

2nd November 1944

**THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY DEBATES**

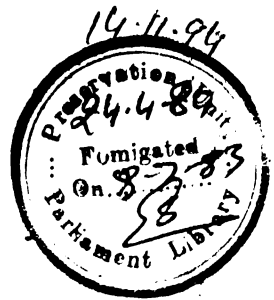
Official Report

Volume IV, 1944

(1st to 13th November 1944)

**TWENTY-FIRST SESSION
OF THE
FIFTH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,
1944**

Chamber Fumigated 18.10.73



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

President :

The Honourable Sir ABDUR RAHIM, K.C.S.I.

Deputy President :

Mr. AKHIL CHANDRA DATTA, M.L.A.

Panel of Chairmen :

Mr. ABDUL QAYUM, M.L.A.

Nawabzada MUHAMMAD LIAQUAT ALI KHAN, M.L.A.

Mr. K. C. NEOGY, M.L.A.

Sir HENRY RICHARDSON, M.L.A.

Secretary :

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Assistants of the Secretary :

Mr. M. N. KAUL, Barrister-at-Law.

Khan Bahadur S. G. HASNAIN.

● *Marshal :*

Captain Haji Sardar NUR AHMAD KHAN, M.C., I.O.M., I.A.

Committee on Petitions :

Mr. AKHIL CHANDRA DATTA, M.L.A. (*Chairman*).

Nawabzada MUHAMMAD LIAQUAT ALI KHAN, M.L.A.

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

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

Sardar SANT SINGH, M.L.A.

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 2nd November, 1944

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

STARRED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(a) ORAL ANSWERS

GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTION TO INDIAN LABOUR FEDERATION.

31. *Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: (a) With reference to the reply to my starred question No. 776 given on the 4th April, 1944, will the Honourable the Labour Member be pleased to state whether the sum of Rs. 13,000 given monthly to the Indian Labour Federation has been distributed amongst the President, Vice-Presidents and other office-bearers of the Federation? If so, in what proportion?

(b) Has the Honourable Member looked into the audited accounts of the Federation to find out how this money has been utilized? If not, why not? If so, does he propose to place the audited accounts on the table of the House from the date the subsidy of Rs. 13,000 a month was paid up to this day?

(c) Is it a fact that this question came up before the International Labour Conference, which met at Philadelphia, in the form of the comparative representative character of the Indian Labour Federation and the All-India Trade Union Congress, and what was the decision of the Conference? What has been decided for the future representation of the Indian Labour on the International Labour Conference to be given to an organization not living on subsidy?

(d) Have all the funds paid to the Indian Labour Federation been spent on the object for which they were given? If so, will he give a brief account of the activities of the Federation in this respect? If any part thereof has not been used for the purpose for which it was granted, will the Honourable Member please take steps to have that much portion refunded to the Government? If not, why not?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: (a) The grant is made to the Indian Federation of Labour as an organisation and is not distributed among its several office bearers.

(b) and (d) (First part). Government are not concerned with the accounts of the Federation, but with the manner in which the Government contribution has been spent by the Federation. They are satisfied that although full and regular accounts are not available for the earlier period of the grant, this expenditure has achieved the objects for which it was sanctioned. With effect from the 1st June, 1944 the accounts will be prepared in the Federation's office by a qualified accountant, and these will be available to audit in the ordinary way.

(c) The grant was mentioned in an objection by the All India Trade Union Congress made to the International Labour Office as regards the credentials of the workers' representatives in the Indian delegation. The Credentials Committee, in its report which was adopted by the Conference, asked the Conference to regard the Workers' delegate of India and his advisers at that session of the Conference as duly accredited. The Committee's report did not mention the grant but stated as follows :

"It does not doubt that the Government of India will continue its endeavours to make provision for the representation of both organisations in an appropriate manner at future sessions of the Conference and ventures to hope that the two organisations will reach an agreement, which will secure the effective participation in the International Labour Organisation of representatives of all sections of the Indian Trade Union movement. The Committee understands that, failing such an agreement, the Indian Workers' delegate to the next session of the

Conference will be appointed in agreement with the All India Trade Union Congress."

(d) (Second part). The monthly grant is spent on publications of printed literature, oral propaganda, 'visual publicity and the disseminating of reassuring news.

Mr. T. S. Avinashilingam Chettiar: May I know the object for which the grant has been given?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: The answer will be found in my answer to part (d) (Second part). It states that the grant is spent on publication of printed literature, oral propaganda, visual publicity and the disseminating of reassuring news about war.

Mr. T. S. Avinashilingam Chettiar: Are the Government satisfied that the money given by them has been spent on those items alone?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: Yes, they are satisfied.

Mr. T. S. Avinashilingam Chettiar: May I know if the Government are aware that part of this money has been spent on anti-Congress propaganda?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: They have no information.

Mr. T. S. Avinashilingam Chettiar: Will they inquire into the matter?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: I have stated in my answer that with effect from the 1st of June, 1944, the accounts will be prepared in the Federation's Office by a qualified accountant and these will be available to audit in the ordinary way.

Sardar Mangal Singh: May I know whether this payment is made monthly or yearly?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: I have no information on this point in front of me. I suppose it is made monthly.

Sardar Mangal Singh: Is it paid to the Secretary or the President?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: To some responsible officer of the organisation concerned.

Mr. T. S. Avinashilingam Chettiar: May I know what is the subject of this propaganda and the subjects of the publications issued?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: It is pro-war propaganda and pro-war literature.

Mr. Badri Dutt Pande: Will the Honourable Member be prepared to place the audited accounts on the table of the House?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: When it is audited, it will be placed on the table and will be available to the Members in the ordinary way.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: What is the period covered for which there have been no accounts?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: For the earlier period; we have not got the exact accounts but we have now made arrangements that the accounts will be kept by an officer of the Audit Department.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: What was the amount?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: I am unable to give the figure.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Who is responsible for not keeping these accounts in the earlier period—the Honourable Member himself or the Government or they?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: I have not followed the question.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: The Honourable Member said that for some period no accounts were kept.

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: I have not said that no accounts were kept. What I said was:

They are satisfied that, although full and regular accounts are not available for the earlier period of the grant, the money has been spent in the manner in which the Government desired it should be spent.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Is the Government satisfied that the money has been spent properly?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: I have no reason to believe to the contrary.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: It is not a question of the Honourable Member believing to the contrary

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

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: What evidence has the Honourable Member got for thinking that the money has been spent properly?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: I have no reason to believe to the contrary.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: My question was different. How is the Honourable Member able to believe one way or the other?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: I have no reason to believe that the amount was not spent regularly.

Sardar Sant Singh: May I know if it is only to the satisfaction of the Honourable Member himself or does he take into account that the public has to be satisfied how the money has been spent? How has the Honourable Member satisfied the public?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: I do not know how I could satisfy the public but the Government which paid the money is satisfied.

Sardar Sant Singh: It is the taxpayers' money that the Government is paying out. How is the Government going to satisfy the taxpayer that the money has been legitimately spent?

(No answer.)

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: Was the Finance Member satisfied with the correctness of accounts?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: That question might be addressed to the Honourable the Finance Member.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Who is the Secretary and who is the President of this Labour Federation? Are they paid some salary or money from this fund?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: It does not arise. If the Honourable Member will give notice, I will find out the information for him.

Mr. T. S. Avinashilingam Chettiar: May I raise a point of order? Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad asked whether the Finance Member was satisfied and the Labour Member replied that the question might be addressed to the Finance Member. The Member in charge ought to know whether the Finance Member was satisfied or not. He must give the reply.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): He has given the reply. I cannot ask the Honourable Member to reply in a particular way.

GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTION TO INDIAN LABOUR FEDERATION.

32. **Mr. Lalchand Navalrai:** (a) With reference to the reply to my starred question No. 776 given on the 4th April, 1944, will the Honourable the Labour Member be pleased to state whether his attention has been drawn to a statement made by the President, Indian Labour Federation, at Bombay in December last, at the 1st Annual Session of the Federation, that it was a blackest lie that they were receiving Rs. 13,000 per month from the Government?

(b) Has the Honourable Member's attention been also drawn to a statement made by Mr. Jamnadas Mehta, President of the Indian Labour Federation on his departure for Philadelphia to attend the International Labour Conference meeting, denying the fact of Rs. 18,000 of the Government's subsidy?

(c) Is it also a fact that this statement was made in reply to the Honourable the Labour Member's statement in the House on the 4th April, 1944, confirming the fact that a sum of Rs. 13,000 was being given to the Indian Labour Federation?

(d) Is it a fact that the subsidy of Rs. 13,000 is secretly paid to Mr. M. N. Roy? If so, why is it paid to this particular individual and not to the Indian Labour Federation?

(e) Will the Honourable Member please make a brief statement as to the measures taken by the Indian Labour Federation during the period it has been

in receipt of the monthly subsidy to achieve the object, *e.g.*, to assist the Government in maintaining the labour morale?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: (a), (b) and (c). Government's attention has been drawn to the statements referred to. From the very beginning the arrangement has been with the Indian Federation of Labour and not with any individual. The attention of the Federation was drawn to Mr. Mehta's statements and in reply the Federation has re-affirmed the fact that the arrangement is with the Federation.

(d) As already stated in reply to the preceding question, the grant is publicly made to the Indian Federation of Labour and not personally to Mr. M. N. Roy.

(e) The attention of the Honourable Member is invited to my reply to the second part of part (d) of the preceding question.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: The Honourable Member has stated in his reply that the money was given and Mr. Jamnadas Mehta, before he went to Philadelphia, made a statement that the money was not given. How does the Honourable Member reconcile this inconsistency?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: It is not for me to reconcile the two statements.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Is the Honourable Member correct or not in having made the statement?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: It is not for me to answer that question.

Sardar Sant Singh: May I know who is telling this blackest lie, either the Federation or the Government of India?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: My Honourable friend is free to draw any conclusions that he likes.

LICENCES FOR PRODUCTION OF FULL LENGTH ENTERTAINMENT FILMS.

33. *Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: (a) Will the Honourable Member for Industries and Civil Supplies be pleased to state how many licences for the production of full length entertainment films have been issued since the promulgation of Control Order in India?

(b) Is there any distinction made in giving licences to independent producers and studio owners? If so, why?

(c) Is it a fact that concerns who only rent out their studios to independent producers have themselves been given licences to produce pictures in their own name.

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: (a) The total number of licences issued up to the end of September 1944 is 260.

(b) I would invite the attention of the Honourable Member to the replies to Dr. Habibur Rahman's Starred Question No. 716, on the 30th March, 1944, wherein I stated the principles on which raw film is licensed. A minimum of two pictures has been fixed for a Studio-owner whereas no such minimum is fixed for an Independent producer. The reason for this differentiation is that a Studio-owner is required to shoulder much larger overhead and maintenance expenditure.

(c) No.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: May I know if a list of the persons to whom the licences have been given is maintained in the office? If so, will it be placed on the table of the House?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: A list is maintained but I will consider whether I will be able to place it on the table of the House.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Have any representations been made to the Honourable Member with regard to the matter contained in part (c) of my question that only those who pay the rent should be given the licences? What I want to know is whether the Honourable Member has got representations to that effect and whether the statement that I have made in part (c) of the question is correct?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: Ever since the economic controls of different commodities has come into force I am flooded with representations of all types. If my Honourable friend would be rather specific; I will try to answer his question.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Have these representations been held to be unfounded?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: I will not say they are unfounded, but so long as the position continues that we have got only a restricted supply of films, we have to give it on certain considerations and principles, and the principles that we have enunciated are what I have stated in reply to the last part of this question.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: May I take it that answer to part (c) of this question is 'Yes'?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: The answer to that part of the question is 'No'.

PEGGING ACT.

34. *Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: (a) Will the Honourable Member for Commonwealth Relations be pleased to state whether the Pegging Act has been passed? If so, on what date, and from what date does it come into force?

(b) Has it been passed against the objections having been raised to its enactment by the Asiatics particularly the Indian Nationals?

(c) Are there any relieving features in the Act? If so, which?

(d) What efforts has the Indian Government made to oppose the passing of the Pegging Act or remove its stringent provisions?

(e) Is it a fact that lately one Mr. Pathar was sentenced to a fine or a month's hard labour for occupying premises 282, Moor Road, Durban, and that the defence was that he was in occupation before the Pegging Act came into operation?

(f) On what grounds was Mr. Pathar found guilty?

(g) What steps do the Government of India propose to take through the British Government to get the alleged undemocratic Pegging Act removed from the Statute Book?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: (a) The Honourable Member is presumably referring to the Trading and Occupation of Land (Transvaal and Natal) Restriction Act, 1943. This Act received the assent of the officer administering the Government on the 28th April 1943, when it presumably came into force.

(b) Yes.

(c) None in the opinion of the Government of India.

(d) and (g). As the House is aware, the Government of India had made representations to the Union Government before the passing of the Act. Since then the Government of India also made further representations. The Union Government and representatives of the Indian community have arrived at an Agreement, known as the Pretoria Agreement. Under this Agreement a licensing board composed of two Indian members and two European members with a European with legal training as Chairman is to be established for the regulation of the occupation of property. On the creation of the licensing board the Pegging Legislation is to be withdrawn from the areas to which it has been applied. The Agreement has to be embodied in Legislation and an Ordinance, introduced in the Natal Provincial Council to that end, has now emerged from the Select Committee Stage. The Select Committee has made radical alterations in the Ordinance and further correspondence is now going on with the Union Government as regards future action.

(e) Yes.

(f) The Honourable Member's attention is invited to the reply given in this House on the 30th March, 1944, to parts (a) and (b) of Mr. K. S. Gupta's Starred Question No. 708. Mr. Pathar's defence was not accepted by the court on the ground that the last instalment of the purchase price of the house was not paid until April 1943, so that technically occupation took place after the prescribed date of 22nd March, 1943.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: I believe a day is going to be allotted during this session for the consideration of the matter with which the Honourable Member is concerned. May I know if this question also will then be debated and whether certain light will be thrown on it?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: Certainly it will be debated.

RESERVATION OF KENYA HIGHLANDS FOR EUROPEANS.

35. *Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: (a) Will the Honourable Member for Commonwealth Relations be pleased to state if it is a fact that Kenya Highlands have been reserved exclusively for Europeans on the ground that that part of the country is suitable for Europeans to cultivate? If so, why are Indians not considered capable to cultivate the highlands?

(b) Is it a fact that this matter went before the Colonial Office? If so, what was the opinion or advice given by the Colonial Office for the benefit of the Indian Nationals?

(c) In view of the fact that Indians helped in civilizing and popularising South Africa, and in view of the acknowledged bravery and loyalty shown by the Indians in the present war, do Government propose to have the Indian Nationals treated better and get them equal rights with the Europeans in the territories and colonies under the supervision and suzerainty of the British Government? If not, has the Indian Government no remedy at all in their hands to come to the relief of the Indian Nationals?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: (a) Indians are not considered incapable of cultivating land in the Highlands but, on the ground that the area suitable for European cultivation is limited, the Highlands have been actually reserved by His Majesty's Government for Europeans only as a matter of administrative convenience.

(b) The Honourable Member's attention is invited to paragraph 8 of Part II of the Kenya White Paper of 1923, the Resolution of the Government of India of July 18, 1923, which accompanied its publication and to the Government of India's press communiqué of the 24th February, 1939, on the Kenya (Highlands) Order-in-Council of 1939. Copies are available in the Assembly Library.

(c) Yes; the Government of India are constantly endeavouring to achieve the objects which the Honourable Member refers to.

Mr. Hooseinbhoj A. Lalljee: Will the Honourable Member kindly state whether in the term "Europeans" Germans are also included?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: I believe so.

Mr. Hooseinbhoj A. Lalljee: Have they also the right of cultivation in the Highlands?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: Not now.

Sir Vithal N. Ohandavarkar: What is the view of the Government of India—whether it is a case of administrative convenience or it is a case of racial discrimination?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: I myself hold the view that it is a case of racial discrimination.

RECONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE FOR BURMA AND COMMITTEE FOR RESTORATION OF PROPERTY OF INDIANS.

36. *Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: (a) Will the Honourable Member for Commonwealth Relations be pleased to state whether the Government of Burma have already formed a Reconstruction Committee for Burma and a Committee for the restoration of the property of Indians?

(b) Does the Honourable Member propose to make a statement or to lay a statement on the table of the House about the progress that has been made in this Committee?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: (a) and (b). The Government of Burma appointed various Reconstruction Committees to advise on proposals for the reconstruction of different departments of that Government on the re-occupation of Burma, but no separate Committee was formed to advise on the question of restoration of property of Indians. The Reconstruction Committees so appointed have submitted their reports to the Government of Burma

who are now considering their recommendations. The Reconstruction Committee on Rural Economy went into the question of action to be taken in regard to the restoration of land to the owners who were in their rightful possession at the time of evacuation and its recommendations in this respect will receive the attention of Government of Burma in due course.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Is the Honourable Member's Department keeping itself in close touch with these activities of the Burma Government?

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

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Have the Government of India formally come into the picture at all now, because I remember on a previous occasion the Honourable Member stated that the Government of India was not participating in these discussions formally? Have the Government of India come formally into this picture as yet?

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

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: Will the Honourable Member instruct the representative who has now been appointed for this purpose to make inquiries and report to us?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: I think that will be part of his ordinary duties.

RESTORATION TO INDIANS OF PROPERTIES LOST BY THEM IN BURMA.

37. *Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: (a) In view of the fact that Burma will be recaptured mainly by Indian Forces, does the Honourable Member for Commonwealth Relations propose to press the Burmese Government to restore the properties of the Indians lost by looting, unlawful capture and confiscation by the Japanese?

(b) Is the Honourable Member aware that the Mussalmans and Hindus endowed in Burma both movable and immovable properties for the maintenance of mosques, temples and other charitable institutions? Will the Honourable Member take early steps to ensure that these endowed properties are recovered from unlawful usurpers and restored to the Trustees of the Waqf to be spent in the manner laid down in the Waqf Deed?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: (a) and (b). The Government of India will take up these matters with the Burma Government in due course.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: Will these things be considered in the Peace Conference?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: I hope so.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Will these things be considered through the representative that the Government of India have appointed for Burma or will they be considered through some other independent way?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: Our Representative is the usual channel of our communication and they will be considered through him.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Is he the sole channel of communication between the Government of India and the Government of Burma?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: Not necessarily.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: What will be the matters which will be dealt with by this officer and what are the other matters which will be dealt with independently by the Government of India?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: Sir, that does not arise out of this question at all.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: Will the Honourable Member instruct our representative to collect the figures of the losses and find them out and lay before the House the amount of losses sustained by Indians?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: I think it will be done in due course.

DESIRABILITY OF BURMA GOVERNMENT GRANT FOR SCHOOLS FORMERLY MAINTAINED BY ENDOWMENTS IN RANGOON.

38. *Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: (a) Will the Honourable Member for Commonwealth Relations please consider the question of approaching the Burmese

Government to give a grant for the schools which were maintained by the endowments existing in Rangoon and which have now been confiscated by the enemies?

(b) Is the Honourable Member aware of the fact that some Indian States like Hyderabad and Baroda are giving special assistance to their own subjects who are refugees and evacuees from Burma and Eastern Colonies? Do the Government of India propose to give similar assistance to these people till employment is found for them?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: (a) Government of India do not consider it desirable to approach the Government of Burma.

(b) Yes, the Government of India are already giving necessary financial assistance to refugees in British India.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: Will the Government of India give some small assistance to the schools which were run by the endowments in Burma?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: That will be considered when the time arrives.

ALLOCATION OF EXPENDITURE ON REFUGEES AND EVACUEES BETWEEN GOVERNMENT OF INDIA AND BURMA GOVERNMENT.

39. ***Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad:** Will the Honourable Member for Commonwealth Relations please state the financial arrangements between the Government of India and the Government of Burma as regards the expenditure incurred by the Indian Exchequer in supporting the refugees and the evacuees?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: The Expenditure incurred on Indians and Anglo-Indians is met from Indian revenues and that on Burmans, Anglo-Burmans, European British subjects and all other British subjects other than Indians and Anglo-Indians is charged to the Government of Burma.

ANTI-HOARDING BILL.

40. ***Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad:** (a) Has the Honourable the Food Member seen the Bill (Anti-Hoarding Bill) whose notice was issued by me?

(b) Why does the Honourable Member refuse to allow even the introduction of the Bill?

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

(b) Leave to the introduction of the Bill was refused not by me but by the Governor-General acting in his discretion.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: And on the advice of the Honourable Member?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I have nothing to add to the answer that I have just now given.

PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION OF FOODGRAINS.

†41. ***Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad:** (a) Will the Honourable the Food Member please state the total production of foodgrains in the year 1943-44; and what the total consumption was?

(b) What is the total expected production of foodgrain in the year 1944-45, and what is the estimated consumption of the same?

(c) Will the Honourable Member lay a statement on the table giving the production of each foodgrain, provincewise, and also its consumption in each province?

(d) What is the percentage of consumption (i) for army purposes, and (ii) for export to the countries whom India has been feeding for the last fifteen years?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: (a) The total production of cereal foodgrains in 1943-44 was estimated at 57.5 million tons. Total consumption during the year is not known, but in addition to domestic supplies a net import of 289,000 tons of foodgrains was made available during the year.

(b) The total expected production of foodgrains in the year 1944-45 is not yet available in respect of all the foodgrains. It is too early yet to estimate

† Answer to this question laid on the table, the questioner having exhausted his quota.

what the production of the *rabi* grains in 1944-45 will be, while information available about *kharif* grains is far from complete.

It is not possible to estimate consumption of foodgrains in 1944-45.

(c) A statement giving the production of each foodgrains, province-wise, and also total available supply in each province for the year 1943-44 is laid on the table.

(d) (i) It is not in the public interest to reveal what proportion of the total supplies were required for army purposes but I may assure the Honourable Member that the percentage was extremely small.

(ii) Export to foreign countries in 1943-44 was about 0.08 per cent. of the total available in the country.

Production, Imports, Exports and nett available supply of rice in different Provinces and States during 1943-44.

| Area | (In '000 tons) | | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------|---------|---------|-----------------------|
| | Production | Imports | Exports | Nett available supply |
| Assam | 2,104 | .. | 91 | 2,013 |
| Bengal | 11,782 | 347 | 3 | 12,126 |
| Bihar | 3,372 | 4 | 52 | 3,324 |
| Bombay | 836 | 120 | .. | 956 |
| C. P. and Berar | 1,812 | .. | 146 | 1,666 |
| Madras | 4,965 | 45 | 85 | 4,925 |
| Orissa | 1,349 | 1 | 123 | 1,227 |
| Punjab (including Delhi) | 426 | (c)1 | 134 | 293 |
| Sind | 501 | .. | 186 | 315 |
| U. P. | 1,863 | .. | 5 | 1,858 |
| N. W. F. P. | (b) 20 | 2 | .. | 22 |
| Baluchistan | (b) 15 | .. | 14 | 1 |
| Ajmer-Merwara | Neg. | 2 | .. | 2 |
| Baroda | 78 | 1 | .. | 79 |
| C. I. States (Bhopal) | 6 | Neg. | .. | 6 |
| Bombay States | 259 | 14 | .. | 273 |
| Eastern States | 559 | .. | 71 | 488 |
| Hyderabad | 355 | 6 | .. | 361 |
| Khairpur | 3 | .. | .. | 3 |
| Mysore | 255 | 14 | 1 | 268 |
| Rampur | 9 | .. | .. | 9 |
| Punjab States | (a)40 | .. | 7 | 33 |
| Rajputana | (a) 7 | 1 | .. | 8 |
| Coorg | 69 | .. | 14 | 55 |
| Kashmir | (a) 322 | .. | 1 | 321 |
| Travancore/Cochin | (b) 295 | 136 | .. | 431 |
| Others | .. | 226 | 3 | 223 |
| Total | 31,302 | 920 | 936 | 31,286 |

NOTE.—Production figures have been taken from the final forecast for 1943-44 issued by the D. C. I. and S.

(a) Relates to 1942-43 figure supplied by the Governments concerned. 1943-44 figure not available.

(b) Supplied by the Governments concerned.

(c) Relates to imports into Delhi only.

Production, Imports, Exports and nett available supply of Wheat in different Provinces and States during 1943-44.

| Area | Production | Imports | (In '000 tons). | |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| | | | Exports | Nett available supply |
| Assam | Neg. | 15 | .. | 15 |
| Bengal | 51 | 456 | 5 | 502 |
| Bihar | 453 | 19 | 1 | 471 |
| Bombay | (c) 264 | 230 | 5 | 489 |
| C. P. and Berar | 370 | 35 | .. | 405 |
| Madras | .. | 43 | .. | 43 |
| Orissa | 2 | 7 | .. | 9 |
| Punjab | (c) 3,412 | .. | 852 | 2,560 |
| Sind | 443 | 5 | 131 | 317 |
| U. P. | 2,525 | Neg. | 96 | 2,429 |
| N. W. F. P. | 246 | 3 | .. | 249 |
| Delhi | 13 | 7 | .. | 20 |
| Baluchistan | (b) 50 | 4 | .. | 54 |
| Ajmer-Merwara | 10 | 14 | .. | 24 |
| Baroda | 54 | 1 | .. | 55 |
| C. I. States | 240 | 4 | 3 | 241 |
| Bombay States | (c) 112 | 16 | 2 | 126 |
| Eastern States | 15 | Neg. | .. | 15 |
| Hyderabad | 77 | 4 | .. | 81 |
| Khairpur | 43 | .. | .. | 43 |
| Mysore | Neg. | 14 | .. | 14 |
| Rampur | 32 | .. | .. | 32 |
| Punjab States | (c) 525 | Neg. | 163 | 362 |
| Gwalior | 327 | .. | Neg. | 327 |
| Rajputana | 476 | 10 | 4 | 482 |
| Travancore/Cochin | Neg. | 109 | .. | 109 |
| Kashmir | (a) 116 | 7 | .. | 123 |
| Others | .. | 479 | 2 | 477 |
| Total | 9,856 | 1,482 | 1,264 | 10,074 |

NOTE.—Production figures are based on the final forecast of 1943-44 issued by D. C. I. and S. supplemented by Provincial forecasts where found necessary.

(a) Relates to 1942-43 figure supplied by the Government concerned. 1943-44 figure not available.

(b) Supplied by the Government concerned.

(c) The Provincial and State figures have been separated by splitting the combined final forecast figures in the proportion of the 4th forecast estimates.

Production of Maize and Barley in different Provinces and States of India and their Foreign Imports during 1943-44.

| Province or State | (In '000 tons). | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| | Maize | Barley |
| Bengal | 48 | 48 |
| Bihar | 487 | 495 |
| Bombay | 56 | 2 |
| C. P. and Berar | 102 | 2 |
| Madras | 30 | Neg. |
| Orissa | 7 | 1 |
| Punjab | 514 | 210 |
| Sind | 1 | 4 |
| U. P. | 922 | 1,298 |
| N. W. F. P. | 203 | 52 |
| Delhi | Neg. | 4 |
| Ajmer-Merwara | 7 | 16 |
| Hyderabad | 104 | 1 |
| Khairpur | .. | 1 |
| Total production | 2,461 | 2,134 |
| Foreign imports | (a) 4 | (b) 127 |
| Total available supply | 2,465 | 2,261 |

NOTE.—Production figures have been supplied by the D. C. I. and S. and the Provincial or State Governments concerned.

(a) The whole of this was given to Travancore and Cochin.

(b) The break-up of this is given below:—

| | |
|-------------------|-------|
| Bengal | 26.8 |
| Bombay | 34.3 |
| Madras | 0.6 |
| W. I. States | 0.1 |
| Baroda | 0.2 |
| Deccan | 0.1 |
| Hyderabad | 0.3 |
| Mysore | 1.3 |
| Travancore/Cochin | 2.0 |
| Defence Services | 16.5 |
| | 82.2 |
| Karachi Depot | 44.8 |
| Total | 127.0 |

Production, Imports, Exports and nett available supply of Millets (Jowar and Bajra) in different Provinces and States during 1943-44.

| Area | (In '000 tons) | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|---------|---------|-----------------------|
| | Production | Imports | Exports | Nett available supply |
| Baluchistan | 18 | .. | 10 | 8 |
| Bengal | 3 | 66 | .. | 69 |
| Bihar | 44 | Neg. | .. | 44 |
| Bombay | 1,840 | 106 | Neg. | 1,946 |
| C. P. and Berar | 1,396 | .. | 7 | 1,389 |
| Madras | 1,766 | 50 | .. | 1,816 |
| Orissa | 9 | .. | .. | 9 |
| Punjab | 622 | .. | 127 | 495 |
| Sind | 315 | .. | 1 | 314 |
| U. P. | 1,103 | .. | 46 | 1,057 |
| N.-W. F. P. | 21 | Neg. | Neg. | 21 |
| Delhi | 28 | 7 | .. | 30 |
| Ajmer-Merwara | 9 | 2 | .. | 11 |
| Baroda and Gujrat States | 398 | 11 | 4 | 405 |
| C. I. States | 209 | 6 | Neg. | 215 |
| Bombay States | 1,362 | 27 | 13 | 1,376 |
| Hyderabad | 1,560 | .. | 56 | 1,504 |
| Khairpur | 29 | .. | .. | 29 |
| Mysore | 145 | 1 | Neg. | 146 |
| Punjab States | (a) 353 | .. | 41 | 312 |
| Rajputana | (a) 513 | 7 | 5 | 515 |
| Travancore/Cochin | Neg. | 31 | .. | 31 |
| Kashmir | (a) 58 | .. | .. | 58 |
| Others | Nil. | 3 | .. | 3 |
| Total | 11,796 | 317 | 310 | 11,803 |

NOTE.—Production figures have been supplied by the D. C. I. and S. and the Provincial or State Governments concerned.

(a) Relates to 1942-43 figures supplied by the Government concerned. 1943-44 figures not available.

POLICY RE IMMIGRATION OF JEWS.

42. *Sardar Sant Singh: Will the Honourable the Leader of the House be pleased to make a statement as to the policy of the Government of India in regard to immigration of Jews to India with particular reference to the following matters:

(i) was the policy initiated by the Government of India or was it done by His Majesty's Government; and

(ii) did the Governor General in Council consider this matter?

The Honourable Sir Sultan Ahmed: The question should have been addressed to the Honourable the Home Member who will reply in due course.

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

43. *Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Will the Honourable the Commerce Member please make a statement with reference to his answer to my starred question No. 71 given on the 10th February, 1944 in connection with lower wages, etc., of Indian sea-men employed on British-owned ships, showing the extent to which he has been able to carry out the assurances given by him? If nothing has been done, why?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: The matter is still under negotiation and discussion.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: How long it will take?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: I have been expecting that it will be finally decided as soon as possible.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: How long has the discussion been going on?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: On what point?

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Generally with regard to wages?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: The wages were increased in June 1942, but the question of further increase of wages was taken up towards the end of September 1942 and the matter is still not settled.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: In view of the fact that expenses are increasing every day and every hour, will the matter be taken up seriously and promptly dealt with?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: I can assure my Honourable friend that I have taken up the matter as seriously as possible.

FRANCHISE OF INDIANS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA.

44. *Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: With reference to his answer to my starred question No. 395 given on the 14th March 1944 regarding franchise of Indians in British Columbia, will the Honourable Member for Commonwealth Relations please state what the outcome of the correspondence carried on by the Government of India and referred to in my last question (i.e., No. 395) is? Will the whole correspondence between the Government of India and the British Columbian Government be placed on the table?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: The Government of India have made several enquiries since then, the last enquiry being made only last month. I regret we have still no information about the result of our representations. It will not be in the public interest to publish the official correspondence.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Since representations were made so long ago, what is the explanation for Government not achieving anything for Indians so far?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: I cannot give any explanation.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: When a discussion of this question takes place on the day allotted for this purpose, will all the questions arising out of all the Colonies be taken up? Will the question relating to Ceylon be discussed?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: No, Sir. We will discuss only South Africa and East Africa.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: The Honourable Member just now said that the correspondence cannot be placed on the table. Will the Honourable Member at least give a gist of the correspondence?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: No, Sir.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: What is the objection to giving a gist of the correspondence that has been carried on?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: The gist is already contained in the reply.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: The House would like to know what representations were made?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: It comes to this. We have made representations and we await reply.

STEPS FOR PERMANENT REHABILITATION OF AGRICULTURE IN INDIA.

45. *Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Will the Secretary for Education, Health and Lands please state what steps were taken after he made his speech on the 10th March, 1943 on the cut motion moved by Mr. Lawson "that the demand under the Head 'Executive Council' be reduced by Rs. 100" and the means whereby the present prosperous agricultural conditions might be used for the permanent rehabilitation of agriculture in India in respect of—

- (i) the raising of money crops such as pyrethrum and cinchona;
- (ii) agricultural debt;
- (iii) permanent benefit of the agriculturist—planning of production, creation of agricultural credits;
- (iv) fixing of prices of foodgrains to raise the standard of living of the agriculturist; and
- (v) financial policy having no other aim but to make life better for all the people of India of whom about 60 per cent. to 70 per cent. are agriculturists?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: A statement is laid on the table of the House.

Statement

(i) In 1943, 5,600 lbs. of Pyrethrum seeds were imported from Kenya (East Africa) and distributed to the Governments of Madras, the Punjab, Assam, Patiala and Kashmir. Government agreed to buy the produce at certain fixed prices. The area under pyrethrum under this scheme is 2358 acres.

As regards cinchona, arrangements have been made for the planting of 2,000 acres with cinchona in 1943 and 1944.

(ii) The question of agricultural indebtedness was considered by the Policy Committee on Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and as recommended by that Committee the Government of India have appointed a Sub-Committee to report on the ways in which indebtedness can be reduced and finance, both short term and long term, provided, under efficient control, for agriculture and animal husbandry operations. The report of the Sub-Committee is expected in January.

(iii) The Government of India have given to the provinces for the development of agriculture Rs. 295 lakhs as loans and Rs. 222 lakhs as grants in the last 2 years; Provincial Governments have probably given similar grants from their own funds. The main items for which grants have been given from the Centre are:

Irrigation, bunding, etc., Rs. 118.0 lakhs.

Manure distribution Rs. 27.63 lakhs.

Seed distribution Rs. 51.76 lakhs.

Miscellaneous (staff, bonus for cotton restriction, etc.) Rs. 24.61 lakhs.

All these schemes may be regarded as being for the permanent benefit of agriculturists. The question of planning production is under consideration in consultation with the Food Department. No additional agricultural credits are considered necessary at the present stage though the question of such credits for the post-war period will be looked into by a committee which it is proposed to set up shortly to deal with co-operation.

(iv) In April 1944 the Government of India announced that they were ready to purchase, until further notice, in the Punjab, United Provinces and Sind, through provincial government agency, all fair average quality wheat offered in assembling markets at Rs. 7-8-0 per maund unbagged. They also announced in May last that they would be willing to buy from the crop of 1944-45 all *jowar* and *bajra* of fair average quality offered for sale in the main assembling markets of the United Provinces, Central Provinces, Madras, the Punjab, Sind, and Ajmer-Merwara at prices of Rs. 5-8-0 and Rs. 6 a maund respectively, should prices fall.

On the recommendation of the Policy Committee on Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, a Sub-Committee is being set up to examine how to have an assured market for agricultural produce and how to fix remunerative prices for it in the post war period.

(v) The Central and Provincial Governments are planning for post-war development on the basis that considerable funds will be available over a period of years. The object of all such expenditure will be to make life better for all the people of India and steps will be taken to ensure that the rural population receive its share of the benefits. In the mean time the Government of India have been engaged in a policy of active assistance to the cultivator by means of loans and grants, especially in connection with the "Grow More Food Campaign", as stated in answer to (iii) of the question, and grants such as those from the Cotton Fund.

STEPS FOR INCLUSION IN CENTRAL AND PROVINCIAL ELECTORAL ROLLS OF NAMES OF PERSONS IN HIS MAJESTY'S FORCES ON ACTIVE SERVICE.

46. *Sir F. E. James: Will the Honourable the Leader of the House be pleased to state:

- (a) if he is aware that the names of many persons who are on active service in His Majesty's Forces were removed from the electoral rolls of the

Provincial Legislative Assemblies during the last revision in 1941, because they were absent from their homes and thus had lost their residential qualification;

(b) if he is aware that the revision of the electoral rolls for the Central Legislative Assembly now being undertaken will result in the removal from them of many names of persons on active service in His Majesty's Forces for the same reason;

(c) if it is a fact that unless there is an amendment of the Government of India Act, 1935, and rules thereunder, any revision of the Provincial or Central electoral rolls during and immediately after the war is bound to result in depriving many who are serving in His Majesty's Forces of the vote because of the loss of their residential qualification through absence on active service and in excluding others who would otherwise be qualified;

(d) if His Majesty's Government will be invited to undertake forthwith the necessary amendments of the Government of India Act of 1935 and the Rules thereunder; and

(e) what steps Government propose to take in the meantime to ensure that no person loses his right to vote in any Provincial or Central election, or his right to be included on the appropriate electoral roll in any revision thereof, solely on account of his absence from home on active service with His Majesty's Forces?

The Honourable Sir Sultan Ahmed: (a), (b) and (c). Yes.

(d) and (e). The question is engaging the attention of Government.

Sir F. E. James: Does my Honourable friend hope to be in a position to make a statement on the subject before the end of this Session, if I put down another question?

The Honourable Sir Sultan Ahmed: I cannot make any promise about it, but I will make enquiries, and if it is possible, it will be done.

FEES CHARGED FOR DEATH CERTIFICATES FOR PERSONS DYING IN IRWIN HOSPITAL

47. ***Mr. C. P. Lawson:** Will the Secretary for Education, Health and Lands be pleased to state:

(a) whether any limits are prescribed for the fees which may be charged by medical officers in the Irwin Hospital for death certificates for persons who die in that Hospital;

(b) if he is aware that dependents of persons who die in the Irwin Hospital may be unable to obtain access to the estate of the deceased until such death certificate is forthcoming;

(c) whether he is aware that on the 20th of May, 1944, Mr. K. V. Martin died of typhoid in the Irwin Hospital and a sum of Rs. 16 was demanded by the Resident Medical Officer before a death certificate could be issued;

(d) what steps he proposes to take to ensure that similar demands are not made in future; and

(e) whether steps will be taken by the authorities to fix the maximum charge for death certificates, and, if so, at what level the maximum will be fixed?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: (a), (b) and (c). Yes.

(d) and (e). The fee charged was in accordance with the orders which existed at the time. The prescribed fee has since been reduced to Rs. 4.

Mr. C. P. Lawson: May I ask the Honourable Member whether he would look into the matter of supplying poor people with the means of getting access to such money as has been left either without any charge at all or with a nominal charge, by some means or other?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: Yes, Sir, in so far as it relates to death certificates, I would look into it.

STATEMENT ON FAMINE CONDITIONS IN BENGAL.

48. ***Mr. K. O. Neogy:** (a) Will the Honourable the Food Member be pleased to make a comprehensive and up-to-date statement, in continuation of the statement made by him, on the famine conditions in Bengal, in reply to my starred question No. 11 on the 7th February, 1944, dealing with the different points indicated in the said question?

(b) How have the supplies and prices of principal foodgrains varied in the different districts of Bengal since the above statement was made?

(c) What is the total quantity of foodgrains supplied to Bengal at the instance of the Central Government since January, 1944, and from which different areas were these supplies obtained? What is the system of procurement, storage and distribution of these supplies?

(d) Has the attention of the Central Government or the Honourable Member personally been drawn to various reports regarding the wastage and deterioration of foodgrains due to defective storage or deteriorated quality of supplies at different Government centres in Bengal? If so, will the Honourable Member be pleased to make a detailed statement indicating the nature of each such report, and the facts of the situation?

(e) Is the Honourable Member aware that a general complaint prevails all over Bengal regarding the bad quality of foodgrains supplied under Government control, and that in some past cases at least samples indicated that the supplies were unfit for human consumption? If so, has any enquiry been made at the instance of the Central Government into these complaints?

(f) Is it a fact that in some instances Municipal or other local authorities have not been permitted to exercise their normal functions regarding inquiry into and supervision over the quality of foodstuffs in connection with Government supplies of foodgrains in Bengal?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: (a) I shall be making a comprehensive statement on the food position in the country in the course of the Food Debate today.

(b) Substantial purchases have been made by the Bengal Government under the *Aman* Procurement Scheme which together with the quantities supplied by the Central Government have enabled the Bengal Government to build up considerable stocks in the districts. No acute shortage of foodgrains has been reported from any part of the province during recent months.

The present average of subdivisional rice prices is Rs. 12-14-0, as against the controlled price of Rs. 13-8-0 in the surplus areas and Rs. 14-12-0 in the deficit areas. The trend of prices has been downward during all this period and rice is now available at or within the controlled rates in most of the districts. In Eastern Bengal, particularly in Chittagong, prices at one time rose to Rs. 35 per maund, but were brought within reasonable limits by accelerating despatches and releasing Government stocks at controlled rates.

(c) The total quantity of foodgrains supplied to Bengal since January 1st is over 4,75,000 tons. The supplies were obtained mainly from the Punjab, the Punjab States, the Central Provinces, Assam, the United Provinces, Nepal, the Eastern States, Orissa, Sind, Rewa and imports from abroad. The methods of procurement are not uniform in all supplying areas, but generally speaking, supplying areas procure the grain through authorised purchasing agents, which may be governmental agencies or trade agencies, store it wherever necessary and move it to the recipient areas, in accordance with the Basic Plan of the Food Department.

(d) and (e). The Government of India are aware that there have been complaints about poor quality and deterioration of stocks in storage. I propose to supply the information available to the Food Department on these complaints in course of the Food Debate.

(f) My information is that the functions of the Calcutta Corporation in this behalf are now under consideration by the Bengal Government.

Mr. K. O. Neogy: In part (b) the Honourable Member referred to the downward trend of prices. Will he be in a position to explain the reasons, so far as he may be aware of them, for this phenomenon?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I shall deal with that in the course of the debate.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: With regard to (d) and (e) of the question, may I ask whether the appointment of a special storage expert has not in any way improved the position?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: Yes, it has improved, and is improving the position.

Mr. K. O. Neogy: Improving the position of the storage expert, or what?

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: Will the Honourable Member kindly tell us exactly how the improvement has been effected?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I shall deal with that also in the course of the debate.

Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta: Is the Honourable Member aware that the District Magistrate of Backergunje has stated in a public meeting that people are dying literally of starvation in the most extensive area of that district?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I am not aware of that.

Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta: It has been published in the newspapers. Does not the Honourable Member read them?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I read as many as I can.

STATEMENT ON SUPPLIES OF VEGETABLES, MILK, ETC., IN BENGAL.

49. ***Mr. K. O. Neogy:** (a) Will the Honourable the Food Member be pleased to place on the table a statement on the lines of that made by him in reply to my starred question No. 254 on the 17th November, 1943, bringing the information up-to-date from November, 1943?

(b) Is the Honourable Member in a position to make a statement regarding the prices and availability of milk, milk products, fish, poultry and eggs for the consumption of civil population in the different districts of Bengal during the last few months?

(c) To what extent has the scarcity of supplies of vegetables, milk, milk products, fish, poultry and eggs in the Bengal districts, for the civil population, and their ruling prices been induced, directly or indirectly, by the purchases, made on behalf of the Military authorities, British as well as American?

(d) Is the Honourable Member in a position to confirm the statement made by the War Secretary in reply to my starred question No. 292 on the 18th November, 1943, that "the Army to a large extent is self-supporting as regards potatoes and fresh vegetables leaving the normal produce largely untouched for the civil population", with reference to the situation that has prevailed in Bengal, particularly during the last few months? Is the Honourable Member also in a position to state whether the civil authorities in the districts of Bengal have been regularly consulted by special local purchase officers appointed by the War Department, in regard to the stocks of local vegetables and dairy products as well as the prices to be paid therefor, as indicated by the War Secretary in reply to my said starred question?

(e) What is the policy of the Central Government in regard to the maintenance of adequate supplies for the civil population in the different Provinces in respect of vegetables, fruits, dairy products, poultry, eggs, fish and meat and the regulation of their prices?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: (a) A statement showing monthly prices of vegetables and fruits in the Calcutta market since November 1943, is laid on the table.

(b) Precise statistics of prices are not available but reports from Calcutta and Districts in Bengal indicate that there has been an upward trend in the prices of these commodities during the last five months. They are available at these prices to the civil population.

(c) It is not possible without an exhaustive economic survey to assess with any exactitude to what extent the scarcity of the supplies of the commodities mentioned in the question has been due to purchases by the military authorities or to what extent purchases by them have affected market prices.

(d) The Army in Bengal is to a very large extent self-supporting in vegetables, but not yet in potatoes, since military schemes for growing the latter have not yet begun to operate fully. It is hoped, however, that the military will be largely self-supporting in potatoes from December 1944 onwards.

The civil authorities in Bengal have been consulted regularly by military local purchase officers.

(e) Supply and prices of these commodities are regulated by the Provincial Governments who have got powers under Rule 81 of the Defence of India Rules.

The Food Department have also taken steps to import from abroad supplies of tinned-milk, meat, fish, and other foodstuffs in order to relieve the deficit.

To co-ordinate the demands of competing Army Units and the civil population, co-ordination committees have been set up in all the Commands, and these have again set up provincial committees. The function of these committees is to check price inflation due to competitive purchase to regulate supplies in accordance with the resources available without drawing upon the breeding stock or seed requirements. These committees also endeavour to increase production of all these commodities, particularly for meeting the Defence requirements.

Average Monthly Prices of Vegetables and Fruits in Calcutta for the period November 1943 to October 1944

| — | Unit | November | December | January | February | March | April |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | | 1943 | 1943-4 | 1944 | 1944 | 1944 | 1944 |
| | | Rs. A. P. | Rs. A. P. | Rs. A. P. | Rs. A. P. | Rs. A. P. | Rs. A. P. |
| Potatoes (<i>Desi Nainital</i>) | per maund | 21 4 0 | 10 8 0 | 7 3 2 | 8 13 6 | 9 8 0 | 8 11 6 |
| Cauliflower | each | 0 7 8 | 0 3 9 | 0 3 4 | 0 5 7½ | 0 3 3 | 0 11 1½ |
| Cabbage | each | 1 11 4 | 0 9 3 | 0 6 7 | 0 6 9 | 0 4 3 | 0 8 1½ |
| Fulbul | per seer | 0 8 2 | 0 9 8 | 0 8 6 | 0 6 0 | 1 2 0* | 0 9 8½ |
| Squash | per seer | 0 5 9 | 0 5 0 | 0 6 0 | 0 6 0* | 0 4 3 | 0 5 3 |
| Tomato | per seer | 1 2 9 | 0 7 6 | 0 5 8 | 0 5 10½ | 0 4 3 | 0 5 3 |
| Pineapple (Assam) | per 100 | 103 0 0 | 100 10 0 | 100 15 10 | 95 0 0 | 103 12 0 | 95 10 0 |
| Mangoes (Madras) | per 4 dozs. | 24 0 0 | 24 0 0 | 19 3 3 | 19 3 3 | 12 0 0 | 6 10 0 |
| Oranges (Nagpur) | per 100 | 7 6 6 | 6 10 8 | 6 10 8 | 6 7 3 | 8 2 6 | 9 12 0 |
| Apples (Kashmir) | per 100 | 22 3 7 | 30 12 3 | 29 6 7 | 25 0 0 | 25 13 0 | 25 0 0 |

| — | Unit | May | June | July | August | September | October |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | | 1944 | 1944 | 1944 | 1944 | 1944† | 1944‡ |
| | | Rs. A. P. | Rs. A. P. | Rs. A. P. | Rs. A. P. | Rs. A. P. | Rs. A. P. |
| Potatoes (<i>Desi Nainital</i>) | per maund | 12 3 8 | 20 1 0 | 21 4 0 | 31 4 0 | 30 5 4 | 35 0 0 |
| Cauliflower | each | 0 12 0† | ... | ... | ... | ... | 0 14 0 |
| Cabbage | each | 1 4 0 | 2 0 0 | 1 3 6 | 0 13 0 | 0 13 0 | 0 13 0 |
| Fulbul | per seer | 0 8 3 | 0 7 3 | 0 6 0 | 0 6 6 | 0 7 4 | 0 9 0 |
| Squash | per seer | ... | 1 0 0† | 0 8 6 | 0 7 0 | 0 7 0 | 0 7 0 |
| Tomato | per seer | 1 0 0 | 0 2 8 | 1 6 6 | 1 3 0 | 1 3 0 | 1 3 0 |
| Pineapple (Assam) | per 100 | 101 0 3 | 88 12 0 | 78 8 3 | 125 0 0† | 215 13 4 | 240 0 0 |
| Mangoes (Madras) | per 4 dozs. | 3 3 0 | 4 13 0 | 9 2 3 | 6 10 0 | 10 4 3 | 12 0 0 |
| Oranges (Nagpur) | per 100 | 12 8 0 | 25 0 0 | 16 10 6 | 15 1 6 | 25 0 0 | 12 8 0 |
| Apples (Kashmir) | per 100 | 20 0 0* | ... | 11 1 9 | 15 6 0 | 18 12 0 | 25 0 0 |

NOTE.—Controlled prices are quoted for cabbage, squash and tomato from the 24th July, 1944 and for potatoes from the 2nd October, 1944.

* Average for one week.

† Average for two weeks.

‡ Average for three weeks.

Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta: As regards the answer to (b) and the statistics of prices, is the Honourable Member aware that the *Statesman* of Calcutta decently published a detailed and elaborate statement showing that the prices of fish, meat, vegetables of all kinds, milk, eggs, *ghee*, etc., have increased by about 100 to 200 per cent. over the prices which prevailed during the dire days of famine last year?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I have nothing to add to the answer I have given. I am aware that prices have risen but we hope that once these military schemes are in full operation the prices will come down.

Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta: Is the Honourable Member aware that the food distress in Bengal this year is far more acute than it was during the famine of last year?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: That is not so.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Will the Honourable Member kindly tell this House whether the Government of India in his Department have any responsibility in regard to the control of prices of the various articles of food I have mentioned in this question, or whether the responsibility of the Department is more or less confined to the provision of foodgrains?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: The constitutional position is quite well known to my Honourable friend; food is a provincial subject.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Yet we have the phenomenon of a Food Member in this House. Am I to take it that the constitution makes a distinction between rice as a food article, and eggs?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: No, but my Department is looking into all these commodities and we are trying to do whatever we can to relieve the situation.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: That is exactly what I wanted to know from the Honourable Member. What action has the Honourable Member's Department taken for the purpose of studying the extraordinary situation that admittedly prevails in Bengal in regard to these various articles of food, and what powers the Honourable Member himself thinks he has not got for the purpose of controlling the situation?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: That would be entering into a long debate into various aspects of the matter. But I have already stated in my reply that under our instructions coordination committees have been set up and very soon I hope the military will be totally independent of the ordinary supplies of these commodities for their requirements.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: When the Honourable Member mentions the military, does he include in that term what I should like to describe as semi-military personnel engaged directly or indirectly in the promotion of the war effort, or is his reply confined to the military personnel strictly so called.

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: As the supply is increased, I hope the military authorities will be able to give over the stuff even to the civilian population.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: That is not the point. I should like to know whether by the term 'military' the Honourable Member means also the non-combatant, the semi-military personnel and organisations like the A.R.P., and so on?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I have known in one province at least that the Military has given a lot of stuff for the civilian population. So I suppose—I am not able to answer the Honourable Member's question here and now categorically—but I suppose the Military will meet the requirements of non-combatants too from what they have.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Do I take it that that is not the position so far?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I am not able to give an answer straightaway here. Probably they are doing it already.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: I hope that the Honourable Member will keep himself better informed on these points hereafter.

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I am very well informed, as far as possible, on the question.

REMOVAL AFTER THE WAR OF TEMPORARY BUILDINGS CONSTRUCTED IN NEW DELHI

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

(i) that Lord Linlithgow in reply to the farewell address presented by the New Delhi Municipal Committee on the 16th October, 1943, made the following statement:

You express anxiety about the removal after the war of the many temporary buildings which must be admitted to mar the beauty of the city. As I announced in my recent speech to the Houses of the Legislature it is the definite policy of the Government of India to remove those buildings as soon as possible. It is the intention that all the temporary buildings that have been constructed for use as offices and hostels, etc., in the neighbourhood of the Secretariat, in the Irwin Stadium, near the Willingdon aerodrome, in the neighbourhood of Connaught Circus and in various blocks, which under the New Delhi Development Scheme had been allotted for other purposes, will be removed as soon as possible after the cessation of hostilities.

(ii) that His Excellency Lord Wavell in reply to the welcome address presented by the New Delhi Municipal Committee on the 30th October, 1943, made the following statement:

I can assure you that Her Excellency and I are at one with you in the matter of the removal after the war of temporary buildings. You will recollect that Lord Linlithgow gave you an assurance on behalf of the Government of India.

(b) To what buildings do the intentions of the Government of India as announced by Lord Linlithgow now apply, in view of the construction programme undertaken, since October, 1943?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: (a) Yes.

(b) To all buildings that are of temporary construction and that will interfere with the future development of Delhi. It does not apply to the Lodi Road Officers bungalows constructed in 1941 or to most of the clerks quarters constructed recently. In particular it does not refer to the large block of clerks quarters under construction to the south of Lodi Road behind the observatory.

Sir F. E. James: May I know, Sir, who will decide whether the temporary buildings now being constructed will or will not interfere with the development of Delhi?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: Obviously the Government of India.

Sir F. E. James: May I also enquire if those buildings which he has referred to in his answer, which are not included in the term 'temporary' buildings, are, in fact, being constructed on a permanent basis and at a standard of quality which will justify their being retained as permanent buildings?

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

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: May I know from the Honourable Member whether he considers that all the palatial buildings which have been built for Americans also mar the beauty of the city? Are they temporary, and will they be removed after the cessation of hostilities?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: That does not arise out of this question.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: It does. These buildings—such as those built near the Council House—also mar the beauty of the city.

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: The question did not refer to the buildings built for American troops.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: All these buildings are being constructed by Government.....

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: The question does not refer to the buildings built for American troops. Therefore the question does not arise.

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

STATEMENT ON FOOD POSITION IN BENGAL

51. ***Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta:** Will the Honourable the Food Member be pleased to make a full and exhaustive statement on the food position in Bengal (both Districts and Calcutta), and the policy of the Government of India to tackle the problem? Has there been any change in their policy of feeding Calcutta from the Central Government's food reserves and from the surplus Provinces?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: As regards the first part of the question I propose to make a statement today on the food position in India, including Bengal.

As regards the second part, the question what assistance it will be necessary to give Bengal from outside during the next year is under examination.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: Will the result of the examination be out before the end of the war?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I hope so.

Mr. K. O. Neogy: May I know if a copy of the report of the Committee which was presided over by Justice Braund is in the hands of the Honourable Member, and, if so, will it be available to Members of this House before the food debate is concluded?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: That is a provincial report, Sir. I will try and see if I can get a copy of it.

Mr. K. O. Neogy: Will it be available to us?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I will first see that it is made available to me.

Mr. K. O. Neogy: May I take it that although Justice Braund is an officer of the Central Government.....

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: He is not now.

Mr. K. O. Neogy: He was when he was appointed Chairman of this Committee. Do I take it that the Honourable Member does not expect formally a copy of the Report of this Committee which was presided over by one of his own officers?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: As I have said, that Report has been made to the Bengal Government. They have got to consider it first and then come up to us with their proposals in regard to the recommendations contained in that Report.

Mr. H. A. Sathar H. Essak Sait: Arising out of the reply to the first part of the question. Will the Honourable Member confirm or deny the statement made in first part that so much of foodstuff was destroyed or deteriorated? It will help the Members in making their observations on the question.

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I am dealing with that in my speech today directly after the questions.

WASTAGE AND DETERIORATION OF FOODSTUFFS IN BIHAR

52. *Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta: Has the attention of the Honourable the Food Member been drawn to the following:

(i) the colossal waste and deterioration of foodstuff in Bihar totalling about 1,17,786 maunds which was stored last year for export to Bengal but which was not exported and which has now been refused by all Rationing Authorities as unfit for human consumption and which, if exported to Bengal, would be sufficient to feed about 40,000 adults for one year;

(ii) the deterioration and waste of a huge quantity of foodstuff—about 1,50,000 maunds of *atta* and *maida* (flour)—now lying with Government stockists in Calcutta in a state unfit for human consumption and now proposed to be sold by the Government for use other than food;

(iii) the deterioration and decomposition of hundreds of bags of rice and *atta* now lying in a decomposed state in the Khulna Railway colony endangering public health; and

(iv) the waste of a huge quantity of foodgrains stocked at the Botanical Garden of Shibpur and which have now been thrown away in a decomposed condition into the Howrah-Belgachia dumping ground?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: (i) At the conclusion of the free trade period in the Eastern Zone last year the Government of Bihar agreed to issue permits for the movement of foodgrains to Bengal in all cases where a contract had been executed between the 18th May and 31st July 1943, provided that on or before 31st July 1943 the seller had the foodgrains in his possession and that prior to the date of the contract the foodgrains in question, had not been attached under Rule 75 A of the D. I. R. for any infringement of the food laws. The Provincial Government, however, had reasons to believe that attempts were made to abuse this concession. Accordingly, in November 1943 they issued orders freezing all such stocks. Due to some misunderstanding on the part of some of the District Magistrates in Bihar, a quantity of foodgrains other than those falling under the above category were also frozen. Presumably, these are the stocks referred to by the Honourable Member. These stocks were ordered to be released in August this year and the Government of Bihar have no reason to believe that the foodgrains are not fit for human consumption, nor have any complaints to this effect been received by them from the owners in whose possession the stocks remained throughout this period.

(ii) The actual quantity of *atta* and *maida* involved is 1,46,000 maunds. This quantity represents two per cent. of the turnover in eight months since the commencement of rationing on 31st January 1944 the turnover being approximately 1,60,000 tons. Re-conditioning 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. Steps are being taken by the Bengal Government to improve their storage arrangements.

(iii) The quantities of foodgrains which had deteriorated in the Khulna Railway Colony are:—

| | bags | | bags |
|-----------------------|-------|----------------------|------|
| <i>Atta</i> | 4,023 | Rice | 979 |
| Flour | 944 | <i>Dal</i> | 979 |

Deterioration of these grains was due to damage during transit and storage during rains. The stocks have since been removed from the Khulna Colony.

(iv) 120,000 tons of foodgrains passed through the Botanical Gardens Depot, two and a half per cent. or 3,000 tons had to be destroyed through deterioration a major portion of which had been sold to merchants who failed to remove it.

Mr. T. S. Avinashilingam Chettiar: Who bears the loss arising out of this deterioration?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: The Provincial Government.

Mr. K. O. Neogy: Is the Honourable Member aware of a recently reported instance in which a pretty large quantity of wheat was condemned as unfit for human consumption and sold to certain traders for Rs. 4 per maund for the purpose of being utilised for food purposes and that this very stock was resold to the Civil Supplies Department at the rate of Rs. 20 per maund and subsequently found to be perfectly fit for human consumption?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I would like to have notice of the question.

BENEFITS TO INDIA FROM THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND REHABILITATION ADMINISTRATION

53. ***Mr. K. O. Neogy:** (a) Will the Honourable the Commerce Member be pleased to state whether under the constitution of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration as now amended, India comes within the scope of operations of that body?

(b) Has the Honourable Member's attention been drawn to a statement made by the Director General of the said Administration that because India is a contributing nation, she cannot be given any relief and that even the extension of that administration's scope to famine-stricken areas militarily important to the United Nations is conditioned by limitations of funds and facilities?

(c) Will the Honourable Member be pleased to make a comprehensive statement on the question of India's participation in the aforesaid Administration and the steps taken by the Government for the purpose of enabling India to benefit by its activities in terms of the express desire of the Central Legislature in this matter?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: (a) Under an amendment recently passed by the Council of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration benefits to be made available through the Administration may be extended to areas which are of importance in military operations of the United Nations and which are stricken by famine or disease, in so far as the resources and facilities of the Administration shall permit. Famine or disease stricken areas in India may, therefore, be included in the scope of the Administration's activities.

(b) I have seen a News Agency report to this effect.

(c) I propose to move a resolution in this Assembly recommending the grant of a contribution to U. N. R. R. A. As the whole question will then be discussed, the Honourable Member will perhaps agree to wait until then.

Mr. K. O. Neogy: Will that be during the present Session?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: I will try.

VISIT TO ENGLAND OF THE COMMERCE SECRETARY, MR. N. R. PILLAI

54. *Mr. K. C. Neogy: Will the Honourable the Commerce Member be pleased to state:

(a) the purpose of the visit to England of the Commerce Secretary, Mr. N. R. Pillai;

(b) whether the Honourable Member's attention has been drawn to Press reports that one of the objects of the Commerce Secretary's visit is to evolve schemes for the partial liquidation of the India's sterling balances held in England through trade methods; and

(c) whether the Commerce Secretary possesses necessary information regarding India's probable future trade requirements, and whether he is expected to supply this information to His Majesty's Government or to organisations of British manufacturers?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: (a) and (c). The purpose of Mr. Pillai's visit to England is to discuss with the officers of the Departments concerned questions relating generally to commercial policy, shipping, import and export controls, arrangements for the procurement of India's requirements, etc.

(b) No.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: What do you mean by "Departments concerned"?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: We are for the time being in contract with His Majesty's Government for the supply of tea. That is taken by the Ministry of Food. But what is going to be done after the war for the supply of tea to the world? This is a matter which requires a lot of preliminary talk before a settlement can be reached. Again we are importing a very large number of goods and we would like to know what are the intentions of His Majesty's Government about them after the war.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Is it the usual practice of the Government to depute officials for discussion with His Majesty's Government rather than have these discussions carried on by correspondence?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: This is the first time I have sent a man from my Department.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: Is it not a fact that His Majesty's Government is the sole purchaser of tea?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: It is not the sole purchaser of tea but the sole purchaser of a certain quantity of tea. The rest is entirely available for Indian consumption.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: I do not know whether the Honourable Member has answered part (b) of my question.

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: I said 'No'.

Mr. Manu Subedar: Is it not true that the Indian trade people are anxious to know what are the post-war restrictions on trade? Will my Honourable friend explain why steps are taken to let British manufacturers and traders know the mind of the Government of India earlier than the Indian manufacturers and businessmen in India?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: I repudiate this suggestion. There is no intention to inform anyone out of India of the Government of India's policy before we know it ourselves and before we can communicate it to the interests concerned. But in order that we may formulate our views, my friend will agree it is always better to know the other side of the picture.

Mr. P. J. Griffiths: With regard to Dr. Zia Uddin's question as to the excessive exports of tea, is it not a fact that, before determining the quantity of tea to be exported, the Government first determine the quantity required for Indian consumption; deduct that from total production and prohibit export in excess of that balance?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: That is correct but my answer to Question 57 may help the Honourable Member. I might say that in the year 1943-44 the total production was 551 million lbs. of which only 408 million lbs. was for export and we always keep sufficient margin for the home market. So far as tea is concerned, there is a demand that much more tea should go out.

Dr. M. A. Uddin Ahmad: Has the Honourable Member said that the Government of India determine the quantity of tea which they can afford to export?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: So far as tea is concerned, in view of the large consumption, the export of tea from India to the United Kingdom has gone down from 350 million lbs. to 270 million lbs. in the year 1943-44.

Mr. K. O. Neogy: Will the Honourable Member be pleased to give an assurance to this House that he will make a comprehensive statement on this subject after Mr. Pillai returns with tips from His Majesty's Government?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: I entirely repudiate the suggestion of tips. It is for the purpose of what tips we shall have ourselves. It is tactical to know what the tips are going to be on the other side.

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

INSUFFICIENT SUPPLIES OF SUPERIOR COTTON TO INDIAN TEXTILE MILLS.

55. *Mr. K. O. Neogy: Will the Honourable the Commerce Member be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian cotton textile mills are handicapped by insufficient supplies of superior cotton;

(b) whether it is a fact that the United Kingdom has a prior claim on Egyptian cotton and that whatever Egyptian cotton is supplied to India is sold to her at a price about 40 per cent. above the purchase price for the United Kingdom; and

(c) the average quantity of East African cotton imported into India during the last two years and whether any proportion of these imports are earmarked for production for the Defence services?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: (a) and (b). No.

(c) The average annual imports of East African cotton in the last two years ending 31st August 1944 were 150,976 bales. No proportion was earmarked for production for the Defence Services, but mills utilised some of this cotton in executing war orders placed on them.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Does the Government of India take a part in fixing the price of this cotton which comes from East Africa?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: It is usually done. For the last two years the representatives of the Government concerned and the representatives of this Government and the representatives of the consuming mills have been brought together in a conference and whatever is arrived at is a matter of agreement among those who consume cotton in this country.

INSUFFICIENT ORDERS FOR TINNED FOOD TO INDIAN MANUFACTURERS.

†56. *Mr. R. R. Gupta: Will the Honourable the Food Member be pleased to state as to why the orders for tinned food are not being placed according to the capacity of Indian manufacturers whose factories are being closed for want of order, while the stuff is being imported from abroad?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: The Food Department places orders for tinned foods with indigenous manufacturers only for the supply of the demands of the Defence Services. The placing of orders with factories is determined by the requirements of the Defence Forces which fluctuate considerably, the capacity of factories to produce foodstuffs of the quality prescribed by R.I.A.S.C. specifications and lastly by the availability of raw materials. In considering the last factor the Food Department has to bear in mind the availability of essential supplies for civilian consumption.

TEA SHIPPED FROM INDIA

†57. *Mr. R. R. Gupta: Will the Honourable the Commerce Member be pleased to state the quantity of tea shipped from India on account of the British Ministry of Food and on other accounts in each of the years 1940-41, 1941-42, 1942-43 and 1943-44, and the total production of India in each of these years?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: I lay on the table a statement showing the information asked for.

†Answer to this question laid on the table, the questioner being absent.

Statement

| Financial year | Exports of tea from India in mill. lbs. | | | |
|----------------|---|-----------------------|-------|-------------------------|
| | To U. K. | To other destinations | Total | Production (mill. lbs.) |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1940-41 | 315 | 39 | 354 | 471* |
| 1941-42 | 288 | 96 | 384 | 500* |
| 1942-43 | 252 | 76 | 328 | 569* |
| 1943-44 | 270 | 138 | 408 | 551* |

*Calendar year.

Note.—1. Under the Tea Emergency Purchase Scheme the British Ministry of Food purchased teas for U. K. up to the 14th December, 1942. After that date exports of tea on private account (excepting to certain land-frontier countries) have ceased and the entire export should be regarded as on account of the British Ministry of Food under the Tea Block Purchase Scheme.

2. The figures in column 4 do not include the full quantity contracted for by the Tea Controller during a calendar year, as shipments by him of the total quantity covered by each year's contract are generally spread over several months beyond the calendar and financial years concerned according to the freight position.

EXPORTS AND MANUFACTURE OF GUNNIES AND HESSIAN

†58. *Mr. R. B. Gupta: Will the Honourable the Commerce Member be pleased to state the quantity of gunnies and hessian exported from India on Government and other accounts in each of the years 1940-41, 1941-42, 1942-43 and 1943-44, and the total manufacture of gunnies and hessian in India in each of these years?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: The information is being collected and will be placed on the table of the House in due course.

GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTION TO ASSOCIATIONS OTHER THAN INDIAN LABOUR FEDERATION.

59. *Mr. Badri Dutt Pande: (a) With reference to starred question No. 776 of the 4th April, 1944, regarding monthly grant of Rs. 13,000 to the Indian Federation of Labour, will the Honourable the Labour Member be pleased to give a reply to my supplementary question as to whether there are other Associations which are getting money like the said Federation?

(b) What is the Government control over this money to see that it is being utilised for public purposes?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: (a) No other labour Association has received financial assistance from Government for this purpose. The letter in which assistance from Government in the matter of propaganda for maintaining morale of labour was offered, was addressed both to the All India Trade Union Congress and the Indian Federation of Labour. In their reply the All India Trade Union Congress did not ask for any assistance.

(b) I would refer the Honourable Member to the replies already given to questions put by Mr. Lalchand Navalrai.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

SLAUGHTER AND EXPORT OF COWS, ETC.

20. Mr. K. C. Neogy: Will the Secretary for Education, Health and Lands please make a statement indicating—

(a) the total extent of slaughter in India of living animals such as cows, buffaloes, bullocks, sheep and goats, for the years 1938, 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942, 1943 and 1944, stating the figures separately for each province; and

†Answer to this question laid on the table, the questioner being absent.

(b) the total number of living animals under the above categories exported from this country in the years 1940, 1941, 1942, 1943 and 1944, showing separately the destination of these exports to each individual country?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: (a) A statement is laid on the table showing the estimated number of cattle, buffaloes, sheep and goats slaughtered in each province, as given in the Reports of the Agricultural Marketing Officers on the marketing of hides and of skins in India. No other figures for the slaughter of cattle, buffaloes, sheep and goats are available.

(b) A statement showing the number of cattle, sheep and goats exported abroad by sea from British India during 1940, 1941, 1942 and 1943 is placed on the table. Figures showing the numbers exported during 1944 are not yet available.

Statement showing the estimated number of Cattle, Buffaloes, Sheep and Goats slaughtered in the various Provinces per year (in lakhs)

| Name of province | Cattle | Buffaloes | Sheep | Goats |
|------------------|--------|-----------|-------|-------|
| Assam | 0.5 | .. | .. | 1.2 |
| Bengal | 18.3 | 0.5 | 3.5 | 29.6 |
| Bihar | 12.4 | 2.0 | 2.5 | 26.0 |
| Bombay | 1.7 | 0.4 | 13.8 | 13.9 |
| C. P. | 0.7 | 0.2 | 1.1 | 9.1 |
| Madras | 8.5 | 3.3 | 38.7 | 19.7 |
| N.-W. F. P. | 2.4 | 1.8 | 5.3 | 5.7 |
| Orissa | 1.3 | 0.2 | 0.7 | 8.0 |
| Punjab | 2.6 | 1.6 | 8.9 | 11.5 |
| Sind | 0.2 | .. | 1.2 | 4.7 |
| U. P. | 4.8 | 1.9 | 13.7 | 41.1 |

Statement showing the number of Cattle, Sheep and Goats exported abroad by sea from British India during each calendar year 1940 to 1943

| Countries and final destination | Cattle | | | | Sheep and goats. | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------|-------|-------|-------|------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| | 1940 | 1941 | 1942 | 1943 | 1940 | 1941 | 1942 | 1943 |
| No. | No. | No. | No. | No. | No. | No. | No. | No. |
| United Kingdom | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Bahrain Islands | 15 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Ceylon | 565 | 1,021 | 2,292 | 3,015 | 25,983 | 23,609 | 38,531 | 77,203 |
| Burma | 1,157 | 1,055 | .. | .. | 152 | 52 | .. | .. |
| Straits Settlements | 6 | .. | .. | .. | .. | 4,239 | .. | .. |
| Federated Malaya States | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 200 | .. | .. |
| Kenya Colony | 41 | 3 | 4 | 8 | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Tanganyika territory | .. | 1 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Seychelles | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 11 | .. | .. |
| Iran | .. | 16 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Philippine Islands | 12 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Total | 1,796 | 2,096 | 2,296 | 3,023 | 26,135 | 28,111 | 38,531 | 77,203 |

IMPORTS AND EXPORTS OF MEATS

21. Mr. K. O. Neogy: Will the Honourable Member for Food please state:

(a) the quantity of meat, dehydrated or of other categories, exported from this country in the years 1942, 1943 and 1944; and

(b) the total amount of meat, dehydrated or of other categories, imported in this country during the years 1940, 1941, 1942, 1943 and 1944?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: (a) and (b). A statement is placed on the table of the House.

| <i>Statement</i> | | | | | |
|---|--|-------|-------|-------------|--------|
| (a) Exports— | | 1942 | 1943 | 1944 | |
| Tons | | 1,079 | 3,663 | 483 | |
| (b) Imports— | | 1940 | 1941 | 1942 & 1943 | 1944 |
| Tons | | 237 | 5,475 | 43,280 | 55,225 |
| In addition the following quantities of bacon were imported:— | | | | | |
| | | | | Tons | |
| 1942 | | | | 8,545 | |
| 1943 | | | | 1,684 | |
| January—June 1944 | | | | 654 | |

COMMODITIES NOTIFIED UNDER DEFENCE OF INDIA RULES AS ESSENTIAL FOR LIFE.

22. Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali: Will the Honourable Member for Industries and Civil Supplies please state the commodities notified under the Rules of the Defence of India Act Rules as essential for the life of the community, together with the particulars of those notifications issued either by the Central Government or by the Provincial Governments or by the authorities subordinate?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: No commodity has been notified under the Defence of India Rules as essential for the life of the community, but action has been taken under these Rules to control distribution, prices, etc., of a large number of commodities because such action was considered to be essential for the life of the community. The number of orders and notifications issued in this connection is so large that the time and labour involved in giving the detailed particulars of each of these notifications and orders would be incommensurate with the value of the information so collected.

MOTIONS FOR ADJOURNMENT

UNSATISFACTORY CHARACTER OF RAILWAY BOARD NOTIFICATION RE REVISED RATES OF DEARNESS ALLOWANCE

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The first adjournment motion today is in the name of Mr. Joshi who wishes to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, the unsatisfactory character of the notification dated the 2nd October, 1944, issued by the Railway Board regarding the revised rates of Dearness Allowance sanctioned from the 1st July, 1944.

Mr. N. M. Joshi (Nominated Non-Official): The exact complaint is that in this notification the Government of India have introduced certain new classes for whom dearness allowance is being given and omitted, in the case of certain other classes of railway servants, to give any increase in their dearness allowance. This is the unsatisfactory nature of the proposal in the notification.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall (Member for Railways and War Transport): Sir, I submit that there is nothing new in this policy which has been frequently and fully discussed before this House. This is the fifth liberalisation of the Dearness Allowance scheme which comprises benefits both in cash and in kind. The present scheme covers increases in one way or another to all classes of railwaymen up to a salary of Rs. 1,000. I think the Honourable Member has not paid attention to the other notifications which have widened the scope of the allowance and given benefits amounting to something like two and a half crores to the classes of people who, Mr. Joshi says, did not receive any benefit. Therefore I submit that there is no occasion to debate the subject on an adjournment motion.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: I do not accept that plea of the Honourable Member. He has introduced new classes of railway servants for giving dearness allowance. My complaint is that he has not given sufficient dearness allowance to certain other classes. He says that the policy is not a new one. I know that the Government of India's policy is to treat their poorly paid employees worse than how they treat their well-paid ones. Therefore I am not complaining about the policy, because the policy has always been bad. I am complaining of the details.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): On the facts stated by the Honourable the Railway Member-I hold that there is not sufficient justification for a discussion of this motion, and I therefore disallow it.

FAILURE TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE FACILITIES FOR SAFE TRAVEL OF CIVILIAN PUBLIC.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The next adjournment motion is one by Mr. K. S. Gupta relating to "the failure of the Government of India to provide adequate facilities and make proper arrangements for the safe travel of the civilian public instead of encouraging civilians sitting perched precariously on roof-tops, standing on foot boards and hanging on to the windows of the railway carriages, having failed to get accommodation inside the trains during their travel from place to place and thereby causing serious loss of life and limb as reported daily of occurrences here, there and everywhere in India, with special reference to incidents on the East Indian Railway reported by A.P.I. from Patna on 25th May, 1944."

I should like to know whether there is any objection to this motion.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Yes, Sir, I must object to this adjournment motion. There is nothing new in the position which has been debated very fully in this House during the course of the last Session and the general facts are well known to the House.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): How long has this state of things been going on?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Since 1942. In the matter of dealing with this we are guided by the advice of the Central Advisory Council for Railways which has twice discussed this subject and I am quite prepared to put the matter before them again during this Session, if they wish it.

Mr. K. S. Gupta (Ganjam *cum* Vizagapatam: Non-Muhammadian Rural): I withdraw the motion, Sir, as I am not going to move it.

FAILURE TO CHECK EPIDEMICS LIKE CHOLERA, ETC.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): There is another adjournment motion by Mr. K. S. Gupta which relates to "the failure of the Government of India to provide adequate facilities to prevent or check the epidemics like cholera, malaria (malignant type), sores (fatal in most cases) and dysentery, thereby causing serious loss of life as a result of malnutrition caused by inadequate supply of foodgrains (rice—the staple food) unfit for human consumption in the area devastated by successive cyclones of 1942 and 1943, including the coastal belt of Ganjam (Ex) and Vizagapatam districts of Madras Province."

The subject of this motion relates to the supply of foodgrains which is to be debated in the House today. I therefore disallow it.

POSITION OF INDIANS IN NATAL UNDER NATAL OCCUPATION ORDINANCE

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The next motion for adjournment is one by Mr. Govind V. Deehmukh relating to "the situation created for Indians in Natal by the Natal Occupation Ordinance, *i.e.*, the Ordinance providing for the control of the occupation and acquisition of residential and other property in Natal".

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare (Member for Commonwealth Relations): This can be debated on the day on which the whole question will be debated.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Has a date been fixed for the discussion of this question?

The Honourable Sir Sultan Ahmed (Leader of the House): The date has not been fixed yet, though it has been decided to allot a date as early as possible.

Mr. Bhulabhai J. Desai (Bombay Northern Divisions: Non-Muhammadian Rural): I understand that the 6th has been fixed for the discussion of this subject.

The Honourable Sir Sultan Ahmed: Yes, that will suit.

DEATH OF MR. SRIDEO SUMAN, AN EXILE FROM TEHRI STATE

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The next one is an adjournment motion by Mr. B. D. Pande relating to "the mysterious death of Mr. Srideo Suman, an exile from the Tehri State in the Tehri prison after a hunger strike of 50 days on the 25th July, 1944".

As the motion relates to Tehri, which is an Indian State, the consent of the Governor General is necessary. The Governor General has refused his consent.

INADEQUATE WAR ALLOWANCE FOR NON-GAZETTED OFFICERS

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): This adjournment motion is by Mr. A. C. Datta and relates to "the failure of the Government of India to extend to the non-gazetted officers of the Central Services the benefits of war allowance to the same extent to which these have been given to the gazetted officers (*vide*, Finance Department, Office Memorandum No. F. 2(52) W/44, dated the 25th September, 1944)".

What does the Honourable Member mean by the phrase "to the same extent"?

Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta (Chittagong and Rajshahi Divisions Non-Muhammadan Rural): I mean, Sir, the same proportion.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): What is the exact meaning of the expression?

Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta: The recent circular of the Government of India has given relief to the gazetted officers in the shape of a war allowance but none is given to the lower-paid non-gazetted staff.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Is it an equivalent or substitute for the dearness allowance?

Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta: So far as the gazetted officers are concerned there was no dearness allowance but with respect to the low-paid Government employees there was a dearness allowance. Substantial relief has been given to the higher paid officers but none to the low-paid non-gazetted officers.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman (Finance Member): The position is that dearness allowance was being given to classes of Government servants drawing pay up to Rs. 250, Rs. 200 and Rs. 150 in areas classified as A, B and C, respectively. The War Allowance is an extension of the principle of Dearness Allowance to higher classes of Government servants. It takes the principle of relief up to a pay of Rs. 1,000 a month for married officers. Now, Sir, the war allowance is 10 per cent. for married officers and 5 per cent. for unmarried officers.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Does it apply equally to gazetted and non-gazetted officers?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: I think it does, except that for gazetted officers it is subject to a minimum. Otherwise, where the dearness allowance is less than 10 per cent the establishments concerned, instead of getting the dearness allowance, may get the percentage war allowance instead. The only difference is that there is a minimum in the case of this war allowance.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): What is the minimum?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: The minimum for married officers is Rs. 50 and for unmarried officers the 5 per cent. is subject to a minimum of Rs. 30.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): That is for all gazetted as well as non-gazetted?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: No. That is the war allowance for gazetted officers. Broadly speaking, wherever the establishment which is at present getting a dearness allowance, will be better off by getting a war allowance of 10 per cent., then they get the percentage war allowance. That I understand to be the position.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): What is this difference between gazetted and non-gazetted—those who are not receiving the dearness allowance?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: Non-gazetted officers of the central services will receive dearness allowance at the existing rates or a war allowance of 10 per cent. of pay, whichever is greater. Therefore I suggest that it is not correct to imply that the relief is being denied to the non-gazetted officers.

Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta: A distinction is obviously made between gazetted and non-gazetted officers.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The allowance is in proportion to the pay?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: Yes, subject to a minimum as regards gazetted officers. As regards non-gazetted officers it is 10 per cent.; where the dearness allowance is more than 10 per cent. then I understand that the dearness allowance will be given.

Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta: In their case this 10 per cent. becomes illusory.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: These are matters of detail; there is no question of principle involved.

Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta: The anomalous result that follows is this . . .

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I want to know whether there is special hardship caused by any invidious distinction.

Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta: An invidious distinction has been made.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I take it that, generally speaking, gazetted officers receive higher salaries than non-gazetted officers. Is that so?

Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta: That is true. I say that a gazetted officer and a non-gazetted officer getting, say, Rs. 280 have been treated differentially by this recent order.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The pay is also different.

Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta: I say the pay is the same. I am taking the case of a gazetted and a non-gazetted officer, both drawing Rs. 250. The result with regard to the first officer is that he gets more and the second (non-gazetted officer) gets less.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): How much more?

Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta: The difference is this: the gazetted officer drawing Rs. 250 gets Rs. 50, while the non-gazetted officer drawing Rs. 250 gets only Rs. 25. The difference is between Rs. 25 and Rs. 50, although both are getting the same pay.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: Yes; that particular case is correct. That is due to the operation of the minimum provision. The minimum provision is the same throughout the scale for gazetted officers—it applies right up to Rs. one thousand. The 10 per cent. war allowance is subject to a minimum in the case of married officers of Rs. 50; and the 5 per cent. war allowance is subject to a minimum of Rs. 30. The result is that in certain cases the non-gazetted officer will find that his dearness allowance is less than the war allowance given to gazetted officers, but I submit that it is merely one feature in the general scheme and is not a matter of principle.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): If the Honourable Member is advised that there is an anomaly, it can be reconsidered, I suppose?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: I cannot say at this moment that I am prepared to reconsider that particular feature, but it is a matter which will no doubt come under consideration. The dearness allowance, I must point out, has come under constant review, as in the case of the Railway Department.

Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta: We are now concerned with the present position.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: They come under constant review in accordance with the policy of granting relief to our staff: it may be that at any particular moment there will be anomalies but that does not in my opinion raise a question of principle.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I do not think a matter like this is a fit subject for an adjournment motion. The whole scheme has to be considered together, and if there is an anomaly in any particular respect, no doubt on the next reconsideration the anomaly may possibly be removed.

Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta: May I have an assurance in that respect from the Honourable Member?

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): He has said that it is under constant review.

Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta: This is only about the non-gazetted officers.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: I say that the whole matter is one which is constantly under the consideration of the Government.

HUNGER STRIKE BY POLITICAL PRISONERS IN BHAGALPORE CAMP JAIL

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The next one is in the name of Mr. Satyanarayan Sinha. He wishes to discuss "the serious situation in the Bhagalpore Camp Jail which has led to the hunger strike of the political prisoners lodged therein."

I should like to know more details of this. Is that not a matter for the Provincial Government—jail administration?

Mr. Satya Narayan Sinha (Darbhanga *cum* Saran: Non-Muhammadan): Section 93 is operating there—there is no provincial ministry.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I am afraid that is under the law. It cannot be discussed here.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The next is in the name of Mr. Ananga Mohan Dam, the Honourable Member does not want to move it?

Mr. Ananga Mohan Dam (Surma Valley *cum* Shillong: Non-Muhammadan) No, Sir.

DISCONTINUANCE ON RACING DAYS OF RESTAURANT CAR ON THE POONA EXPRESS

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The next one also is in the name of Mr. Dam. He wants to discuss "the grave impropriety on the part of the G. I. P. Railway administration in discontinuing on racing days the Restaurant Car usually attached to the Poona Express between Poona and Bombay and using it for the benefit of the racing community and the gamblers who attend the races at Poona during the monsoon."

I do not think it is a matter of so much importance that the business of the House should be adjourned on that account.

NON-REPRESENTATIVE DELEGATION TO WORLD MONETARY CONFERENCE IN AMERICA

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The next one is also in the name of Mr. Dam. He wishes to discuss "the action of the Government in sending a non-representative delegation to the World Monetary Conference in America in July last by excluding from that Delegation representatives of scientific economic thought and of the common men who are most vitally affected by the deliberations of that World Conference."

I think this is a notice that was originally given by Mr. Jamnadas Mehta and he did not move it. I should like to know who are the members of this delegation.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta (Bombay Central Division Non Muhammadan Rural): May I inform you Sir, that the members of this delegation were

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I want to know it from the Honourable Mover.

Mr. Ananga Mohan Dam: I do not want to move it, Sir.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I think there must have been some misunderstanding about the ruling I gave—I think in the last Session—in which I admitted a motion of a somewhat similar character, and I

want to explain what I meant regarding motions of this character. The motion that I admitted last Session related to the selection of certain non-official gentlemen who were sent by the Government of India to explain the war efforts of the Government of India to Britain and America. If there has been any misunderstanding that the admission of that motion meant that it is not the responsibility of the Government of India to make the selection in such cases but that they are bound to consult any particular representative bodies, then I must make it clear that I did not mean to lay down any such proposition. It is the primary responsibility of the Government to make the selection, though in a proper case it is the right of this House to call in question any action taken by the Government in this respect. In the other case, the question involved was one of a character which raised political issues on which a large section of the House differed from the Government of India and that was the main ground on which I admitted that motion.

CENTRAL PROVINCES GOVERNMENT SERVANTS' AID TO CONVERSION OF GONDS TO CHRISTIANITY

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The next motion No. 33 is also in the name of Mr. Ananga Mohan Dam. There was also a similar motion in the name of Mr. Jannadas Mehta. It wants to discuss the action of Government servants in C. P. in aiding and abetting the Christian Missionaries in that province in forcibly and fraudulently converting the Gonds to Christianity.

I do not know what the exact position is. I think the Government Member will be able to explain.

The Honourable Sir Francis Mudie (Home Member): This is entirely a provincial matter. The Provincial Government are responsible for the conduct of their own servants. We cannot interfere. As regards conversion, it is either lawful or unlawful. If it is unlawful, as the allegation is, and if converts were obtained by force or fraud, that is entirely for the Provincial Government who are responsible for the administration of the criminal law.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): This seems to be the responsibility of the Provincial Government—to see that their servants do not misbehave in the way alleged.

BAN ON PUBLICATION OF PANCHANGAS

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The next motion is in the names of Mr. Nilakantha Das and Mr. Dam. It seeks to discuss the action of the Government of India in placing a ban and limitation on the publication of the Panchangas (Religious Calendars) which are essential for the observance of the religious and social ceremonies of the Hindus all over India.

When did this happen?

Mr. Ananga Mohan Dam: I do not wish to move it.

(Mr. Das was absent.)

FORCIBLE ENTRY BY POLICE AT THE LAHORE MEETING OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF ALL-INDIA RAILWAYMEN'S FEDERATION

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The next one is also in the name of Mr. Ananga Mohan Dam. He wants to discuss the great resentment and indignation prevailing among 8 lakhs of Railwaymen all over India at the action of the Punjab Government in forcing the presence of C. I. D. reporters supported by a force of police constables both armed and unarmed at Barkat Ali Khan Hall, Lahore, at a private general meeting of the General Council of the All-India Railwaymen's Federation on the 16th September 1944 and thereby interfering with and preventing the transaction of legitimate business of a body which has been recognised by the Government of India for the last fifteen years as an organisation of genuine Trade Unionism

[Mr. President]

This action is an action of the Local Government of the Punjab which is responsible for law and order. It cannot be discussed here. The motion is disallowed.

RUNNING OF COMPETITIVE ROAD-TRANSPORT SERVICES BY RAILWAYS FOR MONOPOLI SIND

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The next one is in the name of Sardar Sant Singh. He wishes to discuss "the transport policy of the Government of India as disclosed by the Railway Board's letter No. 9083TX, dated 17th April 1944, which in practice amounts to the ousting of the Public individual or Company operators—who are solely responsible for the development of this industry in India—from the road and obtain a monopoly of this field as exemplified by the recent project of the N. W. Railway to run competitive petrol driven goods services between Lahore, Pathankot and Nagrota as against private gas Plant driven services."

I have not seen the notification. Will the Honourable Member acquaint the House with the purport of it.

Sardar Sant Singh (West Punjab: Sikh): The letter of the Railway Board, No. 9083TX, dated the 17th April, 1944, related to the running of road services for passengers and goods to afford relief on routes where railways are congested. In this letter it is stated (these are the portions which are relevant to the adjournment motion) that large numbers of chassis were coming to India from America on lend-lease. It says:

"Nearly 9,000 will have been released by the end of March, and releases thereafter are expected to be at the rate of not less than 1,200 monthly. Past releases have mainly been absorbed for special war purposes; future releases are expected to be increasingly available for general transport of passengers and goods, and the question is how far railways should participate in operating these vehicles and how far they should be released for independent operation."

Then, in the course of the same letter they say:

"The Government of India have not formed final opinion on the latter report but they have decided that it is in the public interest that the available vehicles should, as far as circumstances permit, be used by or in conjunction with railways for goods or passenger transport where needed for high priority traffic for relieving congested sections of railways and generally for relief to the public on routes where road and rail facilities are now together unequal to the essential needs of the community."

Later on, in the course of the same letter, they have stated:

"The Controller of Capital Issues has agreed in principle to sanction new flotations for amalgamations of transport concerns, and it seems probable that developments along these lines during the next 12 months will be substantial. With such amalgamation, the danger of a recurrence of cut-throat competition is much reduced and it should at any future time be possible for railways to enter into mutual agreements with such companies and eventually to acquire a substantial financial interest in those operating on the main routes served by the Railways."

In the course of the debate on the Motor Vehicles Bill, Sir K. G. Mitchell, on behalf of the Government of India, denied that the Bill enjoined forced partnership between Motor Transport and State Railways. Here is an instance in which the Railway transport is taking advantage of the position created in the country, because of the control they have over the imports of vehicles. They are forcing their partnership on the private bus companies who are carrying on business. This is against the policy enunciated in the course of the debate on the Motor Vehicles Bill. In my address as President of the Motor Union held at Lahore, I have pleaded the cause of the motor unions and have criticised this policy of the Railway Transport which goes against the declared wishes of two Viceroys who made speeches on this subject. Therefore, this new policy which is adopted by the Railway Transport deserves to be censured by this House. That is my case.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Sir, it is well-known that for a long time railways have been pressed to do what they can to afford relief to rail transport. In pursuance of that they have undertaken, as I have said on several

occasions publicly, to do what they can to initiate road services to relieve both passengers and goods congestion.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): When was this policy announced?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: I will just explain the circumstances as my Honourable friend has spoken at length. In pursuance of that policy in the Punjab, we consulted with the Punjab Government and with the commercial interests in the Punjab and having due regard to the interests of the private companies, we came to the conclusion that one of the best routes on which to relieve congestion would be this particular route to which my Honourable friend takes exception. The railways were, therefore, accordingly allotted ten lorries out of about 60 which were being allotted not by us but by the Provincial Motor Transport Controller. It will be seen, therefore, that there is no intention whatsoever on behalf of the railways to obtain a monopoly, that we have co-operated with the commercial interests and that we are attempting to safeguard the interests of the small owner in this matter. If there is any difficulty about producer gas *versus* petrol, I will give an undertaking to my friend to see that there is no discrimination on that score.

As regards the main question, there is nothing new in this policy which has been referred to on previous occasions, in my Budget speech and in the debate on post-war policy. Incidentally, the matter has been before the Standing Finance Committee, who have approved the policy for the period of the present emergency. The House will have an opportunity to discuss the policy in so far as the post-war policy is concerned and I submit that this is not the occasion to initiate a general discussion on the policy.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad (United Provinces Southern Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): May I say a few words in this connection? The Assembly has repeatedly asserted that the railways ought not to take share in the running of the buses nor should they purchase the shares. If the railway administration wanted to depart from this policy, the Railway Member ought to have moved a Resolution in this House and taken the permission of the House to depart from the policy which this Assembly has established.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): It is a very wide question.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: I am quite prepared to have this discussed at the proper time.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The motion raised a wide question of policy and the facts stated by the Honourable the War Transport Member show that the matter cannot be discussed properly on an adjournment motion and the House will have an opportunity to discuss it later. So, I rule it out of order.

STOPPING THE BOOKING OF PASSENGERS TO NANKANA SAHIB ON GURU NANAK'S BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARY

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The next motion for the adjournment of the business of the House also stands in the name of Sardar Sant Singh. He wishes to "censure the Government for stopping the booking of passengers to Nankana Sahib Railway Station on the North Western Railway on the auspicious occasion of Guru Nanak's birthday anniversary and for abdicating their authority in favour of the executive of the Punjab by giving powers to District Magistrates to issue permits to pilgrims".

Is not that a proper function of the Local Government?

Sardar Sant Singh: The position is this that on the anniversary of the birthday of Guru Nanak a big fair takes place at Nankana Sahib, which is a railway station on the North Western Railway. The railway authorities stopped the booking between Lahore and a certain station on Jallianwala line which is called Tandawala.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: On whose order?

Sardar Sant Singh: On the General Manager's order. This ought not to have been done because of the importance of the fair and other considerations which are stated in my speech. The second grievance is that they abdicated their authority. Instead of issuing permits themselves, the railway authorities allowed the District Magistrate to issue the permits. I cannot understand how the booking can be regulated by the order of a District Magistrate. It is the function of the railway authorities to see that the passengers get the convenience as far as the accommodation is available, but I really fail to understand why they should hand over their powers to the District Magistrate to be exercised by them in order to issue permits. This is my case. The Government deserves to be censured and severely censured on the point because we find there is a tendency on the part of the Central Government to hand over their power to the Provincial Government and say that it is their duty and not that of the Railways.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Sir, I submit that there is nothing new in this question, the principle of which was debated on the floor of the House arising out of a similar situation which arose in Madras, I think in the course of the last Session. The order is, of course, put out by the Provincial Government and the Provincial Government prescribed that the following classes of persons are excluded from the application of their order: Government servants on duty, genuine residents of the locality served by specified railway stations possessing a Magistrate's certificate to that effect and persons possessing certificates, issued by the District Magistrate of Sheikhpura or by any other Magistrate empowered by him in that behalf to the effect that their presence is required to assist in the running of the *mela*.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Why was this restriction placed?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: It was placed in pursuance of the general policy of trying to relieve congestion on the railways, for which the House and the public have been pressing again and again.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Why was the power delegated to the District Magistrate?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: It is the Provincial Government which is in the best position to know whether it is desirable to allow congestion or not.

Sardar Sant Singh: May I say a word, Sir? The Honourable Member has not explained whether the stopping of booking was done by the General Manager of the North-Western Railway or by the Provincial Government. Secondly, why did he agree to the permits being issued by the Provincial authority instead of issuing them by the railways? He has not explained that.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: It was an order of the Provincial Government which the railways were carrying out. The railways themselves do not issue such orders which are made by the Provincial Government.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): As stated by the Honourable the War Transport Member, I do not think the position taken up by Sardar Sant Singh is the right one and I disallow the motion.

FREQUENT DISALLOWANCE BY THE GOVERNOR GENERAL OF MOTIONS IN THE ASSEMBLY REQUIRING HIS PREVIOUS CONSENT

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The next motion is also in the name of Sardar Sant Singh. He wishes to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, "the passive acceptance without protest by the Government of India of the increasing and frequent use of discretion by Governor General to disallow those motions in the Assembly requiring Governor General's previous consent without regard to the fact that some of them vitally affect the interests of India and concern the welfare of the people of this country—particularly the disallowance of Sardar Sant Singh's question asking for information whether Jews have been permitted to be settled in a Native State in

India—and the resolution purporting to convey the disapproval of the House to the frequent use of Section 72 of the Government of India Act in issuing Ordinances over the head of the Assembly”.

The motion is of a very general character and it really raises a large constitutional question. I gave my ruling yesterday that motions of this character cannot be moved in this House. I, therefore, hold that this motion is not in order.

Sardar Sant Singh: May I know, Sir, then, what is the other method of protesting against this frequent use of section 72 of the Government of India Act?

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I think the Honourable Member ought to get the Act changed.

ILL-TREATMENT METED OUT TO MR. RAM CHARAN AGRAWAL BY THE DELHI POLICE

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The next motion for adjournment is in the name of Mr. Kailash Bihari Lall. He wishes to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, the revengeful conduct of the Delhi Kotwali Police in handcuffing Mr. Ram Charan Agrawal, a respectable citizen of Delhi and making him march on foot from Kotwali to the jail and refusing him the use of pillow while allowing a wrapper and a *gadda* and keeping him without food for a day and half against the declared policy and practice of the Government with regard to the treatment of political prisoner.

I wish to know what the Government Member has to say on this motion.

The Honourable Sir Francis Mudie: I am afraid I have no information on this. I have called for information and I have not yet received it. I should like to know the date of this occurrence.

Mr. Kailash Bihari Lall (Bhagalpur, Purnea and the Sonthal Parganas: Non-Muhammadian): It happened about 10th October, 1944.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): This motion will stand over till tomorrow. I suppose the Honourable Home Member will be able to get the information by tomorrow.

DEATHS DUE TO AN ACCIDENT AT BAKHTIARPUR JUNCTION STATION

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The next motion is in the name of Mr. Muhammad Nauman. He wishes to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, *vis.*, criminal negligence of the E. I. Railway administration in not having provided lights at Bakhtiarpur Junction Station and allowing empty special train to run without searchlight on the engine on the 26th of September 1944, which resulted in the death of nine persons who were run over by the said special train when these persons were attempting to catch the 14-Up Express at about 8-30 P.M. and further failure of the E. I. Railway administration in not having instituted a public enquiry into the said accident.

I should like to know what the facts are.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Sir, the position is that an accident took place on 25th September. It was very regrettable that seven people were killed and two died later. The facts of the case were that these people who were coming from a pilgrimage jumped on the line from the platform and attempted to get into a standing train on the wrong side of the line. They were therefore trespassing on the line.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Has any enquiry been made?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: There was an enquiry by Senior officers of the Railway and also by the Government Inspector of Railways, who, of course, is not under the Railway Board.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): What is the finding?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: It was found that no railway staff have been held responsible for the accident which was entirely due to the passengers in question not using the overbridge to cross from the up to the down

[Sir Edward Benthall]

platform, but jumping on the up track from the high level platform without heeding the approaching empty coaching special.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The allegation is that there was no searchlight on the engine.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Searchlights are provided only for the guidance of the driver and they are not intended to serve the purpose of warning trespassers off the line.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman (Patna and Chota Nagpur *cum* Orissa: Muhammadan): How do you explain the fact that there were no lights on the Bakhtiar-pur railway platform on that day and probably there were no lights on the platform for months together. This was responsible for people not knowing where to go and trying to cross over the line and trying to catch the 14-Down Express.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): There is an overbridge.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: Yes. But the overbridge is at a distance, and the train was already on the platform, and perhaps the people thought it would be easier for them to catch 14-Down Express which was already standing on the other platform and hence they crossed the line to get into the train. The platform itself is not very high and it was very easy for them to cross. Of these nine passengers, seven were Muslim women who were coming from a *mela* and they were bound for Monghyre.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Could they not use the overbridge?

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: But they could not see the overbridge. There was no light of any kind. The train was standing on the platform. There was no searchlight on the engine also.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Is it the practice to have searchlight on the engine?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: The practice is to have a searchlight on the engine so that the driver can see if there are any obstacles on the track. It is not to warn passengers. Very often the searchlight is put out when it is not necessary or desirable for the driver to use it.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: How do you explain that there was no light on the platform or a searchlight on the Engine?

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan (Agra Division: Muhammadan-Rural): I hope the Honourable Member for War Transport will excuse me if I point out that this searchlight was put at my suggestion as far back as 1922 or 1923. At that time there was a big accident. This searchlight is not for the benefit of the driver alone, it is also for the benefit of the passengers who may have to cross over to the other side so that they may know what is happening on the line. The searchlight has been used for a long time past to warn passengers also to keep off the track. It is not merely for the benefit of the driver to see what is happening and whether the track is in proper order or not.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I admit the motion as being in order. It will be taken up at four of the Clock.

NOMINATION OF THE PANEL OF CHAIRMEN

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I have to inform the House that under sub-rule (1) of rule 3 of the Indian Legislative Rules, I nominate Mr. Abdul Qaiyum, Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan; Mr. K. C. Neogy and Sir Henry Richardson on the Panel of Chairmen for the current Session.

COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I have to announce that under sub-order (1) of Standing Order 80 of the Legislative Assembly Standing

Orders the following Honourable Members will form the Committee on Petitions, namely: (1) Nawabzada Muhammad Liaquat Ali Khan, (2) Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh, (3) Mr. N. M. Joshi, (4) Sardar Sant Singh.

According to the provision of the same Standing Order the Deputy President will be the Chairman of the Committee.

PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT OF THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman (Finance Member): Sir, I present the Report* of the Public Accounts Committee on the Accounts of 1942-43.

MOTION RE FOOD SITUATION.

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava (Food Member): Sir, I move: "That the food situation in India be taken into consideration."

Sir, it is now nearly a year since I made my last statement in this House on the food situation in India. I have no doubt that Honourable Members would like to have from me an up-to-date review of the position since then. It would perhaps be best if I were to give the House a brief review of the conditions in the main deficit areas. Bengal was in the grip of famine last year and it is not necessary for me to repeat an account of the causes that led to this distressing situation nor give a statement of the steps taken by the Government of India last year to remedy the situation. The end of last year saw the appearance perhaps of the biggest harvest that the province of Bengal had ever seen. Nature was evidently merciful after the devastation it caused in the preceding harvest. But confidence was lacking in the Province. The public had not yet recovered from the shocks that they had sustained in the preceding months and some urgent action was necessary to restore public confidence and assist the Government of Bengal to procure a substantial portion of the new crop and make it available to its deficit districts at reasonable rates. That was why the Government of India undertook to feed Calcutta for a period of 12 months and thus relieve the Bengal Government from the strain of having to procure food supplies for Calcutta. As originally estimated, this undertaking was calculated to involve 646,000 tons of foodgrains of which 246,000 tons were in the form of rice and 340,000 tons in the form of wheat. I may say that up to date a total quantity of 475,000 tons has been moved to Calcutta of which 223,000 tons consist of wheat and 174,000 tons of rice. In the meanwhile the Bengal Government went ahead with the scheme of their local procurements. They anticipated being able to procure a total of 700,000 tons and I am glad to say that the quantity they have so far succeeded in procuring is well in excess of that quantity. I admit, Sir, that in spite of the local procurement scheme and the arrangements they had made for feeding the deficit areas and in spite of their having been relieved from the strain of having to feed Calcutta, acute local scarcities were experienced in the earlier stages in some of the deficit districts like Chittagong, Tipperah and Dacca; and that was reflected in a level of rice prices in those areas considerably above not only their own statutory maxima but also over the rate prevailing in the rest of Bengal. For example, at one time the price of rice in Chittagong ranged from Rs. 30 to Rs. 35 while in Dacca at one time it was quoted in the region of Rs. 20. The main causes for these local shortages were the slowness of procurement operations in the earlier part of the season and, even more, difficulties of transporting rice from the surplus districts to the deficit districts. But the House must not forget that slow procurement was part of a deliberate policy in the beginning as we did not want to disturb the restoration of confidence by hasty and ill-planned purchases in the rural markets. We knew that if the crop was a bumper one, as we thought it was, procurement was bound to become easier in the latter part of the year, and the results have justified our

*Not printed in these Debates, but a copy has been placed in the Library of the House.—
Ed. of D.

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expectations. The food situation, as far as rice is concerned, is now easy over practically all the areas of Bengal and the sub-divisional average of rice prices in Bengal today is in the neighbourhood of Rs. 13 a maund as against the level of Rs. 15 it had reached in the first half of March, 1944. The average of rice prices in the nine deficit districts is now Rs. 13/12, prices in Chittagong ranging from Rs. 13 to Rs. 14. If Honourable Members want, I am prepared to lay on the table a statement showing the latest rice prices in the different districts of Bengal as reported to us by the Government of that province.

Mr. K. O. Neogy (Dacca Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): We shall be grateful if the Honourable Member will do that.

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I will do that.

The stock position has also improved. The stocks of foodgrains in Calcutta total 87,000 tons,—that was on the 21st October last,—in the deficit districts 182,000 tons and in the surplus districts 100,000 tons; and it is expected that at the end of the calendar year the Bengal Government will be left with substantial reserves. As you know, Sir, the *aman* crop will come to be harvested in the next two months, and from the reports received so far the condition of the crop seems to be normal, though not up to the bumper level it had reached last year. On the whole, therefore, I think I would be justified in claiming that so far as Bengal is concerned the policy which we and the Provincial Government adopted has been justified and that we have sound cause to look to the future with confidence.

Now, Sir, there are two other major deficit areas to which I should like to draw attention. The first is Travancore and Cochin. Honourable Members are aware how these two States used on the average to import nearly 446,000 tons of rice in the pre-war period, most of which came from Burma. The cutting off of this fruitful source of supply has placed these States in the most difficult position by depriving them of more than 50 per cent. of their annual requirements. The Food Department allotted to these areas a total quantity of 283,000 tons of foodgrains under the *kharif* plan of 1943-44 and 32,000 tons of foodgrains under the *rabi* plan of 1944-45, making a total of 315,000 tons of foodgrains. Of this quantity 239,000 tons were rice, 33,000 tons were millets and 32,000 tons were wheat. The States in their turn undertook the most comprehensive measures both for mobilising their domestic resources and for providing for an equitable distribution of the total supplies they obtained both from within and without. Honourable Members are aware that in both these States there is monopoly procurement and State-wide rationing. I have myself but recently visited these two States and I must place on record my admiration of the efficient manner in which the Governments of these two States have tackled their food problem and have prevented the occurrence of starvation deaths in spite of shortage in their domestic output. The ration in these two States today is 13 ounces per day in Travancore and 12 ounces per day in Cochin. Of this ration, however, only 8 ounces of rice are available per day in Travancore and up till recently only 5½ ounces of rice per day were the ration given in the Cochin State. The rest of the ration was made up with other grains like wheat and millets. On my recent visit to Cochin I asked the Cochin State to raise their rice ration to the neighbouring level of 8 ounces. They promised to place the necessary supplies at their disposal. The Cochin Durbar have accordingly raised their rice ration from 5½ ounces to 6½ ounces per day, and will, I hope, presently be able to raise it to 8 ounces a day. I must confess quite frankly that I am not satisfied even with a ration of 8 ounces of rice. I know that Travancore and Cochin are predominantly rice-eating areas and it is not easy to change age-long habits within the course of a few months. I would very much like to see the rice ration in these areas raised to at least 12 ounces, but my difficulty is of getting the rice. It is possible to import wheat and I am now able to do so in increasing quantities, but rice is just not available. I have, therefore, to continue to ask the people of Travancore and Cochin to supplement their rice ration with wheat, which grain, I am glad to say, is gradually becoming popular in those areas, thanks to the

active and vigorous propaganda undertaken by their Administrations to popularise its use. I may add that I shall constantly bear in mind the desirability of helping the Governments of Travancore and Cochin to raise the rice constituent of their ration to a higher level. My ability to assist them will of course depend on the supplies placed at my disposal by other producing areas. In this connection, I should like to make a public appeal to the Governments and to the peoples of those areas in which rice is in the nature of a luxury ration than an essential article of diet that they should limit to the maximum extent possible their own consumption of rice and thus release the stocks to serve the needs of the predominantly rice-eating people of the south.

Now, Sir, I come to Bombay. Bombay used to import on an average 532,000 tons of foodgrains in the pre-war period, of which 143,000 tons consisted of wheat, 50,000 tons of millets and 294,000 tons of rice. We were able to allot them 227,000 tons of foodgrains under the *Kharif* Plan of 1943-44 and 257,000 tons under the *Rabi* Plan of 1944-45, of which 129,000 tons was in rice, 98,000 tons in millets and 210,000 tons in wheat. Of this quantity, 349,000 tons have already been moved to Bombay, of which 114,000 tons is in rice, 78,000 tons in millets and 157,000 tons in wheat.

Mr. Manu Subedar (Indian Merchants' Chamber and Bureau: Indian Commerce): Where is barley? We were getting barley, not wheat.

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: That was imported barley.

Mr. Manu Subedar: How much was imported?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I have not got the figures here. I am dealing with the Basic Plan of India.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee (Calcutta Suburbs: Non-Muhammadan Urban): There it is omitted!

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: It will be noticed that in the case of Bombay as well, we were not able to meet their requirements of rice in full, and we have tried to make up the balance to some extent by giving them other foodgrains. Bombay also is a deficit area which has tried its best to help itself, both in the matter of procurement and equitable distribution of total available supplies. Honourable Members may be aware that Bombay has put through a scheme of a graded compulsory levy of foodgrains and has also instituted a system of monopoly purchase for the balance of the cultivator's marketable surplus. Indeed, they have gone further and enacted legislation for the compulsory maintenance of their existing area under food crops, and for the compulsory diversion to food crops of a part of the area under non-food crops. They have not only extended the scheme of rationing to practically their entire urban area but have also undertaken a system of provisioning for all the inadequate producers and non-producers in their rural areas as well. The population involved in this provisioning scheme is estimated at 4 millions. The ration allowed at present is 28 lbs. per month per adult. With the stocks in their actual possession at present together with the quantities expected to be procured by them from the last year's crop and the balance awaiting despatch from the rest of India, the Bombay Government expect to be in a position to meet their requirements till the end of December and still hold one month's reserve. I am confident that with these stocks, the allotment that we hope to make to them for the next year and the quantities they will themselves procure from their own domestic production, the Bombay Government will be able to handle their food problem successfully during the coming year as well.

Sir, I now turn to another area which perhaps is prominently present in the minds of some Honourable Members. I refer to the province of Madras. Madras has been more or less self-sufficient in the matter of food supplies and we had been informed by the Madras Government that they were confident about their ability to meet their own requirements. As Honourable Members may be aware, rationing in urban areas has been most extended in the province of Madras. The Madras Government have also had a very efficient system of procurement of food supplies from their surplus districts which they utilize

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for feeding their rationed area as well as supplying the balance of the requirements of their deficit districts. Some time during the year, however, our attention was drawn to the presence of acute distress in Malabar. My Director-General of Food paid an immediate visit to the South and held discussions with the Government of Madras and obtained our assurance that they would keep the district of Malabar sufficiently supplied with foodgrains. We also recommended to them the advisability of introducing district wide rationing in the district of Malabar, and I am glad to say that the Government of Madras have now introduced district wide rationing in the major part of the Malabar district. This is the first experiment of its kind in British India and I am most anxious that it should succeed. I have recently been to Malabar and saw for myself the conditions in that district and I have no doubt that the introduction of district wide rationing was the correct course to adopt. As a result of my observations, and in order to assist the Government of Madras, the Government of India have recently made a special allotment to the Madras Government of 22,000 tons of rice and 8,000 tons of wheat for the purpose of easing the food situation in Malabar and facilitating the successful introduction of district-wide rationing in that area. If this experiment succeeds in Malabar it may well prove a pointer to other deficit areas in British India particularly in regard to their deficit pockets. I am not happy about the size of the ration contemplated for Malabar. The ration proposed is 12 oz. and of it only 10 oz. is to be available in the form of rice. I wish it were possible for the Government of India to make available to the Madras Government additional supplies of rice which would help them to raise this ration. But as I have already stated, rice is in very short supply and I cannot import it. We hope however to make available sufficient supplies of wheat to the Madras Government by which they may be able to raise the rations in all cereals in Malabar to a total of a pound a day. The other district of the Madras Presidency about which we have recently been hearing reports of some distress is Vizagapatam. While I was last in Madras I particularly drew the attention of the Madras Government to the reported situation in Vizagapatam district and I was assured that the Madras Government was in close touch with the situation there and were taking appropriate steps to meet it. The Government of India have recently made a special allotment of 5,000 tons of rice to the Madras Government for the use of the Vizagapatam district and I think this will go some way to meet the shortage which particularly prevails in these pre-harvest months, I shall watch with interest whether the Madras Government will also apply the principle of district-wide rationing in Vizagapatam.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Does the Honourable Member like to stop now?

Before adjourning the House I wish to mention that I understand that there has been an agreement among the Parties that the time limit to be fixed for speeches during the debate on the food situation should be 20 minutes for Members generally and 30 minutes for the leaders of Parties.

Does that meet with the consent of the House?

Sir Henry Richardson (Nominated Non-Official): If the leader does not speak I presume that 30 minutes will be allowed to the principal speaker of the Group?

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): No, the agreement relates only to leaders. If the Parties agree to allow 30 minutes to another speaker in place of the leader, there would be no difficulty; but in the absence of such agreement, the arrangement come to must stand.

Mr. Hoosainbhoy A. Lalljee (Bombay Central Division: Muhammadan Rural): We do not know how many days are allotted. Neither are we informed by the Government as to what is the programme to be adopted in this food discussion. The Members here are not informed at all whether the debate is for one, two or three days. Therefore we cannot say whether 30 minutes are sufficient for leaders.

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I have agreed to give two more dates—8th and 9th November.

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

The Assembly reassembled after Lunch at Half Past Two of the Clock, Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta) in the Chair.

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: Before lunch I was dealing with the main deficit areas of India, I have dealt with Bengal, Bombay, Madras, Travancore and Cochin. I think these are the important deficit areas with which we are concerned.

I would now like to pass on to a review of certain general matters relating to food control and food policy during the last twelve months. This is the period during which the co-ordinated policy which emerged from the Gregory Committee's recommendations has been working. During this period statutory price control was instituted for wheat, gram, barley, bajra, jowar and maize. The basis for the statutory maxima price for wheat was taken at Rs. 9-8-0 per maund in the main producing markets of the Punjab and those for bajra and jowar at Rs. 7/8 and Rs. 7/- per maund respectively. In order to protect the producer if prices fall, Government gave an undertaking to purchase any quantity of wheat offered at Rs. 7/8; a similar guarantee was given in respect of Bajra and Jowar at the rates of Rs. 6 and Rs. 5/8 per maund respectively. As regards rice, an all-India statutory price was not fixed, partly owing to the absence of a homogenous market and partly because of the difficult periods through which Governments in the rice producing Eastern Region were passing during the beginning of the current year. But the Provincial Governments concerned have themselves imposed statutory maxima of rice prices and the House will be glad to know that in the Eastern Region the statutory maxima itself have been steadily brought down during the course of the year under review. The position at present is: for Bengal the statutory maxima producer's price is Rs. 12/12 per maund in surplus districts, and Rs. 14/- per maund in deficit districts; for Bihar Rs. 11/- per maund; for Orissa Rs. 9/- per maund, for Assam Rs. 14/8/- per maund and for Sind Rs. 8/8/- per maund. Rice prices in Madras have been generally kept below Rs. 10/-/- per maund, while for U.P. and Punjab the Government of India fixed the statutory maxima at Rs. 13/8 per maund. The House will see, therefore, that the last 12 months have witnessed considerable development in the realm of statutory fixation of foodgrain prices and it is happy to record that, by and large, market prices have kept well within the statutory maxima. There have been some local exceptions to this general statement, such as, for example, Chittagong and Dacca. But the situation in those places has also now been brought under control and I would be correct in saying that foodgrain prices today are within the maxima limits set by Government. I may also inform the House that the Food Department is most acutely conscious of the need for having the prices of foodgrains at levels which will be within the reach of the vast majority of our poorer consumers, but the House must not forget that the interests of the producers have also got to be taken into account and we cannot take any action unduly to bring down producer's prices, especially when we are so actively seeking his co-operation in the "Grow More Food" campaign. A just and reasonable compromise has, therefore, to be arrived at between the interests of the producers as well as of the consumers in fixing the prices of foodgrains, but I can assure the House that the most careful attention will be paid to the point of view of the consumer in the fixation of the prices with which he is most concerned, *vis.*, retail prices.

Another important development has been in the field of rationing. The principle of rationing which was not so popular when it was first introduced has now proved its worth by experience and even the surplus administrations have now fallen into line and Government's declared policy of bringing all the major urban areas under rationing is now more or less completely enforced.

[Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava.]

Today the number of towns rationed is 460 and the population affected is 42 millions. In addition, rationing has been introduced in rural areas in places like Travancore, Cochin, Bombay Province and now Malabar. This extension of rationing has brought to the front important problems of administration which may necessitate an expansion of the rationing branch in order to make more readily available to the provincial and State administrations the pooled experience of the Government of India in this matter and also in order to secure within reasonable limits uniformity of standards. In this respect, it is the set policy of the Government of India to try its best to see that the statutory ration all over the country does not fall below one lb. a day but the successful execution of this policy depends upon two factors, *vis.*, the willingness of the surplus administrations to fall into line and the willingness of deficit administrations to accustom their people, if necessary, to the use of foodgrains other than those to which they had been normally accustomed. I can see visible signs of progress in both these directions. As regards the former, the ration allowed in the newly rationed cities in the Punjab has been fixed at a pound, while with regard to the latter Travancore and Cochin have led the way and, after long and sustained effort, accustomed their people to the partial use of wheat. Now, the Madras Government have mainly at my instance agreed to try the experiment of introducing a small quota of wheat in the cereal ration in the urban areas. I know it is not an easy thing to turn over from one grain to another, nor am I suggesting that there should be a complete replacement of one grain by another. But the fact remains that we are in short supply regarding rice; and recent events tend to make me feel optimistic that it would be possible to make up the deficit to some extent by wheat. If that is so, the realities of the situation demand that the rice-eating peoples of the country should, to some extent, be induced to supplement their rice rations with wheat, so that their overall ration in cereals may not fall below the limits set by nutritional standards. Moreover I am informed that the introduction of an element of wheat in the rice eater's diet would be a definite factor in the way of securing better balance in his diet. I would like therefore to take this opportunity of urging the administrations of the rice-eating areas in India to make every effort to popularise the use of wheat and to see that it is introduced to some extent in the diet of the people, rather than allow them to stick only to rice and suffer a ration which is considerably less than the minimum of one pound.

Now, there is another matter on which I know grave concern is being felt and rightly felt by Members of this House, and that is the deterioration and wastage taking place in food grains during storage. I would quite frankly admit that losses have taken place of food grains during storage; but I would like the House not to forget that this country has always had a large incidence of loss of food grains through deterioration and wastage during storage. In fact the loss suffered on this account in the pre-war period has been estimated at as high a figure as one million tons. But the incidence of this loss used to be spread over a large number of small stocks and was therefore not so prominent before the public as it has now come to be when bulk storage of large quantities has had to be undertaken in connection with the operation of the basic plans. Moreover facilities did not previously exist in the country for the storing of grain in such large quantities and at such places as has had to be done during the last two years, and it was unavoidable that a certain amount of loss should have occurred during this storage. I would like to assure the House that I am not trying to defend or gloss over the losses which have taken place. On the contrary we have been seriously perturbed over their occurrence and the whole problem of prevention of losses during storage has been engaging the most serious attention of my department in the last few months. We have been able to secure on a temporary basis the services of a specialist with experience of storage conditions in the middle east, and this officer has personally toured round the main surplus and deficit areas and given advice to Provincial and State Governments in the matter of scientific storage

Dr. P. N. Banerjee: Is he a foreigner?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: Yes. A number of advisory notes on the general fundamental principles relating to storage have been issued by the department, and training courses have been arranged in Delhi, to be held during the first fortnight of this month—they are going on now, I believe—which will be attended by selected officers from provinces and states all over India. The House will be glad to know that this storage training course is definitely practical in bias and technical procedures have been avoided as far as possible. The present temporary Director of Storage has also put up a scheme for the establishment of a permanent directorate of storage which will operate largely in an advisory and technical capacity and help the Provincial and State Administrations to minimise, if not altogether eliminate, the losses that were hitherto arising out of insufficient attention having been paid to proper storage conditions.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee: The permanent Director also will be a foreign expert?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: No, I have not said that. I have said that proposals are before me for the establishment of a permanent directorate of storage.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee: But there will be a Director?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: Yes, I suppose so. In addition the Government of India have drawn up an extensive programme for the construction of new storage godowns or the improvement of existing godowns, both to contain grain imported from overseas, and grain procured in the surplus areas and awaiting transport to deficit areas. A senior officer of this department has been placed on special duty to expedite this programme which is expected to be completed within four or five months.

There is another matter relating to the working of the Food Department to which I would like specially to allude. The department exercises constant vigilance over what is going on in the provinces and the States. Our regional Food Commissioners are in constant touch with the Governments of their regions in matters relating to food. They bring to our notice cases of reported shortage within their regions and they draw our attention to difficulties in movement and they also constitute the channel through which the difficulties of the Provincial Governments are brought to the notice of the Central Government and the guidance of the Central Government is transmitted to the Provincial Governments. I may inform the House that during the preceding twelve months several cases of local food shortages or action requiring emergency allotments were brought to the notice of the Central Government and every time the centre took prompt action and made emergency allotments which saved the situation and prevented the emergence of acute distress. Thus, for example, the food grains lost as a result of the Bombay explosion were immediately replaced by a special allotment and an extra allotment of 80,000 tons of wheat was made to the Bombay Government following their urgent representations in the month of August.

Another instance was the acute food shortage in the Deccan States reported at the end of April. Emergency quotas to the extent of 17,500 tons were immediately arranged and a very high priority was ordered for the movement of food grains to these areas. More than 30,000 tons of food grains were moved to the Deccan States during three months and by the end of August the food situation in the Deccan States had been brought under control. The position at present is that substantial reserves have been built up by these areas and they can face the next years without diffidence.

To give another example. Towards the end of July 1944, the U.P. Government reported the emergence of difficult conditions regarding wheat supplies and asked for an immediate allotment of 50,000 tons of wheat. Immediate action was taken by the Food Department on this request and by now a total of 50,000 tons of wheat and 18,500 tons of wheat products and 5,000 tons of rice have been allotted to the U.P. which action has materially helped the Government of that province in handling their food situation. (*An Honourable Member:* "From what province was this sent to U.P.?") I cannot tell you

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but it is from our surplus stocks. Another instance which I may quote would be the North-West Frontier Province where in the middle of April 1944 a shortage of wheat supply was reported and assistance was asked for. An immediate special allotment of 8,000 tons of wheat was made and recently with a view to assisting that province with their rationing schemes the Food Department have given them a special allotment of 22,360 tons of wheat and wheat products.

As regards Madras, I have already told you that as a result of representations made by the Government of Madras and my recent visit to the South a special allotment of 22,000 tons of rice and 8,000 tons of wheat was made for Malabar and 5,000 tons of rice for Vizagapatam. Following my recent visit to Mysore and my discussions with the Mysore Government, we have recently given them an extra allotment of 7,000 tons of rice.

By the citing of these details, it is not my object to express a feeling of self-satisfaction. All that I want to do is to draw the attention of the House to the fact that my Department tries to keep itself in touch with the changing needs of the food situation in the different parts of the country and within the means at its command take the necessary action to prevent the emergence of scarcity conditions in any part of the country.

Finally, I come to the topic which I have no doubt looms large in the minds of many Members and that is the question of imports. The Foodgrains Policy Committee recommended that one million tons of wheat should be imported every year till the restoration of normal conditions and that an extra import of 500,000 tons should be arranged for building up a central reserve. I have repeatedly stated in public and the House is aware that the Government of India have been making the most insistent and urgent representations to His Majesty's Government regarding the urgent need for the implementation of this recommendation. The matter has been not only one of constant concern to me personally but I must acknowledge the steadfast encouragement and support which I have received from His Excellency the Viceroy and my Colleagues of the Executive Council. His Majesty's Government, however, have had their own very real and serious difficulties and we were not, for a very considerable time, able to secure assurances that satisfied us. Negotiations on such a subject conducted by means of telegraphic correspondence have their limitations and it was for that reason that I welcomed very heartily the suggestion that Sir Henry French should pay a visit to India to see for himself the realities of the situation and report on them to His Majesty's Government. I have no doubt that his recent visit has helped to impress upon His Majesty's Government the imperative necessity of enabling an import of a million tons by this country and our thanks are due to him for the frank assessment of the Indian food situation which he must have presented to His Majesty's Government. The present position is that from October 1943 to the end of September 1944, an import of 800,000 tons of grain was promised by His Majesty's Government. Of this quantity, 650 thousand tons have already been received and 95 thousand tons have been shipped. They are on the seas. An additional import of 300 thousand tons has been promised in the three months ending December this year and His Majesty's Government have promised further to review the position in November. These supplies of imports have been of the utmost value to the Government of India not only in meeting the food shortage in the country but also in facilitating the measures of price control. I would like to assure the House that the position at present is that we are able to meet the wheat demands of the different Provincial and State Administrations to the full. The excess of the supplies we are getting over the amount required for this purpose is being utilised by us partly for supplementing the rice deficiency of the deficit regions in the South and in the Bombay province and partly for making up the deficiency caused by the shortage of millets in some parts of the country. We also intend to hold part of the imports of wheat expected to arrive in the next few months as a working reserve. I have no doubt that with the easing of the war situation in the West more shipping would become available and it may be possible perhaps

to obtain as much wheat as we require during the coming calendar year. In any case, the Government of India are acutely conscious of the need for securing an adequate quantity of wheat imports for successfully handling the food problem of the country and I can assure the House that we shall spare no effort to urge upon His Majesty's Government the need for taking appropriate measures for giving us the imports that we require.

So far I have been talking on the food position in the last twelve months, Honourable Members may like to have some idea of the prospects of the next year. No indication can be available at the moment of the prospects of the Rabi harvest of 1945, but we have some information about the Kharif prospects of this year. I believe I would be right in saying that while we cannot expect a bumper harvest of either rice or millets in any part of the country taking the country as a whole, the Kharif crops would be about the average, perhaps a little less in some areas and a little more in other areas. Even this statement can only be made with great caution as much will depend upon the weather conditions in the next two months. But enough is known to make us emphasise the need for care and caution in the administration of the food policy in the coming twelve months. The silver lining in the situation is the more optimistic position regarding the imports and if that position is maintained I think we should be able to go through next year without having to face any calamity of a major magnitude. But much will turn upon the efficient and successful conducting of procurement operations both in the deficit and in the surplus regions, the continued and, if possible, increased willingness of the surplus administrations to share in the All-India food burden, the further extension of rationing, the availability of imports, the maintenance of price control, the easing of transport conditions, the vigilance of the Department and, above all, the understanding and co-operation of leaders of the non-official opinion. I trust that all this will be forthcoming and will enable the Government of India successfully to handle the food situation during the next year.

Before I conclude, Sir, I would like, if I may, to touch upon some problems relating to the future. For some time to come even after the termination of the war, I do not think it would be possible for the country to have restored its normal pre-war sources of rice supply. There is also the fact to be faced that in a sense the food problem has always been with us inasmuch as the country has not had sufficient food to enable everyone of its citizens to get the minimum quantity considered necessary on the nutritional grounds. It has also been a fact that a large majority of the population of this country has not been getting a balanced diet. In particular, the supply of the protective foods has always fallen very short of the basic requirements and even such supplies as were available have not been equitably distributed. In fact, the vulnerable classes like children, nursing and pregnant mothers and especially those belonging to the lower income groups have had all too poor a share of the basic and protective foods. In the meanwhile, the population of this country has been increasing and is continuing to increase. The House needs no indication from me that the food requirements of the people from the long-range attitude must be studied and definite plans regarding production, procurement, price control and distribution of both the cereal food grains and the protective foods should be drawn up so that in the post-war India at least the people of this country can look forward to having more food, better food, balanced food. All this requires careful study and involves the collaboration not only of Provincial and State Governments but also of the Departments of Food, Agriculture and Planning. The first step in this direction has been the formation of a Food Committee of the Viceroy's Council, the principle object of which is the co-ordination policy on a high level on all matters relating to food, to whichever Departments they may pertain. I am proposing to set up very shortly in my Department a Food Planning Section, the main purpose of which will be, in the first instance, to study the whole question of a long-range food policy and planned development of the food economy in India. I know that nothing spectacular can be achieved in this matter within a short

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period but I am sure the House will welcome the attempt which we are now planning at assessing the long-range food requirements of India and devising ways and means not only of setting targets for the requisite supplies but also of taking the necessary steps for their equitable distribution. I intend, therefore, to place on special duty one of the senior officers of the Department to study this question and submit a preliminary report on the subject of food planning in the post-war period.

Sir, this is just a bare recital of the main achievements of the Department of Food during my stewardship of it of a little over a year, and I leave it to the House to judge how far we have advanced since the appalling days of 1948.

I may summarise what I consider we have been able to achieve during the past year. Broadly speaking, I claim that we have been able to do four things. Firstly, we have secured the recognition and adoption of an All-India policy steadily pursued with a common direction and a common aim. In spite of all constitutional and other difficulties, to overcome which a good deal of tact and patience was required, we have been able to secure the acceptance of the broad fact that those who have must share their surplus with those who have not. Secondly, we have controlled prices. Thirdly, we have been able to prevent the occurrence of serious local shortages and improve the stocks of grain in the hands of Governments and Administrations all over India. Fourthly,—and I attach the greatest importance to this,—we have been able to restore confidence in the ability of Government to control the situation. Confidence is best reflected in prices. The steady downward trend of prices of the principal food grains is to my mind proof positive of the returning confidence. In saying this I may be accused of complacency or a desire to advertise myself. I wish to assure the House that I am neither complacent nor do I desire self-advertisement. Whatever we at the Centre have been able to do has been achieved through the hard work, self-sacrifice and steady determination of the people of the country and the administrations of the provinces and States co-operating in the general plan. I am indebted to all and particularly to the Members of this House for much help, guidance and encouragement which I have always received and without which, I am free to confess, it would not have been possible for me to cope with the situation as I found it last year. While food has clearly demonstrated the need for central direction it has, if anything, more clearly demonstrated the economic unity of the country, the interdependence of the provinces and States and the need and capacity for common effort in a common cause. Nothing can be achieved if food is regarded as something which really does not matter, as something which can be made the sport of private or political profit or privilege. We can only succeed if the nation as a whole is determined as if it believes in the possibility of success. As already stated by me, our work is really laying the foundation stone of a new India in which the first requisite of existence is not lackings—namely, adequate and balanced food for all. I appeal to the Members of this House to give a great lead in a great cause.

Mr. N. M. Joshi (Nominated Non-Official): May I ask the Honourable Member whether he will circulate copies of his speech by tomorrow evening? He has made a very important speech with facts and unless we have his speech we cannot deal with it in our speeches.

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I will try.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): Motion moved:

“That the food situation in India be taken into consideration.”

Notices of amendments have been given by some Honourable Members. Of course, these amendments did not comply, and could not possibly comply, with the condition of two days' notice. Therefore in the peculiar circumstances of the case I propose to admit them all.

In the next place I think it will be convenient to the House to have all the amendments moved without any speeches in the first instance, and then there will be a general debate on the main motion and the amendments together.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad (United Provinces Southern Divisions Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I move:

"That the following be added at the end of the motion :

'As no effective measures for growing more rice were adopted after losing the import of rice by 2½ million tons from Burma, this Assembly recommends that the Government of India should start immediate campaigns of growing more rice in U. P. and Punjab—particularly in Assam which can grow the quality of rice which Bengal consumes and which has about 4½ million acres of cultivable land which is not under cultivation and establish poultry, cattle and vegetable farms for the use of the American soldiers and for which implements and live stock may be imported from America under lend-lease arrangement.

The Assembly is further of opinion that the control price of food grains without controlling the stock will lead to blackmarkets and will completely fail, and it recommends to the Governor General-in-Council that steps should be taken to control the entire production of food grains in India. No one—whether producer, distributor or consumer—should be allowed to keep it at his house any stock of food grain without permit from competent authority and the Government should be empowered to purchase the stock in excess of the requirements of the producers at control price.

The Government of India should collect statistics of the production of each food grain in every province and Indian States and formulate a scheme of distribution from surplus areas to deficit provinces; the transport of food grains from one province to another province should be under the control of the Government of India while the transport from one district to another district in the same province should be under the control of Provincial Government. The prices should not be allowed to vary abnormally from district to district or from province to province which is the root cause of blackmarket; the maximum and minimum prices for the whole of India should be fixed by the Government of India with which the provinces may regulate their prices; the distribution should be controlled by the Government agencies consisting of permanent staff but in every province and in each area a Committee of non-officials should be associated to help in distribution; the grain shops should be opened in each muhalla and distribution work should be done by shopkeepers in each muhalla and it should not be the monopoly of one individual or one community; the District Magistrate should consult the Advisory Committee in the selection of the personnel. The rationing should be confined only in towns with a population of 150,000 or more.

The Assembly also deplures the excess of food stuff of perishable nature in certain localities which are either burnt or dumped spoilt food stuff to other places which is very unhygienic; it also deplures the careless manner in which the stock is stored in certain places.

The Assembly further recommends that in every Committee appointed by the Central or the Provincial Governments two members of the Legislature concerned should be associated.

The transport of food grains should have the same priority as the transport of war materials and they should be carried at concession rates on the certificate of the Government. The punishment to be accorded to those who neglect these orders and to Station Masters who do not take prompt action in the supply of wagons should be heavy and in each case the confiscation of the entire stock should be the minimum punishment."

Sir, I move.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): Amendment moved:

"That the following be added at the end of the motion :

'As no effective measures for growing more rice were adopted after losing the import of rice by 2½ million tons from Burma, this Assembly recommends that the Government of India should start immediate campaigns of growing more rice in U. P. and Punjab—particularly in Assam which can grow the quality of rice which Bengal consumes and which has about 4½ million acres of cultivable land which is not under cultivation and establish poultry, cattle and vegetable farms for the use of the American soldiers and for which implements and live stock may be imported from America under lend-lease arrangement.

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The Government of India should collect statistics of the production of each food grain in every province and Indian States and formulate a scheme of distribution from surplus areas to deficit provinces; the transport of food grains from one province to another province should be under the control of the Government of India while the transport from one district to another district in the same province should be under the control of Provincial Government. The prices should not be allowed to vary abnormally from district to district or from province to province which is the root cause of blackmarket; the maximum and minimum prices for the whole of India should be fixed by the Government of India with which the provinces may regulate their prices; the distribution should be controlled by the Government agencies consisting of permanent staff but in every province

[Mr. Deputy President.]

and in each area a Committee of non-officials should be associated to help in distribution; the grain shops should be opened in each muhalla and distribution work should be done by shopkeepers in each muhalla and it should not be the monopoly of one individual or one community; the District Magistrate should consult the Advisory Committee in the selection of the personnel. The rationing should be confined only in towns with a population of 150,000 or more.

The Assembly also deplores the excess of food stuff of perishable nature in certain localities which are either burnt or dumped spoilt food stuff to other places which is very unhygienic; it also deplores the careless manner in which the stock is stored in certain places.

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Mr. H. A. Sathar H. Essak Sait (West Coast and Nilgiris: Muhammadan):
Sir, I move:

"That the following be added at the end of the motion :

'and having considered the same, this House is of opinion that the co-ordination of procurement and distribution between surplus and deficit areas is entirely wanting; that the transport in that behalf is not adequate and timely (even considering the priority for war purposes) and that the prices are beyond the means of the mass of the poor in this country; and that the steps taken by Government for exercising vigilance over eradication of corruption among those engaged by Government in the matter of the execution of food work are poor and ineffective."

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): Amendment moved:

"That the following be added at the end of the motion :

'and having considered the same, this House is of opinion that the co-ordination of procurement and distribution between surplus and deficit areas is entirely wanting; that the transport in that behalf is not adequate and timely (even considering the priority for war purposes) and that the prices are beyond the means of the mass of the poor in this country; and that the steps taken by Government for exercising vigilance over eradication of corruption among those engaged by Government in the matter of the execution of food work are poor and ineffective."

Prof. N. G. Ranga (Guntur cum Nellore: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir,
I move:

"That the following be added at the end of the motion :

'and having considered the same, this House is of opinion that grain prices in most places are uneconomically low for producers and that the failure of Government to subsidize the food consumption of the poorest consumers both in towns and villages is hitting hard both the producers and consumers of food."

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): Amendment moved:

"That the following be added at the end of the motion :

'and having considered the same, this House is of opinion that grain prices in most places are uneconomically low for producers and that the failure of Government to subsidize the food consumption of the poorest consumers both in towns and villages is hitting hard both the producers and consumers of food."

Dr. P. N. Banerjee: Have copies of this amendment been circulated?

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): They will be circulated in due course.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: Sir, the Honourable Member in charge of this Food Department has been at considerable pains to congratulate himself and the Government upon the failure with which the Government policy has met in this country in regard to food supply. Sir, he has not given us any reason why Government has so far failed to assure itself of adequate additional production of food in this country. He has not told us what steps Government have taken and with what results and with what success to increase the total production of food from time to time. The Government have not given us the total amount of additional land that has been brought under cultivation, they were unable to give us any definite information—not merely any estimates about the actual additional production that they have been able to achieve in this country ever since this food scarcity has been recognised to be a factor. Sir, the Honourable Member was very eloquent about his plans for the future, about

his glorious ideas in regard to the basic rations that people should have in this country. He is also very sympathetic in saying that he should give better food, adequate food for the people in future. But he has not told us what exactly they are doing today. It would be the duty of this Government to assure the masses in this country of a basic ration of at least one lb. a day. He does not recognise the fact that today more and more people in larger and larger parts of the country are living on a low ration of food. There are places in India today where the local officials are condemning the people to ten tolas of rice per day per adult, whereas in Madras jails the basic ration that is laid down for a 'C' class convict is 50 tolas per day. For the ordinary people, it was 20 tolas per day but now it is reduced to ten tolas per day. Then again, the Honourable Member has been telling us that in so many towns with about 40 million people, the Government of India have been shouldering the responsibility of feeding the people. What about lakhs and lakhs of villages in this country which are to be found not only in surplus areas but also in deficit areas. Have Government ever considered the question of providing these people with adequate rations. They have done nothing at all. What do they propose to do? He has not given us any information whatsoever. All over the country, there is a clamour for lowering the price of food grains. How I wish some pressure was brought to bear upon the Government to keep down the price of industrial goods as also the cost of these foodgrains. He should see that these prices do not rise abnormally high. The Honourable Member says there should be no profiteering. But who is profiteering, may I ask? Are the peasants profiteering? Or, are the Local Governments,—in collusion with, to what extent I cannot say, the Government of India—and also in collusion with the various middlemen who are very well organised and are profiteering in different parts of the country? Only this morning information was given to me by a reliable friend of mine that in Orissa the Local Government was adding Rs. 2-8-0 to every bag of rice. This is in addition to the ordinary expenses which the Local Government is expected to allow for. Profiteering on a large scale is going on on the part of merchants, and yet no information is given to us. Either now or in the past has any effort been made to reduce the various allowances that have been so lavishly granted to all these people? Many orthodox economists have been telling us that many middlemen carry away all the profits under the present system of Government control. What steps have been taken in regard to them?

Now, Sir, coming to the actual price which the peasants are able to realise for their own benefit, what do we find? In almost all parts of the country, the peasants are not able to make both ends meet. Many of my friends may wonder whether after all my statement is correct. Let them take the trouble of going to the villages to make a detailed enquiry. They are all in the habit of going in railways from one end of the country to another. Let them visit some of the villages in their tours. Hundreds of villages have become depopulated because of uneconomic prices for the grains. They cannot carry on cultivation. Why is it that in villages one does not find any new additional houses built, whereas in towns, hundreds and even thousands of houses are coming up like mushrooms, including so many storied buildings? Is that not a sure indication that villages instead of progressing are going to decay and ruin and they are stagnating, whereas towns are growing fat, and waxing rich at the cost of villages? All this, because it has become very profitable for the various businessmen and middlemen and others who have become a sort of hangers on to this war-minded Government, it has become very easy for them to engage themselves in trade, dealing in foodgrains and thus make profit at the cost of the poor consumers and the poor producers in the villages.

Sir, we have brought to the notice of the Madras Government certain facts which could show that present prices at which rice is being supplied to the local consumers in Madras Presidency, a price of Rs. 12 per bag of paddy can easily be paid to the grower. Instead, the Madras Government insists

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upon paying only Rs. 10-8-0 as a sort of a standard rate. And who gets the benefit of this Rs. 1-8-0? It is these rice millers. The same thing happened to wheat. The millers get the benefit—they are only a few thousands of people. But they are rich and powerful, and this is an alien Government. My friend may happen to be an Indian but he has not got that spirit. He is an agent of this alien Government, which cannot inspire the people in regard to food production and food distribution. Therefore it is obliged to depend upon all these middlemen to get for it the requisite quantities of food at prices which will be low.

Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani (Tirhut Division: Muhammadan): On a point of order. To whom is this eloquent speech being made. The Honourable Member in charge of the Food Department is not here.

An Honourable Member: To empty benches.

The Honourable Sir Sultan Ahmed (Leader of the House): The Honourable Member has just gone out. He will be coming within a minute or two.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): He made a long speech and has gone outside to make himself comfortable.

An Honourable Member: Give him less food.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: In regard to wheat too; not so long ago the Ministers concerned of the Punjab as well as Sind complained very bitterly that not adequate prices are being allowed to the wheat growers of the Punjab and Sind. It may be that these people who live in towns want these things to be cheap. Yes, they would all like to have it, if possible, for nothing. But you cannot produce these grains for nothing. You have got to pay a decent price. Only this morning the Honourable the Railway Member was telling us that four to five times dearness allowance was granted to the various employees in the Railways. What dearness allowance has been allowed to the poor peasant in the Punjab, Sind, or Frontier or anywhere else? You have been trying to suppress these people. The Honourable Member has been repeating again and again that they have been trying their best to bring down the prices of food-grains. What does this mean? It can only mean one thing: the suppression of the peasant and nothing else. On the other hand everybody else is profiting thereby. I want the consumers to be able to get grains at reasonable prices, but if under the present emergent circumstances that prevail in this country you are not able to supply these people at such prices as will be within their reach, then it is the duty of the Government not to suppress the peasant by keeping down the prices of the agricultural produce, but, on the other hand, to subsidise the consumption of the food needed by the poorest sections of the people. Has the Government been able to do anything at all in this respect? When there was so much trouble in the country and millions of people were dying in Bengal, they came forward with their generous offer of feeding Calcutta city. Some cheap kitchens were opened here and there and people were fed also. But where? In towns only. It is the mischievous intention of this Government to satisfy the press, to silence these rich people, to silence these powerful men of the towns, and their organised workers also. They have introduced rationing in the towns and have done nothing at all for the villages. In order to satisfy all these people they have kept down all these prices. What can the poor peasants do? They are not organised, they are not able to make themselves effective. A few thousands of them who were bold enough to protest against this sort of policy of the Government have been kept under lock and key for all these days. If I had not been released 21 days ago, this House would not have heard a word in favour of the peasant. And what is happening in the country? You back up the millers and allow them to become rich at the cost of others and then you say 'we have been able to keep down the prices of foodstuffs'. The sooner we reverse this policy the better it is. But how can this be done. The gentleman who is responsible for this did not care to remain here in his seat and follow the debate cannot be expected to reverse the policy of the Government. And what is his status in this country except that he happens

to be an appointed Member of His Excellency the Governor-General who is himself an alien in this country. It is only a national government which can certainly reverse this policy in a bold manner and give satisfaction to all sections of the people.

Then, Sir, I come to the question of feeding the rural masses. You want to feed the town-folk. What happens to all these rural people themselves? The Honourable Member has told us himself that in Malabar it has become necessary to introduce district-wide rationing covering all villages and towns. What is to happen to all other villages? Are Honourable Members to be told for the first time that there are thousands of villages in this country—lakhs of villages—where there are non-agricultural people? They need food too. The Honourable Member's point seems to be that villages are producing surplus food and it is from those villages that surplus has got to be taken in order to feed the people in towns, and it is possible for non-agricultural people in the villages to meet their requirements from there. Unfortunately, this does not happen. According to the latest programme and policy of the Madras Government, their Grain Requisition Officers go to villages. And what do they do? Whether you are able to produce so much grain on your land or not, they simply demand such and such prescribed quantities of grain from your land which is supposed to have been placed under foodgrains. They are not concerned with the actual position—whether you have produced it or not. They must get their quota. Therefore these people are obliged to give away all the grain in their possession. If they refuse to do so they are liable to be put into jail and, in addition, there is any amount of trouble in store for them from the local Chowkidar, Lambardar and the police. In this way grain is being taken away from the villages—please remember—in order to feed your towns. Moreover villages are becoming famished, under-nourished and are suffering from serious food shortage. The Honourable Member was telling us, 'we are now in possession of such a machinery which has got zonal officers who will be able to tell us what is happening in any part of the country and we can take care to see that no serious local food scarcity occurs'. What is happening in Orissa and Vizagapatam and in Madras Presidency? There is serious food scarcity—local food scarcity. Is there any information available here in regard to that? How soon the Honourable Member is able to get that information and who gives him the information? Even the press is being gagged. They are not allowed to publish any news with regard to food scarcity. In Patna, a paper was suppressed for publishing 'inaccurate information, exaggerated accounts and so on'. The press is being gagged and your publicmen in towns are being gagged for pleading the cause of poor peasants. Villages are allowed to go to rack and ruin.

The Honourable Member has not mentioned anything about Orissa or about Bihar. What is happening in Bihar? Is there no scarcity of food there? Is it not a fact that all that widespread disease and epidemic which are raging the countryside, and for which even the new Governor—Sir Rutherford,—was so very eloquent, were due to malnutrition? You take notice only when people begin to die. They must die conveniently in towns, also in sufficiently large numbers, so that the correspondents of papers would not be able to escape from the awful spectacle of the people dying and dead. Then alone will the Government of India open its eyes. Its officers will begin to open their eyes. Until then they are not going to open their eyes. Where is the machinery to prevent the occurrence of these things? Isn't it a fact that thousands of people in Malabar had to die of cholera brought about by malnutrition even before now? The Madras Government did open their eyes then. In Bihar and Orissa it is the same sad story. People are dying in Vizag. District as a result of strange diseases brought about by malnutrition.

What do I want? I want the Government to think seriously about the rationing, supply and distribution of food in the rural areas. I want them to keep down these middlemen. When they are prepared to control millions of peasants before they reap their crop and harvest it why do they not control the few thousands of rice millers and atta millers? Isn't it because they think

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it very convenient to catch hold of these people and allow them to exploit the masses—both producers and consumers? Then I want them to adopt that scheme of Mahatma Gandhi for developing local self-sufficiency in as many places as possible. This is not Mahatma Gandhi's idea alone. There is Radha Kamal Mukherjee who is accepted by many and the Government of India as a sound economist. He also supports this idea. Then only will it be possible for the villagers to assure themselves of sufficient food before their surplus food is taken to the towns to feed us and keep us in good temper and temperament. I want prices to be fixed as much as possible at the same level of prices and salaries as enjoyed by our industrialists and professional classes respectively. You give every assurance to industrialists and commercial magnates and professional classes of rising items of profit to keep in level with the index number of prices. What do you do with regard to peasants? The Honourable Member says: we must have some compromise between the claims of the producers and consumers. He says he has brought in a British expert. Let him also accept the British practice. In Britain the price of agricultural produce is fixed again and again in consultation with the representatives of the British Farmers' Association and it is only as a result of their discussions that prices are being fixed. And at the same time the prices that are being paid to British agriculturists are shown to be much above the capacity of the consumers to pay and therefore the Government has come forward to subsidise the consumption of food for the poor people. Here, in order to satisfy your consumers, you are keeping down the prices. You come here and pat yourself on your broad chest and say: Oh, I have done so much good. Therefore congratulate me and indirectly congratulate the alien Government.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): You have two minutes more.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: Let him see that the prices are adequate, and that the rural masses are provided with the necessary quantity of food before their harvests are taken away to the towns. We have also to see that profiteering is eliminated. Profiteering is being carried on by Government officers themselves. Your railway station masters and Grain Purchasing Officers are making a roaring business: If one officer can go on leave and gives a chance to some other officer he is likely to be remunerated by thousands: and it is at the cost of the peasant. So far as the consumer is concerned, the price is fixed, but so far as the peasant is concerned it is not fixed. You have fixed the ceiling price but not the minimum price. Have you given any assurance of any decent minimum price for the peasants in the provinces? You have done nothing at all.

Under these circumstances you come forward and say that this Honourable Food Member and this Government of India do really deserve well of the masses of this country. But have they done anything, even in their limited power, to help the peasants as well as the poor consumers? The poor consumers do not exist only in towns. When the Bengal Famine was going on, all those industrial workers engaged in the essential services were paid and fed. They did not die. I am glad. I do not want anybody to die in this country from starvation. At the same time see that those Harijan workers in villages who are mostly agricultural workers also are not starved. Those Harijans in the country-side are workers. They want food. Is the Honourable the Harijan Member there? No.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): Your time is up.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: Think of those Harijan members.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): Your time is up.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: Their needs have to be considered. Therefore this Government has failed miserably. Besides it could not have succeeded because it is an alien Government. It is not a National Government. It is not able to win the confidence of the people. It is only able to thrive on the profits of the middlemen. The sooner this Government gets out of this country and the sooner they get rid of these middlemen the better will it be for the masses of this country, the consumers and the producers.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh (Nagpur Division: Non-Muhammadan): I support the amendment moved by my friend Professor Ranga. The Member for Food relied principally on these things: first of all, price control; then procurement of food, equitable distribution of food, levy of grain, compulsory diversion of land to the foodgrain, rationing, allotment of food to different provinces from surplus provinces, the co-operation of leaders. On nutritional grounds, he would like to have better quality of food and he would like large range policy to be followed. Of these, the things which hit the villager most and on which the Food Member would rely for the success of his Food policy is price control and he would also like to rely on the procurement of food. If the prices were going high there were two things which were necessary to be done. One was to grow more food in the country or import more food. The other was to subsidise the agriculturist so that by growing more food the cost of production of food would be met partly by the Government and food would be available to others at a lower price. To that effect—I had moved a Resolution in the last Session and I had the support of the whole House so far as giving of a subsidy for the purpose of production of food was concerned.

Now what happens is this: The Government finds that the prices of food are going up and the persons whose wages are fixed, principally Government servants, are the persons who shout most saying that agricultural prices are soaring up abnormally and they should be brought down and life made more comfortable for them. There was a period, from 1930 to 1941, when the prices of agricultural produce were very low. At that time none of these persons, who were enjoying fixed incomes, raised their voice to relieve the poor agriculturists of their distress. That was the time when those who shout now should have come forward to help the distressed agriculturists. At that time the cost of living had gone down. They saved money and all that money went to the bank and they do not want to part with any part of it. Now that opportunity has come to the agriculturists to make money we hear from all parts of the country shouts that the agriculturists should not be allowed to charge such high prices. Professor Ranga has suggested a remedy. If the Government is so anxious that the people should get their food at reasonable prices, the Government should come forward with some remedy to help the agriculturists, so that they may pay off the accumulated debts of the last so many years, just as they have granted a dearness allowance to the Government servants.

Now, how is the procurement operation carried on? The procurement of food is carried on first by fixing the prices and the prices are fixed arbitrarily, not on what should be the economic price but what the Government considers is a reasonable price which can be paid by the men who are living in towns. I would like to know the basis on which the prices for the agricultural produce are fixed, particularly in regard to food crops. No basis will be or can be given by the Government, because the representatives of the agriculturists are not taken into confidence by them. As a matter of fact in other countries (I referred to other countries last time while talking about this subsidy in my resolution)—I mean the United States and Britain—there are agricultural unions who have got their representatives in the Parliament or the Senate. Those persons compel the Government to fix a price and the Government dare not go against their decision. If you want the agriculturists to grow more food, then you should see to it that they get better prices. There can be no better inducement for the agriculturists than the assurance that they will get better and more economic prices, not only adequate to meet the cost of production but also something over and above it so that they may be able to pay off their accumulated debts of past years. In other countries there is a guarantee given to the agriculturists regarding the prices below which they shall not go down. But what happens in this country is that a price is fixed, then it is revised and again revised. What confidence can the agriculturists have, if he were to grow more food, that he will get an economic price, which will enable him to meet his needs, not only the ordinary needs of feeding himself and family but medical relief, clothing and the education of his children.

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But the Government not only does him an injustice in fixing a very low and uneconomic price but they compel him to part with his produce at that price. If the Government had fixed prices arbitrarily and had not resorted to compulsion it would not have mattered much. The agriculturists would not have complained, because they would have after all got the price they wanted. The Government could have gone on fixing prices but if the agriculturists had not parted with their crops the Government would have been in a helpless position. Now, what they do is to fix the price arbitrarily and then at that price procure the crops. That is where the farmer or the producer is hit. Not only that but the Government requisitions the crop by law. What is more, there is a target fixed, a target of procurement, that so much shall be collected. This according to them is based on statistics. What happens is that revenue officers in the districts so work it out that the target goes up by double and treble, and the crop is collected at the cost of the poor agriculturists. And this happens not only in the deficit provinces but also in the surplus provinces. For instance, what happened in Orissa is this. The Government compulsorily procured all that the agriculturists grew and then having collected all that, when the agriculturists themselves wanted food for themselves and their families they had to purchase it from the Government at a higher price. This is the irony of the situation. Then, in my own province,—(C. P. and Berar)—which is supposed to be a surplus province, millets, which is the ordinary food of the agriculturists, had been procured by Government to such an extent that the poor people had to live on groundnut cakes and a little gur. If this is the way in which things are managed by Government, no wonder that there will be very little inducement for the agriculturists to grow more food.

I should like to say a few words about this long range policy. This policy has been mentioned by Government but when is it to begin? Should it not begin now? Because it is a long range policy should it begin after a few years? Does it mean that it should begin after some years instead of now? When there is a shortage of food now, you must start growing more food now. What has the Government done? However, as Prof. Ranga said, who cares for this Government. There is plenty of cultivable land in this country on which more food could be grown. There is no urgent need to reclaim waste lands for the purpose. There is already considerable land available and with better methods of cultivation more food could have been grown. This Government ordered one hundred tractors so that they may quicken this business of growing more food. How many were allowed? One. This is how in every matter the representations of the Government count with other members of the United Nations. The Government has gone down in the estimation not only of this country but of outside countries also. If the Government are not doing anything to put this long range policy of producing more food into immediate practice it will stand condemned by itself. Merely appointing directors and directorates and this committee and that committee is not by itself going to help the Government in the solution of the food problem. The Government must realise in all seriousness that it is high time that they should start doing something now.

4 P.M. **Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta):** Order, order. The House will now take up the adjournment motion.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT

DEATHS DUE TO AN ACCIDENT AT BAKHTIARPUR JUNCTION STATION.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman (Patna and Chota Nagpur *cum* Orissa: Muhammadan): Sir, I move that the Assembly do now adjourn to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, *viz.*, criminal negligence of the E. I. Railway administration in not having provided lights at Bakhtiarpur Junction Station and allowing empty special train to run without search light on the engine on the 26th of September, 1944, which resulted in the death of nine persons who were run over by the said special train when these persons were attempting to catch the 14 Up Express at about 8-80 P.M. and further failure of the E. I.

Railway administration in not having instituted a public enquiry into the said accident.

A report was published in the *Searchlight*, a daily newspaper of Patna, on the 26th and 27th, which I want to read in short. The first report which came to us was as following:

"An important railway accident involving loss of lives of nine, seven females and two males, is reported to have occurred last night at Bakhtiarpur, E. I. Railway. It is stated that the deceased along with another were returning from Biharsharif after attending the 'Chiragi' mela there and in their hurry to catch the 14 Down train that had just arrived at the station they were crossing the railway line between the Up and Down platforms, when suddenly an empty coaching special train was sighted passing through the Up line with the result that they were caught under the wheels and killed instantaneously save and except one who sustained serious injuries. The injured was removed to Patna General Hospital in a precarious condition. The party consisting of members of two Muslim families hailed from Monghyr. Enquiries are proceeding."

The following note was then published in the paper on the subsequent date:

"A report published in these columns the other day and so far uncontradicted—gave some details of a tragedy in which 9 or 10 persons lost their lives at Bakhtiarpur railway station. It is alleged that seven women and two men while returning from 'Chiragi' mela at Biharsharif were crossing the railway line to catch a waiting train when an empty coaching special train suddenly came and ran over them. Again the pertinent question that arises is if there was negligence somewhere which was responsible for or which contributed to this tragedy. Is there no rule that an empty coaching special train should slow down her speed at a railway station? If this tragedy occurred after sunset, was there sufficient light at the railway station, and did the authorities give sufficient warning of the coming train to the passengers? If there was any negligence on the part of the railway authorities or the man in charge of the running train, it was simply criminal. Government should at once institute an enquiry and let the public know what they are doing in the matter. The Railway Administration have so far said nothing about this tragedy. It seems that accidents and incidents have now become so common that the Railway Administration are becoming callous, and they will may become so until the public have control over them through a popular Government."

Soon after this, I began to receive letters and representations from people of that locality. I do not intend to read at length all the correspondence I have received in this connection, but I will read just one from Mr. Syed Badrul Huda, an honorary magistrate who stays in Bakhtiarpur and is an honorary magistrate of Patna. This is what he says: (This letter has also been sent by many others):

"The whole point is that there were no lights on the platforms with the result that perhaps in the night, the poor victims could not make out the overbridge of the station and were crossing the line in a hurry to catch the down train when they suddenly met the Up coaching special train which was also without searchlight and could not be detected and were run over. It may be argued by the railways that there was no train in the Up direction and they were not bound to light the Up platform; but the point is that passengers coming from the Bakhtiarpur Light Railway have to come to the Up platform for going to the Down platform; and in view of the rush, it was a necessity that the Up platform should have been lighted. My information is that the Down platform was not also properly lit and there was only perhaps one light burning in front of the A. S. M.'s office."

Another point which he has said is that there was no searchlight on the empty wagon engine which ran on Up line and besides its speed could not be ascertained whether it was running at full speed or at controlled speed. It is also alleged that there was no information available to the Bakhtiarpur junction station. I personally went to the Bakhtiarpur station and made all the necessary enquiries on spot as to what had happened. I got evidences from about 12 to 16 persons—Hindus and Muslims—a few of whom were present at the time of the accident, and all of them told me that there was no light of any kind on the platform, either on the Up or the Down platform, except the one near the A. S. M.'s office. They further told me that not only has this been the position at that station on that particular night, but this has been the story for many months past, that practically all the night those platforms were to remain in dark. There was no light of any kind on the platforms: and there was no searchlight fixed on the engine which could not only have given guidance to the driver of the engine, but would also have given warning to these passengers who were the victims of this accident. The worst is, as Mr. Badrul Huda says, that no information was available even to the Bakhtiarpur station

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master that any Up special empty wagon train was to pass by at that time. One other man told me that until the matter was fully enquired into he was not in a position to tell me whether there was or was not any truth in the report that signals were not on on the Up line. At least, this information was not given to the people who had assembled on the platforms who were detraining from the Bakhtiarpur Light Railway and going to catch the 14 Down Express, and the result was what happened. These passengers were in a hurry to catch the train which they thought was more convenient and it was easy for them to cross the line and catch that train, although they hardly realized that they were crossing the last hurdles of their lives and that the train they were going to catch was taking them to the next world. The railway administration had arranged for all the darkness for necessary ceremony of the tragedy. I do not want to introduce any heat or sentiment. But I would only impress on the House that they should think dispassionately what this means and how callous the administration has been. Probably they think that they have no obligation because they have been carrying on a campaign of 'No travel'. But do they not realise that so long as the so-called public utility service of the railways continues, they cannot shirk their obligation or responsibility in this direction. They have got to give a certain amount of safety and a reasonable amount of safety for individuals who undertake these journeys. This is the point which I want to impress on the House now. After the accident, a public demand was made for a public inquiry into the accident to find out exactly why and how these platforms were kept dark all these days.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall (Member for Railways and War Transport): To whom was it made?

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: Letters were sent to the General Manager by a few persons and no heed was paid. No reply was given to any one of them. Of course, the Honourable Member in the morning said that there was some sort of official inquiry made. I do not know what sort of inquiry was made. At least, I have no knowledge of that and the Honourable Member for Railways would probably be in a position to tell the House what reports he has received from the official bureaucratic source, which he is relying upon.

The other point is, when trains were coming in both directions and if the intimation was already with Bakhtiarpur Junction some sort of verbal notification could have been given to all passengers on the other platform to say that such and such a train was due to arrive in darkness. The people could not even see whether the signal post was down or not.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): You have two minutes more.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: This accident was the result of gross negligence on the part of the E. I. R. administration. The worst of it is their callousness in not having carried out a public inquiry and they have not even sympathised with the families of the victims that they are sorry for what had happened. With these words I move my motion.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): Motion moved.

"That the Assembly do now adjourn."

Mr. Frank B. Anthony (Nominated Non-Official): I had not originally intended to intervene in this debate but I have some specialised knowledge in regard to railways and railway working and I feel that the few remarks that I may have to make will be of some help. I would make the plea that in a case of this description the House should not allow itself to be overborne by emotion. I am sure we are all very sorry indeed that certain persons were killed but it is a very understandable weakness, when persons are killed, to begin to argue from effect to cause and to endorse the plea that blood calls out for blood. Because some people have been killed some say that it follows inevitably that somebody must have been criminally responsible for their death.

I have intervened in the debate as a friend of the railwaymen. I am speaking merely as a matter of principle. I do not know who the persons were, what

railwaymen were involved and to what community or communities they belong but I would ask the House not to endorse or arrive at any decision to require the punishment of innocent and already overburdened railwaymen.

My friend there has made the charge that this engine was not carrying, as he called it, a search light. I want to tell the House what the position legally is with regard to this subject. I appeared in the Bombay Mail accident case recently and perhaps I know the rules even more than my Honourable friend the War Transport Member. It is an admitted fact that there is an acute shortage of bulbs of all description and this acute shortage has affected the Railway Department perhaps more than any other department. And because of this acute shortage of bulbs, railway officials have allowed engines, both mail and passenger, to operate without bulbs. This railway usage is not illegal and it has been allowed. It was admitted by the railway authorities in the Bombay mail accident case that they had no bulbs. They were obliged to allow engines to operate without the usual headlights of 2,500 candle power and to use in their place cab lights of 10 candle power because they had no other alternative. The point I wish to emphasize is this, that legally, these engines—mail and passenger engines—are not obliged to carry these searchlights, as my friend called them. The G. I. P. Railway is governed by certain rules, as is the case in all other State Railways. There is a rule, I think it is rule 143, I am quoting from memory, which allows the engine to be taken out at night, mark you, with buffer lights. Now, the buffer light throws no beam of light. It is a pin point of light. That rule has been framed and it is in existence. The legal implication of this rule is that mail and passenger engines can operate normally, even in peace time, without searchlights or headlights. They are allowed to operate with these buffer lights. In the light of their experience and knowledge, the Railway Administration do not consider it necessary to have these bulbs and if railwaymen are merely carrying out what is allowed to them under the rules, I feel that we cannot ask for their punishment.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: I have not asked for their punishment. I have asked for the condemnation of that rule which has been made.

Mr. Frank R. Anthony: This rule has not been newly framed. It is a rule which has been in existence for years and years. (Interruption.) It is obvious that the Railways do not consider it necessary that these engines should operate with headlight bulbs. I endorse the view that it may be desirable but the desirability is never an effective or a real touch-stone.

Sardar Sant Singh (West Punjab: Sikh): In a court of law!

Mr. Frank R. Anthony: Not even outside a court of law. My Honourable friend may have read the case of an American who was alleged to have been murdered in New Delhi park. It may be said that if there were more searchlights in the park, the murder would not have been committed. You may say that it is desirable to have searchlights in the New Delhi parks but you cannot seek to impeach the New Delhi Municipality because they did not have the desirable number of searchlights.

My only plea is this that the railwaymen were operating under an acute shortage of bulbs. If they were travelling without the bulbs, it has not only the sanction of railway usage but more than that it has the sanction of the law. Let us not therefore in a state of emotion lend ourselves to the process of witch-doctoring in attempting to smell out some innocent scapegoats.

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

Mr. N. M. Joshi (Nominated Non-Official): Sir, I rise to support the motion of my Honourable friend Mr. Muhammad Nauman asking for a public inquiry of the accident that has taken place in Bihar. I know that on account of the war situation, on account of the lack of lighting and on account of the fact that the railways have to carry inflammable and explosive material accidents are taking place oftener than they used to. I, therefore, feel that the Government of India should consider the question of the accidents more carefully and seriously. I do not support the motion for a public inquiry in order to get the railwaymen punished, but it is the duty of the Government of India to see that human

[Mr. N. M. Joshi]

life is saved. I, would, therefore, like the Government of India under the present more difficult situation to be more watchful and to take steps to see that accidents are avoided. Accidents are more likely to take place under the present circumstances but certainly more steps are necessary to be taken in order to avoid them and in order that human life should be saved. I also feel that in all these cases a thorough inquiry should be made by the Government of India and the inquiry should be a public inquiry. Under the present circumstances it seems to me that the Government of India sometimes avoid publicity. I do not know why they should do so. It is true that under the present control over the press they can easily get some very important events suppressed.

Recently there was an accident in Bhusawal, an important railway station not very far from Bombay. As the facts are known to me, I may mention that the accident took place on account of the fact that railway wagon had contained petroleum or some other explosive material. The wagon first took fire and then exploded. While the wagon was burning, some railway officer ordered the men to throw water on the fire in order to extinguish it with the result that there was an explosion. I admit it was a much smaller edition of what we may call the Bombay explosion. The wagon was brought by the officer nearer some office where there were men working with the result that, according to my information, not less than 8 or 9 persons were killed and many more were injured. The point is this that the Government of India have to be more careful. That is the first point. Then, they must issue orders to their employees whenever they carry an explosive material to see that greater care is taken. The example of the Bombay explosions should have been an eye-opener to the Government of India and should have made them take more serious steps to avoid such accidents.

Then, so far as my knowledge goes, there was no publicity given to this explosion. I do not know how Government managed to get this explosion not mentioned in the press because not less than 8 or 9 persons were killed and many more were injured.

Lastly, Government in all these cases must make a public inquiry not with a view to punish the man who was responsible—he may be punished if found guilty—but with a view to avoid such accidents. The root cause of the accident must be gone into so that there will be a warning to all those who have to handle these difficult situations to take steps to avoid them. I, therefore, hope that the Government of India will accept this demand for a public inquiry. Let there be a public inquiry and let facts be known so that the public will know what the Government of India is doing. Sir, I have done.

Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali (Lucknow and Fyzabad Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I am much obliged to you for having given me an opportunity today at least to say something on this adjournment motion. I have been noticing since yesterday that palliation is the rule in this Session. For every action of the Government there are some kinds of palliations. They may be circumstantial palliations or other kinds of palliations, but there is a palliation everywhere. Then there are explanations and explanations but no condemnation. And why? Simply because some of us think that we will be raised in our titles, in our positions and in some other things if we side with the Government. What happened yesterday is happening again today in this House. I do not blame my friends but the atmosphere is charged with the idea of palliations and palliations and nothing else.

Sir, nine or ten lives have been lost and it is not an ordinary matter. It is a matter for every one of us in this House to be sorry about. It is a matter over which every one in this House should feel sorry. It is not to condemn the Government that an inquiry is asked for. It is for the Honourable the War Transport Member to say. Cannot he rise and say that he will make an inquiry in the matter and if there are some persons to be punished, he will punish them? If there are no guilty persons, he will not punish anybody but at least he will issue a warning to the effect that such and such arrangement should be made. Now, nothing is being done; there is only palliation and nothing else. My Honourable friend Mr. Anthony said that he did not care whether it is a

Muslim or a Hindu. Nobody says that because some Muslims have been killed, therefore my friend should have sympathy with us or if the Hindus were killed, he should not have sympathy with us. It is not that. It is a matter for which every human being should feel some sorrow in his heart. We have become very callous in this House. I am sorry to say that although 9 or 10 lives, especially women, have been lost in this accident, yet my Honourable friend over there says that nothing should be done in the matter. We should simply sit here in this House. We should come here and go away after realising our honorarium. Is this the work that we have to do in this House? The Government ought to thank Mr. Muhammad Nauman as they ought to have thanked Nawabzada Muhammad Liaquat Ali Khan yesterday that they have brought to their notice that such serious things are happening in the Punjab and in Bihar. But this callous Government does not care for such happenings. I say it on the floor of this House that if a European's life were lost, my friend Mr. Anthony and my friend Sir Edward Benthall would have expressed their regret. But in the present case there is no regret but palliation and explanation. Is this the way to deal with humanity?

While travelling from my constituency to Delhi, I myself noticed that small stations have no lights. And why? Here in Delhi there are lights everywhere but in small stations there are no lights. The explanation is that there is no kerosene oil. And why not? If in your own houses you can get even half a bottle of kerosene oil why should you not provide a few lamps in these stations? Government in this matter have been guilty of the greatest and grossest misconduct. It is a fact that has been established by my Honourable friend who has given so many paper quotations; and still my Honourable friend Mr. Anthony says it is not an offence. In my view it is a serious offence not to provide lamps at these stations. Nine lives have been lost; it may be nothing to Government but Honourable Members should think twice before they vote on this motion.

Sir, the Honourable Mover has not asked that any one should be punished. So why import the question of punishment at all? It is only in order to divert the question from the main issue. These attempts at side-tracking the real issue should not be made. Sir, I support the motion.

Mr. Kailash Bihari Lall (Bhagalpur, Purnea and the Sonthal Parganas: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, I join my other friends in ventilating the grievances against the railway administration in my province which has lately become a victim of these accidents. Perhaps my Honourable friend Maulvi Abdul Ghani has given notice of an adjournment motion in regard to the sinking of the "Cormorant". This thing has come in the wake of that and God knows how many accidents are still in store for Bihar which seems to be a victim of Nature's cruelty. But it is not in the spirit of a post-mortem examination or crying over spilt milk that I am speaking. I submit that the railway administration in this country is as important as the Government of India itself. In revenue they are equal to the Government of India and therefore in the interest of the people there is no excuse for their not providing some amenities so as to save the people from risking their lives in the way they have done. It may be said it was only an accident. But why should it happen? It is known to every one that railway trains are now-a-days overcrowded and this overcrowding is due to shortage of trains. Every one would like to catch the earliest train and the administration should have seen the risks which the people were running by this shortage of trains.

I will state my own experience. While travelling from Gaya to Bhagalpur there was no light in the train. I had to change the train at Kiul; and while doing so I gave my trunk to the coolie who pointed out to me that the lock was broken. Evidently a thief had tried in the darkness to break the outer lock as well as the lock of the trunk. But somehow he failed in the crowd and nothing was stolen. But even murders may be committed, and criminals are emboldened to commit these offences on account of the darkness that prevails in the whole train. That is the fate of every train that is not on the main line, and even the Loop Express runs without lights except a few lights in the first and

[Mr. Kailash Behari Lall]

second class compartments; the third and inter classes are all without lights. The argument advanced is that bulbs are not available these days. But we find things are obtained at higher prices and if the railway authorities follow the principle of not running trains without lights I believe they can get sufficient bulbs for the trains. Therefore the railways themselves contribute to these accidents, and it is in this spirit of warning the railway authorities that I speak today. Of course the lives lost cannot be brought back, but we can learn by experience at least and take precaution for the future. It will not do to say that there is no money and there are no materials. The income of the railways, as all people know, has gone up many times and they cannot simply make money and make civilians suffer in this way. They should consider that every life has its value. Of course, in these days and in this country human life has gone down in value not only on the railways but also in the general administration. Not only life but our very honour has lost its value. I will take some other opportunity to narrate the change that has come over the administration in this country where the value of our life and our very honour has gone down. It is only to remind this Government about this loss of value that I got up to make a few remarks. When the railways are rolling in wealth by increased income in railway traffic, they should see that human lives are better cared for and given due value.

With regard to the change in the spirit of the administration, I may remind the House about the keenness of the Government to check ticketless travel and punish them. In Bihar they have started the experiment of a court in a running train. A Magistrate holds court in a running train and ticketless travellers are punished on the spot. There cannot be two opinions about the evils of ticketless travel. The railways are to be vigilant in checking this evil and tracing the culprits and punishing them. At the same time they should be vigilant to see that the innocent people are not harassed or punished. Those who are in charge of attending to the amenities of passengers on railway platforms always attempt to squeeze money. They would encourage a man holding a third class ticket to get into the Inter class and then pounce upon him and collect extra fares. What can the poor illiterate passenger do when he finds that there is no room in the third class carriages? He runs about, up and down the platform, only to find that all carriages are crowded and, in his anxiety to get into the train, he gets into an Inter class compartment. I myself have drawn attention of the Inspector on the platform to find accommodation for these poor people who are running up and down the platform. The railway official simply brushed me aside by saying, it was none of my business. But he thinks it is his business to see the poor passenger enter a third class compartment and then demand full fare or at least patch up the whole affair by a compromise. That is the practice obtaining in this country at present. I may point out that I have nothing but praise for the administration so far as their vigilance to put down ticketless travel is concerned. But at the same time, they should look to the comforts and convenience of the passengers. It is in that spirit that I make these remarks and perhaps if nature conspires to inflict some wound on the afflicted people, they will at least have the satisfaction that human agency is not against them. With these words, I support the motion of my Honourable friend.

Lt.-Col. Dr. J. C. Chatterjee (Nominated Non-Official): Sir, I have considerable sympathy with the Honourable Mover of this Motion. My reasons are that in the first place, human life must be treated with the greatest sanctity. It does not matter who the people killed were, whether they were Muslims, whether they were Hindus or whether they were Christians, whether they were poor or rich, human life is sacred and must be held sacred. So, Sir, my Honourable friend has my sincere sympathy in his effort to bring before this House and also to invite the attention of those who are responsible for the administration of the railways to this most unfortunate and most regrettable accident. I also feel, Sir, that he has done a service by bringing to the notice of those who have to deal with these matters certain great inconveniences which the travelling public has to undergo in these days. In recent years, it has been

my lot to travel more than half the month, and I spent about ten nights on the train on an average in a month and therefore I have very great sympathy so far as this question of lights is concerned. The inconvenience that is caused by the absence of lights to the travelling public is indeed very great. In a four berth compartment, you have one light and none in the bath room. This state of affairs is known to every one and every one feels it. It is much more serious if the absence of lights or a shortage of bulbs results in such a serious accident or at any rate becomes a contributory cause where human life is endangered and lost. But there are certain matters which we cannot help. We have been told that there is acute shortage of bulbs, that bulbs simply cannot be had. We have got to take that into consideration. I would also say that it may not be such an insuperable difficulty to procure bulbs as has been said by some speakers. Perhaps you yourself, Sir, might feel so touched by this accident that you may even be willing to lend to the railway administration a number of superfluous lights which I see all round me here and perhaps that will also save us the inconvenience of sitting late at night. That is of course by the way. The fact still remains that we are living in abnormal times. There is a war on. It is not only in India that one suffers from lack of lights or that one hears of unfortunate and regrettable accidents. It was not very long ago that I happened to be in England and there was hardly a light visible anywhere. The lighting restrictions may have been relaxed recently but ever since the war began, there has not been a single road light in England and as far as the railway stations are concerned, even the names of railway stations could not be read. There was no light and the same kind of accidents happened there as they happen here.

Now, Sir, accidents are bound to happen in the best regulated country in the world and the Indian railways do not claim to be the best regulated railways in the world. They may be moderately regulated, or indifferently regulated, but I do realise this, that they along with all other railways are at this time passing through a period of the utmost difficulty in keeping up the train services and in providing whatever facilities they are able to provide. As I was saying, I have been out of this country during the war and I must say that it is to their credit that they do not in any sense show up in a worse light than railways in other countries where there are probably more facilities for production of bulbs than in this country do. I would therefore say that we should make some concessions and not take the administration to task too severely for something which they cannot help.

Another point emerges. I observed that the Honourable Member of this Motion said that these poor unfortunate people did not see the overbridge because it was very dark and therefore they crossed the line. Now, Sir, I feel this, that though I have the greatest regret for the great misfortune and the terrible punishment which they suffered because of this small mistake, the fact remains that in this country, may be in other countries too, people seem to have a terrible temptation not to see and use overbridges whether by day or by night. Somehow or other they do like to go under the bridge and cross the railway line, and no amount of loss, no amount of hearing about people who lost their lives because they tried to save a little physical effort or tried to save a little loss of time by crossing the railway line seems to deter the public from a practice which is so unwise. I still feel though I do not say that this lessens my sympathy for those unfortunate victims of this tragedy or for their relatives, but I still say that it is not due to inadequate lighting that this tragedy happened. Even the absence of light does not completely hide overbridges from human vision and it is very likely that these persons, unfortunately crossed the railway line though they had seen the overbridge. I am just trying to show that the accident was not altogether due either to the negligence or the lightheartedness of the employees of the Railway or the Railway Administration. I have already said that my friend has done a public service by bringing this accident to the notice of this House and through it to the notice of the Honourable the Railway Member. But I feel that a case has not been made up to censure either Government or the Railway Administration for an accident of this kind. It is very

[Lt.-Col. Dr. J. C. Chatterjee]

regrettable but at the same time we must remember that the Railway has a great deal to do and the Railway Administration are now taxed to the utmost capacity. Is it fair or would it be in the public interest that whenever an accident occurs—and accidents in the time of war must frequently occur—that whenever an accident occurs, a public enquiry should be set up or that Government should be censured, or that the Railway Administration should be censured. Does it in any way improve matters? Sir, I have already said that it has been a very good thing to give publicity to this because however hardworked an official might be, human nature being what it is, he is some times negligent; he may some times be not as vigilant as he ought to be. That has already been done by the motion which my Honourable friend has moved and the speeches of those who have recounted their grievances and the shortcomings of the Railway in this matter. So what I would say is this: that what could be done has already been done. I do not think that a case has been made out for a full-dress public enquiry. I do not agree that a case has been made for censuring the Railway Administration, and I would therefore plead that my Honourable friend should now withdraw the motion.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Sir, I feel that I should commence my remarks by saying that I take exception to the remarks of certain of those Members who have, if I may say so, not dealt with the merits of the case, but have spread themselves over a number of extraneous aspects of railway management and have accused the Government of not caring in this matter and of being callous. Sir, I hope to show that the Railway have paid proper care to this accident. They have the necessary information and they did appoint an enquiry, and I have the facts with me here. I think I had better give the facts to the House with one or two comments on them:

"The facts were that there was a heavy rush of passengers at Bakhtiarpur from Bakhtiarpur Bihar Light Railway concerning the pilgrims returning from the Chiraga Meja at Bihar Sharif at about 21.00 hours". (That means 9 p.m.) "14 Down passenger came into Bakhtiarpur and stopped into the down platform and just then an Up M.T. Coaching Special for which though signals had been lowered approached on the up line. A party of about 13 passengers were waiting on the up platform near the mounting of the foot over-bridge."

I draw attention to that because the Honourable Mover pointed out that the lighting was such that passengers could not see the over-bridge.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: The fact was that there was no light of any kind

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

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: They found a way to the foot of the overbridge and could have crossed to the correct platform. The report goes on:

"These passengers had arrived by the Light Railway Train at about 20-22 hours and one of the party had gone across to the down platform to purchase their tickets from the B. G. Booking Office and had come back and joined the waiting party who apparently intended to board 14-Down Passenger Train from the off side due to heavy rush on the down platform." These passengers jumped from this platform on to the up track without noticing the approach of Up M. T. Coaching Special which ran over them, killing seven on the spot and badly injuring three."

That is confirmed by the Honourable Mover's statement and the report which he read out. It is quite clear from that that they were crossing the line in a manner which they should never have been doing and it was evident from the action of the member of the party who bought the tickets that they were crossing the line in order to board the train from the off side, and that this was not done in a wild moment but was done deliberately. I go on with the report:

"The driver of the up train pulled the emergency signal"

That is, he put on the emergency brake—

" but could not avoid the accident."

The driver was alert and attempted to stop the train—

"The train stopped with the last vehicle about 270' beyond the site of the accident."

It shows it could not have been moving very fast—

"From the statement of the driver it is apparent that the engine of the Coaching Special had no electric head lights but had the ordinary oil lamps."

That report gives, I think, a sufficient account of what actually happened, and I think also makes it sufficiently clear that very regrettably the people responsible for this accident were those passengers who apparently decided to jump across the line and did not look at the train which was coming from the opposite direction. Needless to say, no passenger has any business to cross the line, especially, when an over-bridge has been provided for them.

Three points, besides the direct responsibility for the accident, have been made. One concerns the lights on the station. There were lights on the station. That is my information. I admit on some of these stations, particularly in the A.R.P. area, lighting arrangements are not what they were. This station is, as a matter of fact, just outside the present A.R.P. area, but they have been under A.R.P. rules for a long time. Perhaps the lighting is not so good, as it might be and I will endeavour to see that so far as possible lighting is improved on these stations to the extent that the availability of oil and electric light bulbs permit. But what has not yet been explained is why the absence of lighting can be regarded as a contributory cause. What could be the defect in the lighting if people, as the evidence shows, could find their way to the overbridge and cross with perfect safety. There is no question of providing lighting to cross the rails illegally, so that I do not see how in any way better lighting would have effected the result. In fact, if the lights had been at all dazzling, they would probably have still obscured the lights of the approaching train, but the victims did not show even ordinary care to see the lights of the approaching train. There were lights on the approaching train. They were not headlights. Why, I do not know. But all the trains do not carry headlights now, because there is a shortage of headlight bulbs which has been ventilated in this House on numerous occasions. During the last month or so the position has improved, but even now I do not suppose all trains carry headlights. When they do not carry headlights the practice is to carry two oil lights which this train was carrying. Mr. Anthony has explained the technical position. There was nothing wrong. As Lt. Col. Chatterjee points out the lighting difficulties in the United Kingdom are much worse than in this country and engines there do not carry headlights. So, the lighting of the engine may be regarded as having been normal.

Lastly, there is the question of the enquiry. It is suggested that there was no proper enquiry. When an accident like this takes place what happens is that the railway authorities set up an enquiry. They notify the magistrate and the police. They did so on this occasion. They further notify the Government Inspector of Railways under the Posts and Air Department. The enquiry was held. No representative of the District Magistrate attended but two members of the police, Khan Saheb Nabi, Deputy Superintendent of Police and Mr. Muhammad Yakub, Inspector of Police, both attended this enquiry which was also attended by the Government Inspector of Railways from Calcutta. This Committee of Enquiry signed a report to say that, having carefully considered all the evidence, they found (a) that the passengers were killed, etc., (b) that the accident was entirely due to the rash and negligent action of the deceased and the injured for crossing the Up line from the Up high level platform in order to board 14 Down passenger standing on the Down platform, (c) that no railway staff were responsible for this accident.

So, in reply to the suggestion that there was no proper enquiry, I say that there was an enquiry held by the Government Inspector of Railways whose duty it is, if he is not satisfied with the findings, to prosecute. He did not think it necessary to do so. The police officers who attended did not consider it necessary to take any further action and it appears from the evidence that I have given and the report which I have read to you that the enquiry was pretty thorough and, I hope, will satisfy members on that score.

I think I have covered all the points. I think the evidence shows that the victims unfortunately perished or were injured because they were where they should not have been and that they did not use the overhead bridge at the

[Sir Edward Benthall]

foot of which they were standing. There is nothing to show in any way that the railways or the railway staff were at fault and everything to show that it was the lapse of the unfortunate victims, and I would suggest that in fairness to the country's own servants this House should not show a readiness to condemn their railway servants in the way in which some of the members have done.

The motion speaks of criminal negligence. I suggest there is no such criminal negligence: I would ask the honourable mover to withdraw his motion or, if he will not do that, I hope the House will reject it.

Sir Syed Raza Ali (Cities of the United Provinces: Muhammadan Urban): Is there anything to show how many witnesses were examined in this enquiry?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: The Honourable member will appreciate that it is not too easy a matter at short notice on an adjournment motion to secure all the evidence I would like to. But the enquiry report does say "having carefully considered all the evidence". I frankly do not know what that means but the Government Inspector of Railways was there. It was not only a purely railway enquiry. It is the job of the Police and the Government Inspector of Railways of the Posts and Air Department to enquire thoroughly into these matters. They were both present at this enquiry and they came to that finding.

Several Honourable Members: The question be now put.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: Sir, I do not want to take more than four minutes in reply. I went to Bakhtiarpur, spent a full day and from the reports available to me there from non-official sources there was no-one to say that there was any variety of light on the platform. It was dark and cloudy night over and above this.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Do I understand the Honourable member to say that he did not cross-question those who were particularly concerned?

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: I should not say they were not concerned. Those people from whom I enquired were certainly not at all concerned with the victims, but were concerned with facts. I went there after a full week. The other point is that according to the report to which the honourable the Railway Member has referred he said that there was no representative of the Magistrate and for his information I may tell the House that in Bakhtiarpur there is a Magistrate, whose letter I have read and whose evidence to me was that there was no light on the platform and on the authority of whose evidence, given personally to me, and by correspondence, I have made my statements in this House.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: On a point of information I said that the District Magistrate was informed and was invited to attend but did not do so.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: I do not know that: it might be a fact. I said that a Magistrate was in Bakhtiarpur and he stayed there all the time and no reference was made by this enquiry to that Magistrate. I have not tried to bring this adjournment motion on any lines of sentiment. I only want to impress upon this House how these tragedies are being given the names of accidents and how is an enquiry averted or shelved and this is what is being done. Well, if there was any anxiety on the part of the passengers on account of rush, as the Honourable Member for Railway has tried to allege, what reason can be given that, for the last 60 years this station has been in existence and there was never any anxiety on part of the passengers to cross in the manner in which they did on the 25th September 1944? So, to say that this happened because of rush is to say something which cannot convey any meaning and probably cannot convince this side of the House. So, I press my motion for division.

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

"That the Assembly do not adjourn."

The Assembly divided:

AYES—50

Abdul Ghani, Maulvi Muhammad.
 Abdul Qaiyum, Mr.
 Abdullah, Mr. H. M.
 Azhar Ali, Mr. Muhammad.
 Banerjee, Dr. P. N.
 Chattopadhyaya, Mr. Amarendra Nath
 Chettiar, Mr. T. S. Avinashilingam.
 Chetty, Mr. Sami Venkatachalam.
 Choudhury, Mr. Muhammad Hussain.
 Chunder, Mr. N. C.
 Daga, Seth Sheodass.
 Dam, Mr. Ananga Mohan.
 Datta, Mr. Akhil Chandra.
 Desai, Mr. Bhulabhai J.
 Deshmukh, Dr. G. V.
 Deshmukh, Mr. Govind V.
 Essak Sait, Mr. H. A. Sathar H.
 Fazl-i-Haq Piracha, Khan Bahadur Shaikh.
 Gauri Shankar Singh, Mr.
 Gupta, Mr. K. S.
 Hans Raj, Raizada.
 Hegde, Sri K. B. Jinaraja.
 Kailash Bihari Lall, Mr.
 Krishnamachari, Mr. T. T.
 Lahiri Chaudhury, Mr. D. K.

Lakhichand, Mr. Rajmal.
 Lalchand Navalrai, Mr.
 Liaquat Ali Khan, Nawabzade Muhammad.
 Mangal Singh, Sardar
 Manu Subedar, Mr.
 Murtuza Sahib Bahadur, Maulvi Syed.
 Naidu, Mr. G. Rangiah.
 Nautman, Mr. Muhamad.
 Neogy, Mr. K. C.
 Pande, Mr. Badri Dutt.
 Raghurib Narain Singh, Choudhri.
 Ramayan Prasad, Mr.
 Ranga, Prof. N. G.
 Raza Ali, Sir Syed.
 Reddiar, Mr. K. Sitarama.
 Sant Singh, Sardar.
 Satyanarayana Moorthy, Mr. A.
 Siddique Ali Khan, Nawab.
 Sinha, Mr. Satya Narayan.
 Subbaravan, Shrimati K. Radha Bai
 Umar Alv Shah, Mr.
 Yamin Khan, Sir Muhammad.
 Yusuf Abdoola Haroon, Seth.
 Zafar Ali Khan, Maulana.
 Zia Uddin Ahmad, Dr. Sir.

NOES—49

Ahmad Nawaz Khan, Major Nawab Sir.
 Amedkar, The Honourable Dr. B. R.
 Anthony, Mr. Frank R.
 Azizul Huque, The Honourable Sir M.
 Benthall, The Honourable Sir Edward.
 Bhagchand Soni, Rai Bahadur Seth.
 Caroe, Sir Olaf.
 Chandavarkar, Sir Vithal N.
 Chapman-Mortimer, Mr. T.
 Chatterjee, Lt.-Col. Dr. J. C.
 Daga, Seth Sunder Lall.
 Dalal, Dr. Sir Ratanji Dinshaw.
 Dalal, The Honourable Sir Ardeshir.
 Dalpat Singh, Sardar Bahadur Captain.
 Ghiasuddin, Mr. M.
 Griffiths, Mr. P. J.
 Gwillt, Mr. E. L. C.
 Habibur Rahman, Khan Bahadur Sheikh.
 Haidar, Khan Bahadur Shamsuddin.
 Imam, Mr. Saiyid Haidar.
 Inskin, Mr. A. C.
 Ismael Ali Khan, Kunwer Hajee.
 James, Sir F. E.
 Jawahar Singh, Sardar Bahadur Sardar Sir.
 Joshi, Mr. D. S.
 Kamaluddin Ahmad, Shams-ul-Ulema.

Khare, The Honourable Dr. N. B.
 Krishnamoorthy, Mr. E. S. A.
 Kushal Pal Singh, Raja Bahadur.
 Lawson, Mr. C. P.
 Mehta, Mr. Jammadas M.
 Miller, Mr. C. C.
 Mudaliar, The Honourable Dewan Bahadur
 Sir A. Ramaswami.
 Mudie, The Honourable Sir Francis.
 Piare Lall Kureel, Mr.
 Raisman, The Honourable Sir Jeremy.
 Rao, Dr. V. K. R. V.
 Richardson, Sir Henry.
 Roy, The Honourable Sir Asoka.
 Sethna, Mr. D. P.
 Shahban, Khan Bahadur Mian Ghulam Kadir
 Muhammad.
 Shoobert, Mr. W. H.
 Spence, Sir George.
 Srivastava, The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad.
 Stokes, Mr. H. G.
 Sultan Ahmed, The Honourable Sir.
 Thakur Singh, Capt.
 Trivedi, Mr. C. M.
 Tyson, Mr. J. D.

The motion was adopted.

The Assembly then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Friday, the 3rd November, 1944