the reasonable demands of Audit."

All this work was done under the dictation of the military and if it does not come up to the audit standard, is it the fault of the Provincial Government, or the fault of those who ordered these actions. Nevertheless, Sir, the record is not one which can be exposed with any pride by any Government, let alone this Government.

Sir, I should like this House as well as this Government to realise that food is not a factory product, the production of which can be increased or decreased by regulating the shifts. It is a long term product and a product dependent on many things, not only of human agencies but agencies super-human. As one coming from the class of cultivators and farmers, I can give you what are the great factors on which the supply of food is dependent. First and foremost in India are the rains. Rains can make and unmake whatever efforts you may make. Your best efforts may be defeated and your worst efforts may be crowned with success. Good seed play a great part but there is a great dearth of good seeds at present. I could not get good seed from a Central Government farm in U. P. without going over to the U. P. Government for a special permit. If farms helped by the Centre cannot send seeds for multiplication except with the permission of the Provincial Government, things can be no worse than this state of affairs which exists in India.

Then, Sir, good cultivation meaning thereby availability of suitable cattle, also plays a preponderant part in production in India. Last, but not least,—I should call it a major factor—is the psychological effect on the mind of the cultivator which you have to take into account. If the cultivator has no confidence in your ability to supply him with the required goods at reasonable prices, you force him to become a hoarder, you force him to withhold his crops from the market; because he never knows what will be the value of the money in terms of grain which he gets at the time of parting with his produce. He sells at the rate of Rs. 12 per maund, and when he has to purchase, he finds that it is being sold at Rs. 20 per maund. It is your ability to supply him with his requirements at a reasonable price that will make him dis-hoard and bring to the market an increasing quantity of his produce. That is being definitely proved now in Bengal. In Bengal the prices of foodgrains are much lower than the maximum prices fixed by the Bengal Government. And here I should like to mention that the Bengal Government had to meet a spate of criticism from the opposition.

Everything possible was done to undermine the confidence of the people. In spite of that, they have succeeded, I am glad to find, in bringing about a welcome decrease in the prices.

But I would be failing in my duty if I did not stress now that there are limits to the price fall. I would cite the example of the Food Department itself in this connection. In the case of sugarcane they have this very year increased the price by two annas a maund. I do not say they have been very generous. They have given to the cultivators their due. But what I point out is that the Government did come to the conclusion that the price being paid by the mills was uneconomic and therefore a rise in the price was called for. *Similarly I wish there should be a halt to the policy of bringing down prices, because if the prices fall below a certain level the danger is that the production will suffer; people will not cultivate those marginal lands as we call them, that is to say, lands which are not capable of producing a full crop. Because of the high prices, it is profitable to cultivate such marginal lands. On the same principle, the prices for textiles in the Supply Department are fixed, not on the cost of the most efficient mills, but on the cost of the most inefficient mills. Similarly the cost price of foodgrains must be fixed on the basis of when it will pay to utilise the marginal lands, because it is only on the production of those lands that adequate supply is dependent.*

Sir, the system of restriction on movement which was instituted by the Food Department has gone to such length that not only do we find great differences in prices between neighbouring provinces in regard to the same commodity, but even inter-district differences are very great. I do not know the present prices, but in the middle of September, when I had occasion to attend a meeting in my own province, I brought to the attention of His Excellency the Governor the great difference between the prices prevailing in North Bihar and my district of Gaya. There was a difference of Rs. 3 per maund between the Government's own published price of rice in Darbhanga *cum* Muzaffarpur and Gaya. The Government had then promised to look into the matter and to start purchasing in the depressed areas in order to bring down prices in the scarcity areas. I hope that scheme has succeeded to a certain extent, because the Government of Bihar was making some purchases.

Sir, I should like the Honourable Mr. Sen or the Food Member to enlighten the House about the quantity of foodgrains that have been lost due to bad storage. I am told that in one particular instance to which attention was drawn in the Assembly—Nepalese rice—the loss is about Rs. 80 lakhs. Who is going to pay for it? The Centre, the Province of Bihar, the Province of Bengal, or the persons who supplied? What are the true facts, and what is being done to that rice which was refused by Bihar, not accepted by Bengal, and not approved of by U. P.—because everybody was asked to have a finger in that pie; but nobody found it fit for human consumption? What is going to happen to that, and what is the quantity involved, and what are the reasons for the loss?

Sir, I would suggest that, with the improvement in the conditions, you would be justified in removing the restrictions as far as possible. I think it is called for now. I am, as the House knows, no admirer of private trade and commerce, and I have advocated—and I am not ashamed of it—I have advocated nationalization on several occasions. But the mishandling of the food situation has been so great that I cannot bring myself even to tolerate the activities of Food Department. I would rather have the trade come in, where it can do so with safety—I mean in areas which are neither surplus nor deficit, which are able to manage for themselves. In such areas there should be free trade inside the province itself. Free trade in all commodity should be allowed so that trade may come in and start functioning. Not that I admire trade, but if I am to deal with trade, I can discriminate; I can refuse to purchase a certain foodstuff which is bad. But where there is rationing, my freedom is taken away: I have to buy that rotten stuff, or starve. That is the difference between free

[Mr. Hossain Imam.]

trade and Government control as it is at present administered. In this connection I do not want to give many instances because many of my Honourable friends have stressed this point, but even in Delhi there are cases where Ration shops get permits for a higher class of foodstuff like rice, but when they go to the central depot they cannot get it because the depot says it has not got it, and it is reserved for either the black market or the big shops. Small shops

do not get the better quality stuff in spite of permits with the result that men in those areas have to suffer. *I would suggest for instance free trade in pulses and millets between Bihar and Bengal.*

Friends of mine have stressed on the corruption in the Food Department and the hardship which people suffer, and therefore I simply mention it and will not develop it.

The Honourable Member seemed to take great pride in the fact that the position at present is more comfortable than what it was at the time he took over. "I do not wish to deny him the comfort which he may derive from his own actions, but I would be failing in my duty if I did not explain what a tremendous effect the bumper production of rice in Bengal and other parts of the country had in bringing about the psychological equilibrium. By nature the Indian cultivator is conservative and from experience of generations he has come to mistrust token coins and trust only in his own grain. Many of my colleagues asked, "what happened to the bumper crop and the surplus envisaged by the Department of Education, Health and Lands, the four million tons of rice which was supposed to have been grown in excess of the normal." Well, Sir, the explanation is very easy. Part of it has gone to build up that reserve stock which every cultivator kept and which was denuded to the last grain during the famine of 1943. You cannot prevent him from having that reserve: it is for him what National Saving Certificates are for you, they are his Reserve Force. The other factor is that he must keep by something for his cropping, I mean for his seed purposes: that has taken away part of the surplus produced. Thirdly, there has been the cutting off of the Burma supply which amounted to a million and a half tons—that is a permanent deficit from which India has been suffering. I do not know for how many years. Then, Sir, there has been additional population in the shape of Defence personnel, and the military buildings and aerodromes which are being built, the roads and communications which are being constructed, and every other kind of work which is going on, have drawn population from outside Bengal, and they are also being fed by Bengal. Population is not static in Bengal, it is increasing yearly and increasing by leaps and bounds. So you cannot be surprised that these 4 million tons have not become a glut on the market. *I am glad, Sir, that the absorbing capacity of the cultivator has taken it up, otherwise had it come into the market, the price today would have been Rs. 5 a maund instead of what it is at the moment,* because agricultural produce is not protected by this Government. My complaint against Government is that it is mindful of the industrial population who form less than one per cent. of the total population, it is mindful of the urban population who form less than 12 per cent. of the whole population, but it is not mindful of the vast majority of rural population whose very life is dependant on fair prices. A fair price is a very elastic term: if interpreted by the unsympathetic industrialists it means wages of the type of slavery; and if interpreted by a representative grower, it will mean something really fair and honest.

What about supplies which the grower has to purchase: can he get them at a fair price, at a price which will bear relationship to the price which he can get for his grain. Now, if the prices of his necessaries of life are not brought down to the same level as his grain, he will suffer. Look at the price which we have now to pay for fuel: it is nearly four times or 400 per cent. of what it was in the old days. Coal is selling at a price which is nearly 850 per cent. of the pre-war price. Kerosene is not to be had except in the black market at black

market rates. Last but not the least,—I am talking of the common man's requirements, not what people in high society and comfortably situated have to purchase, is mustard oil. It is scandalous—the way in which the Central Government has been conniving at the robbing by U. P. Government in the shape of a tax of Rs. 2/8 per maund which they have put on mustard seed exported out of the United Provinces. The Government which can issue Directives to Ministries, proves to be almost powerless and completely unable to do anything to effect right and justice in this respect. This is not the first time I have brought this question up. Pandit Kunzru and myself have brought these matters to the notice of the Food Department long ago, and yet because of the eminence of the person who occupies the Gubernatorial *Gaddi* of the United Provinces nothing can be done.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I would ask you not to refer to the head of a province.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: His Excellency was one of our colleagues, and we have very great respect for him. He has been doing everything for his province, and it is grateful to him for the services he has rendered, and I do not blame him. He has been powerful enough to take from the centre a good grant of about Rs. 60 lakhs, for subsidising cheap grain shops which no other province has done, and which is an example others may well copy. I would be the last person to say anything against the eminent occupant of U. P. *gaddi*, but I am only stating the inability of the Food Department in that respect, which however shows great capacity of doing mischief in other directions.

Sir, vegetable *ghee* is selling at a price which makes it impossible for the common man to purchase it. Vegetables, as has been said by other friends, are selling at prices which are in my opinion five to six times what they were before the war. *Ghee* is being sold at Rs. 5 to Rs. 6 a seer. All this trouble arises because of military purchases. Defence personnel is about 5 per cent of the population, yet it takes more than 2 per cent. of the supplies, which comes to four times the ordinary quota. I do not ask you to sacrifice the ration of the Defence Services, but I only ask for consideration of the civilian needs. India cannot bear this strain any longer. In this connection I should like to mention one or two very important facts which have come to my notice. The cattle population of India is one-third of the total world population of cattle. India is very rich in cattle, yet very poor in quality. The quantity is so low and the power of sustenance so small that where others could do with a pair of bullocks we have to use four. It is one of the penalties we have to pay for our slavery. *There are 250 million heads of cattle and about 48 million sheep and goats. About 20 million die annually of a natural death and about 6 million are slaughtered. I am giving you pre-war figures.* Now, due to the war, the quantum may not have increased but the quality has changed. That quality of cattle which was serviceable for cultivation is going largely to the military slaughter houses. As far as sheep and goats are concerned, our consumption is most dangerous. We are every year having skins of 25 million with a population of 48 millions. There are things, Sir, which find no record in the Government of India. I refer particularly to the provisioning of ships. Ships are coming in convoys and cattle is taken by them which finds no place in your statistics. They are not slaughtered, they are taken alive. The best quality of cattle is thus removed to foreign ports for provisioning of the ships. *Only recently 40 ships called at a port and they took away more than 500 heads of cattle of the best kind for which there was no check —*

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOGENDRA SINGH: Where was that?

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: For military reasons I will mention it privately to you, Sir. I was given this figure by a semi-official source.

Sir, I am not in favour of rationing in those areas where you do not have scarcity if you are unable to lift the surplus. There are Provinces which, due to the failure of the Central administration to remove the surplus, have had

[Mr. Hossain Imam.]

large quantities of food destroyed. I wish the Honourable Mr. Sen would make available to us, either today or at some future date, a full account of Government and Provincial and trade stocks which were found to have deteriorated beyond human consumption. I found in the "People's War" of July mentioned that 200,000 maunds of wheat had deteriorated in the Punjab stations because they were not removed. I do not know the full facts but I should like the Department to make inquiries. If you cannot remove the surplus, what is the sense in restricting consumption—"Na Khud Khurad—Na Ba Kas Dehad—Ganda Shawad Ba Sag Dehad" which means "you do not eat yourself, you do not give it to others, but when it has rotted you throw it to the dogs".

Sir, as far as supply from H. M. G. is concerned, I do not find myself to be as critical as my Honourable colleagues. The wheat supply may have been a necessity at the time it was asked for but it would be a folly to argue on that line if the situation does not demand it. The food question is not a thing which can be foretold by rule of arithmetic. It is so much dependent on vagaries of nature. The wheat prospects cannot be known till March. *If you find in March that your position is comfortable, you must increase your central stock from local wheat, and not from foreign imported wheat.* I was discussing with a very high official of Government about wheat imports who jokingly told me that it was a good means of liquidating the sterling balance. A million tons would cost £14 millions including freight and everything. If you continue to import wheat, remember that you are exhausting your foreign exchange and that you are bringing hardship to your own country. You had to impose a tax of one rupee per maund in order to make it possible for the Indian growers to cultivate wheat. I only wish that the Government should not blindly follow, but should intelligently follow the march of event and regulate their action to the circumstances in which they live. If the weather is favourable, food production is sufficient for Indian needs and if there is any trouble it is due more to the failure of transport and the interference of the Food Department in the free movement. I would stress on the Food Department that it would be inhuman for them to continue rationing in Madras area on the scale on which it prevails at the present moment. Rice must be supplied to Madras in a much larger quantity than it was supplied last year —

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: Wherefrom?

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: From the surplus, Sir, which you have got. Enter into the market, and wherever you find the price to be below level, purchase it. The next rice crop is due and you must now purchase the surplus rice of these areas. In his speech in the Assembly the Honourable Member has referred to the comfortable position of the Bengal Government which has more than 200,000 tons of rice in its own stock on 1st October 1914 in addition to what Calcutta holds. I say that you must have a bold policy. I do not ask you to interfere with the Provinces in any way. *You look to the prices prevailing in the Provinces and wherever the prices are below the maximum fixed by the Province, the Centre should enter the market and purchase as much rice as they can get below that price.* They should never allow it to rise above that price.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: There is not enough rice to go round the country.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: *Aus* has already come in, in Bengal and *Aman* is expected in a month and if you go and purchase it in the market, you will restore confidence and be able to supply Calcutta from the rice purchased today. If you want to purchase rice after February, you will not be able to get it. If you get it, you will get it at a higher price and it will deteriorate. *I want that Calcutta should no longer be a drain on the Centre after 31st March as far as rice is concerned.*

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Will you please conclude now? As Leader of your Party I have allowed you 40 minutes.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: I am very sorry that my Party was unfortunate enough not to catch your eyes today in the morning.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Don't say that. I asked you twice yesterday to get up and make your speech.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Sir, I was saying that the Food Department must re-orientate its policy in the light of the circumstances as they exist today and they should not carry on and blindly follow the line which was laid down in September 1943.

The Council then adjourned for Lunch till a Quarter to Three of the Clock.

The Council re-assembled after Lunch at Quarter to Three of the Clock, the Honourable the President in the Chair.

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN (Nominated Official): Sir, with your indulgence I would like to intervene in the debate at this stage to make a statement on one matter which has been raised by more than one speaker and about which certain misgivings have been expressed, namely, purchases by the Government of India of rice from Nepal. The facts of this case are these:

In April 1943 the Nepal Government placed an embargo on the export of rice/paddy from their territory as in view of the difficult rice situation in North-east India they apprehended depletion of their stocks. In October 1943, H. H. the Maharaja kindly offered to release certain quantities of rice/paddy from that year's crop for relief of distress in Bengal. Arrangements were made for the Bengal Government to appoint an Agent to procure these stocks who negotiated prices at Rs. 8, and Rs. 14, *minimum* and Rs. 10 and Rs. 17, *maximum* for paddy and rice respectively.

2. While these negotiations were in progress H. H. the Maharaja offered to release 1,00,000 tons in terms of rice from 1944 crop. The Bengal Agent being on the spot negotiated prices for this offer and the Government of Nepal fixed Rs. 6-8-0, and Rs. 12, *minimum* for paddy and rice respectively with the condition that the prevailing market rate across the Border in Bihar would be fixed if it happened to be higher than the minimum. The Maharaja however, preferred that the procurement should be made by an Agent of the Government of India. Moreover, the three neighbouring Provinces had conflicting claims to the Nepal rice and procurement by the Agent of any one of these Provinces would have resulted in sharp differences between them. In addition to this the normal milling centres for the bulk of the Nepal paddy being in Bihar inter-provincial complications were bound to arise if the procurement had been made by Bengal's Agent. To meet the Maharaja's wishes and to reconcile the conflicting interests of the Provinces the Government of India decided that procurement should be made through an Agent appointed by them. Accordingly after consulting the U. P. and Bihar Governments on whose borders the purchases were to be made a prominent trader of Bihar who was at the same time Trade Adviser to the Bihar Government, was appointed as Agent for this purpose on the recommendation of the Bihar Government.

3. In view of the minimum prices already negotiated and fixed and in view of the demand for rice in Bengal, we agreed to accept the Nepal terms in respect of price and instructed the Agent to start purchase operations immediately at the minimum prices agreed to by the Nepal Government. He was told that if at any stage purchases became impossible at the minimum prices he should refer to the Food Department for instructions. The Agent was unable to make much purchases at the minimum rates stated above. At the close of the third week of March 1944 we were informed by the Agent that the Government of Nepal had, by beat of drum, asked the cultivators to sell paddy at Rs. 9, per md. and as a result of this he had made considerable purchases during the last

[Mr. B. R. Sen.]

few days and hoped to buy further large quantities at this rate. The average price of his total purchases of paddy and rice comes to Rs. 7-14-0 and Rs. 18-14-0 per md. respectively.

4. It has been alleged that the Government of India made purchases at "a higher price than had been arranged by the Bengal Government" resulting in a loss of Rs. 40 lakhs. This statement is incorrect and misleading. Bengal Government's Agent had not arranged to purchase *at a certain price*. He had only bound the Bengal Government to pay a particular *minimum* and had further bound them to pay the market price prevailing across the border if that happened to be higher. About the time when Bengal's Agent agreed to these terms the prices in Bengal ranged from Rs. 10 to Rs. 15 per md. for paddy and Rs. 20 to Rs. 32 per md. for rice. With the prices in Bengal at this level and Nepal being entitled to ask for the prevailing market rate with no maximum limit it is evident that Bengal's Agent would have procured at a higher rate than that paid by Government of India's Agent. The alleged loss is therefore imaginary.

5. Some stocks purchased by the Government of India's Agent were damaged by exposure to rains. It has been alleged that this wastage amounted to about Rs. 30 lakhs and the Government of India are trying to say that this loss is not to be borne by the Agent. So far about 2,500 mds. of damaged paddy have been buried as they were not fit for any purpose and an equal quantity has been disposed of for brewing local beer as it was not fit for consumption as food. The price of these quantities would not be more than Rs. 40,000. Approximately another 34,000 mds. in terms of rice are also involved in such damage the price of which would be about Rs. 4,50,000. In normal times the procurement of the Nepal surplus and its movement to the milling centres would have been spread over 12 months with hundreds of purchasers operating for its procurement. We were required to complete the operation in two months. The procurement operations were fraught with various difficulties of transport, storage and milling capacity. The performance of the Government of India's procurement arrangements must be judged with this background. As for the Agent's liability in the matter, I can assure the House that he will be held to the terms of his contract.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Will the Honourable Member, Mr. Sen, tell the Honourable the Food Member that I will not call upon him to reply till half-past four, as there are several other Honourable Members wishing to speak?

THE HONOURABLE MR. V. V. KALIKAR (Central Provinces: General): Sir, my Honourable friend Mr. Sen tried to draw a very bright picture yesterday about the food administration and execution of the food policy in India by the Central Government. But to my mind it seems he tried to make the best of a bad bargain. The Government of India think that they have improved the position, and it may be said with some truth that the position may have been improved in some parts of India, especially in Bengal. But, Sir, everything is not all right even in that province. We are reading daily in papers about the deaths of destitutes. We are reading in papers that in rural areas in Bengal poor families are selling their daughters for getting food. We are reading in the papers that a large number of destitutes are dying on account of malnutrition. You may have set up various committees. You may have set up various councils. You may have chalked out your policy. You may have prepared a basic plan. But so far as the administration of the policy is concerned, I regret to remark that the policy is not being given effect to efficiently in any part of the country.

Sir, I come from a province which is regarded by the Government of India as a surplus province. I come from the Central Provinces which the Government of India regard as a surplus province in the matter of rice and millets.

The Government of India have fixed a quota of about two lakhs of tons of rice and 55,000 tons of millets for export to deficit provinces.

In this connection I want to state before the House the methods of procurement that have been followed in my province. Food grains are procured in my province through the agency of private persons or co-operative societies, but in procuring the food grains no attention is paid to the needs of the producer. I have come across complaints—and it is my personal experience too, I am an agriculturist and grower of primary produce—that very little is left for the needs of the agriculturist, and though they say it is voluntary offer, I am constrained to state that it is compulsory acquisition. You have to take into consideration the needs of the agriculturist. He has to make provision not only for the needs of himself and his family, but he has to keep something in store for the rainy day. If the Government of India or their agents, I mean the Provincial Governments, take away the whole quantity of food grains or leave only a very small quantity for his needs, he has to buy food grains in the market at a very high price which he cannot afford, and in some cases, if the price is not within his reach, he has to subsist on other food grains. I have come across cases in my province where the agriculturist had to part with rice and subsist on pulses for months together. It may be a matter of very great joy to the deficit provinces, but if you persist in this policy, I am afraid you will convert the surplus provinces into deficit provinces. You must make provision for the needs of the agriculturist.

You cannot charge the agriculturist with hoarding his grain. He has to sell to somebody—no matter whether it is Government agency or a private trader—in order to pay rent and to purchase agricultural implements and the necessities of life. So he cannot withhold, or, as you say, hoard the food grain. But your policy of procurement, by forcing him to part with a large quantity of produce, has put him to the greatest hardship and made him to live on other food grains like pulses.

I am not holding a brief for the Provincial Government. In my province the Government is Section 93 Government, but I think this procedure is followed by Provincial Governments in order to complete the quota that has been forced on them.

My suggestion to the Central Government is that they should cut down the quota of my province: that will leave to the agriculturist something for the rainy day.

Now, Sir, let us take the point of distribution. The Gregory Committee has stated that from surplus provinces food grains should be taken to deficit provinces. All right, I agree to it. But, Sir, you have to take into consideration how much food grain is to be taken and how much is to be left for the needs of the agriculturist. That has not at all been taken into consideration in following this policy of procurement. Now, so far as distribution is concerned, we are reading in papers, and a statement has been made in the other House, that at a particular place in Bengal four hundred lorries were employed to remove decomposed food grains from Sibpore. This statement has been made by a very responsible gentleman, the Deputy President of the Assembly. Now, Sir, if that is the position, why should surplus provinces supply food grains to Bengal or to any other province which is not going to put its house in order. If your all-India policy is not followed readily by the provinces or if you cannot yourself appoint your agents or create your own machinery for proper distribution, then, Sir, I must remark that you have failed in your duty, and that your food administration does not at all deserve any praise, and is not carried on in the interests of the Indian people. Higher prices, Sir, make it difficult for the poor people

to purchase food even in ration shops. I may cite an example—
 S. P. M. of Nagpur. Mr. Sen told me yesterday that rice was procured by Government in C. P. at Rs. 9. per maund. In the ration shops of Nagpur rice is sold at Rs. 14-5-0. per maund. That means they charge Rs. 5-5-0. more to the consumer. Let us deduct one rupee per maund for carting and commission

[Mr. V. V. Kalikar.]

to the agent. I am putting it high. Still, they are making Rs. 4-5-0, as profit. According to me, the price should be so fixed that the poor man should be able to get the food necessary for keeping his body and soul together, at a price within his reach. But, Sir, I was told yesterday by Mr. Sen that no Government is allowed to make profit over the purchase of foodgrains. Where does this Rs. 4-5-0 go? That means that the policy of the Central Government that the Provincial Government should not make profits over the purchase of food grains, is not followed. If that policy is not followed, the Central Government ought to impress upon the Provincial Governments that the policy that they should not make any profit over the purchase of food grains should be followed strictly.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Mr. Sen, is that statement of the Honourable Member correct?

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: I am sorry I have not followed his argument.

THE HONOURABLE MR. V. V. KALIKAR: You were not here when I stated my point.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: The Honourable the Food Member can say.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: I am not aware of it. I do not think there is all that divergence in the prices, but I will answer in my closing speech. I am looking into the matter.

THE HONOURABLE MR. V. V. KALIKAR: I have myself inquired about it. My servant purchased it at that price. I have sold my rice for Rs. 9-5-0 per maund and my servant purchased rice at Rs. 14-5-0 per maund.

THE HONOURABLE SIR N. GOPALASWAMI AYYANGAR: Does Nagpur get any rice imported from other Provinces?

THE HONOURABLE MR. V. V. KALIKAR: No. In Nagpur districts, in three Tahsils we grow rice and in about 2 Tahsils we grow wheat and cotton.

THE HONOURABLE SIR RAMUNNI MENON: Did you purchase in the black market?

THE HONOURABLE MR. V. V. KALIKAR: I purchased it at a ration shop with a ration card.

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: If I may say so, at present there are no control rates fixed for retail prices anywhere as far as I know except in Bihar. In the Central Provinces there is no control rate for retail sales.

THE HONOURABLE MR. V. V. KALIKAR: I am speaking of Nagpur where there is rationing, and the price I am speaking of is of the ration shop.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: I will inquire into this matter, Sir. We have no information on the point. We do not know whether the facts are as stated by the Honourable Member.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I hope you will make the inquiry. The allegation is of a very serious character. It is alleged that an immense profit is being made by Government.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: We will do that.

THE HONOURABLE MR. V. V. KALIKAR: It is a matter of surprise that the Central Government should not have any information on that point when they have pressed on the Province to introduce rationing in various cities and towns.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: In spite of their protest.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: India is a large country. We cannot have information about every nook and corner of the country.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Nagpur is the capital of a Province. It is not a nook and corner.

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: May I know if the rice purchased was of a superior quality or of a coarse quality?

THE HONOURABLE MR. V. V. KALIKAR: The rice purchased was of a medium quality, consumed by ordinary people.

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: In that case I do not think that Rs. 9 was the wholesale price. The price of Rs. 9-0-0 is for coarse variety and when you purchase rice of finer variety you will have to pay more.

THE HONOURABLE MR. V. V. KALIKAR: I put a straight question about the price that is fixed for rice in C. P. and you told me that it was Rs. 9-0-0 per maund.

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: My reference was to the coarse variety of rice everywhere.

THE HONOURABLE MR. V. V. KALIKAR: We do not produce fine rice in C. P. We produce medium quality of rice in C. P. The medium quality of rice in C. P. is consumed by ordinary people and the middle class people. The best quality of rice comes to us from Chinur, not from C. P. I have myself sold rice to a Government agent at Rs. 9-0-0 per maund, medium quality.

There is another trouble for the agriculturists in my Province. There is inter-district control over the movement of foodstuffs. Let us take the case of a family of 3 brothers, one brother staying in his property and looking after the cultivation, and two brothers staying in the town. The man who looks after the cultivation has to send foodgrains to his two brothers. He has to take two permits, an import permit and an export permit. If he holds property in Bhandara district, and if his brothers stay in Nagpur city which is rationed, he has to get an export permit from the District Magistrate of Bhandara and another import permit from the Food Controller of Nagpur. What great inconvenience is he thus put to? A man living in a rural area at a distance of about 20 or 30 miles from a railway station or the district headquarters has to go to the district headquarters twice, thrice, or four times in a month and after many calls on the district officers there he can get the permit if he is fortunate enough; otherwise he is discouraged to send foodgrains to Nagpur for his brothers. He is rather encouraged to sell his foodgrain there and ask his brothers to purchase foodgrain at the ration shops, the control shops, in Nagpur. Here he gets a medium quality of rice. There in the control shop, he gets rice mixed with dirt and grit. The quality may be medium, but it contains dirt, stone and he is encouraged to purchase that. I submit that this inter-district control of movement of foodstuffs should be removed. A statement was made possibly by the Honourable the Food Member or some spokesman on behalf of the Government that local shortages of foodstuffs have been removed from the deficit areas. I understand that in Cochin only $\frac{4}{5}$ ths of a lb. is supplied and in Malabar three-fourths of a lb. is supplied to a man. In —

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: It is 12 ounces as I said before and not 10 ounces.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Where?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: In Cochin.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Ten ounces is the compulsory ration which consists of 2 ounces of wheat and 8 of rice. A man can buy as much more of wheat as he likes. If he likes he can buy 8 or 10 ounces of wheat, or as much more he is allowed to buy.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: I will deal with it in my reply.

THE HONOURABLE MR. V. V. KALIKAR: In Madras I understand from my friend that there are deficit districts like Coimbatore and South Canara. But then in spite of sending so much surplus from our province at the cost and the suffering of our people, you have not been able to relieve the needs of the sufferers there. Then I understand that in one taluka of South Canara which

[Mr. V. V. Kalikar.]

has a population of 3 lakhs they cannot get more than half a pound. My Honourable friend Pandit Kunzru said yesterday—and I have heard also from my friends—that in Travancore there is a stock of unused foodgrain. Why do you keep that stock there? Cochin requires foodgrain more. Why do you not move that foodgrain from that part to Cochin? The sum and substance of the remark made by my friend and the story that I have heard comes to this, that there is no co-ordination between the various Departments of the Government of India. The Food Member may have his own policy, but the War Transport Department might be coming in his way.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: No, no.

THE HONOURABLE MR. V. V. KALIKAR: If that is not the case, where is the foodgrain that is going from surplus provinces disappearing? Why does it not reach the deficit areas where it is most needed? Take the case of Vizagapatam district? I understand that there is also shortage of food there. If Bengal has got a bumper crop, if Bengal can put its house in order, I think Bengal should be able to feed its own people and Bengal should be able to stand on its own legs. But if Bengal is not in a position to stand on its own legs, it is the duty of the Centre to make Bengal strong, it is the duty of the Centre to take stringent action against Bengal and see that Bengal stands on its own legs.

Sir, there is much talk of Grow More Food campaign. I am not one of those who think that the Grow More Food campaign has done nothing. It has done something. But it has not reached its goal. And the reason is that you cannot afford to dig a well when you feel thirsty. You have not taken care —

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: May I remind the Honourable Member that there are other speakers?

THE HONOURABLE MR. V. V. KALIKAR: I will finish within five minutes.

Either the Food Department of the Government of India or the Education, Health and Lands Department has never considered the food problem in all its aspects; otherwise we would not have to face this difficult and dirty situation. Sir, the agriculturist does not get his fertilizers. Out of 230 millions of acres of land under cultivation only 58 million acres are under irrigation: The cultivator has to depend upon the vagaries of nature. Then the slaughter of plough cattle has created difficulties in the way of the poor agriculturist purchasing cattle for his agricultural operations. What methods have you adopted to prevent that and to enable the agriculturist to purchase those cattle within his means? My submission is that, whether it be the Provincial Governments, or the Central Government, or His Majesty's Government, nobody has taken care, after the outbreak of war, to ensure efficient management of the food problem. Here is the Food Department of the Government of India which is not able to secure from His Majesty's Government the quota that has been fixed in their Bible, the Gregory Committee's report. Here is the Government of India which has failed in its duty to approach U. N. R. R. A. for getting supplies of foodgrains. In spite of all the paraphernalia of the Food Department and the enthusiasm of the new Member, the all-India policy of the Central Government is not working efficiently. I therefore say: either work that policy efficiently, or else give it up and allow the private trade channels to work.

*THE HONOURABLE MR. J. M. B. GIBBONS (Bombay Chamber of Commerce): Mr. President, in the able and comprehensive survey of the food situation with which my Honourable friend Mr. Sen opened this debate, he made one point which I think must meet with general approval from all parties. That was his assurance that even after the war Government would continue, and would expand too, the controls which they have already initiated over the production and distribution of food. In these days we hear a great deal of planning for the future—planning of industries, and of India's economy generally. I do not think there can be any more worthy object of planning

*Not corrected by the Honourable Member.

than the food of the masses. There is no doubt that the task that Government have set for themselves is one of great immensity. It is no good evolving a plan on paper if you do not put it into execution, and considering the numbers of people involved, and the variety and differences in their diets, in order to ensure a proper standard of feeding among them, an adequate nutritional standard, it is going to be an exceedingly difficult task.

Among one of the main difficulties at present, as I see it, is that of control of distribution. It is no good adopting a standard of diet evolved by scientists like Dr. Akroyd and such, unless Government can ensure that that standard diet gets into the hands of the people. At the present time I regret to say it seems to me that in the distribution of food throughout this country there are very, very grave defects. In fact the degree of adulteration in foodstuffs that goes on must be a serious menace to the health of the country. I have had myself a certain amount of experience in matters connected with the distribution of milk in the city of Bombay, and I can only say that I have been horrified at the degree of adulteration that is regularly indulged in by dishonest traders who are sacrificing the health of the people for their own gain. Government, I think, must pay particular attention to points like that.

As I have said, they have set their hand to a very great task and I feel that we must welcome particularly that they have done so because in his statement Mr. Sen has, I feel, definitely committed Government to assuming responsibility for a proper standard of diet throughout the country.

THE HONOURABLE SIR N. GOPALASWAMI AYYANGAR (Madras: Non-Muhammadan): Mr. President, the debate that has taken place since yesterday has covered a very wide ground. I do not propose to traverse any large portion of it, especially as I know there are a number of other speakers who would like to take part in this debate before the Honourable the Food Member rises to reply to it.

There can be no doubt, Sir, that the food position today is distinctly better than what it was last year about this time. The Foodgrains Policy Committee presented to the Government of India a food policy and the Food Department, in conjunction with the Governments of Provinces and Indian States, has tried to implement this policy to the best of its ability. Yesterday we listened with great interest to the interesting narrative from the Honourable Mr. Sen of the progress that has been made in the implementing of the Committee's recommendations. An undercurrent of modest satisfaction ran through the whole of that speech. I have not inferred that modesty from any becoming understatement of any very big achievement; I would rather relate that modesty to the quantum of the achievement, and the quality of it. All the same, I consider that he was entitled to take satisfaction from what has been accomplished so far. Now, Sir, I say the achievement was modest. I say so because I feel that the ground that we have to cover still before we reach the ideal of providing for the people an adequate supply of food for an adequate nutritional standard—the ground that we have to cover, the distance that we have to traverse, is still a long, very long one.

The Honourable Mr. Sen towards the close of his speech referred to the contrast, or rather to the factors which would enable us to compare what we have achieved in the matter of rationing in this country with what has been achieved in the United Kingdom. He took the population figure. The population that is served by rationing in urban areas, to the extent that it has proceeded in this country, is almost the same as the population of the United Kingdom. And he drew from that the satisfactory feeling, naturally, that we could not be said to have done very badly in the matter of implementing our food policy. I think, Sir, that he is entitled to claim that, but all the same there is a tremendous contrast between the achievement that has taken place in England and the achievement that has taken place in this country. After

[Sir N. Gopaldaswami Ayyangar.]

all, our rationing applies only to staple foodgrains. Great Britain does not ration them. She is supplying them up to any quantity. But Great Britain rations practically every other article of food. We do not attempt anything of the kind: we do certainly attempt a certain amount of rationing in regard to sugar; we attempt a certain amount of control in regard to certain other food articles; but we cannot claim that it is anything like proper rationing in regard to these other articles of food. All the same, Sir, as I said, the achievement certainly does not deserve minimising. That achievement has been accomplished under very difficult conditions in this country. In the first place, the constitutional set-up of the various Governmental authorities at the centre, in the provinces, and in the Indian States, is not such as could, without a great deal of tact and persuasion, conduce to smooth working of any unified policy. In the second place, I should like to refer to the point to which reference was made by my Honourable friend, Mr. Sapru, and that is that behind the implementation of this policy there has not been that amount of support which would have obtained for it the acceptance of the people as a whole. That, Sir, is an unfortunate state of things in this country. Mr. Sen no doubt referred to the attempts that had been made to associate public opinion with all the activities of the Food Department. We welcome that attitude, but mere association is not enough in the matter of implementing the food policy: what we want is active co-operation, and unless the other parts of the Government of India assist in producing an atmosphere which would bring about this attitude of co-operation on the part of a body of public workers who are the only people who can mobilise public support on a large scale, the large scale food policy of Government will not yield results which it otherwise might.

Now, Sir, I proceed to some of the points adverted to by the Honourable Mr. Sen. In spite of all that he said regarding the attempts made to improve the collection of statistics in this country, underlying his speech there was a feeling of considerable disappointment, and I can well sympathise with him. It is difficult to produce basic plans and procurement programmes on statistics such as those on which he has had to work. He says one of the facts increasingly borne in by those who are responsible for working the plan during this period, has been that unless more active and urgent steps are taken to improve statistical information regarding acreage and production, no plan based on the formula such as was adopted can be fully satisfactory. Now, what is it that has been done to improve the statistical data. He has referred to the better reports and figures that he has received from Indian States, to slight improvement in the figures he has been getting from Bengal, to the five-year surveys in Bihar, and to crop cutting experiments in the Punjab and the United Provinces. No doubt these are improvements, but there is no doubt that, for the purpose of his basic plan, such information as he has obtained from these sources cannot be considered to be so reliable as one would wish. There is need for greater energy expedition and expert guidance in overhauling statistical methods. In this connection I would refer to a somewhat ambitious effort which the Madras Government is making in this direction with the object of getting as accurate figures as possible, for both millets and paddy in all districts. They have issued orders prescribing the preparation and maintenance of a register in each village showing the production, consumption and stocks for each cultivator and for each survey number in his holding, and the totals for the village. From this register they have directed the preparation of another register which determines the surplus available under each grain with each cultivator and for the village. A third register gives figures for imports into and exports from each village under each grain. These registers are to form the basis for the estimates of surplus and deficit for their areas from district officers. They have to be checked as frequently as possible by revenue officers from the Collector downwards during their tours, and a final overhaul of these registers is made at the annual

jamabandi. I mention these facts for the purpose of indicating that, if you want really to have a proper procurement plan for each village, district, and province, and India as a whole, you must start on some such foundation as this. Madras village establishments are no doubt considered superior to similar establishments found in other provinces, and they do admit of the possibility of implementation of an elaborate scheme of this nature. Other provinces should, I think, Sir, make the best use of such machinery as is available in their areas for preparing similar statistical information. I understand Bengal has now a Committee for the purpose of evolving improved administrative methods, and one of our officers, till recently the most senior Adviser to His Excellency the Governor of Madras, has recently been sent to Bengal for the purpose of helping this Committee to evolve improved methods.

Now, Sir, passing from the procurement plan to actual procurement, that is to say, the implementation of the procurement plan, you have to think of two aspects of it. There is first procurement by the Government of India from the provinces, and secondly there is procurement by provinces from the cultivators. Mr. Sen has said nothing truer than this in his speech. He says that though a few Provinces have surpluses of all the major foodgrains, in other cases a Province may be surplus in one foodgrain and deficit in all others or deficit in one foodgrain and surplus in all others. Again, though a province may be self-sufficient on balance, some of its districts may be surplus and others again deficit so that inter-district procurement may be of the utmost importance to that Province. This is the particular sentence I would draw attention to. "The essence of the problem is thus not movement of supplies from a surplus Province to deficit areas but of securing from the cultivator the maximum amount to be obtained from every part of India." And if that is to be our target, it is necessary that we should collect information for each village in respect of each cultivator in the manner that the Madras Government are now attempting to do.

Sir, in the course of this debate suggestions have fallen from certain Honourable Members objecting to the controls that have been already established and suggesting that many of them might be done away with at once. For one thing, Sir, with such sense of responsibility as I can claim, I would advise the Government of India to go slow on these suggestions. It is not easy to establish controls and it would be very unwise to take away controls that have been established unless it is proved that these controls are actually working mischievously. I think, Sir, that salutary controls as regards procurement, distribution, price and so on, which have already been established, should continue and should be perfected; and even after the war is over, the Government of India should take time to decide whether the controls that had been established during the period of the war should be relaxed or done away with.

With regard to the obtaining of surpluses from cultivators, Madras has elaborated its methods recently in certain districts. I was glad to hear from the Honourable Mr. Sen that the Government of India had pressed on the Government of Madras the desirability of extending district wide rationing to the district of Vizagapatam also. The Madras Government have since not exactly introduced district-wide rationing in Vizagapatam on the lines of Malabar but they have introduced in Vizagapatam and 5 other districts a system of what they call informal rationing. The idea is that in the rural areas you have got to reckon with a very large body of producers and rationing is required only primarily in the case of non-producers and such of the producers as do not produce enough for the year's requirements. For catering to these latter classes of people they have decided to introduce this informal system of rationing which a very senior officer of the Provincial Civil Service suggested for one of those 6 districts, namely, Tinnevely. He evolved it himself as a result of experience. The Madras Government have now accepted it and extended it to these five other districts.

[Sir N. Gopaldaswami Ayyangar.]

The surplus, as I said, Sir, is determined for each cultivator and for each village. The surplus supplies available in the district are determined. They are moved from villages which are in surplus to villages which are in deficit and these non-producers and what I might call inadequate producers who are rationed get ration tickets with which they go to the accredited shops in the different villages for the purpose of purchasing their requirements either throughout the year as in the case of non-producers or only during a certain part of the year as in the case of inadequate producers. These methods have been evolved because of the realisation by the Government of the Province of the principle that as regards compulsory procurement of foodgrains, a uniform policy is under existing conditions neither desirable nor suitable for all districts in the Province, some of which are surplus districts, others are approximately self-sufficient and a third class could be described as lightly deficit districts and the last class might be described as heavily deficit districts. The notifications which have been issued by the Madras Government for the purpose of compulsory procurement in these areas have the following main features. They provide for compulsory procurement of paddy being enforced in the case of the 6 districts of Vizagapatam, Coimbatore, Ramnad, Tinnevely, South Canara and Trichinopoly. In these districts, every person—and I would draw the Honourable Mr. Kalikar's attention to this—every person who whether as a holder, occupier, tenant, sub-tenant or lessee or in any other capacity cultivates any land with paddy or who receives any portion of such paddy as rent or interest or as repayment of a loan in kind, is required to sell the surplus of such paddy as determined by the District Collector or an officer authorised by him to the District Collector or to an agent appointed and notified by him in this behalf and to no one else. In determining this surplus, allowances are ordered to be made for the quantity required for consumption by the person and his household, for payment of rent or interest in kind or for repayment of loans in kind, for payment to his tenants of advances for agricultural expenses, for seed, for cultivation expenses and wages of labourers and for payment to village artisans or other persons entitled to receive grain as a customary remuneration for services. The only item which this does not provide for is what the Honourable Mr. Kalikar referred to as provision for a rainy day. I do not know exactly what he means by that expression.

THE HONOURABLE MR. V. V. KALIKAR: May I explain, Sir? After all the agriculturist of India and especially of my Province depends upon the vagaries of nature. If you do not get a good harvest next year, you must have something with you to meet your needs.

THE HONOURABLE SIR N. GOPALASWAMI AYYANGAR: The idea of the deduction that is to be made from the production of the land for the person and his household in these orders is that such quantities of grain as the person may require and his family may require, until the next harvest should be deducted before the surplus is determined. I think that is all that you could expect a Government to make in arriving at the surplus.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Please conclude your remarks.

THE HONOURABLE SIR N. GOPALASWAMI AYYANGAR: I will do so in five minutes.

In the districts of Vizagapatam, Coimbatore, Ramnad, Tinnevely, South Canara and the Nilgiris every cultivator is required to sell his entire surplus of millets on the same lines as I have just described. A graded levy with different scales for irrigated and non-irrigated millets will be made from cultivators in the districts of Cuddappah, Kurnool, Bellary, Anantapur, Salem, etc.

With regard to transport, Sir, there has been improvement. But I wish only to mention the points without elaborating them which I think are defects which require remedying. We want a closer co-ordination of procurement operations which are largely in charge of provincial staff with movement programmes which are largely in the hands of Central Government people.

Secondly in the case of some areas a maximum limit of wagon supply has been prescribed. Particularly in the case of Malabar I found it difficult to persuade the Madras Government to move surpluses which were available in other areas to Malabar because they said that whatever stocks or surplus they might find elsewhere, they could not get the wagons for moving them. Time lag, want of correspondence between arrival of stocks at railway stations and arrival of wagons, lack of protected storage at railway stations are other difficulties. Exposure to rain and dust, I need hardly say, is not a little responsibility for deterioration in quality. Railways have to be compelled to provide adequate covered accommodation for goods like foodgrains, especially at stations where large quantities have to be stored temporarily.

Then, Sir, I would only say one or two words on the question of prices. The general statement of policy which the Honourable Mr. Sen has made, namely, that prices should represent a just and reasonable compromise between the interests of producers and consumers is no doubt unexceptionable. The outside limit should, however, be a price not beyond the purchasing capacity of the generality of consumers. Within this limit producers may profit but not profiteer. If producers costs exceed this limit, steps should be taken to reduce them by other controls, for example the control of prices of articles, etc., which enter into the cost of production or by subsidising them. Subsidising may also be necessary in respect of those consumers whose purchasing power is below the limit. One broad statement of principles I would place before the Government of India for their consideration in regard to their food policy. I consider, Sir, that the two cardinal principles of food policy, whether it is a long-range one or a short term one during a period of war or other stress should, if it is to implement the most important of the Four Freedoms, namely Freedom from Want, be Firstly that neither the production nor the procurement nor the distribution of essential goods of which food is the most vital should be permitted to depend on somebody, whether it is an individual or a firm or even a Provincial Government, being able to make a profit out of it in excess of what may be legitimate compensation for the actual services rendered by them; and Secondly, that such essential goods should be made available to every citizen in quantities and qualities adequate for his needs even when he cannot pay for them at all or cannot pay for them at the price fixed. The second of these propositions requires the adoption of a policy of subsidizing prices for the less fortunate. I do not blind myself to the fact that financial considerations of grave import would be involved. They might at first sight look forbidding, but the problem has got to be squarely faced and I would only say at the end that financial pusillanimity or chicken-heartedness would be unforgivable in what is a matter of life and death to the people.

THE HONOURABLE SAIYED MOHAMED PADSHAH SAHIB BAHADUR (Madras: Muhammadan): Sir, from the views expressed in this House on the debate these last two days and those expressed in another place, it is obvious that the food position in the country though better than last year is far from satisfactory. It is clear that the matter still bristles with difficulties. It cannot be gainsaid that the situation in general is still serious and acute in parts of the province from which I come. You have heard, Sir, of the miseries and privations that the people in some parts of my province like Vizagapatam, Coimbatore, South Canara and Malabar have suffered, and even now, though the position seems to have improved, there is not enough food to go round in those parts for the people of those unfortunate areas to keep body and soul together. Sir, it is really very pitiable that in one district in the Madras Province alone, namely, Malabar, in the course of one year as many as 60,000 people have been the victims of epidemics and malnutrition. That is something which the Government should take steps to prevent in the future. In Madras too recently there were difficulties. Until recently there were great difficulties in Madras not only for food but also for firewood and other necessaries of life, and this in spite of the best efforts that the Madras Government have been making from the onset to combat the evil effects of the crisis that has come over the country. The

[Saiyed Mohamed Padshah Sahib Bahadur.]
 Honourable Mr. Gopalaswami Ayyangar, who has just resumed his seat, has recounted to you all the efforts and the arrangements that have been made by the Madras Government; but in spite of all that, if Madras has failed to get the desired result, it is to some extent due to unwillingness, to the want of readiness on the part of the Central Government to come to its rescue. Madras, unlike Bengal, has not been able to attract to itself that amount of public attention and publicity which, for obvious reasons, Bengal has succeeded in attracting to itself. I have mentioned this with a view to appeal to the authorities at Delhi to be a little more considerate towards the people in my unfortunate province which is far away from the capital of India.

Sir, though the facts go to show that the situation is far from satisfactory, still the blame for this does not lie at the door entirely of the Food Department. From what the Honourable Mr. Sen said yesterday in his very lucid and interesting speech, it is quite clear that he has been trying to put the best face upon a very bad case, a case which it has fallen to his lot to defend, but which is the result of the culpable neglect of the Government of the country to have taken the necessary steps which they ought to have done over a century for helping India to get to be self-sufficient in the matter of food. It has been the neglect, the callous indifference of the Government which had led an agricultural country like India to have continued to be insufficient in the matter of its food and to depend upon imports from abroad for feeding the people in the land. As I have said, the whole blame does not lie at the door of the Food Department, which I think has really been trying to tackle a very difficult situation and has to some extent succeeded in achieving some results. The very fact that as many as 42 million people in the country have been brought under rationing is something to the credit of the Department. But even here, I am sorry to observe that the rationing that is now obtaining is not quite satisfactory. It is very defective and needs to be drastically improved. Not only has it got to be introduced in several other parts of the country, but it has also got to be very substantially improved in many directions.

In the first place, the food that is allowed to those who hold ration cards is not enough to help them keep in good health. It has been admitted that nothing less than one pound of diet would go to keep a man in tolerably good health. But we find that the amount of food allowed to people under the rationing system falls very much short of this quantity. The ration varies from area to area. In some places, like Cochin and Travancore, to which pointed attention was drawn by my Honourable friend Pandit Kunzru yesterday, the people in actual practice get only 6½ ounces of rice per day, even though they are allowed 8 ounces; it is all because of the fact that there is not enough food in the country to enable the people to get their due share of the food from the ration shops. It is no use merely telling the people to go and buy so much, unless that amount of food is made available to all the people who hold ration cards. In Malabar the quantity of rice allowed to the people was one pound per day. Subsequently it was cut down to 12 ounces. And Government have now said that they are contemplating cutting this down still further. I should like to sound a note of warning to the Government that if they do that they will very surely run the risk of causing undue hardship and suffering in that part of the country. Sir, even though one pound is said to be sufficient to keep a man in good health, we all know that this quantity is not enough for a manual labourer; and in Malabar we have got quite a vast population which is engaged on manual labour. I will conclude my remarks on this aspect of the question by stating that the Government should not put into effect the idea that they have of cutting down the quantity of rice given to the people in Malabar.

Sir, we are told that it is not merely rice that would be available to the individual holder of the card, but he would be enabled to supplement his rice quota with other foodgrains. But, as you know, it is very difficult for a man to change his habits. It is very difficult for him to be persuaded to switch over from one dietary to another. It cannot be done easily; and much less by a Governmental decree. For people in certain areas who are accustomed to take

rice, a mere recommendation on the part of Government that they should supplement their diet by adding wheat to it will not cut ice. Government will have to try and educate the people and persuade them to take to a substitute. For this purpose, they will have to demonstrate to the people there how palatable and good dishes can be prepared from those other foodgrains which they want the people to substitute for rice.

I do not want to say anything more about this, but while I am on the aspect of the quantity allowed under the rationing system, I wish to ask the Food Department why it is that they allow such a small quantity of sugar to the people. So far as I know, there is not much scarcity of sugar in the country. Eight ounces per week seems to be too little per head, and I would request the Government to see if it will be possible for them to increase the quantity of sugar which they allow to individuals under the present rationing system.

Just one word about the quality of the foodstuffs. Much has been said about deterioration in quality. I would like to ask only one question: how is it that immediately the Government took control of the foodstuffs, immediately the rationing system was introduced and the Government took control of the ration shops, there was a falling off in the quality of foodstuffs? To persons like me who are not in the know of things, the only obvious reason seems to be that the agencies through which the Government is making its purchases are not doing their work properly, and that instead of securing really good and wholesome food they allow a great part of the quantity that they purchase to be of very inferior quality, and for reasons which are quite obvious. Therefore, I

4-15 P.M. would request the Food Department to see that this kind of thing is stopped. How shocking that for saving the reputation of its staff, the Food Department should not be in a position to bring to book those people who commit this social sin. It looks as though much of the foodstuff that is sold in the shops has come from underground. Purchases have been made from people who have withheld their stocks from markets for long. I would request Government to try and eradicate corruption in this direction. The quality has become so bad that most of the towns seem to take exception to the kind of things sold in the ration shops. There too the Civil Supplies Department seems to come to the rescue of its people. In some places it has been said that the Health Officers of municipalities have no say in this matter.

As regards price, previous speakers have referred to it, but there is one thing which remains to be said about it. You may provide the quantity of food required for an area, but unless you make the price such as to bring it within the reach of the poor man, you would have failed in your purpose. The very conception of rationing is that every section of the population should be enabled to get their quantity of food, and unless you make the food really available; and bring it within the means of the poor section of the population, this will not be realised. To bring down the price and help the poorer sections of the population to get their share of foodstuffs, Government should if necessary subsidise food. Large amounts are spent in other belligerent countries to help their civil population to get their food supplies. We understand that in England about ten times the amount that was spent formerly to subsidise food is now being spent for that purpose. One word about this reserve of five lakhs. It is said that the Government of India has not been able to build it up. My humble submission is that we cannot take things lightly. The Honourable Food Member said in the other House that even though the Central Government has not been able to build up its reserve, the Provincial Governments have stocks against their rationing. This is merely window-dressing. This kind of window-dressing and side-tracking will not do. This question has to be looked at from what is going to happen shortly. We all expect the war in Europe to come to an end soon, and then India will become the most important fighting base. It will also become a big supplying base, and how are we going to fulfil this function unless we are self-sufficient in the matter of food. Therefore, I would impress on the Food Department the necessity of inducing British Government to give the amount of food that they

[Saiyed Mohamed Padshah Sahib Bahadur.]

have promised and also to get food from the United Nations. India really cannot be an effective base for operations if there is starvation, hunger, and privation all round.

THE HONOURABLE MR. SUSIL KUMAR ROY CHOWDHURY (West Bengal: Non-Muhammadan): The problem of food in India has become so acute that it is well that the Government of India are having discussions on the food situation every session. Food situation is acute even now. Though the prices of foodgrains have come down considerably in the province of Bengal, the prices of other foodstuffs like milk, fish, vegetables, etc., have increased to five or six times their normal price level. It is beyond the capacity of the people of Bengal to purchase those articles at these prices, even though they are absolute necessities in a Bengali household. Then Sir, food grains like rice and *atta* which we are getting from the ration shops in Bengal are of very bad quality, and sometimes so bad that they are unfit not only for human consumption, but for cattle consumption as well. When the Government of Bengal are confronted with the question of the bad quality of the supplies, they at once throw the blame on the door of the Government of India. I do not know who is really responsible for the supply of this very bad quality of foodgrains, but it is time that the Government of India should settle this issue with the Government of Bengal.

Now, I come, Sir, to the very important question about which a reference has been made by my friend the Honourable Mr. Kalikar, and in regard to which you asked the Honourable Mr. Sen and the Honourable the Food Member to say whether that statement was correct.

May I ask the Honourable Mr. Sen and the Honourable the Food Member why price of rice is still maintained at the ration shops at the rate of Rs. 16/4 per maund in Calcutta and other rationed areas, whereas it is sold now almost everywhere outside the rationed areas in Bengal at the following rates: coarse variety at Rs. 9 or Rs. 10 or even less, and the very fine variety at Rs. 12 per maund—this fine variety you cannot get from the ration shops at all. I do not see any reason why the fine variety of rice should not be supplied to and made available at the ration shops for those who are willing to pay a little higher price for the same.

Sir, I also ask the Government of India whether the time has not come when they should fix the minimum prices for rice and paddy, so that the agriculturist may get a fair return, considering the high prices prevailing for all necessary commodities required by him for himself and his family.

Then I would also urge the Government to provide more transport facilities and the Government should undertake to build small country boats in larger number, and sell them to the villagers at controlled or even subsidised prices.

Lastly, I would ask the Government to open dairies in all the important cities of India, and they should make available to the agriculturists ploughing cattle and implements at very reasonable prices.

THE HONOURABLE MR. MAHENDRA LAL DAS (Nominated Non-Official): Mr. President, with your permission I rise to place before the House a picture of the general food situation prevalent in Assam at present. From the debate that has taken place here on the floor of the House and from the speeches—

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: You just tell us your important points, do not state your troubles.

THE HONOURABLE MR. MAHENDRA LAL DAS: I shall be very brief. From the speeches that have been delivered by Honourable Members here I should say that no other province of India is so unfortunate as Assam is.

Sir, salt is a thing which is the most vital necessity of life. In Assam, every one in the rural areas, in the interior parts, is clamouring for salt. After the last March session of the Council, when I went back and made my appearance, the villagers in large numbers came to me with a view to making

inquiries as to why they were not getting salt. So, I had to address the Honourable the Food Member and the Honourable the Food Secretary letters intimating that Assam was suffering from a severe shortage of salt. Some time later the reply came from the Secretary saying that they were going to make some arrangement with the Bengal Government for some amount of salt to be sent to Assam for distribution and that that would improve the condition. My submission is this. We are ordinary people. We are always in close touch with ordinary people of our class and we know their needs. Every day, the people come and cry for salt. Sometimes we find people coming with fish but won't accept the price for the fish but would demand as barter some salt for the fish. This is the state of things.

With regard to sugar, though the shortage is not so very acute as in the case of salt, I would like to place one thing before the House. Once I had been to Shillong and there, the lady President of the Legislative Council wanted to meet in some function Lady Clow and arranged a tea party. Some of the prominent ladies of the place were invited and there I happened to see a letter in circulation asking every one of the ladies to come from their home with a little quantity of sugar for tea. This is a fact, Sir.

With regard to *ata* and *maida*,—there is the general complaint here also, Sir, the moment the bag is opened, the whole atmosphere is stinking with bad smell all around, and on examination the whole bag is found to be full of maggots. It is unfit for human consumption. It is rather safe not to send this kind of *ata* and *maida* for consumption. The Government of India have entrusted this business of supply to Shaw Wallace of Calcutta but their supplies are very irregular. I sent in my letters to the Food Member and to the Secretary figures of irregular quantities supplied month by month to our provinces. It seems that Shaw Wallace, the Government agent appointed for the purpose of supply, are very irregular and it seems that they have no sense of duty.

Sir, with regard to rice, though I have no complaint to make, Assam being a rice producing country, yet I should like to place before the House that this year we had no rains and the weather was not very favourable and so we are not in a position to expect a very good harvest. If there is shortage of rice in Assam, I hope the Government of India would make some arrangement so that the people of Assam may have their proper food, Assam being a place practically within the war zone even now. Assam is not yet free from danger. In the last week of October, for a day or two, passenger booking was closed in our Railways and this is one of the indications in what position Assam still is.

With regard to the price of rice in Assam, the Honourable Mr. Sen said the other day in the course of his speech that rice is selling at Rs. 14 per maund. I do not know, Sir, where and how he has been able to get this figure.

THE HONOURABLE MR. B. R. SEN: I quoted the wholesale price, not the retail price.

THE HONOURABLE MR. MAHENDRA LAL DAS: But, to our knowledge, Sir, the rationed rice is selling at something like Rs. 0-6-6 a seer which comes to about Rs. 16-4-0 per maund, and in the bazars and *hats* we find rice selling at about Rs. 20 per maund. These are the prices prevailing in Assam. My submission is that the Food Member and the Food Secretary, who are responsible for feeding the people should at least bring down the price to such a level which would not be beyond the purchasing capacity of landless men there. With these words, I conclude my speech, Sir.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: (Food Member): Sir, during the last two days I have listened with the respect and attention which the subject deserves to the debate in this House, and a little earlier, for three days, I listened to the same debate in the Assembly. Sir, I think I am free to acknowledge that the suggestions made by the Honourable Members of both the Houses are of extreme value to the Department of Food. Particularly, Sir, the debate in this House has I think been in a very restrained and constructive vein. I am most grateful to the Honourable Members of this

[Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava.]

House for their appreciation of whatever little the Food Department have been able to do during the last 16 or 17 months since when they have been working to a co-ordinated policy. Sir, the coconuts handed to me in this House have been of a benign type and they have even been accompanied by the good wishes of the Members of the House in true Hindu style. I am particularly grateful for the valuable suggestions which my friends the Honourable Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru, the Honourable Mr. Sapru, the Honourable Mr. Hossain Imam, and lastly the Honourable Sir Gopaldaswami Ayyangar have made. Their speeches show a realistic grasp of the problem with which we are faced and I am thankful to them that they have recognised some of the difficulties with which we are faced. Sir the House is aware that so far as the Food Department is concerned, it has never been desirous of burking discussion of any matter connected with food. We have readily and willingly welcomed debates in both the Houses in every Session and we have appreciated any suggestions that have been made on the floors of the two Houses. But I would like to remind the Members of both the Houses that there is a Standing Committee of the Legislature on Food. It consists of 15 Members elected by both the Houses and I would appreciate if matters of detail are left by common consent to that Committee which meets regularly once in 2 or 3 months or as the occasion demands. It is far easier for us to discuss those matters around the table and to give satisfaction to the representatives of the Legislatures there.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Are all these matters referred to the Advisory Committee, Sir?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: We place at every meeting of the Committee a detailed progress report and we welcome discussion on any subject connected with Food. Members themselves raise questions and I submit, Sir, that it is a better forum for the discussion of matters of detail. Perhaps by agreement between the leaders of different parties whose representatives are members of this Standing Committee, some such working arrangement may be reached. It will save the time of the House and it will also enable us to satisfy the representatives of the people in the Legislature better.

Then, I find, Sir, that a lot of matters of local importance, provincial matters, are raised in these debates here. While I am prepared to answer all the points raised to the best of my capacity, it would I think be agreed that these matters ought to be raised elsewhere, particularly those relating to Provinces where there are Ministries and Assemblies functioning.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: What about section 95 Provinces, Sir?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: I do not mind taking the blame myself for the faults of others, but still I think justice demands that these matters should in the first instance be raised in those Assemblies.

THE HONOURABLE MR. V. V. KALIKAR: What about section 93 Provinces?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: Sir, I have said that I am prepared to answer criticisms relating to every Province to the best of my capacity. I am not suggesting that you should not raise the matters here. But I am only saying that in the first instance such matters may be discussed locally in the Provinces concerned.

Sir, I find also that there is a tendency in these debates to refer to what was done or not done in connection with Food in the old days, why the Food Department did not begin to function when the war broke out and matters like that. Sir, this is a question which has been debated over and over again. It was debated so far as I remember in this House last year and what answer we

could give we gave them. It is therefore not necessary I submit, Sir, to raise that question once again. In any case what we are doing here today is to review the progress made since we last met, and it would, I suggest, be in the interests of the despatch of business if we confined ourselves to matters pertaining to that period. The House knows that the Woodhead Commission is busy with its work and all matters relating to the causes of famine or events relating to the old days will come under review by them. So it is not necessary for me to reply to the remarks which have been made here today about the failure of the Government to start operations in connection with food earlier than 1942.

Then again, Sir, there is a tendency, I am sorry to say, to introduce a little of politics into food. I deprecate this, because I consider man's food is too sacred to be brought within the controversial sphere of politics. I agree that if there were a national Government they may have done better probably; I do not contest that. But, Sir, within our limited sphere we are trying to do our best. The national Government is not here. That is not my fault. And we must all, I think, agree that, in the circumstances in which we find ourselves, we cannot leave the starving man alone to take care of himself.

So much for general remarks. I will now deal with some of the important points raised by the Honourable Members during the debate. I cannot promise that I will deal with every point raised, but I will try my best to cover the ground as best as I can. My Honourable friend Rai Bahadur Sri Narain Mahtha complained that rice was being sold to labour at collieries at prices higher than the controlled rates in Bihar. I have answered an Assembly question on this matter. The fact is that the Bihar Government are supplying the collieries with Nepal rice which they have had to purchase at rates higher than the rates prevailing in Bihar. The difference between the controlled retail rates and the rates at which Nepal rice is being supplied to the collieries is not being passed on to labour but is being debited to the collieries themselves. In Bengal, which has also received Nepal rice, there are no controlled rates for retail sales. In Bengal they have a pool price, which now is Rs. 16-4-0. The complication which has arisen in Bihar due to a fixed retail price therefore does not arise in Bengal.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: What is the controlled price in Bihar?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: It varies from district to district.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: In colliery districts?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: I could not give the information offhand. There is a difference, but it is not a big one. The Bihar Government argue that since they have purchased Nepal rice at prices higher than the controlled prices, there is no reason why they should suffer a loss.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: But what is the difference between the two prices?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: I have not got the controlled price. It varies from district to district. But I wish to assure the House that the matter is engaging the attention of the Food Department at the moment. We are still discussing it with the Bihar Government.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA: Is there any appreciable difference in quality?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: No, not that I am aware of.

Well, Sir, the next point I would like to deal with relates to the question asked by my Honourable friend Rai Bahadur Mahtha again, as to why the Government of India have not approached the Government of the United States or of Australia or of Canada in the matter of securing of imports. As the House

[Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava.]

knows, the Government of India cannot approach those Governments direct. They have placed their requirements before the London Food Council, which is the appropriate body, and which co-ordinates the surpluses and demands in the Empire countries. The allocation of the world supplies of foodstuffs at the disposal of the United Nations is, the House would probably like to know, the responsibility of the Combined Food Board at Washington, and any allotment that is made to us in India is made by that Council in Washington.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA: My question virtually amounted to this: Did you represent India's scarcity to that authority?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: The authority, so far as we in India are concerned, is the London Food Council—that is the body for all the countries of the British Empire—and that Council then goes to the Washington Board.

A great deal has been said in the course of the discussions about wastage and deterioration of foodstuffs. I share the anxiety shown by the Honourable Members on this subject. It has been worrying us too a great deal. But, as stated by the Honourable Mr. Sen in his speech, some of the deterioration at least was due to circumstances beyond the control of anybody. The balance may have been due to circumstances which could have been avoided if they had been foreseen. But the House will remember that last year this time we had to send to Bengal very large consignments of foodstuffs to meet their immediate requirements. We literally poured stuff into Bengal. Bengal was not ready to receive all that stuff; they had no godown accommodation at the time, and they improvised what they could. A good deal of deterioration was caused by their having to make use of godowns which were not suited for the purpose, or by their having to stack the foodgrains in the open, as in the Botanical Gardens of Calcutta. I am sure that such wastage will not be repeated. We have now taken in hand a comprehensive scheme for the construction of godowns in all parts of the country. The Government of India made an offer to all the provinces that they would advance half the cost of these godowns.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Not contribute?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: Advance so as to get a move on. I myself during my tours tried to impress on the Provincial Governments the very urgent need for constructing godowns. As for the stocks of the Government of India itself we have taken in hand the construction of large godowns in the principal ports and in other centres. Sir, I am sure that the House will realise that in these matters we have to learn from our mistakes.

I would like to say here that the loss, although it looks big on the face of it, is not really so big as some people would believe it to be, considering the large quantities of foodstuffs which had to be handled at a time of emergency and stress.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Could the Honourable Member give us some idea of the proportion of the loss?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: We have not got definite, authoritative figures, but I think I would be safe in saying that the loss is below 2 per cent.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Of all the grains handled in Calcutta?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: Yes, the total quantity of grains handled. Well, Sir, this is not so very bad as it might appear to be.

On the question of quality of foodstuffs there is no doubt that a great deal remains to be done. Last year we were talking of quantity, this year we are talking of quality, that in itself is to my mind a sign of progress. What is

happening is that the supplying provinces have so far not agreed with the receiving provinces on a system of inspection. I held a conference in Delhi about six weeks ago to settle this question. The supplying provinces want inspection at the point of despatch. They insist that the receiving provinces should send their representatives to the supplying stations and get the stuff inspected there. The receiving provinces urge that this is not at all satisfactory from their point of view: they want inspection at their end. It is very difficult for the supplying provinces to accept this arrangement, especially when they are not making any profit on the supply of foodgrains, and they are not agreeable to accept the loss due to rejections at the other end. The matter is still pending before us. We have not been able to bring about an agreement between the supplying and receiving provinces, but what we are now doing is to set up a Directorate of Inspection in the Food Department itself which will supervise and guide inspection arrangements of both the supplying and recipient provinces. I hope this arrangement might bring about an improvement.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Will Inspection be the responsibility of the Centre?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: We shall advise, guide, and supervise.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: No good.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: We cannot undertake anything like that. The Directorate will be able, for example, to ascertain exactly what is being done by the various provinces to ensure quality, and what kind of organisation is being employed for the purpose of inspection. So far the Food Department has left this to the Provinces themselves. We are now going to take a definite hand in it, and I hope this might result in some improvement. I cannot say more than that.

My Honourable friend Mr. Kunzru referred to the size of rations in the south, particularly in Cochin, Travancore, and Malabar. I have got here authoritative figures which I want to give to the House. In Cochin the rice ration today is 6·4 ozs., and wheat and other dry grains 5·6 ozs., total 12 ozs.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Will the Honourable Member allow me to explain this point? I have done so repeatedly, but evidently the explanation has made no impression on the Member in charge of the Food Department. The Cochin Government does not compel its people to buy daily only 10 ozs. of food grains, but it compels them to buy at least 10 ozs. daily. This quantity of food consists of 8 ozs. of rice and 2 ozs. of wheat. The card-holders can, however, buy more wheat if they like.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Is it 8 ozs. of rice per day?

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: I have explained it already, but I will explain it again. The Cochin Government is allowing every man a fixed rice ration for six days out of every 8, and that is 8 ozs. per day. This is done only in the belief that all the consumers will not be in a position to take advantage of this offer. If all the people were in a position to buy their food requirements in accordance with the scale laid down—the compulsory scale laid down—by the Cochin Government, it will not be in a position to supply 8 ozs. of rice to every consumer even 6 days out of every 8.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: I will not enter into an argument with my friend over there, but the figures which I am giving to the House are authoritative figures.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Mine have also been obtained from the Cochin Government.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: I have just been to these parts, and I can vouch for the accuracy of these figures.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: I have been there too.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: Travancore: 8 ozs. wheat and dry grains 5 ozs. total 13 ozs. Malabar: (Urban): Rice 10.4 ozs., wheat and dry grains 2.08 ozs., total 12.48 ozs., Malabar: (Rural areas) Rice 9 ozs., wheat and dry grains 3.48 ozs., total 12.48 ozs.

These are official figures and I hope the House will accept them as being correct.

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. S. MOTILAL: Are steamers supplied by the State concerned?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: Yes, I have just been there.

The other point raised by my Honourable friend Mr. Kunzru, over which he did not seem to see eye to eye with me, was in connection with the quantities of imports. Sir, there is no manner of doubt in my own mind as to the information which I supplied to the Assembly and also when I intervened in this debate here. What we said, Sir, in the Press Communiqué which we issued in the month of July was this:

“His Majesty's Government who are in close touch with the food situation in India have informed the Government of India that arrangements will be made to ship 400,000 tons of wheat to Indian ports before the end of September 1944. This quantity is in addition to the 400,000 tons of foodgrains imports, mostly wheat, arranged since October 1943, shipments of which continue and have almost been completed.”

Sir, the foodgrain shipments to India during the 12 months October 1943 to September 1944 will, therefore, amount to 800,000 tons. That was the statement we issued in July. What I told the Assembly was that we had already received 650,000 tons and we had advices to the effect that another 95,000 tons were on the high seas. This totals up to 745,000 tons and we may be receiving further advices. So, the gap between the quantity promised and the quantity shipped is not very wide. In any case, in all my submissions, I have been referring to the assurance given to us by H. M. G. over the quantity to be shipped during the last quarter. Sir, there is no difference between us and the other side of the House over the question of imports. We have been pressing H. M. G. as hard as ever we could and if we have not received more foodgrains during the last year, it is not our fault. I have done my best in the matter and I am glad to be able to acknowledge that His Excellency the Viceroy has been behind me solidly over this matter.

Sir, why we have not got more, it is not for me to say. But the needs of India have been placed before H. M. G. and the London Food Council with all the emphasis that we can command and if during a period of great stress so far as the European war theatre went we have been able to secure this much, it is, I think, in the nature of an achievement. For the future, I am glad to be able to say that the prospects are much brighter. The war situation is better and the recent visit of Sir Henry French has, I think, done much to convince H. M. G. and the London Food Council that what we have been asking for is not because we do not need it.

THE HONOURABLE SIR RAHIMTOOLA CHINYOY: (Nominated Non-Official): What about the Gregory Committee's report, Sir? They said that 10 lakhs tons should be imported for consumption and 5 lakhs tons for reserve. What has happened to that?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: That is the Gregory Committee's report but that is not what we have been actually able to secure. I have confessed it.

THE HONOURABLE SIR RAHIMTOOLA CHINYOY: But surely our aim should have been that.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: That has been my aim, exactly. I have done my best. But, if in spite of that, I have not secured that quantity, it is not my fault.

THE HONOURABLE RAJ BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA: The Government of India was not believed until Henry French came.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: The Government of India believe in it, let me assure you. Over this matter, there has been no difference of opinion at all and we have done our very best.

Sir, I have already taken a long time and the hour is getting late. I will therefore briefly deal with two or three small points that have been raised and conclude my speech. The point has been raised as to why the Government of India have not taken steps to approach the U. N. R. R. A. Probably the House knows that the original object of U. N. R. R. A. was to assist only areas liberated by the armed forces. It was intended for that purpose alone. Recently they have made a change and now they are prepared to do the following:—"In so far as funds and facilities permit, any area important to military operations of the United Nations, which is stricken by famine or disease may be included in the benefits to be made available by the U. N. R. R. A." This enables us now to approach them. This change has only recently been brought about, but, Sir, I would like the House to bear in mind that U. N. R. R. A. themselves have no foodgrains. They will also have to go to the Washington Food Council and if we are getting this stuff direct from them, we cannot duplicate the demand. The source of supply is one. However, we may be able to get some additional quantities in the name of areas like Assam and Chittagong where there has been some distress caused by the war —

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: But when?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: Let us get our main supply first. Whatever we get from them will not be much when we have already got a large contribution from the Washington Council direct.

Sir, as regards Calcutta, some speakers have referred to the need for our going on with last year's arrangements. Sir, as I said in the other House, I feel extremely doubtful of our being able to feed Calcutta as we did last year, because the demand for rice from other parts like the South is very great, and while I agreed to feed Calcutta from the Centre last year with a view to restore confidence in Bengal, I do not feel honestly that the same treatment is called for this year. I am prepared to consider the demands of Calcutta on the same basis as the demands of other parts of India. But I do not think that Bengal should still be treated as being in nurse's arms.

Sir, the point has been raised about surcharge made by the U. P. Government on mustard seed and mustard oil. This is a matter which has been engaging our attention for some time.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: For a very long time.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: Yes, Sir. But I would like to say that this matter is not really the concern of the Food Department. This export surcharge is dealt with in the Commerce Department. However, I have interested myself in this matter and we are even now discussing it with the U. P. Government. The reason why they imposed the surcharge was that they felt that in Bengal the retail prices of mustard seed and oil were not being properly controlled. Well, they controlled their prices of mustard seed and mustard oil in U. P. They stopped all exports. They did not allow sales being made above a certain price. They felt that the middlemen in Bengal should not have the benefit of the drop in prices which they had brought about in the U. P. They wanted to keep the Rs. 2 a maund for the purpose of subsidizing food for the poor man and they said "Until we are satisfied that Bengal has controlled retail prices of mustard seed and oil we are not willing to give up this surcharge."

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Is not there a controlled price for Calcutta for mustard oil?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: Wholesale, not retail price.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: Wholesale, retail and everything, Sir.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: This is a matter which is still under discussion. That was the reason given by the U. P. Government. I am not saying that it is right or wrong.

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM: A year back, not now.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: The matter is still engaging the attention of the two Governments.

Then my Honourable friend Pandit Kunzru wanted to have information about subventions which the Centre has given to the U. P. Government. Sir, in September 1943 the price of wheat in U. P. shot up as compared with the price in the Punjab. The Centre was deeply concerned to keep the prices down and there was no way of doing that except by the U. P. Government buying the wheat at the market price and reselling it at a lower price. We had therefore to agree to meet this loss which the U. P. Government incurred on reducing the prices which was an all-India matter. If the U. P. price had not come down, the price of wheat would have gone up all over India and it was a matter of great importance to the country as a whole. The U. P. Government have so far earned about Rs. 67 lakhs towards this subsidy.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Was any part of this subsidy given as compensation for wastage in storage?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: No, Sir. And then Sir, there was a slab system too. The first 25 lakhs were borne by the U. P. Government themselves and of the next 75 lakhs, three-fourths was to be borne by the Provincial Government and one-fourth by the Centre, and then beyond one crore, the loss was to be borne half and half by the two Governments. I think it was a business-like arrangement which benefited the country as a whole.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: What was the total loss?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: So far 67 lakhs have been debited to the Centre.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: And three times that to the Province?

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: Yes, because they are selling their foodgrains to the poorer classes at a subsidized price under the provisioning scheme in all the cities.

Sir, something has been said about the defects of Delhi and Ajmer rationing. Both these matters are engaging my attention. I am sorry if Honourable Members have been put to any inconvenience, but I hope next time when they come here things would be working smoothly and nobody would have any complaint to make. We are inquiring into the complaints at Ajmer and I hope something will eventuate very soon.

THE HONOURABLE PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU: Delhi also.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: Delhi is constantly engaging my attention.

One word more and I have finished, Sir. As to the question of prices, as usual two voices have been heard in this debate as well as in any other debate. There are those who stand for a rise of prices in the interest of the grower. Then there are others who want the price to come down still further, who consider that the present prices are not low enough for the average consumer. Sir, that is the problem with which I am faced every day. If I talk to my friends in the Punjab, they will ask me for higher prices; they will ask for free

trade, so that they might get those higher prices. If I go to Malabar, Cochin, Travancore, they complain to me that the prices at which we send them food-grains are not within the reach of the average consumer, are not within their means.

THE HONOURABLE MR. SUSIL KUMAR ROY CHOWDHURY: You should fix a minimum price so that agriculturists may not be exploited.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: There is no question of any minimum price except for wheat just now. We are watching the situation. My friend is thinking of rice. Rice has not yet come down to a level where it is necessary to think of a minimum price.

THE HONOURABLE MR. SUSIL KUMAR ROY CHOWDHURY: It has come down in Bengal to Rs. 7.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA: My information is that it is not so. Still we are watching the situation and when prices register a sharp fall, when they come down to uneconomic levels, the Government of India will not be behind in fixing a minimum price. But in most parts, the time has not come yet. In regard to wheat we have a minimum price operating in the Punjab, U. P. and Sind. We have guaranteed to buy all the wheat at that rate of Rs. 7-8-0. The House may rest assured that we shall not overlook the interests of the cultivator, while we must naturally protect the consumer, the poor man, who is poorer than the cultivator himself. The vast majority of those who died in the last Bengal famine were the landless labourers in the villages.

I have finished. I wish to assure the House that the Food Department, as a result of these debates, is neither in a chastened mood, nor in a complacent mood; it may be in a confident mood, but that confidence is tempered with caution.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: This concludes the debate on the food question.

The Council then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Thursday, the 16th November 1944.