

9th April 1946

THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY DEBATES

Official Report

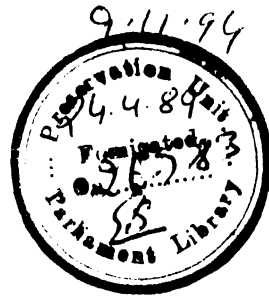
Volume V, 1946

(1st April to 15th April, 1946)

FIRST SESSION

OF THE

SIXTH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, 1946



PUBLISHED BY THE MANAGER OF PUBLICATIONS, DELHI, INDIA
PRINTED BY THE MANAGER GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PRESS, NEW DELHI, INDIA
1947

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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SARDAR MANGAL SINGH, M.L.A.

CONTENTS

Volume V—1st April to 15th April 1946

	Pages		Pages
Monday, 1st April 1946—			
Starred Questions and Answers	3250—86	Hindu Inter-caste Marriage Regulating val-	
Unstarred Questions and Answers	3286—87	idating Bill—Presentation of Reports of	3551
Statements laid on the Table	3287—89	the Committee on Petitions	
Short Notice Question and Answer	3289—90	Trade Marks (Amendment) Bill—Passed as	3551—57
Motions for Adjournment re—		amended	
Burning of Military Lorries in Calcutta		Indian Companies (Amendment) Bill—	3557—58
—Disallowed	3290—91	Passed	
Failure of the Government of India to		Railway Companies (Substitution of Part-	3559—60
obtain the Food Quota demanded by	3291—92,	les in Civil Proceedings) Bill—Passed as	
them from the Combined Food Board—	3313—34	amended	
talked out		Indian Coconut Committee (Amendment)	3559—61
Message from the Council of State	3292	Bill—Motion to consider adopted	
Resolution re Release of Indian National			
Army men and Political Prisoners	3292—3313		
Tuesday, 2nd April 1946 —		Friday, 5th April 1946—	
Starred Questions and Answers	3335—75	Members sworn	3563
Unstarred Questions and Answers	3375—79	Starred Questions and Answers	3563—87
Short Notice Question and Answer	3370—80	Unstarred Questions and Answers	3587—89
Hindu Married Women's Right to separate		Indian Coconut Committee (Amendment)	
Residence and Maintenance Bill—Peti-		Bill—Passed as amended	3589—97
tions Reported	3380	Protective Duties Continuation Bill—	
Hindu Inter-caste Marriage Regulating		Passed	3597—3615
and validating Bill—Petitions Reported	3380	Protective Duties Bill—Motion to con-	
Motions for adjournment re—failure of the		sider not concluded	3615—26
Government of India to refer the dispute		Statement of Business	3626—29
between India and South Africa over the			
Ghetto Bill to U.N.O.—Not admitted	3380—83		
Failure of the Government of India to		Monday 8th April 1946—	
withdraw the Indian High Commissioner		Members sworn	3631
from South Africa—Disallowed	3383—84	Starred Questions and Answers	3631—42
Election of Members to the Standing Com-		Unstarred Questions and Answers	3632—43
mittee for Roads	3384	Short Notice Question and Answer	3633—34
Election of Members to all India Council		Motion for Adjournment re Starvation	
for Technical Education	3384	deaths in the Streets of Calcutta—Post-	
Election of Members to the Central Advisory		poned till next day	3664—66
Board of Education in India	3384	Statement of Business	3666—67
Election of Members to the Advisory Board		Election of a Member to Standing Com-	
of Archaeology in India	3384	mittee for Department of Planning and	
Hindu Married Women's Right to separate		Development	3667
Residence and Maintenance Bill—Passed		Summary of Proceedings of the Seventh	
as amended	3385—3416	meeting of the Standing Labour Com-	
		mittee	3667
		Industrial Employment (Standing Orders)	
		Bill—Introduced	3667
		Protective Duties Bill—Passed as amended	3667—3700
		Indian Soldiers (Litigation) Amendment	
		Bill—Passed as amended	3700—04
		Tuesday, 9th April 1946,—	
		Member Sworn	3705
		Starred Questions and Answers	3705—86
		Unstarred Questions and Answers	3726—37
		Short Notice Question and Answer	3726—38
		Motion for Adjournment re Starvation	
		Deaths in the Streets of Calcutta—With-	
		drawn	3738—44,
		Paper laid on the table—Report of the	3766—68
		Labour Investigation Committee	
		Merchant Seamen (Litigation) Bill—Presen-	3744
		tation of the Report of the Select Com-	
		mittee	3745
		Mica Mines Labour Welfare Fund Bill—	
		Referred to Select Committee	3745—59
		Banking Companies Bill—Discussion on	
		the motion to refer to Select Committee	3759—66
		Thursday, 11th April 1946 —	
		Member sworn	3788
		Starred Questions and Answers	3788—3915
		Unstarred Questions and Answers	3815—30
		Short Notice Questions and Answers	3830—37
		Motions for adjournment re—Closing down	
		of Sholapur Textile Mills for want of	
		coal—not moved	3837—39
		Deaths in the Baruni Mels at Samastipur	
		Railway Station due to Criminal Negli-	
		gence of the O. T. Railway—Disallowed	3893—40
		Rights of Indian Labourers employed on	
		Kenversmere Estate in Ceylon—Dis-	
		allowed	3840—41
		Motor Vehicles Amendment Bill—Intro-	
		duced	3841
		Minimum Wages Bill—Introduced	3842
		Banking Companies Bill—Referred to Se-	
		lect Committee	3842—70
		Mica Mines Labour Welfare Fund Bill—	
		Presentation of the Report of Select Com-	
		mittee	3871

Friday,

12th April, 1946 —	PAGES
Starred Questions and Answers	3873—3901
Postponed Starred Questions and Answers	3901—02
Unstarred Questions and Answers	3902—04
Short Notice Question and Answer	3904
Motions for Adjournment re—	
Unsatisfactory nature of replies to certain Questions re Appointment of Mr. Bowlerston, Member, Railway Board and Continuation of Policy of Europeanisation—Ruled out of order	3905—10
Ignoring Claims of Indian Officers of Department and Appointment of British I.C.S. Officers as Secretary Finance Department—Ruled out of order	3910—13
Message from the Council of State	3913—14
Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Bill—Passed as amended	3914—27
Merchant Seamen (Litigation) Bill—Passed as amended	3927—28
Insurance (Second Amendment) Bill—Discussion on the motion to refer to Select Committee not concluded	3928—41
Statement of Business	3941—42

Monday, 15th April, 1946 —	PAGES
Member Sworn	3943
Starred Questions and Answers	3943—56
Unstarred Questions and Answers	3956—90
Motions for Adjournment re—	
Deputation of an Indian to the Meeting of Council of Foreign Ministers at Paris in place of Sir Geoffrey Prior—Ruled out of Order	3990—91
Train Collision at Itwari—Disallowed	3991—93
Misleading information in answer to questions in the Assembly regarding appointment of Members of Railway Board—Disallowed	3993—97
Banking Companies Bill—Appointment of Mr. K. G. Ambegaokar vice Mr. B. C. A. Cook on the Select Committee	3997
Insurance (Second Amendment) Bill—Referred to Select Committee	3997—4024
Mica Mines Labour Welfare Fund Bill—Passed as amended	4024—25
Statement of Business	4025—27

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 9th April, 1946

The Assembly met in the Assembly Chamber of the Council House at Eleven of the Clock, Mr. President (The Honourable Mr. G. V. Mavalankar) in the Chair.

MEMBER SWORN:

Mr. Indra Singh Puri, C.I.E., M.L.A. (Government of India: Nominated Official).

STARRED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(a) ORAL ANSWERS

PUNISHMENT TO CERTAIN INDIAN ARMY MEN

1655. *Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal: Will the War Secretary be pleased to state:

(a) whether the following persons of the 4th Indian Coastal Battery (or of any other composition) were punished as noted against their names (or otherwise punished); if so, where, and why;

Names	Sentence
(i) Mankumar Basu Thakur	Hanged.
(ii) N. K. Dey	"
(iii) D. D. Roy Choudhury	"
(iv) N. K. Mukherjee	"
(v) N. Mukherjee	"
(vi) N. Barua	"
(vii) P. Chakrabarty	"
(viii) S. K. Mukherjee	"
(ix) K. P. Aich	"
(x) Abdul Rahaman	Transportation for life
(xi) R. N. Ghosh	Transportation for life
(xii) A. K. Dey	Seven years' Rigorous Imprisonment;

(b) the age of each of them at the time of the said punishment and the rank of each of them in their regiment; and

(c) the nature of their trial, and the arrangements for their defence?

Mr. P. Mason: (a) and (c). Yes, Sir. They were tried by Summary General Court Martial at Bangalore between the 6th of July and the 5th of August, 1943, and awarded these punishments. All except Gunner A. C. Dey were convicted on a charge of conspiring with others to cause a mutiny;

Diwan Chaman Lall: Cannot hear a word. May we ask my Honourable friend to repeat the answer?

Mr. P. Mason: (a) and (c). Yes, Sir. They were tried by Summary General Court Martial at Bangalore between the 6th of July and the 5th of August, 1943, and awarded these punishments. All except Gunner A. C. Dey were convicted on a charge of conspiring with others to cause a mutiny; Gunner Dey was convicted for being aware of, but not disclosing the conspiracy. The accused were defended by an Indian Commissioned Officer who in civil life was an advocate of a Presidency High Court, assisted by two other officers with legal experience.

(b) I lay a statement on the table.

Statement

		Years
M. B. Thakur	Jemadar	21
N. K. Dey	Havildar	26
D. D. R. Chowdhury	"	25
N. Barua	"	23
C. R. Mukerjee	"	24
P. Chakravarty	Naik	27
S. K. Mukerjee	Gunner	22
A. C. Dey	"	21
K. P. Aitch	"	23
R. N. Ghosh	"	21
N. M. Mukherjee	"	21
M. Rehman	"	26

Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal: Will the Honourable the War Secretary be pleased to state what were the overt acts of the alleged conspiracy?

Mr. P. Mason: The object of the conspiracy appears to have been to cause the unit to be disbanded and in order to achieve that end three separate series of acts were committed. First these people attempted to burn down their barracks and also a considerable amount of other property in which there were explosives. They actually set fire to property containing explosives but I think the fire was put out in time to prevent a very serious disaster. They then endeavoured to stir up communal trouble in the unit without a great deal of success and finally they started a conspiracy to cause men to desert and in this they met with considerable success to such an extent that they caused the monthly desertions from a comparatively small unit to rise to twenty a month.

Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal: Will the Honourable Member be pleased to state if it is a fact that the principal prosecution witnesses were one Mr. Barnett and one Mr. Lahiri, the son of the promoter of the regiment and another Mr. Ganguly, and whether it is also a fact that this Mr. Ganguly stated in his examination-in-chief that there was some conspiracy and that on cross-examination he said that he was tutored to say what he had said?

Mr. P. Mason: I would need notice of that.

Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal: Is the Honourable Member aware that copies of the proceedings were asked for but the request was refused?

Mr. P. Mason: I am not aware of that.

Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal: Will the Honourable Member be pleased to state that this Mr. Lahiri and Mr. Barnett were on a previous occasion accused of having pilfered rations in the regiment?

Mr. P. Mason: I am not aware of that. I was aware of the fact that among the witnesses two were to some extent involved in the conspiracy and were actually confederates, I mean accomplices, but their evidence was not given very great weight, and it was merely used to corroborate on certain points outside the conspiracy the main evidence which was believed by the Court.

Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal: Is the Honourable Member aware that a copy was asked for in respect of the evidence of those persons who were outside the accomplices and the accused?

Mr. P. Mason: I am not aware of that.

Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal: Is the Honourable Member aware that a lawyer was brought from Calcutta, namely, one Mr. D. M. Sen to appear on behalf of the Defence but that he was returned on the assurance that he would be

informed subsequently when the charges were ready and further that he was at a subsequent stage informed that his appearance was not required?

Mr. P. Mason: I am not aware of that.

Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal: Is the Honourable Member aware that certain persons who were examined as Defence witnesses and after they had made their deposition that they were prosecuted for perjury, put in a cell, not given food, not given water, and when water was asked for urine was given and later persecuted?

Mr. P. Mason: I am not aware of that. I should say that I have studied the proceedings of this Court Martial and naturally none of the suggestions made by the Honourable Member appear in those proceedings, and I would rather question whether they arise out of the question.

Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal: Will the Honourable Member be pleased to state whether he is prepared to release the correspondence between the lawyer Mr. D. M. Sen of Calcutta and the Army authorities?

Mr. P. Mason: I have not seen the correspondence. I will see whether the correspondence can be released.

Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal: Will the Honourable Member be pleased to state whether it is a fact that after these Defence witnesses were convicted for perjury, some of the men of the regiment protested, giving their reasons?

Mr. P. Mason: I was not aware of that.

Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal: Has the Honourable Member's attention been drawn to certain statements made in the press here and before relating to the so-called farce of a trial?

Mr. P. Mason: No, Sir.

Shri Sarat Chandra Bose: Will the Honourable the War Secretary please say if it is a fact that the only overt act they were charged with was setting fire to a palm-leaf hut?

Mr. P. Mason: No, Sir. I have already explained the act for which they were charged.

Shri D. P. Karmakar: Is the Honourable the War Secretary prepared to place a copy of the proceedings of the trial on the table of this House?

Mr. P. Mason: I think I probably can. I would like to make enquiries first.

Shri Sarat Chandra Bose: Were the relatives of these persons informed that charges had been made against them of mutiny?

Mr. P. Mason: I think they must have been. It is the usual practice.

Shri Sarat Chandra Bose: Were they informed in fact? I am not asking about the practice.

Mr. P. Mason: I do not know that.

Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal: If I place before the Honourable the War Secretary the file of these persons who say they were not given intimation, setting forth the details of how they were kept in the dark, will he be prepared to take the file and consider the question of having a non-official enquiry into the matter?

Mr. P. Mason: Yes, Sir, I am certainly prepared to consider the suggestion.

Shri Sarat Chandra Bose: Is the Honourable Member prepared to ascertain whether the relatives of these persons were informed that these persons were tried and sentenced, some of them to death and the others to long terms of imprisonment?

Mr. P. Mason: I have told you, Sir, that I do not know whether or not they were informed but that it is the usual custom so to inform them.

Diwan Chaman Lall: May I ask my Honourable friend if he is aware of the fact that under the Indian Army Act not permitting a lawyer to attend and defend the cases of these people makes the entire trial illegal and *ultra vires*?

Mr. P. Mason: I am not aware of that fact. But the Indian Commissioned Officer who defended them had also been a lawyer. He was an Indian Commissioned Officer but he was an Advocate of a Presidency High Court. To defend them he had the assistance of two able counsel and in the Judge Advocate's summing up he particularly mentioned the able way in which the defence had been conducted.

As to whether or not anyone was refused, who wished to defend them or whom the accused wished to have as their defence Counsel, as I have said, I have no information about that but I can find out.

Diwan Ohaman Lall: May I ask my Honourable friend if it is a fact that the accused asked to be defended by private counsel to which they are entitled under the Indian Army Act but the counsel was refused? Is it not a fact that under those circumstances the trial is *ab initio* illegal and *ultra vires*?

Mr. P. Mason: (a) I have already told you that I do not know. I have studied the proceedings of this court of enquiry and information of that nature would naturally not be included in the official proceedings.

(b) As to whether or not that would make the whole proceedings *ultra vires* I cannot say without notice.

Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal: Is the Honourable the War Secretary aware that the Indian Commissioned Officer who was engaged for defending these people was put under prosecution or proceedings immediately after he had finished the cross-examination of the first witness and that after the trial was over he was suspended and degraded?

Some Honourable Members: Shame, Shame.

Mr. P. Mason: I think it is a little premature to say shame, because an allegation has been made of which we have no proof and my information is that nothing of the kind happened. I do not even understand the term used by the Honourable Member as to putting the person "under prosecution".

Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal: I said "proceeding".

Mr. P. Mason: I do not even understand that.

Mr. Manu Subedar: In view of the very serious allegations that have been made, will the Honourable the War Secretary now put the whole file of this case before the Defence Consultative Committee after impartial further enquiry into each of the allegations which have been made in this House and giving the explanations of such authorities as there may be to give such explanation?

Mr. P. Mason: I have already said that I will examine the record and see if there is any reason why it should not be made public. Personally I do not see any reason why it should not. And as to putting it before the Defence Consultative Committee I think there are certain difficulties in that. That body will have the greatest difficulty in getting through the programme which will be before it, including matters of high policy and it will be too much to take up their time with looking into the record of a case which I believe extends to some 500 or 600 pages. I think it would be better if I place the record, as I said I am not quite sure whether I can do it, on the table of the House and anyone interested could look into it and we can see if any further action is required.

Shri Sarat Chandra Bose: Is it a fact that His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief had spoken highly about these men of the Indian Coastal Battery, who were subsequently charged with having committed these offences?

Mr. P. Mason: It is a fact that until about six months before this act, the unit had had a very good record.

Mr. Manu Subedar: We are interested in the punishment of those who were delinquents. If the serious allegations made here were correct, will my Honourable friend not merely content himself with placing the record for our information on the table of the House but will he institute an enquiry so as to bring to book those officers who were responsible for this misdirection of justice?

Mr. P. Mason: It is begging the question: to suggest that I should institute an enquiry in order to bring some people to book. That is a wholly wrong approach. The object of the enquiry should be to ascertain the truth. I will certainly have this matter looked into. As to the various allegations which have been made I will have them examined and I will, if need be, make a report to the House as to the results of that enquiry.

Shri Mohan Lal Saksena: Is not the Honourable Member aware that the facts brought out in the question were stated by Mr. Sanyal on the 1st of April in this House?

Mr. P. Mason: Some of them were.

Shri Mohan Lal Saksena: Did the Honourable Member take any steps to make enquiries?

Mr. P. Mason: I did, Sir.

Shri Mohan Lal Saksena: What was the result?

Mr. P. Mason: I have not had time to make a very full enquiry but such knowledge as I have of the case I have acquired since then.

Shri Mohan Lal Saksena: What is the difference between the manner in which all these men were tried and the Gestapo method?

Mr. President: Order, order. Next question.

ENQUIRY INTO ALLEGATIONS MADE BY MISS RANGA RAO OF W. A. C. (I.)

1656. ***Shri Satya Narayan Sinha:** (a) Has the attention of the War Secretary been drawn to the statement issued by Miss Ranga Rao, published in newspapers of the 24th March, 1946, demanding a proper commission of enquiry to bring to light with dignity and goodwill all the necessary facts to help to establish as untrue, malicious and wholly incorrect allegations and the slur on the fine corps of the W.A.C.(I)?

(b) Is it a fact that Miss Ranga Rao, while in service and also after her resignation, requested the War Department to give publicity to some of the regrettable features of the W.A.C (I) policy? If so, what action, if any, was taken by the War Department?

(c) Does he propose to appoint an impartial Enquiry Committee to go into the whole matter?

Mr. P. Mason: (a), (b) and (c). Sir, I have on more than one occasion tried to explain why Government do not consider it necessary to hold a Commission of Enquiry into this matter. But I have not perhaps succeeded in making myself sufficiently clear, and I have now received figures which demonstrate my point conclusively.

A Commission of Enquiry is expensive, not only in money, but also in time; in the time not only of the distinguished persons who sit on the Commission, but also of the persons into whose conduct the enquiry is made.

For these reasons, it is advisable to hold a Commission of Enquiry only in Government believes that there is a likelihood that something is wrong. In the case of the WAC(I), Government have no reason whatever to believe that there is anything wrong with this corps. If there was anything wrong, many of the members would wish to leave the service. Whereas the facts are that 721 officers out of 928 and 9482 auxiliaries out of 10651 wish to continue in the corps beyond their release date. That is roughly 80 per cent. of officers and 90 per cent. of auxiliaries wish to continue in the corps. This is I am sure the highest percentage of any corps in either the British or Indian Army, and I suggest that on these facts it is impossible to deny that the Corps as a whole is healthy, contented and happy. And it is generally agreed that it is doing good work and is efficient.

Against this we have only the following facts. One Indian lady of senior rank resigned her commission after eight months service only and that five others of her juniors also resigned. We also have a letter of the authenticity of which have no proof, purporting to come from 100 members of the Corps, published in

a paper on whose reputation I should prefer not to comment. There have also been one or two other letters regarding which the great majority of the Corps are very indignant.

I conclude from this that there are therefore no reasonable grounds for appointing a Commission of Enquiry.

This is only part of the case for believing that conditions in this Corps are good. I have already agreed to lay the whole case before the Defence Consultative Committee; and if after hearing the whole case the Committee do not agree with me that a Commission would be wasting its time and that of other people, I shall be surprised.

Mr. Manu Subedar: Will Government give facilities to the All-India Women's Council who have considered this matter sufficiently important and who propose to inquire into this subject?

Mr. P. Mason: No, Sir. I have given very good reasons why we should not do that. The All-India Women's Conference is a body which has taken no interest whatever in that corps. They have never attempted to help the service during the war. They have never volunteered to look after the soldiers or of their families in the way the W.V.S. have done and they have no knowledge whatever of service conditions.

Mr. Manu Subedar: Is not the All-India Women's Conference, from the perusal of whose report my Honourable friend can satisfy himself, concerned with the honour and the reputation of Indian women and is not that the most outstanding issue arising out of the allegations made, whose truth must be ascertained?

Mr. P. Mason: May I suggest that it would be the best thing to leave it till the Defence Consultative Committee, which is meeting at the end of this week, have seen the whole case.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: May I know what arrangements are being made for the resettlement of these women once they leave the Corps; and whether the absence of such arrangements is the cause for those wishing to remain there in preference?

Mr. P. Mason: (a) That does not arise out of the question; and

(b) I have answered this on previous occasions.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: It has not been answered.

Mr. President: Order, order. The question has been answered previously.

TOURS AND PURCHASES OUTSIDE INDIA BY OFFICERS OF INFORMATION AND ARTS DEPARTMENT

1657. ***Shri Satya Narayan Sinha:** (a) Will the Honourable Member for Information and Arts please inform the House as to how many Senior Officers of his Department during the past twelve months have gone out of India on deputation?

(b) Is it a fact that both the Secretary and the Joint Secretary of the Department, as well as the heads of the Counter-Propaganda (now Research and Reference Section) and Publications Division have been out of India on deputation recently? If so, what was the exact nature of their jobs, how long did they stay out of India and what was the extra expense the Department had to bear for the same?

(c) Is it a fact that the Joint Secretary of the Department, Mr. Thaper, while in the United States of America, besides doing other things, was responsible for the purchases of many vans, caravans, projectors and other equipment? If so, how much money was spent on these, and to what use is this equipment now going to be put?

The Honourable Sir Akbar Hydari: (a) Five.

(b) Yes, Sir.

I lay a statement on the table.

(c) No, Sir.

Statement

Name of Officer	Period of stay out of India	Extra expenditure	Object of Deputation
1	2	3	4
Mr. G. S. Bozman, C.S.I., C.I.E., I.C.S.	2 months and 10 days	Approximately Rs. 19,300	To make enquiries into (i) the organisation of cultural, literary and other art associations and their relationship with Government and (ii) to examine the charter of B. B. C. in the light of the possibility of a similar organisation for All-India Radio.
Mr. P. N. Thapar, C.I.E., I.C.S.	3 months and 11 days	12,950	To discuss (i) production and commercial and non-commercial distribution of Indian shorts in England with the Ministry of Information, (ii) reception and distribution of telephotos, (iii) Supply of books to India, (iv) High Commissioner's proposal to constitute a publicity section and the possibilities of holding an Indian exhibition in London and to study the working of (a) B. B. C. Indian Broadcasting Section, (b) Crown Film Unit and other documentary film studios with particular reference to scripting and editing, (c) Exhibition and display section of Ministry of Information, (d) working of the British Film Institute, (e) re-diffusion or relaying of Radio Broadcast, (f) the problem of manufacture of cheap radio sets in India, (g) distribution of Indian shorts in America and (h) study of the use of films in mass education and instruction.

Name of Officer	Period of stay out of India	Extra expenditure	Object of Deputation
1	2	3	4
Mr. F. Watson, O.B.E.	About 2 and a half months.	Approximately Rs. 4,000	To study the organisation and methods of conducting research and reference tasks.
Lt.-Col. G. E. Wheeler, C.I.E.	4 months and 10 days	14,300	To discuss with the authorities on the spot the question of co-ordinating the publicity and distribution arrangements in the Middle East and U. K.

Shri Mohan Lal Saksena: Did they submit any report?

The Honourable Sir Akbar Hydari: One of them did.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: What did the others do? Did they not even submit reports?

The Honourable Sir Akbar Hydari: One of them submitted a formal report. The others submitted their observations on the relevant files.

Shri Mohan Lal Saksena: Will the Honourable Member place a copy of these observations and reports before the House?

The Honourable Sir Akbar Hydari: No, Sir.

HEAD OF COUNTER PROPAGANDA DEPARTMENT SENT ON DEPUTATION TO ENGLAND

1658. ***Shri Satya Narayan Sinha:** (a) Will the Honourable Member for Information and Arts please state if it is a fact that the head of the Counter-Propaganda Department when he went out of India, did not avail of the air passage and went by sea because his step son too had to go with him? If so, why did he not come back also by sea?

(b) Is it a fact that the latest of these "going on deputation" stunts is being tried by the head of the News Section of the All-India Radio? If so, are Government aware that before being sent on this so-called deputation, this particular officer had applied for leave to go to England for some domestic matters of his own and that the "deputation" idea was an after-thought to save him all the expenses and botheration of passages and priority?

The Honourable Sir Akbar Hydari: (a) I presume the question refers to the Director of the Research and Reference Division. The reason suggested for his going to U. K. by sea is incorrect. His passage was not a matter of such urgency as to demand a priority by air. As regards his return, the war came to an end with unexpected suddenness while he was in U. K., and he therefore cut short his deputation and returned by the fastest available means.

(b) The Director of News and External Services recently went on deputation to U. K. No leave application was made by him, and the further allegations are incorrect.

Mr. Manu Subedar: For what purpose was this officer, mentioned in (b), sent on deputation, may I know?

The Honourable Sir Akbar Hydari: I have answered this before. He is the Director of News and External Services of the All-India Radio. From time to time it is desirable that officers of the All-India Radio contact people in the B. B. C. He went on one of those visits. I have previously given the details.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: Which was the result of what? Was it that he realized his domestic needs and afterwards started on deputation or was it that because the deputation was needed he was able to satisfy his domestic needs?

The Honourable Sir Akbar Hydari: I do not know about his domestic needs, Sir.

Shri Mohan Lal Saksena: Our information is that he went to arrange for his divorce.

The Honourable Sir Akbar Hydari: Then, you know better than I do.

Shri Mohan Lal Saksena: May I know who decides whether a particular officer is to proceed to U. K. or U. S. A. is it the Honourable Member or the officers themselves?

The Honourable Sir Akbar Hydari: I decide.

Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar: Could the Honourable Member tell us if similar operators concerned in the radio organizations of other Dominions have likewise gone to B. B. C. from time to time or whether India is the only country which does so?

The Honourable Sir Akbar Hydari: I really cannot answer that question. I do not know what the practice is in the Dominions. But judging from the number of people one sees in London on deputation from the Dominions, it is extremely likely.

Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar: For what purpose was this officer mentioned in (b) sent? What is the particular information or instruction that he wanted from the B. B. C. and what is the instruction or information that he has brought so as to advance the cause of radio in this country?

The Honourable Sir Akbar Hydari: I think I have answered it on previous occasions. I do not carry the instruction in my head. But if the Honourable Member wishes, I shall lay the information on the table of the House.

Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar: What steps have been taken on the so-called reports submitted by persons sent on deputation?

The Honourable Sir Akbar Hydari: I would require notice for this.

Shri Mohan Lal Saksena: May I know for how long he was on deputation in England and whether the period of his deputation was decided by the Honourable Member?

The Honourable Sir Akbar Hydari: No. But Mr. Watson was there for about two months, I think.

Seth Govind Das: Will the Honourable Member say what is done in the Dominions as far as these matters are concerned and see that the policy of India is also adjusted to what is happening in other Dominions?

The Honourable Sir Akbar Hydari: We must decide what we do according to India's needs and not according to the practice in the Dominions.

REPATRIATION OF INDIAN TROOPS FROM MIDDLE EAST AND PALESTINE

†1659. ***Mr. Ahmed E. H. Jaffer:** Will the War Secretary be pleased to state the approximate number of Indian troops in the Middle East especially in Palestine at the present time, and whether it is proposed to repatriate these troops at an early date?

Mr. P. Mason: I am not permitted to disclose the number of troops in any particular theatre. The majority of Indian troops serving in the Middle East have, however, already been repatriated. I can give no information at present regarding the repatriation of the remainder.

REPATRIATION OF FOREIGN PRISONERS OF WAR TO EASE FOOD SCARCITY

1660. ***Pandit Mukut Bihari Lal Bhargava:** (a) Will the War Secretary please state the number of prisoners of war of alien nationalities still confined in various places in India with the particulars of places where they are confined and the nationalities to which they belong?

(b) What is the quantity of foodgrains and other food materials necessary for meeting the needs of these prisoners of war during a month?

(c) Do Government, in view of the acute food situation, propose to take steps to repatriate these war prisoners to their respective homelands or any other place outside India? If not, why not?

Mr. P. Mason: (a) and (b). I lay a statement on the table of the House containing the required information.

(c) Yes Sir. They are already being repatriated as fast as the shipping situation permits.

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

*Statement**

(a) The number of enemy Prisoners of War now held in India is as follows :—

		Numbers
(i) ITALIANS		
Group 2, Bhopal		3,818
Group 5, Yol.		8,404
P. W. employed outside camps all over India		6,334
Total		18,556
(ii) OTHER EUROPEANS		
Central Internment Camp, Dehra Dun		55
(iii) JAPANESE		
Camp No. 29, Biraner		1,549
Camp No. 30, Baleli		985
Total		2,534
Grand Total		21,145

(b) The quantity of foodgrains and other food materials necessary to meet the needs of these Prisoners of War for one month is as shown below.—

Commodity	Italian P. O. W.	Jap P. O. W.	Total.
	Tons	Tons	Tons
<i>Foodgrains—</i>			
Flour for bread making	156	...	156
Rice or Atta or Barley according to availability	...	26	26
Macaroni or Oatmeal	16	...	16
Dhall	23	5	28
Meat	43	4	47
Vegetables fresh	124	13	137

*Statement is revised as per War Department U.O.I. No. 2153 M/S. & M., dated 15th May 1946.

Commodity	Italian P. O. W.	Jap P. O. W.	Total.
	Tons	Tons	Tons
<i>Foodgrains - contd.</i>			
Potatoes	156	4	160
Fruit fresh	31	6	37
Fruit dried	4	...	4
Tea	4	11350	4/1350
Sugar	13	1	14
Skimmed milk powder	16	2	18
Jam	7	...	7
Salt	6	2	8
Chillies	1½	...	1½
Baking powder	½	...	½
Margarine	8	1	9
Cooking Oil	2	1	3
Bacon tinned	7	...	7
Offal (meat e.g., Kidney)	22	...	22
Cheese tinned	4	...	4

Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar: Is there a proposal on the part of the Government to retain any of these foreign nationals in this country?

Mr. P. Mason: No, Sir. Even when they want to stay in this country they are not allowed to do so.

SHOOTING OF JAPANESE PRISONERS OF WAR IN DEOLI DETENTION CAMP

1661. ***Pandit Mukut Bihari Lal Bhargava:** (a) Will the Honourable the Home Member please state if it is a fact that recently during the last month shooting was resorted to in the Detention Camp at Deoli, where Japanese war prisoners are confined? If so, why was the shooting resorted to, and by whom?

(b) What was the number of casualties, and what, if any, was the justification for such shooting?

The Honourable Sir John Thorne: (a) and (b). On the 26th February it was necessary for a military party to open fire to quell a riot among the Japanese civilians internees (not prisoners of war) at the Deoli Internment Camp. The rioters had armed themselves with sticks and knives and were stoning the camp staff and the military party. 19 rioters were killed and 12 wounded.

Some of the internees refuse to believe that Japan has surrendered and the trouble started with assaults by this party on other internees. The camp authorities decided to isolate the ring-leaders but this action was resisted and members of the camp staff were assaulted.

WHEREABOUTS OF SARDAR AJIT SINGH AND IQBAL SHADAI

1662. ***Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal:** (a) Will the Honourable the Home Member be pleased to state the whereabouts of (i) Sardar Ajit Singh, and (ii) Iqbal Shadai?

- (b) Was any of them in the Italian legion of the I.N.A.?
 (c) Was any of them captured during the occupation of Italy?
 (d) Was any of them ever brought to the Red Fort at Delhi?
 (e) What are the intentions of Government with regard to their being put on trial or being released?
 (f) What are the charges against them?

The Honourable Sir John Thorne: (a) Mr. Ajit Singh is in detention in Germany. The whereabouts of Mr. Iqbal Shadai are unknown.

(b) Both of them were organisers of the so called Free India Movement in Italy.

(c) Only Mr. Ajit Singh was captured.

(d) No.

(e) The Government of India have no intention of putting them on trial. The question of the release of Mr. Ajit Singh is for the authorities who detained him.

(f) Does not arise.

Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal: Is it a fact that Sardar Ajit Singh was brought to India at one time?

The Honourable Sir John Thorne: No, Sir.

Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal: Is it a fact that Sardar Ajit Singh and one Garwar Singh came by the same boat and they were landed in India?

The Honourable Sir John Thorne: During the war, Sir?

Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal: After capture.

The Honourable Sir John Thorne: I believe not. My information is to the contrary.

Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal: Will the Honourable Member be pleased to institute an enquiry taking the evidence which Garwar Singh might give? He was brought to India, he was kept in the Red Fort and after that he was taken away.

The Honourable Sir John Thorne: If the Honourable Member will give me this information and the source of it, I will certainly make an enquiry.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: In case Sardar Ajit Singh is still in Germany, what steps do the Government of India propose to take in order to try to bring him over to India?

The Honourable Sir John Thorne: Well, Sir, he left India in 1907, that is about forty years ago, and I do not think it is incumbent on the Government of India to make any representations to ensure his speedy repatriation.

Seth Govind Das: He may have left this country at any time. But he is an Indian. As such, is it not the duty of the Honourable Member to enquire where he is, why he is detained and why he is not released?

The Honourable Sir John Thorne: I answered that on the question of his repatriation.

Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal: Have any steps been taken for getting him released?

The Honourable Sir John Thorne: Not by the Government of India.

Shri Mohan Lal Saksena: Is he detained in the British zone of occupation in Germany?

The Honourable Sir John Thorne: I cannot answer that without notice.

Shri Mohan Lal Saksena: Will he make inquiries and let us know?

The Honourable Sir John Thorne: Yes.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: Has Government any definite information that he has surrendered his Indian nationality?

The Honourable Sir John Thorne: I am not sure of that.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: In view of the fact that they are sure of one thing, that he happens to be an Indian, will Government try to use their good offices with the authorities who are now in charge of that part of Germany where he is kept in detention, and try and effect his release?

The Honourable Sir John Thorne: I cannot undertake to do that. I am not certain for what reason he was taken into custody or what is contemplated by the authorities who are in charge of him.

Shri Sarat Chandra Bose: Will the Honourable Home Member please enquire whether Sardar Ajit Singh has asked for repatriation to India?

The Honourable Sir John Thorne: Yes; I will do that, if the Honourable Member so desires.

Diwan Chaman Lall: Is the Honourable Member aware that Sardar Ajit Singh is held in the greatest veneration and respect by the people of India?

The Honourable Sir John Thorne: I think they must have pretty long memories if they hold him in veneration and respect.

Diwan Chaman Lall: It is because their memories are long that they hold him in veneration and respect.

WHEREABOUTS OF SARDAR HARDAYAL SINGH OF 1/15 PUNJAB REGIMENT

1663. ***Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal:** (a) Will the War Secretary be pleased to state the whereabouts of Quarter Master Havildar Sardar Hardayal Singh of the 1/15, Punjab Regiment?

(b) When and where was he last heard of, and what happened to him thereafter?

Mr. P. Mason: (a) and (b). Havildar Sardar Hardayal Singh is at present at the Holding and Enquiry Centre in Multan where his case is being investigated.

I felt myself, Sir, though perhaps I may be wrong that this information is not of sufficient general interest to warrant taking up the time of the House, and accordingly gave this information privately to the Honourable Member ten days ago in order that he might consider withdrawing the question.

Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal: Since the Honourable Member has referred to it, I admit that he has given me the information—it was really his opinion—and left the matter there, leaving me free to take it up on the floor of the House. Will the War Secretary please state when this gentleman was taken into custody?

Mr. P. Mason: I am afraid I do not know that; I should require notice.

Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal: Will he kindly say for how long he has been in detention?

Mr. P. Mason: I am afraid I shall require notice.

Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal: Will he please state what are the charges against him?

Mr. P. Mason: There are no charges against him.

Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal: Will the Honourable Member state whether there was any offence for which steps have been taken towards his interrogation?

Mr. P. Mason: Yes; he is being interrogated.

Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal: Will he be pleased to state who are the persons who are carrying on this work of interrogation actually?

Mr. P. Mason: No; I do not think I could make such a statement; certainly not.

Shri Sarat Chandra Bose: Will the Honourable the War Secretary state why interrogation is going on, when, according to him there are no charges against the gentleman?

Mr. P. Mason: In order to see whether a charge should be framed.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: For how long will the interrogation continue?

Mr. P. Mason: Until we know the whole evidence in the matter and know the position.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: Are we to understand that this interrogation is to run into a campaign of vendetta and for a number of months?

Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal: Will the War Secretary be pleased to state whether his Department has sent a reminder to the interrogating authority asking for expedition in the investigation?

Mr. P. Mason: I have repeatedly explained that in all these matters we are hoping to finish these interrogations by the end of this month. There may be a few left over to go on into the next month, but not very many.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: And we have repeatedly said that we are getting tired of these repeated promises which do not fructify.

Mr. P. K. Salve: May I ask the War Secretary if the interrogation is directed towards getting a confession from the person concerned?

Mr. P. Mason: No.

Diwan Chaman Lal: What are the methods being employed for interrogation?

Mr. P. Mason: I do not think that really arises out of this question.

Mr. President: It does not arise and the question has been put so many times.

DISCRIMINATORY TREATMENT AGAINST INDIANS IN R. I. A. F.

1664. ***Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal:** Will the War Secretary be pleased to state:

(a) the proportion of Indian, Anglo-Indian and non-Indian strength of the R.I.A.F. in the technical and non-technical Departments;

(b) the comparative amenities for British and Indian members of the R.I.A.F. in the matter of food, cloth, pay and prospects, and the reasons for the disparity, and whether Government have taken up the policy of removal of disparity; if so, in what directions;

(c) whether Indians of the R.I.A.F. who asked for release, were not given release, but were subsequently discharged; if so, whether this was done with a view to depriving them of any lien upon future employment by virtue of their right as ex-servicemen;

(d) whether any Britisher has been so discharged; and if it is a fact that Britishers are elevated to superior ranks on the eve of demobilisation with a view to facilitating their being employed otherwise and elsewhere;

(e) whether Government are aware that Indians represented and protested against these and other discriminatory treatments and that a large number of them went on sympathetic strike at the time of the strike of naval ratings in Bombay and Karachi; whether Government are aware that the men were asked to put their grievances and case formally through their representatives and that when this was done through, one Prabhu and one Thakkar, these two boys, who were earlier refused release, were summarily discharged; and

(f) whether Government have issued instructions for getting rid of *undesirables and malcontents* (by a secret circular) by giving discharge orders?

Mr. P. Mason: (a) The Royal Indian Air Force is wholly an Indian Service recruited on an All-India basis without distinction of class or creed. Statistics, therefore, are not maintained on a communal basis.

(b) British personnel are not eligible for service in the Royal Indian Air Force.

(c) There may be isolated cases in which airmen who had asked for, but had not been granted release, were subsequently discharged under I. A. F. Act Rules, Chapter II, para. 13, Clause (vii)—“Services being no longer required”. Discharge under this heading does not entail forfeiture of release benefits, nor can it in any way deprive an airmen of any benefits with regard to future employment.

(d) R. A. F. discharges are the responsibility of H. M. G. It is not a fact that any class of persons are elevated to superior ranks on the eve of demobilisation with a view to getting them employed elsewhere.

(e) Indian airmen have, as stated, made representations and have refused duty. Allegations of discriminatory treatment were among their grievances. The airmen named by the Honourable Member were discharged. There is, however, no record of their having previously applied for release.

(f) No, Sir.

Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal: Will the War Secretary state whether he is prepared to give opportunities to these two persons named for proving that they were victimised?

Mr. P. Mason: I take it he means the persons named in part (e). They have their normal channel if they wish to prove anything; and if they wish to make any representation they can do so.

REMOVAL OF RESTRICTIONS ON AND RESTORATION OF ESTATE OF RAJA MAHENDRA PRATAP SINGH.

1665. ***Shri Mohan Lal Saksena:** (a) Will the Honourable the Home Member be pleased to state if it is a fact that Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh was declared a fugitive in 1924 by the then Viceroy and Governor General in Council?

(b) Will any action be taken against Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh if he comes to India now?

(c) Will he give details of his estates and properties attached under the Bengal States Prisoners Regulations, 1918?

(d) Will he also give details of the estates and properties of Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh forfeited to His Majesty's Government under the Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh Estates Act, 1923?

(e) If Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh returns to India, will Government consider the question of restoration of his estates and properties to him?

(f) Is it a fact that relations of Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh are forbidden to have anything to do with him under a Sanad, dated the 7th September, 1924, issued under the signature of Lord Reading?

(g) If Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh returns to India, will Government consider the question of relaxing orders so that his relations can entertain him?

The Honourable Sir John Thorne: (a) He was described as a fugitive from justice in the Mahendra Pratap Singh Estates Act, No. XXIV of 1923.

(b), (e) and (g). These questions will be considered if and when they arise.

(c) and (d). These details have been published in the *Gazette of India* of 8th July 1916, 25th November 1916 and 26th January 1918, and in the Schedule to the Mahendra Pratap Singh Estates Act.

(f) His son was granted the forfeited estates under a Sanad which contains a condition “that neither he nor his heirs shall render support to the said Mahendra Pratap Singh either pecuniarily or otherwise in any manner whatsoever”.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: Sir, I am authorised to ask these questions of Sir Vijaya Ananda—Nos. 1666 and 1667.

Mr. President: I thought the authority was only for those of Shri Sri Prakasa.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: Shri Sri Prakasa as well as Sir Vijaya Ananda.

Mr. President: They will be taken up at the end,** if there is time.

BAN ON MALAYAN INDIAN LEADER, MR. N. RAGHAVAN'S VISIT TO INDIA

†1666. ***Maharajkumar Dr. Sir Vijaya Ananda:** (a) Will the Honourable the Home Member be pleased to state if it is a fact that Mr. N. Raghavan, the Malayan Indian leader, has not been allowed to visit India?

(b) Is the ban imposed by the British Military Administration in Malaya or the Indian Government, itself?

(c) If imposed by the latter, will the Honourable Member state the reasons for such imposition?

The Honourable Sir John Thorne: The Government of India have informed the local authorities that they have no objection to Mr. Raghavan's return to India.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.

ENQUIRY INTO EXPLOSION AT CHUNAR FORT

†1667. ***Maharajkumar Dr. Sir Vijaya Ananda:** Will the War Secretary be pleased to state whether in regard to the Explosion which occurred at the Chunar Fort on the 10th March, 1946, in which four civilians and one Indian soldier died, Government propose to order a non-official inquiry or at least appoint members of this House to the Military Court of Inquiry?

Mr. P. Mason: It is not within my powers, or those of anyone else, to appoint Members of this House to a Military Court of Enquiry. Under the law, such a court must consist of soldiers, not of politicians or bureaucrats, such as the Honourable Member or myself. The findings of the Military Court of Enquiry which was assembled to report on the incident are now awaiting confirmation. I can see no grounds for holding a non-official enquiry.

REST AND RECREATION ALLOWANCE TO PROVINCIAL AND CENTRAL GOVERNMENT SERVANTS

1668. ***Sri R. Venkatasubba Reddiar:** (a) Will the Honourable the Home Member please state if it is a fact that the Government of India have granted the concession of rest and recreation allowance to their employees?

(b) Is it a fact that this allowance is admissible only to the Government servant and his wife, and not to their children?

(c) Is it a fact that certain Local Government, *e.g.*, United Provinces have extended this concession to the children of their employees subject to a maximum limit of two full fares for children?

(d) Do the Government of India propose to see that a uniform policy is adopted throughout the country in the matter of concessions and make an employee eligible to the full extent of the concession either when he travels with his wife or with his children alone or with the whole family together, subject to the monetary limit of each category?

The Honourable Sir John Thorne: (a) to (c). Yes.

(d) The Provincial Governments and Central Government are competent to make rules in the matter of travelling allowance concessions for their employees during leave for rest and recreation. The Government of India do not consider that it is necessary or possible to ensure absolute uniformity in this respect.

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

**These questions and answers have, however, been printed serially in these Debates.—
Ed. of D.

**REPRESENTATION OF MUSLIMS VIS-A-VIS CLASSIFICATION OF GOVERNMENT SER-
VANTS FOR RETENTION IN SERVICE**

†1669. ***Mr. Ahmed E. H. Jaffer:** (a) Will the Honourable the Home Member please state what criterion has been laid down for classifying the temporary staff of the offices of the Central Government into three categories for purposes of retention in Government services, and what safeguards have been provided to guard against indiscriminate classification of persons in category "C"?

(b) Have instructions been issued that all Government offices will try to make up the shortage of Muslims and that the orders regarding classification into three categories will not be made an excuse for turning out all Muslims by placing them in category "C"?

(c) In view of the shortage of Muslims, do Government propose to issue instructions that no Muslim will be discharged on any pretext till the shortage of Muslims is made up?

The Honourable Sir John Thorne: (a), (b) and (c). I invite attention to the reply I gave to question No. 783, on the 8th March, 1946. I cannot undertake that the Government will go beyond the instructions to which I have referred and which, I trust, will not be evaded in the manner suggested by the Honourable Member.

MUSLIMS IN INDIAN AUDIT DEPARTMENT

†1670. ***Mr. Ahmed E. H. Jaffer:** (a) Will the Honourable the Finance Member please state the total number of Gazetted Officers and Accountants employed in the Indian Audit Department and the number of Muslims holding these posts?

(b) Is there a provision in the rules that on account of direct recruitment of men in the Accountant's cadre, minority communities should be given at least one third of the posts? If so, how many Muslims, who have qualified in the Departmental Examination for Accountants, have been permanently promoted as Accountants?

(c) Is it a fact that out of the only two Muslim Assistant Accounts Officers under the control of the Accountant-General, Posts and Telegraphs, one has been reverted and replaced by a non-Muslim?

(d) Is it a fact that the enquiry instituted against the Muslim Assistant Accounts Officer was conducted by non-Muslim officers throughout and that the Muslim officer was not given a copy of the report of the Enquiring Officer even on demand?

Mr. B. O. A. Cook: (a) and (b). The Honourable Member's attention is invited to the replies given to his starred question No. 784, on the 8th March, 1946.

(c) and (d). The Honourable Member may kindly refer to the replies given to his starred question No. 785, on the 8th March, 1946.

SECRET INTERCEPTION OF PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE UNDER POST OFFICE ACT

†1671. ***Shri Sri Prakash:** Will the Honourable the Home Member refer to his replies to starred questions Nos. 628 and 629 asked on March 4, 1946, and state:

(a) what public emergency arose and when, because of which secret interception of private correspondence is exercised at the present day under Section 26 of the Post Office Act of 1898;

(b) if it is a fact that the Central Government have granted any certificate regarding the existence of public emergency as required in Sub-Section 2 of Section 26 of the Post Office Act;

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

(c) if it is a fact that secret interception has been going on the correspondence of some individuals continuously for twenty years or more; if so, whether Government issue orders in writing from time to time continuing this process; and

(d) if it is a fact that Government issue orders for the interception of all articles addressed to any individual or specify particular articles or class of articles that can be so intercepted?

The Honourable Sir John Thorne: (a) Powers of secret interception are exercised not only on the occurrence of a public emergency but also in the interests of public safety or tranquillity.

(b) No. But the question does not quite accurately reproduce the sense of the sub-section.

(c) and (d). These are matters of detail which depend on the procedure followed in the various Provinces.

ENQUIRIES *re* STATUS, INFLUENCE, MEANS OF LIVELIHOOD, ETC., OF MEMBERS OF CENTRAL ASSEMBLY

†1672. ***Shri Sri Prakasa:** Will the Honourable the Home Member be pleased† to state:

(a) if enquiries are made regarding the status, influence, means of livelihood, etc., of every member of the Central Assembly;

(b) if these enquiries are made through subordinate Revenue and Police Officers;

(c) if Government have received information regarding members of the present Assembly; and

(d) if they propose to place on the table of the House the information as received about all the members of the present Central Assembly?

The Honourable Sir John Thorne: (a) to (d). I understand that enquiries have been made. The results have not yet reached Government; and I have stopped the enquiries.

PROFITS TO GOVERNMENT DUE TO SOME HIGH DENOMINATION NOTES HAVING NOT BEEN TENDERED FOR EXCHANGE

†1673. ***Shri Sri Prakasa:** Will the Honourable the Finance Member please refer to his replies to starred questions Nos. 625 and 627 asked on March 4, 1946 and state:

(a) what further amounts have been claimed after that date from the Reserve Bank by members of the public in exchange for the High Denomination Notes;

(b) the amount of money that has been saved to Government by High Denomination Notes not having been presented for cashing; and

(c) if Government are now in a position to assess the results of the operation of the Demonetization Ordinance?

Mr. B. C. A. Cook: (a) Rs. 2.98 crores between the 9th February and the 22nd March, 1946.

(b) The Governor and the Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank have been authorised to permit exchanges of high denomination notes up to the 26th April, 1946. Thereafter the Central Government can still permit exchange of high denomination notes in hard and genuine cases. It is therefore too early to estimate what amount of high denomination notes will not be tendered for exchange.

(c) Not yet Sir. The examination of the declarations is still in progress.

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

BROADCASTS IN MALAYALAM FROM STATIONS IN MADRAS PRESIDENCY

1674. *Sri A. K. Menon: (a) Will the Honourable Member for Information and Arts be pleased to state how many Broadcasting Stations there are in the Madras Presidency? Where are they located?

(b) What are the languages in which broadcasting is being done in the medium wave transmissions of those Broadcasting Stations?

(c) Is Malayalam language one of them? If not, why is it omitted?

The Honourable Sir Akbar Hydari: (a) Two. Madras and Trichinopoly.

(b) *Madras*.—English, Tamil and Telugu.

Trichinopoly.—English and Tamil.

(c) No. The medium wave transmitters at Trichinopoly and Madras cannot serve the Malayalam speaking districts.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: Will any steps be taken either to provide a separate broadcasting station for Malayalam speaking people or to provide the necessary equipment to the Madras or Trichy stations in order that broadcasting in Malayalam may be made?

The Honourable Sir Akbar Hydari: In the basic plan for the development of broadcasting in India, provision has been made for two urban centres at Trivandrum and Calicut and one rural centre at Cochin for the broadcasting of Malayalam programmes.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: Will Government take early steps to provide a broadcasting station for the Telugu speaking peoples; preferably at Bezwada?

The Honourable Sir Akbar Hydari: I will consider that.

Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar: May I know if the two stations proposed to be started for the West coast are only a post-war plan or is the Honourable Member making any immediate arrangement?

The Honourable Sir Akbar Hydari: It is in the post-war plan. We are now in the post-war period.

Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar: If it is post-war, has the Honourable Member considered the desirability of removing some broadcasting plants from here which are catering to the Middle East and Far East and taking them to the southern part of India?

The Honourable Sir Akbar Hydari: You asked me the same question some time ago. I said I would consider the matter. I am awaiting a report from the technical people.

Shrimati Ammu Swaminadhan: Considering that the Malayalam programme is so short, will not the Honourable Member hurry up the scheme for having a station for Malabar before long and not wait for the post-war plans to develop?

The Honourable Sir Akbar Hydari: I will certainly consider it.

Babu Ram Narayan Singh: How many new broadcasting stations are under construction?

The Honourable Sir Akbar Hydari: I will supply the information to the Honourable Member. I do not carry it in my head.

Babu Ram Narayan Singh: What is the position about Patna?

The Honourable Sir Akbar Hydari: I explained the position about Patna in answer to your question some weeks ago.

Mr. President: That does not arise. Next question.

BROADCASTS IN MALAYALAM FROM STATIONS IN MADRAS PRESIDENCY

1675. *Sri A. K. Menon: (a) Will the Honourable Member for Information and Arts be pleased to state the time taken daily by the short wave broadcasts in the Radio stations of the Madras Presidency?

(b) What is the allocation of languages—English, Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam, in these short wave broadcasts?

(c) What is the total population of the Madras Presidency along with those of the States of Travancore and Cochin? What is the proportion of the Malayalam speaking population in it?

(d) Do Government propose to give the Malayalam language the importance that it deserves considering the vastness of the population that speaks that language in South India?

The Honourable Sir Akbar Hydari: (a) The Shortwave transmitter at Madras broadcasts ten hours daily on week days and eleven hours on Sundays. There is no shortwave transmitter at Trichinopoly.

(b) Excluding music items and including news, the approximate comparative durations per day are: Telugu—1 hour 55 minutes, English—58 minutes, Tamil—27 minutes, Malayalam—13 minutes.

(c) The population of Madras is 5,68,34,703 and the Malayalam population is roughly one-sixth of that. (These figures are taken from the census of India 1941).

(d) Yes. A plan for the development of Broadcasting in India is under consideration, which provides for Stations in the Malayalam speaking areas.

Mr. Manu Subedar: Will the Honourable Member reduce the time given to the English language during the intervening period before he can establish a Malayalam centre, and give more time to the Malayalam language?

The Honourable Sir Akbar Hydari: The Madrasis are English speaking generally.

Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar: We have got our own indigenous languages. We have not become Anglicized. May I ask the Honourable Member what is the programme that is being broadcast during this period of 13 minutes?

The Honourable Sir Akbar Hydari: Music and news.

Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar: In view of the fact that there is a separate station at Trichinopoly for Tamil and Madras caters for Telugu and Malayalam, will the Honourable Member consider the desirability of increasing the time devoted to the Malayalam language?

The Honourable Sir Akbar Hydari: I will consider that but I may get a protest from the Tamil and Telugu speaking people.

NEWS BROADCASTS IN MALAYALAM FROM A. I. R., DELHI

1676. ***Sri A. K. Menon:** (a) Will the Honourable Member for Information and Arts be pleased to state the South Indian languages in which news is being broadcast by the All-India Radio from Delhi?

(b) Is the Malayalam language one of them? If not, why is that language neglected?

The Honourable Sir Akbar Hydari: (a) Tamil and Telugu.

(b) No. With the present transmitting facilities, it has not been possible to add to the list of languages in which news is broadcast.

BROADCASTS IN MALAYALAM FOR INDIANS OVERSEAS

1677. ***Sri A. K. Menon:** (a) Will the Honourable Member for Information and Arts, be pleased to state the languages in which broadcasts are being done by the All-India Radio for Indians overseas?

(b) Is the Malayalam language one of them?

(c) If not, why not? In view of the fact that a large number of the population. If the post is sanctioned it will carry emoluments equivalent to those of rectify the omission?

The Honourable Sir Akbar Hydari: (a) English, Tamil, Hindustani, and Gujerati.

(b) No.

(c) *First part.*—All-India Radio broadcasts are at present confined only to the four languages which are most widely spoken by the Indians resident in South East Asia and South and East Africa.

Second part.—The plans for external broadcasts are at present under consideration. Due regard will be paid to the claims of Malayalam before a final decision is taken.

PUNJAB POLICE RULES FOLLOWED BY DELHI POLICE.

1678. ***Babu Ram Narayan Singh:** (a) Will the Honourable the Home Member please state if it is a fact that the Delhi Police and the Punjab Police have a joint cadre and that the former follows the rules, regulations, traditions, pay and allowances of the latter?

(b) Do Government follow the Punjab Police in all these respects so far as the entire office staff of the Delhi is concerned? If not, where and on what basis or principle does there exist differentiation, and why has it been allowed by the Central Government to stand?

(c) Is it a fact that a post of Deputy Superintendent of Police is being created in the office of the Delhi Police? If so, what would be the monthly total emoluments of this post?

The Honourable Sir John Thorne: (a) The Delhi Police and the Punjab Police have separate cadres for Lower Subordinates and a joint cadre for Upper Subordinates and Gazetted Officers. The Punjab Police Rules govern both the Delhi and the Punjab Police Forces and normally the Delhi Police follow the Punjab Police rates of pay and allowances.

(b) The same rules govern the Punjab and the Delhi Police office staffs.

(c) A proposal for the creation of a post of Deputy Superintendent of Police as Registrar or Office Superintendent of the Delhi Police is under consideration. If the post is sanctioned it will carry emoluments equivalent to those of the other Deputy Superintendents of Police, *viz.*:

(1) Pay in the scale of pay for Provincial Police Service in the Punjab.

(2) Office allowance—Rs. 75 p. m.,

(3) Local allowance—Rs. 75 p. m.,

(4) Motor Car allowance—Rs. 87-8-0 p.m.

(5) War allowance according to the rates fixed by the Government of India.

Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar: Since the last strike of the Police in Delhi, has any attempt been made to revise their pay and allowances, with a view to avoid a recurrence of similar strikes?

The Honourable Sir John Thorne: We follow the same rates as the Punjab. Speaking without precise information, I think there is a proposal in the Punjab to improve their rates, and if that is done the same rates will be applied in Delhi.

APPOINTMENT OF *MIR MOHALLAS* BY CHIEF COMMISSIONER, DELHI.

1679. ***Sjt. Seth Damodar Swroop:** Will the Honourable the Home Member be pleased to state if it is a fact that the Chief Commissioner of Delhi has recently appointed *Mir Mohallas* in the various *Mohallas* of Delhi? If so what are the functions of these *Mir Mohallas*, and what amount, if any, do Government intend to pay them monthly or yearly as honorarium?

The Honourable Sir John Thorne: Yes. There are two grades *Mir Mohallas*. An inam of Rs. 180 a year is paid to the first grade and an inam of Rs. 150 a year to the second grade. The functions of the *Mr. Mohallas* are in brief to render such assistance to the officials of Government and the municipal

authorities as they may reasonably require and to further all measures undertaken by Government or the municipality for the improvement of the health and welfare of the people in their area.

Shri Mohan Lal Saksena: How are these *Mir Mohallas* appointed?

The Honourable Sir John Thorne: They are appointed, I think, by the Chief Commissioner.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: How are they selected? What is the machinery for selecting *Mir Mohallas*?

The Honourable Sir John Thorne: I must ask for notice.

Shri Mohan Lal Saksena: Is it not a fact that the police informers are appointed sometimes as *Mir Mohallas*?

The Honourable Sir John Thorne: I am not sure what a police informer is.

Sreejot Rohini Kumar Choudhuri: Is the Honourable Member aware that we on this side, have not heard a syllable of his answer?

The Honourable Sir John Thorne: The main trouble is the fans.

Mr. President: If the Chair is permitted to say so, the talks that go on on the left in loud tones also prevent the Chair from catching what the Honourable Members are saying.

Sreejot Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri: In smaller provinces like Assam and Lucknow, microphones have been installed inside the House?

Mr. President: That matter has been brought to my notice and it is under consideration.

Mr. M. Asaf Ali: Will the Honourable Member say why are these *Mir Mohallas* required considering the fact that their functions will be confined to look after the health and other measures initiated by the Government and the municipality? The Government and the municipality have got ample arrangements to look after these matters and why are these *Mir Mohallas* required and on whose recommendations are they employed?

The Honourable Sir John Thorne: This experiment was introduced at the end of 1943 in imitation of the practice which prevails in some of the Cities of the Punjab. It has been sanctioned for three years in the first instance, and we shall be interested to see when these three years lapse whether the experiment is a successful one and whether it is worth continuing.

Mr. M. Asaf Ali: Is the Honourable Member aware that this practice prevailed here before 1857 and it was abandoned soon after 1857. I do not see why it should be revived now. It is a completely reactionary measure.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: How many are employed and how much is spent on them?

The Honourable Sir John Thorne: I think 150 are employed. The amount paid is for the first grade Rs. 180 a year and for the second grade Rs. 150 a year. I am afraid I have not got the total cost here.

Mr. M. Asaf Ali: Will this amount be charged to the revenue of the Province or to the revenue of the municipality? In either case it will be either the municipality or somebody who may be advising the administration of the Province which should sanction it. I do not see the point of appointing these people.

Mr. President: What is the question?

Mr. M. Asaf Ali: Will the Honourable Member bring this fact to the notice of the Chief Commissioner that the feeling here is that these *Mir Mohallas* should not be appointed and that they should be abolished?

The Honourable Sir John Thorne: I am not sure what the feeling of the House is, but these questions and answers will be brought to the notice of the Chief Commissioner.

Mr. Manu Subedar: May I know whether this is a new kind of title? May I know whether the word 'Mir' is the same as 'Amir'—a nobleman?

The Honourable Sir John Thorne: I am afraid I cannot answer that.

MOBILE POLICE FORCE AND WIRELESS SETS IN VILLAGES OF DELHI DISTRICT

1680. *Sjt. Seth Damodar Swroop: Will the Honourable the Home Member, please state if it is a fact that the Chief Commissioner of Delhi has requested for the sanction of the Central Government for keeping mobile police force and wireless sets in the villages of the Delhi District? If so, what amount if any have the Central Government sanctioned for this purpose?

The Honourable Sir John Thorne: No such request has been made by the Chief Commissioner, Delhi, and the Central Government have not sanctioned any amount for this purpose.

BAN ON MONTHLY FLAG SALUTATION IN NEHRU PARK, CONNAUGHT PLACE, NEW DELHI

1681. *Sjt. Seth Damodar Swroop: (a) Will the Honourable the Home Member, please state if it is a fact that before August, 1942, public meetings used to be held at Nehru Park in Connaught Place, New Delhi?

(b) Is it also a fact that a loudspeaker is installed in the Centre of the said Park, that people crowd there every evening to listen to the All-India Radio propaganda broadcasts and that the police band is also played in the said Park every Saturday?

(c) If the answers to (a) and (b) are in the affirmative, what are the reasons for the interference of the Police and the Municipal authorities in the monthly flag salutation ceremony?

The Honourable Sir John Thorne: (a) No exact record is available but questions were raised as to the appropriateness of using the Park as a place for street preaching both in 1938 and in January, 1942. In 1943, the New Delhi Municipal Committee passed a bye-law forbidding the use of the park for meetings without prior permission.

(b) Yes.

(c) Interference is only necessary when the bye-laws have not been complied with.

DESTRUCTION OF PETITIONS BY COMMANDANT 10/6 RAJPUTANA RIFLES

1682. *Babu Ram Narayan Singh: Has the attention of the War Secretary been drawn to letter No. A/13/1/104, dated the 7th-8th May, 1944, of the Commandant, 10/6 Rajputana Rifles, stating "As you are bringing up petitions for cases already decided, all petitions in your hand-writing will be destroyed"?

Mr. P. Mason: Yes, Sir. The letter was addressed to a person who was constantly sending petitions on behalf of others in cases which had already been decided.

Babu Ram Narayan Singh: If applications for reconsideration are to be torn in this way, then what are the chances of appeals coming in?

Mr. President: Order, order. Is the Honourable Member putting any question for eliciting further information?

Babu Ram Narayan Singh: How can a man appeal?

Mr. President: The Honourable Member is arguing. What he is saying is a matter of opinion.

Mr. P. Mason: Appeals are entertained and decided. But in these cases the appeals had been turned down.

GRIEVANCES OF LUCKNOW CANTONMENT BOARD VOTERS

1683. *Shri Mohan Lal Saksena: (a) Will the War Secretary be pleased to state whether he has received a representation from the General Secretary, 'Hindu Sangh', Lucknow Cantonment, dated the 24th March, 1946, regarding the failure of the Cantonment Board, Lucknow, in making timely notification of the "change of the voters qualifying date"? If so, what action has been taken thereon?

(b) Are Government aware that the Cantonment Board failed not only to notify to the public regarding the formalities for qualifying date, but they also did not proclaim to the public about the alteration from June to January, as altered by the Government of India?

(c) Are Government aware that many voters have been consequently deprived of their votes? If so, do Government propose to take necessary action to redress the grievances of the voters?

Mr. P. Mason: (a) Yes. A representation has been received, but as the change of date had been notified in the *Gazette of India* dated 9th June 1945, I do not propose to take any action thereon.

(b) The Cantonment Board did not specifically notify the public regarding the change of date during 1946 but 1st January of each year was notified as the date for the purpose of section 27(1) (a) of the Cantonments Act in the *Gazette of India*, dated the 9th June 1945.

(c) 148 voters are stated to have been disqualified on account of being in arrears of payment of taxes on 1st January 1946. Government do not consider it necessary to take any such action as is suggested. The voters are advised to pay up their arrears for the future in good time. There have been no complaints from other cantonments, in respect of which the method of notification was the same.

Shri Mohan Lal Saksena: What harm will be done to the Government or the Cantonment Board if the disqualification is removed and the order is modified?

Mr. P. Mason: If the order is changed and presumably if these people are allowed to record their votes in spite of having arrears on the notified day, it would encourage other voters not to pay their taxes and it would lead to a general feeling of insecurity in the processes of law.

Shri Mohan Lal Saksena: Is it a fact that it was not publicly notified that this was the last date for paying up the arrears?

Mr. P. Mason: I have already stated that it was published in the *Gazette of India*.

Shri Mohan Lal Saksena: Besides publication in the *Gazette of India*, was it published in the local papers?

Mr. P. Mason: I have said, no.

Shri Mohan Lal Saksena: In view of the fact that this was not published in the local papers, nor was it published by beat of drum, but that it was simply published in the *Gazette of India*, will the Honourable Member consider the advisability of just revising the order this time and warning the public that they should take care in future?

Mr. P. Mason: No, Sir.

Shri Mohan Lal Saksena: Why not, Sir?

Mr. P. Mason: Because as I have already said the same method of notification, which worked perfectly harmoniously in other cases, was followed in this case also and to do what is suggested by the Honourable Member would encourage voters not to pay taxes.

Shri Mohan Lal Saksena: Will the Government direct that in future these notifications should be published in the local newspapers also and not merely in the *Gazette of India*?

Mr. P. Mason: I will consider that.

LEAKAGE OF BUDGET PROPOSAL *re* IMPORT DUTY ON GOLD AND SILVER

1684. *Shri Mohan Lal Saksena: (a) Will the Honourable the Finance Member be pleased to state if he is aware of the news published in several papers that there was a good deal of speculation in bullion at Bombay, few days before the presentation of the Budget?

(b) Is he also aware that it was from the speculation in Bombay that it was known that there was going to be imposed an import duty on gold and silver? If so, did he make enquiries to find out whether there was any justification in the popular belief that there was a leakage about this proposal?

(c) What action, if any, has he taken to put an end to this?

The Honourable Sir Archibald Rowlands: (a) Yes.

(b) and (c). I have read newspaper accounts to this effect, though I have received no positive information to establish the fact that there was a leakage. Nevertheless, in view of the allegation, I am causing a special enquiry to be made. The enquiry is not yet complete.

Shri Mohan Lal Saksena: Is it not a fact that the Honourable Member, Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad himself said that he was in Bombay at the time and he got information of that before the Budget was presented?

The Honourable Sir Archibald Rowlands: I do not remember Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad saying that; but, like every other Honourable Member of the House, he has got to pick up all sorts of rumours while in Bombay.

Mr. Manu Subedar: Has the Honourable Member noticed that in several newspapers in Bombay, in the financial columns, names were mentioned of big operators who conducted their operations to their own tremendous advantage through alleged securing of prior information regarding the Budget?

The Honourable Sir Archibald Rowlands: I have seen reports of some members who are alleged to have made a lot of money; others lost a lot of money. Somebody always loses. Fools are born every minute. Some people make money, others lose money. In point of fact, irregular movements in the Stock Exchange just before the Budget rather suggest that nobody knew what was going to happen, somebody bet in one way, somebody else bet in the other way; but, nevertheless, in view of the allegations, I am causing a special enquiry to be made.

Mr. Manu Subedar: Was the increase of duty on bullion discussed by the Honourable Member with any public man of Bombay or with officials of the Reserve Bank or with any other class through whom leakage might have possibly occurred?

The Honourable Sir Archibald Rowlands: I am not prepared to disclose what happened between the Government of India and the Reserve Bank. The answer to the other two questions is in the negative.

SUPPLY OF *LONDON TIMES* TO OFFICERS OF GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

1685. *Shri Sri Prakasa: Will the Honourable Member for Information and Arts please refer to his reply to starred question No. 1174 asked on March 22, 1946, and state:

(a) if copies of the *London Times* (Daily Air Mail Edition) are being supplied to various Departments and officers of Government on their application or are given to them at the initiative of the Department itself;

(b) if he is assured that the officers who are supplied with copies of the *London Times* actually utilise them and profit by them;

(c) if he is aware that there are many officers who do not want this paper at all; and

(d) if Government are satisfied that the money spent yields fruitful results; if not, whether Government propose to stop any further purchase of the paper at public expense?

The Honourable Sir Akbar Hydari: (a) In a few cases requests were received for the supply of copies of the *Times* but, generally speaking, the supply was arranged at the initiative of Information and Arts Department.

(b) I assume that to be the case.

(c) No.

(d) The creation of a wider outlook among the functionaries of any administration is desirable but I am having the distribution list examined with a view to its curtailment.

CLASSIFICATION OF PERSONS CONVICTED IN CONNECTION WITH DISTURBANCES ON MARCH 7, 1946

1686. *Sjt. Seth Damodar Swroop: (a) Will the Honourable the Home Member be pleased to state as to how many Congress and other political workers have been arrested in Delhi in connection with the disturbances on March 7th?

(b) What kind of treatment is being meted out to them in jail, i.e., whether they have been classified according to their social status or are being treated as ordinary criminals even while they are under trial?

(c) Is it a fact that Messrs. Khurshed Ahmed Kazmi, Sardar Jagat Singh and Shri Deo Dutt Vashisht, who occupy high social status, have not been classified as superior class under trials? If so, why?

The Honourable Sir John Thorne: (a) to (c) The information has been called for and will be placed on the table of the House in due course.

PROCESSES OF EXPLOITATION OF INDIA'S RAW MATERIALS DISCOVERED BY COUNCIL OF INDUSTRIAL AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

1687. *Prof. N. G. Ranga: Will the Honourable Member for Planning and Development be pleased to state:

(a) how many new processes of industrial production and exploitation of India's raw materials have been discovered and prepared by the Council of Industrial and Scientific Research;

(b) how many of them are actually offered to private enterprise and how many are accepted on lease by private enterprise, and what they are;

(c) why technical annual reports or summaries of them are not being published, and whether they will be published hereafter; and

(d) how many new regional laboratories have been opened and where and for what kind of researches?

The Honourable Sir Akbar Hydari: (a) More than 40 processes have been developed by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research for utilising Indian raw materials, chemicals of Indian manufacture, and wastes from Indian Industry.

I lay on the table of the House list of these processes.

(b) The council has offered about 40 processes for commercial exploitation of which thirty two have been leased out to private parties. I lay on the table of the House a list of these processes.

(c) Annual reports on the technical work of the Council are published every year, but due to paper shortage their number has been restricted. The monthly *Journal of Scientific and Industrial Research* also gives an account of the research work done under the auspices of the Council.

A consolidated report on the utilisation of the research work done by the Council till the end of March, 1945, will be published shortly.

(d) So far only the Technological wing of the Central Glass and Ceramics Institute has been opened at Calcutta.

I lay on the table of the house a list of the various laboratories proposed to be opened.

List of processes evolved under the auspices of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research

1. Utilisation of horn and hoof for Air foam manufacture.
2. Utilisation of chemicals of Indian manufacture for water-proofing and fire-proofing of canvas and other fabrics.
3. Utilisation of methyl alcohol for the manufacture of formaldehyde.
4. Utilisation of horn and hoof with shellac for moulding powder.
5. Utilisation of Philwan nuts for stoving and air drying enamels, moulding powders, reclamation of waste rubber for the manufacture of ebonite and other hard and soft rubber goods.
6. Utilisation of rubber latex for the manufacture of lining and seaming compound for canning industry.
7. Utilisation of crude tar for the manufacture of high grade disinfectants.
8. Utilisation of Indian Tallow and hydrogenated oils for the manufacture of stearic and oleic acids.
9. Utilisation of barks of Terminalia Arjuna and Butea frondosa for the manufacture of dyes for wool and cotton.
10. Utilisation of Tamarind seed Testa for the manufacture of dyes for wool.
11. Utilisation of Gracilaria from Travancore and other places in India for the manufacture of Agar, Agar.
12. Utilisation of neem seeds for the manufacture of certain useful products.
13. Utilisation of Indian natural resins for the manufacture of petrol pump diaphragms.
14. Utilisation of waste materials from sugar and starch industry for the manufacture of furfural.
15. Utilisation of Indian vegetable oils for the manufacture of lubricating oils.
16. Utilisation of Indian raw materials for the manufacture of carbon electrodes.
17. Utilisation of Indian manganese ore for dry-cell manufacture.
18. Utilisation of Indian natural resins for treatment of cheap Indian wood for the manufacture of Hobbins for Jute and Textile Mills.
19. Utilisation of molasses for the manufacture of calcium Gluconate.
20. Utilisation of Glands from slaughter houses for the manufacture of Glandular products.
21. Utilisation of sludge from Aluminium industry and Ilmenite ore for the manufacture of Titanium dioxide.
22. Utilisation of phosphatic nodules for the manufacture of fertilisers and phosphorus.
23. Utilisation of Coffee bean and husk for plastics.
24. Utilisation of Indian natural resins for the manufacture of petrol-proof hose pipes and tubes.
25. Utilisation of waste zinc slimes for the manufacture of zinc salts.
26. Utilisation of Jute waste, cotton waste, coir for plastic, boards and cork substitutes, etc.
27. Laminated board with paper and fabric as base.
28. Parchment and Butter paper.
29. Annatto dye for colouring of vegetable ghee, milk, aerated waters, etc.
30. Extraction of sulphur from Baluchistan ore.
31. Manufacture of Barium Chloride.
32. Manufacture of Potassium chlorate.
33. Manufacture of Vacuum pumps.
34. Manufacture of Aluminium welding fluxes from chemicals of Indian manufacture.
35. Manufacture of Radio Resistances, condensers and loudspeakers.
36. Duplicating Ink.
37. Mosquito repellent creams from Indian materials.
38. Welding electrodes from Indian steel coated with flux from chemicals of Indian manufacture.

39. Water-proofing compound for cement mortars from chemicals of Indian manufacture.
40. Hydraulic brake fluid.
41. Metal polish from chemicals and other raw materials of Indian origin.
42. Sintered glass.
43. Purification of China clay to render it suitable for use in rubber industry.
44. Shark liver oil.
45. High tension ignition cable testing device for field use.
46. Patching cement for repairing rubber and synthetic rubber tanks.
47. Slushing varnishes for metal tanks for petrol storage, and for rubber, synthetic rubber, and laminated tanks for carrying petrol in aircraft.
48. Smoke candles and distress signals for use in land and aerial operations.
49. Substitute hairlock.
50. Collapsible tubes.
51. Reclamation and use of perspex.
52. Improving hot food containers.
53. Antigas cloth.
54. Luminous paints and pigments.
55. Substitute for glass.
56. Silver and glossy transparent paper.
57. Solid fuel.
58. Oil silks.
59. Waterproof paint for indianite roofing slabs.
60. Atoxyl and carbarzone.
61. Benzidine.
62. Para-amine phenol.
63. Radio resistances.
64. Drawn laminated mouldings.
65. "Bemax" like products.
66. Yeast extract.
67. Photo-sensitising dyestuffs.
68. Photographic plates and paper.
69. Water detecting composition.
70. Treatment of bamboo reeds for use handlooms.
71. Urea.
72. Nitrobenzene, aniline and methylaniline.
73. Pyrethrum emulsifier.

List of processes which have so far been leased out to private parties.

1. Manufacture of Air Foam solution.
2. Manufacture of Barium chloride.
3. Manufacture of Bhilawan stoving Enamel.
4. Manufacture of Bhilawan Air Drying Varnishes.
5. Manufacture of Glass substitute.
6. Manufacture of Laminated Boards from paper.
7. Manufacture of Laminated Boards from jute and fabrics.
8. Manufacture of Luminous Paints and Pigment.
9. Manufacture of Oil Silks.
10. Manufacture of Potassium chlorate.
11. Manufacture of Plastic Collapsible Tubes.
12. Manufacture of Silver paper and glossy transparent paper.
13. Manufacture of Carbon Electrodes for Dry Cells.
14. Manufacture of Carbon and Graphite Electrodes for Chemical and Metallurgical Industry.
15. Manufacture of Stearic and Oleic Acids.
16. Manufacture of Cork Substitutes.

- Treatment of Manganèse Ores for use in Dry Cell Manufacture.
 Manufacture of Petrol Pump Diaphragms.
 Manufacture of Moulding Powders from horn and hoof with Indian natural resin.
 Manufacture of Vacuum Pumps.
 Purification of China Clay.
 Manufacture of Dye Extracts and Dyed Shades on wool and Cotton from the barks of terminalia arjuna and butea frondosa.
 Manufacture of Dye Extracts and Dyed Shades on wool from tamarind seed testa.
 Manufacture of Annato Dye Extracts.
 Manufacture of Atoxyle and Carbarsonc.
 Manufacture of Jettol Type of Disinfectants.
 Improvement of Jute Mill Bobbins by resin impregnation.
 Extraction of Potash salts from molasses.
 Manufacture of Calcium Gluconate.
 Manufacture of Tin Lining Compound.
 Waterproofing of Indiarite Roofing Slabs.
 Manufacture of Ebonite substitutes and other hard and soft rubber goods from rubber waste.

List showing details about the various proposed laboratories

Laboratory	Location	Function:
1. National Physical Laboratory	Delhi	<p>The work of this laboratory will cover the following :—</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Weights and Measures. 2. Applied Mechanic and Materials. 3. Heat and Power. 4. Optics. 5. Electricity. 6. Electronics and Sound. 7. Building and Housing Res : 8. Hydraulics Research. 9. Analytical Chem:stry.
2. National Chemical Laboratory.	Poona	<p>This Laboratory will cover the following branches of science :—</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inorganic Chemistry including Analytical Chemistry. 2. Physical Chem:stry including Electro-Chem:stry. 3. Chem:stry of high Polymers. 4. Organic Chem:stry. 5. Biochemistry including Biological Evaluation. 6. Chem:cal Engineering. 7. Survey and Intelligence.

Laboratory	Location	Functions
3. National Metallurgical Laboratory.	Jamshedpur	This laboratory will cover all aspects of metallurgical research both fundamental and applied and will also carry out research on Ores, Minerals and Refractories.
4. Central Glass and Ceramic Research Institute.	Calcutta .	This Institute will carry out research on the improvement of the existing technique of manufacture of glass and ceramic articles and on the commencement of new processes.
5. Fuel Research Station	Dhanbad .	This Laboratory will chiefly deal with :— <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chemical and Physical survey of Indian coals. 2. Processing and preparing coal with special reference to metallurgical coke. 3. Low temperature carbonization of coal. 4. Other day to day problems confronting the industry.
6. Road Research Institute	Delhi .	This Institute will tackle the problems of highway engineering in India with a view to introduce the proper use of materials and standards of modern road engineering.
*7. Building Research Station . . .	Roorkee .	In collaboration with the Thompson College of Engineering.
*8. Institute of Leather Technology.	Madras .	In collaboration with the University of Madras.
*9. Fundamental Research	Bombay .	In collaboration with the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research.
*10. Dyestuffs Technology	Bombay .	In collaboration with the Bombay University.
11. *Internal Combustion Engines.	Bangalore.	In collaboration with the Indian Institute of Science.

* Substantial grants are made to these bodies by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research.

JALAHALLI MILITARY HOSPITAL NEAR BANGALORE

1688. *Prof. N. G. Ranga: Will the War Secretary be pleased to state:

- (a) what use is being made of the Jalahalli Military Hospital near Bangalore with a capacity for ten thousand beds;
- (b) the cost of its maintenance;
- (c) the number of superior and junior establishment (doctors, nurses, etc.) employed in the Indian section thereof; and
- (d) whether it is a fact that it is not being used even up to one tenth of its capacity?

Mr. P. Mason: (a) The Military hospitals situated in the hospital town Jalahalli are being gused for psychiatric cases, long duration cases, and those cases requiring specialist treatment from ALFSEA and India. The present

authorised bed strength is 5,450 and not 10,000 as stated by the Honourable Member.

(b) The approximate estimated cost of maintenance (establishment, equipment and buildings) is about 68 lakhs of Rupees per annum.

(c) The Superior establishment (doctors, nurses, etc.) number 381 and the junior establishment 1,903.

(d) No, Sir. Out of the 5,450 authorised beds an average 3,351 were occupied by patients during the month of March 1946.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

CLASSIFICATION OF ACCREDITED PRESS CORRESPONDENTS

186. Babu Ram Narayan Singh: Will the Honourable Member for Information and Arts please refer to the reply to starred question No. 212 asked on the 12th February, 1946, regarding class distinctions amongst the accredited correspondents and state the date from which this distinction has been abolished? And if not yet abolished, what are the reasons therefor, and who are the members of the Advisory Committee?

The Honourable Sir Akbar Hydari: The A and B distinctions between accredited correspondents have been abolished with effect from 15th March, 1946.

CLASSIFICATION OF ACCREDITED PRESS CORRESPONDENTS

187. Babu Ram Narayan Singh: Has the attention of the Honourable Member for Information and Arts been drawn to Resolution No. 8 passed by the All-India Newspaper Editors' Conference held at Allahabad in February, 1946, which reads as under:

"The All-India Newspaper Editors' Conference is of opinion that there should be no discrimination between correspondents accredited to the Government of India and request the Standing Committee to take necessary steps to secure the application of a uniform standard in regard to extension of facilities to correspondents accredited to the Government of India".

and state the action taken thereon; and if no action has been taken, the reasons therefor?

The Honourable Sir Akbar Hydari: The system of "A" and "B" class accreditation was abolished on the 15th March, 1946.

MANUFACTURE OF OPIUM ALKALOIDS

188. Mr. Manu Subedar: (a) Has the Honourable Member for Planning and Development received any representation from the Indian Chemical Manufacturers' Association regarding the manufacture of opium alkaloids in India?

(b) What steps has he taken to encourage such manufacture in India?

(c) Is it a fact that during the war the need for opium alkaloids was felt acute?

(d) Is it also a fact that the available supplies in India were not adequate as no manufacturing capacity was developed?

(e) What are the difficulties on this subject?

The Honourable Sir Akbar Hydari: (a) Yes.

(b) to (e). It has been considered desirable, in the larger interests of the country, to restrict the manufacture of opium alkaloids to as few manufacturing centres as possible. Government have their own alkaloid works at Ghazipur which are capable of meeting the country's entire peace-time requirements. During the war however India was called upon to supply opium alkaloids to the Defence Services and the Eastern Group supply countries as well as to the trade in India and for some time it was not possible to meet in full the demands from the trade. A new alkaloid plant has since been installed at Ghazi-

pur with the object of increasing the output and the new plant is estimated to be capable of producing much more than the total of India's requirements. The supply position at present is quite satisfactory and no difficulty is anticipated in meeting trade demands.

PAUCITY OF SIKHS IN COUNCIL OF SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH

189. Sardar Mangal Singh: Will the Honourable Member for Planning and Development please state:

(a) the number of officers and Assistants, separately, in the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research on (i) technical side, and (ii) administrative side;

(b) the number of Sikhs in the officer's and Assistant's grades on both sides; and

(c) in view of the paucity of Sikhs in the service of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, whether the Government propose to promote and appoint suitably qualified Sikhs in this section?

The Honourable Sir Akbar Hydari: (a) On the technical side: 24 Officers and 23 Assistants; and on the Administrative side: 3 Officers and 11 Assistants.

(b) One officer and one Assistant (technical) and one Assistant (Administration),—3 in all.

(c) Recruitment on the administrative side is made strictly in accordance with the prescribed communal ratio rules, and Sikhs are in fact adequately represented. On the technical side, only men with special technical qualifications for the type of work, which they have to do, can be recruited, and it is not desirable to prescribe any communal formula for such recruitment.

SUBJECTION OF INDIANS TO TORTURE

190. Mr. Manu Subedar: (a) Will the Honourable the Home Member be pleased to state if he has received a representation from a former M.L.A. (Central) Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer, regarding subjection of Indians to torture?

(b) Was this representation of Mr. Ranga Iyer based on his own personal experience?

(c) Have Government denied subjection of Indians to torture in their book "India in 1925-26" (pages 193 and 194)?

(d) Are Government aware that Mr. Ranga Iyer has informed the Home Secretary in his letter, dated the 10th March, 1946, from his own experience of subjection to torture, that torture still continues in India?

(e) Do Government propose to put an end to this torture? If so, when?

The Honourable Sir John Thorne: (a) to (e). A number of representations have been received. There are no grounds whatever for Mr Ranga Iyer's suspicions and apprehensions.

SHORT NOTICE QUESTION AND ANSWER

DELETION OF SECTIONS OF GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ACT *re* COMMERCIAL SAFEGUARDS

Mr. Manu Subedar: (a) Will the Honourable the Planning and Development Member inform this House what progress has been made for the deletion of sections 111 to 121 of the Government of India Act 1955 popularly known as the Commercial Safeguards, since the passing of the Assembly resolution on this subject last year?

(b) In view of the limitation which these sections put on Legislative authority of this House as well as all Provincial legislatures and thus (in the words of Sir Ardeshir Dalal) 'hinder planning and development' what further steps do Government of India propose to take to secure their deletion?

The Honourable Sir Akbar Hydari: (a) and (b). Sir Ardeshir Dalal in pursuance of the undertaking he gave to this House did take up the matter.

12 NOON

But last year while in London Sir Ardeshir was advised that in view of the imminence of the constitutional discussions he should let matters stand for the present. These discussions are now taking place. If, as we all must hope, there is a settlement, the question raised by my Honourable friend which is part of the bigger issue will also be settled along with it.

Mr. Manu Subedar: If a decision is reached, will my Honourable friend take an opportunity of immediately informing the provincial Governments and the public who are very much concerned about this?

The Honourable Sir Akbar Hydari: My Honourable friend will know the decision just as soon as I shall.

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar (Leader of the House): Sir, arising out of the question and answer just given, may I ask a question of the Leader of the Opposition? I understood that he wanted a day for a debate on the clauses relating to these commercial safeguards. But in view of the answer that has now been given and in view of the fact that Government are very much pressed for time. I should like to know whether the Leader of the Opposition is still of the opinion that any time be spared for the purpose.

Shri Sarat Chandra Bose (Calcutta Non-Muhammadan Urban): Sir, I have had an opportunity of talking over this matter with the Leader of the House and the Honourable Member for Planning and Development. It is true that we were pressing for a full discussion of this subject; but as a result of the conversations I have had I have ascertained that it is not possible for Government to give anything more than half a day. That, I am afraid, will not be sufficient. I have also considered the answers just now given by the Planning Member and I shall say that, in the hope that the unanimous verdict which the House gave last year will be respected and that the constitutional discussions will result in the removal of the offending sections of the Government of India Act and also in the hope that similar sections will not disfigure the statute-book of the future. I shall not press for a day during the current Session. If it becomes necessary to raise the question again next Session, I shall approach you, Sir, and make my suggestions to the House, including of course, the Government benches.

Mr. President: So for the present, at any rate, it is clear that no day need be allotted.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT

STARVATION DEATHS IN THE STREETS OF CALCUTTA

Mr. President: We will now take up the adjournment motion of which the admissibility was being discussed yesterday. I should like to know what the Leader of the House has to say on it.

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar (Leader of the House): I said that we will collect whatever further information can be collected and my colleague Mr. Sen will give that information now.

Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal (Presidency Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I think it would be better to have a discussion in the proper way, because he will give his information and we will also give our information, and if possible guidance, to Government in the matter, as to how to approach this question. It is a serious thing; it has started in one place and may continue in other places also. Therefore I suggest that it should be taken up for discussion. As you made it clear, it is not a motion of censure but of discussion and questions of party or other things do not arise. Therefore a full debate is necessary, and I hope the Leader of the House will agree to have the matter taken up at 4 P.M.

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: After my colleague has given the information the House will be in a better position to

know whether the matter requires further consideration at this stage. As I said yesterday, I would very much like to avoid a general discussion on the food position or on the constitutional responsibilities. That would certainly not be a matter for urgent consideration at this stage on an adjournment motion. It would lead to a roving discussion on many matters and it is very difficult to confine it to any particular aspect of it. My Honourable friend has raised the question of a certain number of deaths occurring in the streets of Calcutta. Yesterday my Honourable friend Mr. Sen gave such information as he was in possession of and promised to give further and clearer information on the whole matter. That information has now been obtained and I suggest that the House may hear what Mr. Sen has to say on the actual facts.

Mr. President: I might state at this stage what my reaction to this adjournment motion is. It is neither the general food problem nor the constitutional aspect of the thing, that I have in mind in considering the importance or urgency of this matter. I was looking at it from a different point of view, and that is that, the necessary supply of food for all the parts of the country has been undertaken as their responsibility by the Government of India. It is, in that way, an all-India question. One of the most important aspects of the question would be the question of procurement, particularly from surplus areas, and a question may be raised, as to whether it may not be necessary for the Government of India to have powers whereby they can compel the Provincial Governments to procure food so as to be able to meet the requirements of the deficit areas. Provincial Governments may be inclined to look to their own provincial needs in preference to the needs of other Provinces; and notwithstanding their best desire to help the whole of India, a position may arise where the procurement would not be as efficient as possible. Therefore, I was considering it from the point of view as to whether it would not be necessary or proper for the Government of India to assume some more powers so as to help procurement as also more equitable or effective distribution; and I was thinking whether the discussion could not be restricted only to this aspect. That is my own reaction: I do not know what the opposition wants or what Government feels about it. If there is a discussion, it will be restricted to such issues and will not go to the wider issue of the constitutional position or the general question of food.

I am only discussing the admissibility of the motion and not its merits.

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: Sir, on that issue I should like to say this. The adjournment motion deals with questions relating, at the best, to the availability of surpluses or stocks in Calcutta and in Bengal province. There is no allegation whatever that there are not enough stocks, so far as the province of Bengal is concerned; I do not think it is anybody's case that there are not enough stocks there and that the Government of India should provide further stocks.

Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal: Is it not a fact that the Bengal Government have not disclosed their stocks as yet for the last six or seven months?

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: That is another matter. So far as the Government of India are concerned, I think I am in a position to state that no demand for any further stocks has been received from Bengal province. I am anxious that the motion should be confined to conditions in Bengal; and on the conditions in Bengal no question arises of supplies not being enough.

Prof. N. G. Ranga (Guntur *cum* Nellore: Non-Muhammadan Rural): The point is that the rural areas

Mr. President: Let us hear what Mr. Sen has to say.

Mr. B. R. Sen (Secretary Food Department): As I said yesterday, the question is not that Bengal Government have not the stocks. The Bengal Government have ample stocks to meet the situation for the present and I can quote the latest stock figures. On the 23rd March in Calcutta, the Bengal Government had about 157,000 tons of rice and in the other districts about

[Mr. B. R. Sen]

284,000 tons. So there is no question that Bengal Government is short of rice and that the Government of India must come to their rescue immediately.

Yesterday I promised the House further information on this question and I shall read to the House the contents of a telegram I have received.

So far as can be ascertained, after careful enquiry, no death has occurred in the streets of Calcutta due to starvation or to other causes. Two deaths of starvation reported in the Auxiliary Government Hospitals accommodating destitutes in March and two other deaths by Municipal Health Officer had been enquired into and reported on as follows:

Mr. President: Will he please read a little slowly.

Mr. B. R. Sen: One was a sick beggar woman in the streets who was taken to hospital where she died. The other one was an old woman who collapsed in the streets and was taken to hospital where she died without being able to speak. These are the two cases of death which can be ascribed to starvation. The rest are deaths due to other causes and all these deaths took place in hospitals.

I enquired whether entries in hospitals have gone up in the last one month. The reply is: "Total taken into the Auxiliaries and hospitals in March was 200 as compared with 160 for the two preceding fortnights. Admission in the first week in April was 98". So there has been some increase in the admission into hospitals.

I asked what arrangements they had to accommodate these destitutes on their way to Calcutta. The reply is: "Three relief centres on roads to Calcutta, namely Belur in the Howrah District and Diamond Harbour and Sonapur in the 24 Paraganas district are in full working order and three others being arranged for immediately".

Appearance of destitutes in the city according to the Bengal Government, is partly due to contraction of local charity and 50 of the destitutes actually transferred to destitute camps in March were persons belonging to other provinces who had been in Calcutta for some time.

I asked what arrangements they had made to remove persons who look like suffering from starvation to hospital. The reply is that there are daily patrols to remove destitutes: ambulances remove sick persons when reported. Additional lorries for the purpose of removal of destitutes from the streets of Calcutta are being arranged.

Then the question was what additional arrangement they propose to take in order to find food for people who were drifting into Calcutta. The reply is that food and relief is available for all necessitous persons and isolated deaths ascribed to starvation are those of persons affected by illness or contraction of charity, whose condition was not reported by neighbours and who were not actually found in the streets till too late.

This is all the information I have got. I agree that there should be no deaths from starvation and Government must take all necessary measures to prevent deaths from starvation. We are taking with the Bengal Government all further measures that are necessary in order to prevent such deaths.

Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal: May I have your permission to place certain facts before the House so that Government may apply their mind to it.

So far as the question of the number of deaths is concerned, it is said by the Government communique that two were deaths from starvation and there were other unidentified deaths which must be in the hospitals. Anyone with a little commonsense and understanding will see that this is a sad specimen of the hiding policy of Government, because they say that persons once admitted into hospitals can never be identified. Whereas when they are treated as patients their names and descriptions are given. Are we to understand that the Bengal hospitals are so badly managed?

Mr. President: The Honourable Member is arguing his case. I believe what was stated yesterday was unclaimed bodies; not unidentified bodies.

Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal: In the report there were unidentified bodies.

Mr. President: My impression was that certain bodies in the hospitals were unclaimed as paupers.

Mr. B. R. Sen: I mentioned that these were persons buried as paupers in the ordinary course.

Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal: There are certain things which have to be considered. I very much appreciate his saying that there has been a contraction of local charity. Why has this contraction taken place? For two reasons. In the first place there is an alarmist feeling that there is a general shortage. In the second place the price, so far as the grower is concerned is very low, but so far as the purchaser is concerned, it is very high. On the floor of the House there has been much discussion on this point. I have got series of telegrams in which it is said that the growers are getting nothing and the middlemen making large profits and consumers purchasing at forbidding rates. Therefore this starvation problem cannot be tackled successfully unless Government goes immediately into the question of subsidiary aid. This is not a theoretical question. But the fact is that this problem was tackled by the Government of Great Britain in times of war. Later in the war, rice subsidies were given to the growers and then the minimum price level was fixed for the grower and the maximum price level fixed for the purchaser. It is a very practical proposition and if I may, I would draw the attention of the Leader of the House and the Food Department to the report that has been left by Sir Henry French who considered this question. He also admitted the wisdom of that policy but he thought under the existing circumstances and on the advice of the Food Department, that it was not advisable. That was two years back. Now they should apply themselves to this question.

Then the Honourable Member must take the responsibility of feeding Greater Calcutta as they did before. Previously the Government did not take things seriously. But today the Government will never be excused for unpreparedness. Therefore, they must take up the matter immediately, and there is one thing which ought to be considered by the Government, namely, allaying all the panic. This panic has been aggravated by the food shortage, and for the further thing in Bengal that large shipments have been sent out. I have facts with me. In 1945 and throughout the war, several thousands and thousands of tons of rice were shipped outside India. My good friend, Mr. Sen, may say that these were on replacement basis to Ceylon. I have consulted the chart of the Customs Department. There are different columns. There are foreign countries in one column and the coastal centres in a different column. Those centres which were meant for Colombo and Cochin were shown separately. But there were no columns for "despatched to foreign countries". I believe that the Food Department is being hoodwinked by some other power bigger than the Customs. I will tell you another trick. These shipments are meant for Colombo but they are not all really for Colombo. They first go to Colombo and then they are rebooked for unknown destination. This is the information which I am giving the Honourable Member and I want the Food Department to apply their wisdom into this question. Even in February 1946, large quantities were exported out of Bengal and this was elicited from an answer put by Mr. Banerjee. I would urge upon the Government to make enquiries into the matter and I assure the Government that if they want help with proper information, well we are at their disposal and we will give them the necessary assistance. I assure the Leader of the House and the House that I will not go into the responsibility of the Centre *vis-a-vis* the Provincial Governments. I will deal with the question of Centre's duty in the matter, and I will give suggestions which, if accepted, will relieve the food situation in Bengal. I hope, Sir, I will be able to make out a good case not in a spirit of rancour but with the earnest desire to help in the matter.

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: In spite of all that has been said, we are concerned with an adjournment motion. It is true it is not sought to be a censure motion, but still there are certain rules which have to be applied: that it is a matter of urgency, and it is a matter of specific kind. All that my Honourable friend has been saying for the last several minutes do not indicate that there is anything urgent or specific.

An Honourable Member: People are dying.

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: That is exactly the sort of statement which creates panic which my Honourable friend rightly deprecated. What should not be done in this House is to create an unnecessary panic and I beg of them not to create panic all over the country by suggesting where it is not a fact and where it has been stated by my Honourable friend, Mr. Sen, after careful enquiries, that it is not a fact that there has been any large starvation or any number of deaths due to starvation, that Calcutta is quite amply supplied with stocks of food and deficit areas in Bengal are supplied with stock of food. It has been said over and over again that there has been no export to foreign countries. If Bengal is a surplus area owing to the happy harvest this year, part of it must go to other provinces and I cannot conceive of any other method of transportation from Calcutta Port to other parts of India except by sea. It seems to me, Sir, that on the statement that has been made, there is no case for adjournment motion either by way of censuring the Government or eliciting further information. We have no further information that we can place at the disposal of this House at the present time. Therefore, it seems to me that there is no point in having an adjournment motion on this subject at the present time.

Shri Sarat Chandra Bose (Calcutta: Non-Muhammadan Urban): May I tell the Leader of the House that it is not our desire to create panic in any way, but that we cannot feel reassured merely by the statement that there were only two deaths from starvation. The House will remember that in 1943 several assurances were given, but we know what the result was. Apparently there is a shortage of food in mofussil areas and therefore people are rushing to the cities. There is something wrong with the distribution of food. I do not know, but I heard the Honourable the Food Secretary say that Bengal has ample stocks today. We want more information on that point and we shall then make our suggestions as to how the food is to be distributed in the different parts of the province. That is a matter which the Government of India should take upon themselves. We do not feel, having regard to past experience, that we can have any confidence in the Bengal Government, at any rate, until it is very differently constituted. The Government of India have taken responsibility for the supply and the distribution of food all over the country and I shall tell them that the facts which have been brought to the notice of the House are ominous.

Further, there is the question also of exports and imports. My Honourable friend, Mr. Sanayal, has spoken about exports and further details will be forthcoming from him. I know some of those details myself. As regards imports of rice, we got information through the newspaper *Free Press Journal* yesterday that Indonesia had offered 500,000 tons of rice to India and all that they wanted was that shipping facilities should be arranged for by the Government of India. All these are matters of policy and therefore I suggest that the time of the House will be well spent if it has a general discussion on this subject.

Pandit Govind Malaviya (Allahabad and Jhansi Divisions: Non-Muhammadan Rural): May I also, in support of what our Honourable leader has said, urge upon the Leader of the House the desirability of this debate? In view of the fact that the last time when we had a general discussion on the food problem in the country was long ago, and in view of the fact that it is the most urgent problem facing the country,—may I urge the need and the desirability of facilitating a discussion, in which not only the point as to whether there is sufficient food in Calcutta or not, and whether, in case there is sufficient food there, it is a matter of faulty methods of distribution that should make people still

starve, or, whether it is something else, but besides all that, the desirability of placing before this House, and thereby before the country, all relevant and up-to-date facts and review of the Food situation may be put forward. For instance, the fact that the Government of India, unwittingly probably, have created a panic deserves discussion. I do not suggest that they did it deliberately with a view to create panic but they went about the thing in a way that a great deal of unnecessary panic has been created. They announced again and again that there was almost total failure of crops everywhere. And now, we have Government statements from several provinces that the foodgrain position has improved, and that there are surpluses available

Mr. President: Order, order. I am afraid the Honourable Member is arguing the question on merits. I am chiefly concerned with the admissibility of the motion, and I was, I must confess, feeling divided on the point. The question does appear to me to be of importance and urgency also, if at all preventive measures are to be taken in time. I also see the intense desire to make suggestions. I do not think that anything more by way of information can be had just at present, but when I feel divided I propose to follow the rule of allowing the discussion on merits rather than preventing it. I think the matter should be discussed even if I am committing a mistake. But I must say that I do feel divided.

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: We had half an hour discussion and the very nature of the discussion shows that it is the desire of the House to help the Government in this matter. We are equally anxious to take some of the Honourable Members into confidence and place all the facts before them. But what I wanted to avoid was precipitating a general food debate, and I am in a position to say that the Standing Committee of this subject will be convened before the House adjourns and all the facts will be placed before them.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: This is the last occasion when we can possibly have any discussion at all on food.

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: That is what I am fearing—a general discussion on food.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: before the House adjourns. The other point is that the villagers have no means of publicity. It is there that the pinch comes in. People in villages are not properly informed; they believe that towns are being fed while they are starving and so they rush to the towns.

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: I would rather have the adjournment motion than further discussion at this time.

Mr. President: As I said, I do not know whether under the rules the motion is strictly inadmissible or admissible. I do feel divided, and I had better admit the motion and have the discussion at Four of the Clock.

Sir Cowasjee Jehangir (Nominated Non-Official): Can we have discussion for one and a half hour?

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: Yes, we are very much pressed for time. (Interruption).

Mr. President: Order, order. The House has already taken half an hour. I understand that the South African Delegation is also coming and meeting the Members. So let us have the adjournment motion but discuss it for a shorter time. Keeping the pressure on time in view, let us also talk very much less on legislative business.

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: You may fix the motion for 4-30 P.M., Sir.

Mr. President: Not at 4-30 P.M. I can fix it earlier, if wanted. The Member has a right to carry on up to 6 P.M.

Shri Sarat Chandra Bose: We shall cooperate with the Leader of the House and shorten the debate as much as possible, and I hope we shall not go beyond?

Mr. President: The issue will be the restricted issue and not the wider issue. The cooperation should also be extended for the purpose of shortening the speeches on the legislative programme.

Shri Sarat Chandra Bose: We shall certainly bear your remarks in mind.

Mr. M. A. F. Hirtzel (Bengal: European): Sir, I do not know what exactly is the issue to be discussed. There has been so much discussion already that I am a bit confused and would like to know from you what the issue is.

Mr. President: I would better do it at 4 o'clock.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

REPORTS OF THE LABOUR INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar (Labour Member): Sir, I lay on the table a copy each of the following *Reports of the Labour Investigation Committee:—

- (1.) Report on an Enquiry into Conditions of Labour in the Silk Industry in India.
- (2.) Report on an Enquiry into Conditions of Labour in the Cement Industry in India.
- (3.) Report on Labour Conditions in Carpet Weaving.
- (4.) Report on Labour Conditions in the Iron Ore Industry.
- (5.) Report on Labour Conditions in Coir Mats and Matting Industry.
- (6.) Report on Labour Conditions in the Mica Mining and Mica Manufacturing Industry.
- (7.) Report on an Enquiry into Conditions of Labour in Dockyards in India.
- (8.) Report on Labour Conditions in the Shellac Industry.
- (9.) Report on Rickshaw Pullers.
- (10.) Report on Labour Conditions in the Rice Mills.
- (11.) Report on Labour Conditions in the Glass Industry.
- (12.) Report on an Enquiry into Conditions of Labour in the Bidi, Cigar and Cigarette Industries.
- (13.) Report on an Enquiry into Conditions of Labour in Plantations in India.
- (14.) Report on an Enquiry into Conditions of Labour in the Gold Mining Industry in India.
- (15.) Report on Labour Conditions in Potteries.
- (16.) Report on Labour Conditions in the Chemical Industry.
- (17.) Report on an Enquiry into Conditions of Labour in the Manganese Mining Industry in India.
- (18.) Report on an Enquiry into Conditions of Labour in the Mineral Oil Industry in India.
- (19.) Report on an Enquiry into Conditions of Labour in the Woollen Textile Industry in India.
- (20.) Report on an Enquiry into Conditions of Labour in the Paper Mill Industry in India.

Sjt. N. V. Gadgil (Bombay Central Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): These papers are not circulated. Will the Honourable Member be good enough to supply them to those who apply for them?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: I shall certainly consider it, Sir. We have not got sufficient number of copies.

Mr. President: The present request is to supply copies to those only who ask for them.

*Not printed in these debates. Copies placed in the Library.—*Et. of Debates.*

MERCHANT SEAMEN (LITIGATION) BILL.

PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE

The Honourable Dr. Sir M. Azizul Huque (Commerce Member): Sir I present the Report of the Select Committee on the Bill to provide for the special protection in respect of civil and revenue litigation of serving merchant seamen.

MICA MINES LABOUR WELFARE FUND BILL

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar (Labour Member): Sir, I move:

"That the Bill to constitute a fund for the financing of activities to promote the welfare of labour employed in the mica mining industry be taken into consideration."

The important provision of the Bill is contained in clause 3, where it is proposed that a levy should be made upon the export of mica in order to constitute a fund for providing for the welfare of the labour employed in the mica mining industry. The nature of the welfare activities which this fund will undertake are detailed in clause 2 of the Bill. It is not necessary for me to go over these clauses and read them to the House. Before I go further I would like to explain to the House why the Government of India have thought it necessary to institute a fund of the sort mentioned in clause 3 of the Bill and I do not think I could do better than read a few extracts from the report of a Committee on labour conditions in mica mining and mica manufacturing industry. The report is made by Prof. Adarkar who was a member of the Fact Finding Committee appointed by the Tripartite Labour Conference. With your permission, Sir, I propose to read a few extracts from this report.

On page 27 of this report Prof. Adarkar says:

"We did not see urinal or latrine accommodation provided in any mine. Reference to this breach of the Mines Act. has already been made above. One just wonders what the workers do while working 500 feet below they are called upon to answer calls of nature. Lack of arrangements for good drinking water is a crying evil of the mica mining industry. The doctors told us that diseases like dyspepsia, intestinal trouble, etc., were caused by the presence of harmful minerals in the water supplied to the workers. As I said earlier, some of the bigger firms carry water in lorries to mines but generally women are employed to fetch water from dirty pools five to six miles away. This water is carried and stored in filthy earthen pitchers or drums. The supply of even such water is inadequate. No water is usually made available for washing purposes. The problem is a very serious one and deserves immediate attention."

Speaking of housing the report says:

"No adjectives can properly describe the 'houses' in which workers are housed. The more temporary amongst them look like tents of leaves held in position by a strong bamboo or wooden pillar. Houses proper are of two types; we may describe them separately:—

(i) *Built entirely of bamboo and grass.*—We saw a house built by a mine owner for workers which was typical and the roofing was of green leaves. The general appearance was that of a cattle shed. There was hardly any necessity for doors and windows as it was airy from every side. This shed housed one family worker with his wife and two children along with 10 other workers. There was no privacy for the family. The choolhas were separate. Grass had been spread on the floor and workers slept upon that at night. No rent was however charged for the accommodation provided. It may be noted here that the other 8 or 10 occupants had been put into the cottage by the employer after the family worker had occupied. As the worker was not paying any rents, he could not possibly grumble.

(ii) *Better type of houses.*—Their number is very small and generally they are meant for durbars, khalasis or carpenters. There are single-room tenements built in lines and are rent free. Their walls are built either of brushwood or of kuchcha bricks and roofs are built of wooden beams. They are closed rooms with doors but ventilation is very poor. It must be emphasised again that these quarters are not meant for ordinary workers but are reserved for the superior skilled staff. It is important to note here that no latrines or urinal accommodation is provided even for those who live in these quarters with the result that they go out into the open to attend to calls of nature. As has been pointed out earlier, this causes them to develop diseases like ankylostomiasis and anaemia. Workers do not like to stay in these quarters, despite the efforts of the employers to make them do so. Workers like to walk 4 to 6 miles each way and prefer to stay at home at night. The employers want them to stay at mines as this would ensure regularity of attendance but the workers dreading compulsory overwork prefer to ignore such exhortations. Moreover, their own huts are definitely better built than the quarters provided by the employers."

[Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.]

I will read another passage which deals with occupational and other diseases which are prevalent in mica mines. The report says:

"Diseases which mica workers suffer from may be classified as (a) those that are directly attributable to mining operations and working conditions and (b) those that are caused by the configuration and natural vegetation of the mining area. In this connection, we could collect some information in the Bihar area, and the following analysis is based mainly on the information,

(a) The following diseases may be considered under the first category:—

(i) *Silicosis*.—This is a disease of the lungs and is attributed to dry machine-drilling of quartz rock. Machine drills have octagonal ends with a regular bore running right through the drill. The drill is rotated by machine and quartz dust produced in the drilling process escapes with great force through the bore and strikes the driller right on his nose. Within a few seconds thick clouds of quartz dust envelope the driller and he inhales that dust continuously. The tiny quartz pieces enter the body and injure the lungs. The first symptom of silicosis is bronchitis and this gradually develops into silicosis proper. The incidence of the disease is fairly high but due to the excessive turnover of labour it is not detected early. What saves most of these workers from early death is their seasonal migration to agriculture. If the driller works continually even for one whole year he cannot escape catching the disease and within five years or so he may die. One employer stated that he had lost 16 of his best drillers within the past five years. It seems that the only possible way of saving the drillers from this disease which proves fatal in nearly all cases is to prohibit dry machine drilling by an order under the Indian Mines Act. Of their own accord so far only the Chrestien Mining Company have introduced wet drilling in some of their mines. But no other firm is planning even to follow suit at any rate during the course of the present war. It may be noted here, however, that all employers declared themselves in favour of statutory prohibition of dry drilling."

Then a description is given of the prevalence of dyspepsia, rheumatism, bronchitis, malaria. I need not go through the whole list of them. But I would like to draw the attention of the House to the following paragraph in the Report:—

"Welfare activities are conspicuous by their total absence. Canteens, creches, entertainments and washing or any other facilities are things entirely unheard of in the mica mining area. The bigger firms like the Chrestien Mining Company, the Chaturam Horilram Company, and the Indian Mica Supply Company, have made arrangements for medical aid."

Then they give details below.

"Medical aid, wherever it is provided, is free. No arrangements have been made, however, for child or adult education."

Now, Sir, I can go on for a length of time quoting passages from this Report in order to show that the conditions of work in mica mines have really become intolerable and that the time has arrived for Government to intervene in this matter and to do something for the workers in the mica mines.

The next question, Sir, is the best method of dealing with this subject. So far as that question is concerned it seems to me that there are really two ways of dealing with the subject. One way is to impose the liability upon the employer and to prescribe certain measures of welfare and to leave it to the employer to carry them into effect and reserve to the Government the power to inspect and to see that the obligation imposed upon the employer is carried out by him. The second method is for Government to take charge of the welfare measures themselves and to make the employer bear the cost of it. The first method, to my mind, is an imperfect method, and for two reasons. Firstly, different employers have different capacities to bear the cost of welfare measures. That being so, it is not possible for small employers to keep up the standard which may be prescribed by the Act. Secondly, it is hardly possible for the Government to engage such a large body of inspectors so that they could constantly go round, keep a vigil and see that the standards are maintained. Government, therefore, has come to the conclusion that the better method would be for Government, in matters of this sort, to take the responsibility on their own shoulders and to compel the employer to pay the cost of these welfare measures. Sir, it is this principle on which this Bill relating to the welfare

of workers in mica industries is based. If I may say so, so far as the Government of India is concerned, this is by no means a new principle which they have adopted. As the House knows, during the war the Government of India issued an Ordinance for the welfare activities of the population engaged in coal mining. It was done by Ordinance. But the principles embodied in the present measure are exactly the same as the principles embodied in that ordinance. It is, therefore, unnecessary for me to dilate upon the necessity or the advisability of the principle on which this measure has been based.

Sir, there is one other point to which I would like to make some reference. As Honourable Members will see, under the Bill it is proposed to constitute two Committees to advise the authorities who will be administering this Fund as to how this money should be spent. One Advisory Committee will be for the Province of Madras and another will be for the Province of Bihar. Some Members might feel that the Government of India has shown no reason why, for instance, another area which is also a mica producing area has been omitted from this consideration, namely Rajputana. I would like to explain to the House the reason why we have not thought it necessary to constitute a third Committee for Rajputana. Rajputana occupies a very small place, for the moment, in this mica industry and I like to give the House some figures on that point. Take the mica mines in India. I have got the figures for 1941. In Bihar the total number of mines in 1941 were 623. Of them those that worked throughout the year were 297. In Madras the total was 108 and those that worked throughout the year were 47; while in Rajputana, although the total was 62, those that worked throughout the year were only 8. Taking the question of the number of workers, I have got figures for 1943. The figures are as follows. In Bihar the total number of workers working in mica mines was 81,431; in Madras it was 18,379; in Rajputana it was only 15,000. It is, therefore, thought that it would be better not to constitute a separate Committee for Rajputana. The reason is obvious. All these Advisory Committees involve a great deal of administrative cost, and I do not want that the money in the Fund should be spent on mere matters of administration more than we can help it. We, therefore, propose that it would be better to economize by not having one Committee and to leave the matter to be provided for in some other way. Sir, I do not know whether there is any other clause in the Bill which requires any explanation or any specific comment. As the House will see, the matter is very urgent and I am very keen to see that this Bill is put on the statute book.

I find there is an amendment in the name of Honourable Members, the object of which is to send this Bill to a Select Committee. I am not willing or rather I am opposed to referring this Bill to a Select Committee, because I do not think that this Bill can be said to be either controversial or complicated as to require the labours of a Select Committee to be spent upon it. However, if the members of the House are keen on having the matter referred to a Select Committee, if they agree that the Select Committee shall be authorised or directed to return the Bill before the Session ends, so that I can move the second reading of the Bill, I would not object to such an amendment. Sir, I move.

Mr. President: Motion moved:

"That the Bill to constitute a fund for the financing of activities to promote the welfare of labour employed in the mica mining industry be taken into consideration."

Mr. Ahmed E. H. Jaffer (Bombay Southern Division: Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I move:

"That the Bill be referred to a Select Committee consisting of the Honourable Sir Asoka Roy, the Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Miss Maniben Kara, Mr. S. C. Joshi, Babu Ram Narayan Singh, Sri R. Venkatasubba Reddiar, Mr. Gauri Shankar Saran Singh, Sri A. Karunakara Menon, Prof. N. G. Ranga, Mr. Geoffrey W. Tyson, Mr. Madandhari Singh, Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad, Khan Bahadur Hafiz M. Ghazanfarulla, Mr. Muhammad Nauman and the mover with instructions to report by the 15th April, 1946, and that the number of members whose presence shall be necessary to constitute a meeting of the Committee shall be five."

Mr. President: Will 15th be all right?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: No; it will be too late.

Mr. Ahmed E. H. Jaffer: I will amend it to the 12th if that is the feeling of the House.

Mr. President: Amendment moved:

"That the Bill be referred to a Select Committee consisting of the Honourable Sir Asoka Roy, the Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Miss Maniben Kara, Mr. S. C. Joshi, Babu Ram Narayan Singh, Sri R. Venkatasubba Reddiar, Mr. Gauri Shankar Saran Singh, Sri A. Karunakara Menon, Prof. N. G. Ranga, Mr. Geoffrey W. Tyson, Mr. Madandhari Singh, Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad, Khan Bahadur Hafiz M. Ghazanfarulla, Mr. Muhammad Nauman and the mover with instructions to report by the 12th April, 1946, and that the number of members whose presence shall be necessary to constitute a meeting of the Committee shall be five."

Mr. Geoffrey W. Tyson (Bengal European): Sir, in rising to support the amendment of Mr. Jaffer for reference of this Bill to a select committee, I should like to say that I do not think that any of the responsible elements in the producing end of the industry would oppose or dispute the motives which have actuated the Honourable Labour Member in bringing this Bill forward. On the other hand, I think it is fair to say that we have not heard from the Honourable Labour Member the whole picture as it affects the industry today. He has quoted from the report of an officer appointed to investigate the labour conditions prevailing in the industry, but I myself am of the opinion—and I think there will be other elements in this House also—that a consideration of the imposition of a cess for the particular objectives which Dr. Ambedkar has in view should have been taken in the context of the report of the inquiry committee which has been sitting for the last twelve months investigating the affairs of the industry. I believe that that report is now ready—possibly already printed; and in considering the questions raised in this short and I think laudable Bill in many respects, we should have the whole picture as discovered by the Mica Inquiry Committee, with a view in fact to ascertaining what the industry will bear in the way of additional costs, because this is not the only cess which the Honourable Member has in view for that industry. I understand that he has in mind a marketing and grading cess, which is going to impose a further charge upon the producing industry. If it is proposed to impose a cess of 2½ per cent. for purposes of labour welfare—the principle of which I am not disputing at the moment—and a further cess, I believe, of 3½ per cent. for purposes of marketing and grading in the near future, the industry is going to be saddled with an additional burden of 6 per cent., at a time when there exist, both in Britain and in America which are the chief consuming centres for the export of mica, very considerable surplus stocks of lots and splittings, as a result of the excess production in which the industry engaged during the war. India undoubtedly in her mica deposits possesses a most valuable mineral asset. Mica was listed during the war by the American administration and by the British administration as a critical mineral, and it plays a very large and important part in the composition of a number of armaments. The Government of India are quite right to be concerned with the conduct of the industry which mines this important mineral. One would wish that they show that concern sometimes in a little more practical manner than the one which is proposed today. But I do suggest that this cess, to which I again affirm I have no objection in principle, and the other imposts which the Honourable Labour Member in his right zeal for the cause of labour which are under contemplation to put upon the industry—I could wish that they could be considered in the context of the wider problems which have been raised by the report of the Mica Mining Committee, which I think sat for over a year, under the chairmanship of Mr. Justice Reuben of the Bihar High Court. There is also overhanging the industry at this particular stage considerable surplus stocks in the hands of the Governments of the two chief consuming markets, and I understand that the Government of India made some attempts recently to come to an agreement about the prices; it was not a very successful attempt; and as long as those stocks are in existence it is not possible for many producers, especially the smaller producers, to obtain any-

thing like a reasonable profit on their current production. If the cess proposed in the Bill which it is now proposed to refer to a Select Committee is added to a reduction in costs, a number of producers will be obliged in fact to find the money out of capital and reserves, if they have any; and I suggest that the Honourable Labour Member and the Government of India might turn their mind, if they accept the principle of the cess and think it is a good thing, to considering how in fact it can be passed on to the consumer who is, as to 90 per cent. of the output of this mineral, a non-Indian consumer. These and many other points will doubtless be raised before the Select Committee and I will not speak at greater length upon them except to repeat what I said in the beginning, that the principle incorporated in Dr. Ambedkar's Bill is unexceptionable, but its implication does require a good deal of detailed consideration, and I hope that this will be accorded to the Bill by the Select Committee, reference to which as suggested by Mr. Jaffer's amendment, I now hereby support.

Shri D. P. Karmarkar (Bombay Southern Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): I support the motion and in doing so I shall confine myself to two matters. Obviously the intention of this Bill is to promote the real welfare of the labourers in the mica industry. I find that in sub-clause (b)

I. P. M. of clause 3 of the Bill it is provided that the fund may be utilised to defray the grant to a Provincial Government, a local authority or the owner, agent or manager of a mica mine, of money in aid of any scheme approved by the Central Government for any purpose for which the Fund may be utilised. One cannot always be sure that every owner, agent or manager of a mica mine has always the welfare of the labourers at heart. My submission is that at this stage, at the beginning of the consideration of welfare work, these funds should not be given to the agent or manager, etc. for improving the condition of the workers.

Secondly, so far as I can see from clause 4 of the Bill, it is not proposed to associate any representative of this House or the legislatures in the provinces. Our experience shows that, where any Government is concerned, especially the Central Government, it is always in need of guidance and vigilance at the hands of elected members. I should suggest that it should be compulsory for the Central Government to include in the advisory committee an elected representative of the provincial legislatures or the Indian legislature. With these two observations, I support the reference to a Select Committee.

Diwan Ohaman Lall (West Punjab: Non-Muhammadan): I was originally not of the opinion that this matter should go to the Select Committee and be delayed any further but on closer examination both of the Bill and of the speeches made by my Honourable friend and by my Honourable friend behind me. I have come to the conclusion that it is necessary that the terms of this measure should be very carefully scrutinised by a Select Committee with a view to improving these terms.

I have a complaint to make against my Honourable friend. A few days ago I asked him to send me a copy of the report to which he has made reference this afternoon. To this day I have not had a reply from my Honourable friend. I submit that in these matters the House ought to be informed and be fully in possession of all the facts available in respect of these matters. Here is a report which was printed last year. It is available to my Honourable friend but it is not available to my Honourable friends on these benches. It is on the strength of this report that this Bill has been brought before us and yet when we ask for it, it is not made available to us. It may be that my friend is overworked and but for the courtesy shown to me, Mr. President, by your very worthy Secretary, I would not have been in possession of the report even now.

I take it that my Honourable friend's object is laudable but there are many things which have got to be considered. My friend did not mention what sum of money he expects to get out of the 6½ per cent. *ad valorem* cess he is going to levy. The cess is going to be levied only on exports and not on production

[Diwan Chaman Lall]

—on that quantity which leaves this country for America, or Great Britain or any other part of the world. The production which will be utilised in the country itself will be free from any levy. We do not know whether the amount my friend is going to collect is going to be sufficient for the purposes which he has in view.

I do not see why the cess should not be at the source but should apply only to the production which goes out of the country. My Honourable friend over there raised another point. He said: "Oh, it is a terrible thing. It will oppress the industry. You are going to ask for another levy in regard to marketing and so on. You are going to overburden this industry, which is so hard pressed that it may go out of business". Now, Mr. President, we know something of the horrible conditions of the workers in this industry and if this industry cannot live without the perpetuation of those horrible conditions, then the industry deserves to die. I submit that my friends should make up their minds not to exploit any more the man power of this country, if the industry cannot bear these charges. Does my Honourable friend know that there are 13 thousand children of tender age between 6 and 12 who are being employed by this industry, little children being paid 8 annas a day and no provision made for the control of the hours of work of their employment?

Mr. Geoffrey W. Tyson: Not in the mines.

Diwan Chaman Lall: My Honourable friend says 'not in the mines'. My Honourable friend knows perfectly well that the Indian Mining Act has ceased to have any reference whatsoever to this industry. Does he not know that in spite of the Act these children and women have been working in these mica mines? They may be working underground and there is no provision made to control this industry. There are no inspectors, no method of finding out from the attendance registers what the hours of work are, whether these workers are being employed overground or underground, because there is no inspection and no attendance registers. Does my Honourable friend know that none of the labour legislation, not one, which has been passed, is applicable to the workers and there is no means available to the Government to obtain information for the purpose of prosecuting those who contravene the sections of this labour legislation. Take the Workmen's Compensation Act. It is supposed to apply here but accidents are not covered by this Act.

There is the question of women underground. They are not prevented from working underground in spite of legislation. There is the question of the employment of children of tender age. The employment of Children's Act, although it is supposed to apply, has been nullified by this industry which has had absolute freedom to drive a coach and four through all labour legislation and do what they like.

Now, I ask is this state of affairs to be allowed to continue? My Honourable friend is worried only about welfare conditions. That is a laudable object but will my Honourable friend go a little further and see to it that the provisions of this labour legislation which is on the statute book strictly apply to the workers in these mines, those who work underground or those who work above ground known as *uparchallas* or those work in between. Do I take it that something will be done by my Honourable friend to make an effort to bring the workers strictly within the purview of the legislation regarding labour which is on the statute book.

Now my friend says further that he is going to leave out Rajputana and he gave us the figure of 15 thousand workers.

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: I did not say that I would leave out Rajputana. I shall be constituting a separate committee.

Diwan Chaman Lall: I did not hear my Honourable friend say that he would constitute a separate committee. I heard him say, "some other means". I am glad he says "some separate committee" now. As far as this measure is concerned, Rajputana is left out.

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: There welfare measures will be carried out with the aid of this Fund.

Diwan Chaman Lall: Will the money from Madras and Bihar be taken to help the Rajputana workers?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: We might employ some other agency some other organisation in order to carry out the activities connected with welfare workers. The Fund will pay.

Diwan Chaman Lall: I take it that the Fund is going to be utilised and will be utilised, not only for Madras and Bihar but also for Rajputana, and that the provisions of this measure regarding Welfare committees that he is setting up will not apply to Rajputana, but some other method will be found. That is the position, I take it. If that is the position, the money he is likely to get, in my estimation—I may be entirely wrong, because my Honourable friend is in a better position to tell the House—is about five lakhs a year, if you take the total value of production, I do not think all is meant for export—some good part of it is not meant for export. Therefore the sum of five lakhs which you may reckon—I am not a good mathematician—this sum will be reduced by that extent. Do I take it that this amount will be sufficient to deal with thousands of workers who are engaged in this industry. I believe the number of employees who would be covered by this industry runs into several thousands and their numbers have increased, during war years. Mica has been of very great importance as far as war industries were concerned. Therefore, Mr. President, I find that although the measure, as far as it goes, is a good one, it does not go far enough. Here is an industry in which efforts should be made to bring in a greater measure of State control and a greater measure of taxation. I do not know whether my Honourable friends of the European Group have considered, possibly they have, possibly they own a good part of this business.

Mr. Geoffrey W. Tyson: No part.

Diwan Chaman Lall: I do not know whether they have considered what the financial position is in regard to the exploitation of these mines. When my Honourable friend made a statement that this industry may not be able to bear this particular cess, did he then consider what the financial implications of this industry were? Now that he says that he did not consider this question and he does not know the financial implications of this industry, how can the House say, that a 6½ per cent *ad valorem* duty would be so great as to break of the industry?

Mr. Geoffrey W. Tyson: I never said that, I did not know what the financial implications were. I may say that when I interrupted my Honourable friend a moment ago, all I said was that no part of the industry was in the hands of people on these Benches. The industry is entirely Indian owned and Indian managed. It has been so for some time.

Diwan Chaman Lall: My Honourable friend is taking the word 'industry' in a very narrow sense indeed. I take it that Honourable Members sitting on those Benches are very vitally interested in the export of this particular commodity. I take it that that is not part of the industry which is in the hands of Indians. Therefore, I say that my Honourable friends of the European Group are vitally interested in the price of mica. What they mean is this, by putting this cess, it will increase the price, and therefore it will hurt the market in Great Britain and in America.

Mr. Geoffrey W. Tyson: Again, I must intervene. I did not make myself clear to the Honourable Member. What I said was that the cess should be paid by the consumer, should be levied on the export. I cannot see how that is a suggestion which endorses the implication which my Honourable friend Diwan Chaman Lall puts forward.

Diwan Chaman Lall: All I can say is if my Honourable friend reads the report of his speech, he will come to a different conclusion. He was trying to frighten the House into the belief that regarding this particular cess, and the-

[Diwan Chaman Lall]

marketing cess, you have got to be careful lest you break the back of the industry. That is what my Honourable friend was driving at at that time. The reason why the European Group is interested in this particular matter is because this commodity is exported to America and to Great Britain and utilised by America and Great Britain as raw material for very important purposes, for preparation of electrical apparatus, for wireless purposes and purposes connected with war. Naturally they are interested as buyers of this commodity and being interested as buyers of this commodity, they would be happy to see that the price of this commodity is not raised against them.

Mr. President: The House will now adjourn for Lunch. The Honourable Member can continue his speech after Lunch.

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

The Assembly re-assembled after Lunch at Half Past Two of the Clock, Mr. President (The Honourable Mr. G. V. Mavalankar) in the Chair.

Diwan Chaman Lall: Sir, when we rose for Lunch I was talking about my Honourable friend's interruption. When he said that as far as he was aware there was no employment of women or children underground I do not know where my Honourable friend got his facts from, whether they are of his own personal knowledge or not or whether he merely considers that since the Act was passed preventing women from working underground therefore it must be concluded that there are no women underground in these mica mines. In this report which my Honourable friend failed to present me with he will find on page 8 a statement made by Dr. Adarkar who made an inquiry into this matter. He says that although an Act was passed prohibiting the employment of children below 15 years of age in certain specified occupations, mica manufacture was not one of those occupations which were specified.

"The Act was amended in 1939, and the employment of any child who had not completed his twelfth year was prohibited in any workshop connected with *inter alia*, mica cutting and splitting. By a proviso, however, operations carried on in a house by the occupier with the aid of his family only and without employing any hired labour were exempted from the provisions of the amending Act. The Act, therefore, does not apply to domestic manufacture of mica splittings. In spite of the Act, however, the employment of children between 6 and 12 years of age in fairly large numbers is prevalent on an amazingly wide scale in open defiance of law and the employers make no secret of it. Surprising though it may seem, child labour was found even at the Government Factory at Pachamba in Bihar."

So I do not know where my Honourable friend got this particular fact from. It is regrettable that even a Government controlled mine, according to this report, has been openly violating all the provisions of labour legislation applicable to these workers.

This is in regard to children, and in regard to women the report says:

"In contravention of the provisions of the Indian Mines Act, both women and children appear to be employed underground in mines quite openly in all the three mica areas."

This is in reference to Bihar. I must say that my Honourable friend's information in regard to this matter is being challenged by the gentleman who made this report to Government after a very detailed inquiry. As a matter of fact long ago I remember having written on the subject myself in a little book that I wrote about 1932. There I find a chapter on mica. According to this report the number of children employed is about 14.7 per cent.; but at that time my estimate was that the number of children employed was somewhere about 27 per cent. of the total employment in these mines. This is a very serious fact. And why are these children employed? It is obvious. The employers want to make big profits on sweated labour. This is one of the most deeply sweated industries in the whole of India; and I am glad that my Honourable friend has taken this necessary step, but I think it is a step which is not likely to meet the entire deplorable situation as we find in these areas.

There are 113,000 employees—women and children—engaged in this industry, and I take it that in respect of not only the men and women employed but even in regard to children employed in these factories there is no limit to the hours of work that they have to put in in these mines. I am told that they come at about 10 in the morning and leave at about 5 in the afternoon; that is seven hours at least. And there are no regulations, no prohibition and no inspection of the hours of work. And on what, Sir? On a pittance of three or four annas a day; that is what these children get. I submit that if there is a case for a closer investigation into methods that must be employed to put industrial labour in these mines on a sound footing, there is no case stronger than this which can be put forward on the floor of this House. Every step must be taken; the steps that are being taken are not sufficient. All that my Honourable friend is doing is this. If the total number of people employed is 113,000 and he gets a little two lakhs for expenditure on welfare amongst them, he will spend two rupees per head. But what about the breaking of the provisions of all labour legislation, what about the hours of work, what about the application of the Children's Employment Act, what about the application of the Indian Mines Act? All these things are of very great importance to the well-being and the welfare of the working classes. And I submit that in these circumstances it is necessary not merely to set up a welfare fund. The matters which will be discussed in the Select Committee will be as to the sort of welfare fund that it should be. But it is necessary also to go a step further and see that all the provisions of the law are respected by the employers in this industry. I am told that there is a mica purchasing mission. Has that been wound up? My Honourable friend Mr. Ram Narayan Singh tells me that they have been given a monopoly. There are complaints in regard to this mission that by restricting the purchase of mica to particular grades they have brought down the level of employment in the mica mines. Who are these people in the mica supplying mission? I hope my Honourable friend will be able to throw some light on this subject. There is a case made out not only for labour legislation affecting the welfare of the working classes, but a complete case made out for the nationalisation of this industry in order that Government may be able to do the right thing by the workers who are engaged in this industry. I therefore submit that these matters have got to be considered.

The recruitment question is a very important one in this industry. We have seen the evils of recruitment in the Assam tea plantations,—the appointment of Sardars to engage these workers. A similar system prevails in the mica mines. There are Sardars engaged for the purpose of recruiting labour and the evils connected with the Sardari system of employment are well known to everybody who has studied this subject. There is the question of hours of work, there is the question of sweated wages, there is the question of a complete disregard of all labour legislation. All these matters will have to be considered and cannot be considered unless my Honourable friend takes the next step forward in reference to this matter and deals with this subject in a more comprehensive manner.

Babu Ram Narayan Singh (Chota Nagpur Division: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, I welcome this measure, but I do not support the motion for consideration of the Bill just now. I had a motion standing in my name for circulation for public opinion, but my Party decided for its reference to Select Committee and this motion has already been moved by my Honourable friend, Mr. Ahmed Jaffer, and I support this motion.

I am glad that Dr. Ambedkar has done very much in this matter. He has taken up the cause of suffering labourers, but his attitude reminds me of the attitude of a man who is on the verge of death and is filled with feelings of remorse for his acts of omissions and commissions. This Government has been in this country for about two centuries and everybody knows that the Government is on the verge of death—there is no doubt about that. This Mica industry has been in existence for about a century, but upto now the Government did nothing with regard to this industry. The first thing the Honourable Dr. Ambedkar did was the constitution of the Mica Enquiry Committee, and I say

[Babu Ram Narayan Singh]

that that committee was unconstitutional. The Government of India in the Central Legislature according to the 7th Schedule to the Government of India Act can legislate only with regard to welfare of labour and regulation of labour. The Government of India and the Central Authority have got nothing to do with the regulation of Mica trade and business. So the constitution of the Mica Enquiry Committee is certainly unconstitutional. A great hue and cry was raised at that time, but this Government and our worthy friend, Dr. Ambedkar, did not listen to all that. When he says 'that the conditions of labour in Mica industry have become deplorable and the time has come when he must take these steps', I am rather surprised. I am a resident of the Hazaribagh district and I can tell him that these miserable conditions of the mica labour began when the Mica industry began. These miserable conditions and intolerable conditions existed from the very beginning in the Mica industry and now Dr. Ambedkar says that the time has come when he ought to take some steps. As I said, I welcome the measure but with a feeling of resentment. What has the Government been doing so long? We know that the Mica industry has been so long in this country; the Government has been so long in this country, but uptil now Mica traders and the local people are nothing more than hewers of wood and drawers of water. This Government has not done anything with regard to the use of Mica in this country uptil now, after so long a time we have always exported mica to other countries. We are only the exporters of raw materials, and we know, as my Honourable friend, Diwan Chaman Lall has said, that this material is very very essential for several purposes. This Government has done nothing so far as its use in the country is concerned, and now I ask Dr. Ambedkar, if he is patriotic in the least, to come forward with another proposal, another scheme so that every inch of mica is used in this country and whatever we export, we should export in the form of finished goods so that all the profit shall be ours.

As my Honourable friend, Diwan Chaman Lall, has said the Bill has been submitted to us, but connected papers have not been given to us. The paper has been laid on the table. I think this paper ought to have been sent to the members and at least I hope that the Honourable Member will supply copies of the Mica Enquiry Committee Report and also of the Report on the conditions of labour to the members of the Select Committee today.

I am glad that the Honourable Member has agreed to the motion of reference to the Select Committee. Therefore I will not say much on the subject, but in order to prepare his mind I tell him that so far as the constitution of the Advisory Committee is concerned, I do not understand the constitution of the Committee. There are labourers, and there are mine-owners, but there ought to be, as my Honourable friend, has suggested, local representatives on the Committee and at the same time there must be also representatives of local Governments concerned on the Committee.

As regards clause 5—appointments and powers of officers—I would like to say, in order to prepare the mind of the Honourable Member, that it is better that administration should be left in the hands of the Provincial Governments. Sir, officers will be appointed and there will be nobody to control them, and Government of India, sitting in Delhi, will be controlling officers at Kodarma so many miles away. This is an impossible situation, and it will be making the officers there all-important and all-independent, and they will be doing everything and anything in collaboration with the mine-owners. They will not be doing proper things.

It has been said that although law has been passed prohibiting the employment of children and women, but the practice still continues, my Honourable friend has said that this is not done. I am a resident of that district and I am a congress worker; I have been visiting Kodarma almost every week, if not twice a week. No Rules and laws are obeyed by the mine owners. I know that even children and women are employed underground and although this Government has passed the Maternity Benefit Act, it has not been extended to the

women working there. Although according to law women may not be allowed to work underground, but they are employed there and this Maternity Benefit Act ought to have been extended to them. As regards administration, I am convinced that if the Government of India really want to do anything for labour and for the removal of their grievances, then the administration of the fund ought to be placed in the hands of the Local Governments. But they say that officers will be appointed by the Central Government and funds will be administered by them, but this is not proper. At the same time I do not understand Section 3, clause (b). According to it the fund is to be distributed among a Provincial Government, a local authority or the owner, agent or manager of a mica mine and so forth. I think there must be a very strong administrative committee on the spot who will administer the fund and there ought to be some controlling authority also on the spot, not so many miles away in Delhi.

As I know that I am also on the Select Committee, we shall do whatever we can there. At the same time I say that the Bill has to be so amended as to be of some use to the people there. And if possible, some other items may be included, as my friend Diwan Chaman Lal has said, namely, regulation of labour and hours of work. If all these things are not included in the Bill here, I trust the Government will bring this measure up as soon as possible, so that although the Government is going, even at the time of their departure, they will have the satisfaction that they have done something for labour in this country.

Miss Maniben Kara (Nominated Non-Official): I welcome the Bill which has been moved by the Honourable Dr. Ambedkar. I also endorse the demands made by the previous speakers on this question. But I would like to draw the attention of the House to the question regarding hours of work and to say that the suggestions made must come up in the form of another Bill. The Bill which is at present before us only goes to show that certain welfare measures should be undertaken. Certainly there are a number of suggestions which can be made in the Select Committee, which I hope will be accepted by the Honourable the Labour Member but I must admit that I was shocked to listen to the appalling conditions of the workers in the mining area which were presented to us this morning by the Honourable the Labour Member. It is certainly terrible for workers if all those things mentioned this morning do exist, and I am surprised that the Government of India took so many years to realize that something should be done for the people who live in these horrible conditions. The condition, a report of which we had this morning, is certainly not a condition in which we would expect even the cattle of this country to exist. It is a most disgraceful state of affairs that the workers in an industry which is of such importance should be living in those horrible conditions. And that is why any measure which goes for the betterment of the conditions of the workers should be welcomed by all the Members of this House.

I do not want to repeat all that has been said by the previous speakers, but I just want to point out that the Members of the Labour Investigating Committee made certain observations on the standard of living of the workers. By this Bill we are not going to raise the standard of living of the workers. This is only a reform measure. Reforms of this kind are in no way going to help to raise the standard of living of the workers. So long as the wages of the workers are as low as they are, it is idle to talk of any uplift of the standard of living. Such reform measures will be of some help but they will not remove the root cause of the misery. Such measures like facilities for medical attendance, better housing, facilities for drinking water are certainly essential necessities of life and I am glad that they will be provided to some extent by this Bill. But I may on this occasion warn the Labour Member that if he thinks that by such measures the standard of living of the workers will be materially improved or bettered, I think he is mistaken. The improvement of the living standard can only come when the workers feel that they are the masters of the money which they receive and the money is in their own hands. There was another thing which the Honourable the Labour Member said about social services being undertaken either by the employers or the Government. I am

[Miss Maniben Kara.]

glad, Sir, that he has stated that for various reasons they have realized that the workers will have no confidence in welfare measures undertaken by the employers. He has good reasons, namely that it will require more men to inspect whether the employers carry out those measures or not. Secondly he has also given one or two reasons why the Government should take them over. I happen to be working among workers. I know the mind of the workers. I know that any such measure undertaken by the employers is always looked upon with distrust by the employees. The reason is that they lose their independence. They feel that they are under obligation, and rightly too, because at the time of crises pressure is brought on the workers by denying them certain facilities provided by the employers. For this reason, I believe that all such measures must be directly undertaken by the Government and I also endorse the remarks made by my friend, Diwan Chaman Lall, that a day may come when these industries will be nationalised and come directly under the control of Government. With these remarks I support the amendment to the Bill.

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: I do not propose to take very long in replying to the criticisms which have been made against this Bill. I wish to state very briefly my opinion with regard to the points that have been raised by three speakers. I shall first deal with the points raised by my friend, Mr. Tyson. I agree that he had a legitimate ground of complaint when he found that I had made no reference in the speech that I made in support of my motion with regard to the surplus stock of mica or the additional cesses that were proposed to be levied and the report of Mr. Justice Reuben. Sir, I deliberately did not touch upon these points in my speech, because I knew that these points would be raised by my friend Mr. Tyson and that I would have to reply to them. If I did not do so it was largely because I wanted to save the time of the House.

Now Sir, the position is this that "Although" the Labour Department and the Government of India have decided to proceed with measures of social welfare on the basis of the report made by Prof. Adarkar. The decision was taken by the Labour Department long before the report of Prof. Adarkar was made. I am glad to say that the decision taken by the Labour Department has been fully supported by Mr. Justice Reuben in his report on the Mica industry.

In fact he himself has suggested that there should be a general 3 P. M. levy on the mica produced or exported and that about 5/12 of the receipts under the general cess should be set apart for labour welfare in the mica mines. Therefore in proceeding with this measure we are in no sense departing from the report made by Mr. Reuben. All that we have done is that instead of having a single cess as suggested by Mr. Rubben to be distributed and allocated for different purposes we have thought it necessary to have a separate fund for welfare and another fund for certain administrative measures that may be necessary for the industry as such. The reason for making this decision is obviously due to the fact that the welfare fund will have to be administered by a separate agency, while the fund for other purposes will have to be administered by a separate agency. There my Honourable friend Mr. Tyson will see that the decision of the Government of India is in full accord with the report of Mr. Reuben.

With regard to the additional cess we have, as my Honourable friend will see, fixed the cess in the initial stage at a very low figure. The figure suggested in the Reuben report is 6 per cent, *ad valorem*. . . .

Mr. Geoffrey W. Tyson: Labour or General?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: General. This is a matter which will have to be examined at a later stage as to exactly what should be the pitch of the cess in order that the cess may produce sufficient revenue which would be adequate both for welfare and other purposes.

Diwan Chaman Lall: How much does my Honourable friend expect?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: I will come to that a little later. With regard to the question of surplus stock I would like to inform the House that the Government of India has been in negotiation with His Majesty's Government for a long time over the question of the disposal of surplus stocks of mica which have been held by His Majesty's Government as well as by the United States. I am glad to say that we have come to an agreement whereby no sort of harm will be done to the mica industry by the disposal of the surplus stock. The negotiation has reached the final stage and in a few days time a press note will be issued informing the industry and the general public of the arrangement which has been arrived at between His Majesty's Government and the Government of India. I might say that this arrangement has the fullest support of the mica industry itself.

With regard to this measure I would like also to inform the House that this measure has been undertaken with the fullest consent of the industry itself. This question was first broached by me at a conference which was held at Kodarma on 29th April 1944, at which I presided and the representatives of the mica industry were also present, and I was glad to find that the industry as a whole responded to my suggestion for having a welfare fund. The matter was again taken up on 9th November 1945, at a conference held at Dhanbad under the chairmanship of the Coal Mines Welfare Commissioner. There again, the producers of mica accepted the suggestion. Lastly, a third conference was held on 19th December, 1945, also at Dhanbad under the chairmanship of the Secretary of the Labour Department, where a final agreement was reached between the Government and the Mica mineowners. I would also like to state that our proposal to levy a cess on the industry does not seem to have discouraged the industries from further exploiting the field of mica production and I find that during the last few months, there have been to my knowledge at any rate, three big floatations of new companies which have entered into the field of mica. I find, for instance, a new floatation under the name of Micanite and Mica Products Co., Ltd., from Madras with an authorised capital of Rs. 5 lakhs. Another is called the Saraswati Mica Industries Limited, from Calcutta with an authorised capital of Rs. 5 lakhs and I know as a matter of fact that the Christian Mining Industries Ltd., have also applied for capital, issues for mica mining and for the establishment of a micanite factory. These circumstances would show that the cess has not been viewed by the industries in any tragic manner and I think that they believe that it would be possible for the industry to bear the burden of this welfare cess.

Coming to the points made by my friend Diwan Chaman Lall, I must apologise for not supplying him with a copy of the report which he had asked for at some early stage. I must say that I altogether forgot about it. But I do not think that he has in any way lost in dealing with the matter in the way in which he has dealt with it. All that probably he would have done if he had the report is that he would have made a speech of double the length of what he did.

With regard to the question that he put to me as to how much revenue the cess will produce, I hesitate to give the House any definite figure and the reason is quite obvious. The production of mica has not been at a very steady figure. For instance, I have figures here from 1934 to 1944. In 1934, the value of mica produced was Rs. 6,30,525, while in 1944, it was 2,73,01,458 and there have been various figures for the different years in the intervening period. It is no use, therefore, for me to give the House any particular figure. We must allow sometime for the industry to stabilise itself in the postwar period. (But taking the figure for 1944, I calculate that the cess would be somewhere in the neighbourhood of Rs. five lakhs. I quite appreciate that that is not a very large sum. Personally, if I may say so, what I am fighting for is not the total effect or the total amount. What I am fighting for is the establishment of a principle. If later on it was found that the fund was not sufficient it would be still open for any member of the Government who would be in charge of this to come forward and increase the cess and

[Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.]

thereby augment the amount and carry on the measures of social welfare which otherwise would not be possible.

With regard to the Mica Purchase Mission, the point to which my friend made reference, is a matter not relevant to the Bill which we are considering and I do not therefore propose to enter into the questions arising out of the Mica Purchase Mission's activities. But I can tell my friend that so far as I know anything about it, the industrialists engaged in the production of mica in this country have not only not had any harm done to them but I am quite satisfied that they have made more than ordinary profits.

My friend, Diwan Chaman Lal, spent a great length of his speech in discussing the lax administration of the Mines Act. He referred to the employment of children and of other matters relating also to employment of women. As I said, I am quite aware of this fact, and the Labour Department has on the anvil legislation to remove all the defects which have been reported upon by Mr. Adarkar in the course of his Report dealing with the workers in mica mines. And if there was time available to Government, it would have been possible even in this session to bring forth a Bill to remove these evils. But I have no doubt that that will be done without delay.

Coming to the points raised by my friend, Mr. Ram Narayan Singh, I know he made a great point, that this was a very delayed measure. He said that the mica industry was there, the evils have been there, Government has been here and nothing was done. If I may tell him, he only forgot to mention one thing, that he also was there, and for a long number of years. If he had taken the earliest opportunity to move in this matter to energize and organize the conscience of the Government and of the industrialists, I have no doubt that the delay of which he has complained would never have occurred. But I hope he will agree that it is better late than never.

With regard to the question of administration of the Fund, I think the point that he made was that the administration should be left to the Provincial Governments. I am sorry to say that I cannot accept that principle. This legislation is a Central legislation. It is a legislation for which the Central Government is responsible. The Fund is raised by the Central law. The Fund is raised for a particular and specific purpose. Having regard to these circumstances, it seems to me unjustifiable on the part of the Government of India to allot the whole of this sum to the Provincial Governments, where they might be merged in the general revenues of the Province and spent, I suppose, in accordance with the wishes—I do not say whims—of the Provincial Government. I am of opinion, since the responsibility for the Fund is a Central responsibility, since the Fund is for a specific purpose, and since it would be a sort of a trust which the Government of India would be administering, it is in every way desirable—not only desirable but necessary—that the Central Government from beginning to end should keep its hand on the administration of this Fund. While this is so, I should like to tell my Honourable friend that he has probably not studied the way in which the Coal Mines Labour Welfare Fund is administered. I would therefore like to tell him some details about it, because the administration of the Coal Mines Welfare Fund would be the model—indeed not only the model but the pattern—on which the administration of this Fund will be carried on. In the matter of the Coal Mines Welfare Fund, the administration is vested in a Commissioner who is generally a provincial officer, an officer lent by the Provincial Government. If I may tell him, the person who is now administering the Coal Mines Welfare Fund is an officer lent by the Bihar Government, and he should rest assured that even in the matter of the administration of the Mica Fund we shall be applying to the Bihar Government to lend us an officer of the Bihar Government. As I said, and as the Bill provides, the constitution of the Committee will be such that the representatives of the mica industry from Bihar and also from Madras, would be local people knowing local conditions. Further, according to the

constitution of the Coal Mines Welfare Fund, the orders provide by rules that the Provincial Governments shall send their representatives to be members of the Advisory Committee. The same procedure will be followed with regard to the Mica Advisory Committee. We shall provide that by rules. These Committees meet every three months, certain agenda is prepared and the advice of the Committee is sought. There are men drawn from producers, owners, workers and from Provincial Governments as well. The annual budget is also placed before the Advisory Committee. Their advice is obtained. It is after their advice is obtained that the Funds begin to operate on the various purposes for which money has been provided.

With this I believe my friend, Mr. Ram Narayan Singh, will see that there is not going to be any autocracy from the centre. Here is a great deal of decentralization, a great deal of co-operation in the administration of this Fund between the producers, the workers and the Provincial Government. Sir, I do not think that there is any other point which has been raised in the course of the speeches on this Bill to which I have not given my reply, and I do not think I need say anything more than this.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That the Bill be referred to a Select Committee consisting of the Honourable Sir Asoka Roy, the Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Miss Maniben Kara, Mr. S. C. Joshi, Babu Ram Narayan Singh, Sri R. Venkatasubba Reddiar, Mr. Gauri Shankar Saran Singh, Sri A. Karunakara Menon, Prof. N. G. Ranga, Mr. Geoffrey W. Tyson, Mr. Madanhar Singh, Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad, Khan Bahadur Hafiz M. Ghazanfarulla, Mr. Muhammad Nauman and the mover, with instructions to report by the 12th April, 1946, and that the number of members whose presence shall be necessary to constitute a meeting of the Committee shall be five."

The motion was adopted.

BANKING COMPANIES BILL.

The Honourable Sir Archibald Rowlands (Finance Member): Sir, I move:

"That the Bill to consolidate and amend the law relating to Banking Companies be referred to a Select Committee consisting of the Honourable Sir Asoka Roy, Sir Cowasjee Jehangir, Mr. B. C. A. Cook, Mr. Ram Nath, Mr. M. A. F. Hirtzel, Mr. G. W. Tyson, Sir Mohammad Yamin Khan, Haji Abdus Sattar Haji Ishaq Seth, Seth Yusuf Abdoola Haroon, Mr. Mohammad M. Killedar, Mr. Manu Subedar, Mr. Mohan Lal Saksena, Mr. M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar, Mr. P. B. Gole, Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal, Mr. T. A. Ramalingam Chettiar, Mr. Satya Narayan Sinha, Sardar Mangal Singh and the Mover (by that, Sir, I take that it means the Finance Member for the time being), that the number of members whose presence shall be necessary to constitute a meeting of the Committee shall be five, and that the Committee be authorised to meet at Simla."

[At this stage Mr. President vacated the Chair which was then occupied by Mr. Deputy President (Sir Mohammad Yamin Khan).]

This is the third occasion in less than eighteen months that a Bill substantially like the Bill before the House has been discussed in this Assembly. It was first brought before the House in November 1944, when the House approved of circulation for eliciting opinion. It came back almost a year ago when there ensued a four days debate, and the discussion took the whole universe for its theme. In respect of space, the range was Australia *via* Sweden to New York. I looked in vain and I was disappointed at not finding any reference to Panth Piploda, but I believe that an enterprising gentleman from Panth Piploda did in fact express some views about the original Bill. His name is rather obscure but so is Panth Piploda. In respect of time, we had references to the pre-Christian era, the period of Warren Hastings, down to the present day and the future millenium. So far as subjects were concerned, we had all the old favourites from sterling balances to cottage industries. So far as the length of speeches was concerned, we had a ten minute speech from my Honourable friend Sir Cowasjee Jehangir, a speech for an hour and a quarter from my friend Mr. Manu Subedar who was himself beaten at the post by our champion speaker, Prof. Ranga, who took one hour and twenty five minutes.

[Sir Archibald Rowlands.]

In view of the very exhaustive debate that took place on this Bill a year ago, a report of which will be available for the Select Committee, and having regard to the heavy pressure of business before the House which we have now at the end of the session, I do plead that the House will cut the present discussion short, and, as I said, most of the points that are likely to be raised were already raised a year ago, and they are on record. I myself will try and establish an example of brevity and confine myself largely to dealing with the more important changes in the present Bill as compared with the Bill that was before the House a year ago. All the changes in point of fact are explained in the memorandum which accompanies the Bill.

The first important change is in clause 6 where we have dropped two sub-clauses—(1) (f) and (1) (g). Clause 6 is very much like a memorandum of association of company where the promoters put in everything they can possibly think of and draw the memorandum in such wide terms that they can do almost everything, whether it has anything to do with the company that is going to be established or not. Clause (1) (f) authorised banks to promote industry. On reconsideration, we have come to the conclusion that, in the present state of banking in India, it would be wise for banks not to engage in the risks that attach to industrial undertakings, which are better left to special accommodation by corporations that are established for that purpose. As the House will remember, I did mention in my budget speech that the Government has in mind the setting up of an industrial finance corporation for this very purpose.

Secondly, there is sub-clause (1) (g) which authorised a bank to acquire immovable assets other than assets like buildings etc. Again, we have come to the conclusion how that banks with large time and demand liabilities had better keep their funds fluid rather than lock them up in assets which may cause some difficulty in realisation.

The next change is in clause 7 of the Bill. The original clause 7 compelled a company which indulged in business of a banking nature, such as loan corporations and *nidhis*, and non-scheduled banks, to make it clear in their title that they were also engaged in banking business. It was pointed out that the retention of a clause of this kind would mean that institutions long established in this country and abroad, with an international reputation, like the American Express Company, would themselves have to change their title. So we provided for that by adding at the end of the clause a provision exempting scheduled banks from the operation of the clause.

The next clause where there is an important change is clause 8. The intention of the original clause was to prevent banks—a very sensible provision too—from engaging in trade. But in the course of investigation, it was pointed out that this would prevent banks from selling goods which they were asked to sell on the instructions of a customer in respect of bills of exchange; and we have provided for that again by making it quite clear that goods that have been in possession of a bank in connection with bills of exchange shall be exempt from the general clause exempting a bank from indulging in trade.

Clause 12 is a short one, which places a limit on the amount of brokerage or commission or remuneration which anybody can earn in raising capital for the banking concern of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

The next clause I want to deal with is clause 16, which corresponds to clause 15 of the old Bill. That clause was defective. The intention was quite simple, and the intention is retained in the present clause. That clause prevented the formation of a subsidiary company whose business had nothing to do with banking; but it was defective in this respect in that, while it prevented a bank from forming a subsidiary company of that nature, it did not prevent a bank from acquiring control of such company. It laid down that

a bank could invest upto 40 per cent, in a company—and if the directors were to invest an additional eleven per cent, they would get effective control of the company: and recent experience has shown that a loophole was left which led to various undesirable interlocking arrangements. So we are tightening up the clause by laying down that a banking company cannot acquire more than 20 per cent. of the shares of a company and they cannot invest more than 20 per cent. of their own money in such company.

The next clause 18 deals with licensing. We have considerably widened the scope of this clause. The original clause merely provided that a bank carrying on business in British India, but incorporated outside British India or the United Kingdom, could not carry on the business without a license. We have now gone much further than that; and we are laying down that no company or bank, other than a scheduled bank, shall carry on a banking business without a license from the Reserve Bank. Scheduled banks are exempted so long as such banks continue to be scheduled banks.

There are two exceptions to this: that is to say, a non-scheduled bank can continue to carry on business without a license but at the end of five years, it has got to satisfy the conditions which will lead to the grant of a license. Secondly, a company incorporated in a country which discriminates against Indian banks will not be able to get a license at the end of five years. There are such countries. The clause goes on to state that in order to get a license, the Reserve Bank has to be satisfied that the interests of the depositors are safeguarded and that the business is carried on in a reasonably business like and reasonably efficient manner.

The second thing which the clause does is to lay down that, even if a bank or banking company has been authorised to carry on banking business in India, it shall not open a branch without a license from the Reserve Bank. Banking in India in recent years has become rather lop-sided. The larger towns are overstaffed with a plethora of banks, and there are places where there are no banks at all; and the intention of this new licensing provision is to see that towns that have already got too many banks will get no more.

The next one is clause 20. The intention of this clause was quite a simple one and really covered the case of banks operating in British India but having a country of origin elsewhere. The clause laid down that, at the end of the year, such banks must have in India assets equal to 75 per cent, of their time and demand liabilities. It was pointed out that they could very easily arrange that once a year, if they were not too badly equipped; and so the new clause lays down that that position shall obtain at the end of every three months, and the quarterly returns are intended to show what the position in that regard is.

Clause 22 is a new clause. This may be somewhat contentious and it will, no doubt, be argued out in the Select Committee. It enables the Reserve Bank to call for information from a bank even relating to a customer's account. This was not put in in a surreptitious way, in order to meet every contingency that might arise. It is actually based on cases where a certain number of fictitious customers' accounts were opened and discovered. There is no intention of publishing the name of the customer or his account but power will be taken to publish in a consolidated and analytical form any information so obtained. The House may remember that in the recent Bank of England Bill similar powers have been taken, although there certain assurances have been by Government as to how that provision will be operated. As I say, when this clause comes under examination in the Select Committee, it will be looked into carefully. Much as Professor Ranga might want to expand it and others want to restrict it, the answer will be about right.

The next clause is merely an extension of the old clause dealing with inspection. Two new sub-clauses have been inserted enabling Inspectors to get more information than they otherwise would. Also, we have removed the old clause 28. The provisions correspond to the provisions of the Reserve Bank of India Act section 42(6) which defines the powers of the Reserve Bank in

[Sir Archibald Rowlands.]

relation to the admission of banks into the schedule or the exclusion of banks from the schedule. We have put that into a separate clause which expands the definition of the powers of the Reserve Bank as laid down in the Reserve Bank of India Act in relation to the inclusion of a bank in the schedule or the exclusion of a bank from the schedule. We have done two things. First of all we have conferred upon the Reserve Bank the power, which now rests in the Central Government, for admitting a bank in to the schedule. The Reserve Bank is in a better position than the Central Government for verifying whether a banking company satisfies the requirements of section 42 (6) and is fit for inclusion in the schedule. The second point is this. At the moment, if a bank has the necessary minimum capital of Rs. 25 lakhs, it is automatically admitted to the schedule. There is no power to withhold admission to the schedule if, in the opinion of the Reserve Bank, a bank is not in any way suitable for inclusion in the schedule. If after inspection, the Reserve Bank finds that the affairs of the bank are conducted in a way which is detrimental to the interests of the depositors or which is unsatisfactory in any other way, it can be excluded from the schedule. The more extreme penalties are still reserved for the Central Government.

I think that covers all I need say. In my own judgment this Bill is overdue and the experience of the last three years shows that it is urgently necessary. I find that my friend has tabled an amendment to circulate this for eliciting opinion. I trust he will withdraw it. It has been circulated for opinion already. The old Bill was not essentially different from the present Bill. The changes made are in matters of procedure which experience has shown to be necessary and if banking is to be developed in this country in the way in which it ought to be and if industry is to get ahead, a Bill of this nature is necessary and necessary at an early date. Sir, I move.

Mr. Deputy President: Motion moved:

"That the Bill to consolidate and amend the law relating to Banking Companies be referred to a Select Committee consisting of the Honourable Sir Asoka Roy, Sir Cowasjee Jehangir, Mr. B. C. A. Cook, Mr. Ram Nath, Mr. M. A. F. Hirtzel, Mr. G. W. Tyson, Sir Mohammad Yamin Khan, Haji Abdus Sattar Haji Ishaq Seth, Seth Yusuf Abdoola Haroon, Mr. Mohd. M. Killedar, Mr. Manu Subedar, Mr. Mohan Lal Saksena, Mr. M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar, Mr. P. B. Gole, Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal, Mr. T. A. Ramalingam Chettiar, Mr. Satya Narayan Sinha, Sardar Mangal Singh and the Mover, that the number of members whose presence shall be necessary to constitute a meeting of the Committee shall be five, and that the Committee be authorised to meet at Simla."

There is an amendment by Mr. Ahmed E. H. Jaffer, that the Bill be circulated for the purpose of eliciting opinion thereon. The Honourable Member is not here. I want to inform Honourable Members that this amendment is not in order. Honourable Members should be careful when they give notice of their amendments. I want to invite the attention of Honourable Members to Standing Order 39 (2) (b) which says:

if the member in charge moves that his Bill be referred to a Select Committee, any member may move as an amendment that the Bill be circulated for the purpose of eliciting opinion thereon by a date to be specified in the motion.

This date has not been specified in the motion. This is only for the information of Honourable Members. When they give notices of amendments, they should be careful how to draft them.

Mr. Manu Subedar (Indian Merchants' Chamber and Bureau, Indian Commerce): I support the motion moved by the Honourable the Finance Member to send this Bill to a Select Committee. It is not widely recognised in this country how inter connected the life and condition of various classes of people are and in particular the functions of a bank are not very clearly understood. When a man puts by Rs. ten which he does not need this month, with his bank but which he needs after six months his only concern is the safe

custody of that fund but this money goes to increase the working capital of the bank and in millions of little accounts like this there is a fund of working capital built up from which the affairs of the country and all those who need finances, who need money for a short time and are in a position to repay are helped by means of advances. It is by the activities of the enterprising people that trade and industry is carried on and it is to help trade and industry in this manner that the banks function and it should function and it should not be regarded that the functioning of the bank is not the concern of all sections of the population, because if one bank fails for some reason or other—and I shall presently come to those reasons—then the shock to the credit system spreads to more than one centre of population, more than one grade and group of people. All round there is a change, as in the working of the atom bomb by which you can disturb one section of the credit system without having counterbalancing shocks given to all parts thereof. Sir, there is not the slightest doubt that this Bill is a good Bill and is overdue. It should have been introduced long ago. As I said last time, it is the baby of Sir George Schuster, and I am afraid that the two subsequent Finance Members had either not sufficient interest or sufficient understanding of the problem, otherwise they would not have, in spite of repeated reminders from the Chambers of Commerce have postponed the introduction of this Bill. I, Sir, personally as Chairman of the Indian Merchants Chamber, in 1934, when Sir James Grigg came round, mentioned as the first thing at the first formal interview, that the recommendations of the Banking Enquiry Committee should be carried out. I have no doubt that if this reform had been introduced earlier, this reform which is the result of eleven Banking Enquiry Committees and of the activities of the Central Banking Enquiry Committee over a period of two years at a cost to the country of nearly 25 lakhs of rupees, if this reform had been carried out earlier. I have no doubt that 669 small and big Banks which failed during the interval of 1934 to 1943 which have been mentioned by the Government in connection with this Bill, some of these Banks would have been saved. Had some of these Banks been saved that much money would have been saved to the depositors in whose interest this Bill is brought. Had these Banks been saved, that much less shock would have been offered to industry and trade affected and also the all round shock to the credit system of the country would have been less. It is remarkable that in spite of these failures mentioned by Government, failures some of which could have been avoided by earlier legislation, it is remarkable that there is considerable progress in the banking business of this country. Many new institutions have come into existence which promise well.

Now, Sir, I will not go into individual clauses, each one of the clauses here received at our hands attention in very great detail and it is as a matter of fact from that labour that the Bill originates. But why was each clause introduced here? Because from previous accounts of liquidation of Banks, which went into liquidation, from previous history it was found that the privileges and freedom given to various persons in connection with Banks were abused. Take for example the prohibition of the pledging of unpaid call money of Banks. It was actually done in certain cases. Take again the indulging in trading operations, that was done by certain Banks, take the speculative activity, that was also done by certain Banks, take the promotion of companies, interlocking and subsidiary companies in the interests of people who were controlling the Banks, that was also done, and lastly the question of loans to Directors and concerns in which the Directors were personally interested. All these prohibitions which we find in this Bill are justified on the ground that these loopholes were availed of by unscrupulous people and that while pursuing their own greed, and their own private interest, they gave a shock to the system as a whole. They discouraged banking as a whole, they discouraged

[Mr. Manu Subedar.]

people from deposit habit and cheque habit and they generally kept the country backward. As I explained in the beginning, they prevented the use of fallow capital, the use of money which was not wanted by 'A', 'B', or 'C', for a few months, but which was more useful to 'X', 'Y', or 'Z'. It is through the machinery of the Bank that this fallow capital can be used and put to productive and useful purpose. This is the justification for this piece of legislation that is before us. It is unfortunate that Government have thought it fit to bring this Bill at the fag end of the Session, and it is very disappointing that a full discussion which we would like to have on a Bill of this nature cannot be had.

Now, Sir, there are four major points which I shall make in connection with this Bill. First of all the question of powers which are being given to the Reserve Bank of India. Powers are being given to the Reserve Bank of India in increasing numbers and in a variety of ways and at every stage of the bank's history, right from the inception at its birth. It is the Reserve Bank which will see that the bank right from its birth comes within the purview of the licence, and then while the institution is running, information will be sought about it, and if there is anything wrong, the Reserve Bank of India, would interfere and if there is anything further wrong, it is the Reserve Bank of India which would liquidate it and send it through the final rites to which even banking institutions are liable. But, Sir, there is no corresponding obligation imposed on the Reserve Bank to help, to guide and to assist the banks when they are in difficulties. The Reserve Bank is to act merely, as a policeman, that is to say, merely in order to see that the regulations are observed and that banks work within the law. I do not say this is not a useful function. It is a very desirable and proper function, but if in the course of activities of the Bank, even through no fault of those who are running that Bank, even through a cataclysm outside, often through some calamities which occur and shake the whole money market, some small institutions get into temporary difficulties which are capable of being tided over, I ask is not the Reserve Bank then going to help them.

Take another issue. If there is a small institution which has got its money unduly frozen and it therefore finds itself in difficulties, that is to say, is unable to honour cheques for a particular time, would not the Reserve Bank enable that institution to tide over that? Or, failing that, would it not assist that institution to be absorbed or to be amalgamated by somebody who is also small, and thus together we have a local Bank doing good banking service to that particular locality, surviving and functioning for the advantage of the public, would not the Reserve Bank come to its aid . . .

The Honourable Sir Archibald Rowlands: Yes, Sir, it will.

Mr. Manu Subedar: Where is the obligation?

The Honourable Sir Archibald Rowlands: It is left to its discretion.

Mr. Manu Subedar: The Reserve Bank of India did not exercise this discretion for the last ten years. It is left to the discretion of the Reserve Bank Directors, some of them are only concerned about the shareholders, and the Reserve Bank Managing Governor and others are only concerned about the orders of the Directors, as I shall show later on. I say that obligation should be there, that obligation has not yet been fulfilled and no particular section of this Bill lays that obligation definitely on the Reserve Bank of India.

Then, Sir, the second big point which I wish to make and which I shall explain in due course is the confusion of classification. I see that so far as they have gone this Bill has been drawn up very timidly, it has been drawn up by some one who had no choice left, who felt that after all this wretched thing has been hanging over his head for some time past, let us go and do something about it. In that very timidly drawn up Bill, I am glad to find that some of the criticisms which were advanced at the time of the last Sessions when this Bill was dis-

cussed, I am glad that they have made in response to those criticisms some changes which are all to the good. But in my opinion, there is still a large amount of confusion. There is for example, section 18, section 45 and section 11. There are Banks with three kinds of classification. The Imperial Bank is a class by itself. Then, we shall have licensed and unlicensed Banks, we shall have scheduled and unscheduled banks, we shall have existing Banks and Banks which will come into existence hereafter—banks which are exempted from the operation of clause 11 for two years, other banks which are exempted from the operation of clause 18 for five years. Now, Sir, ours is a strange country, although we revel in variety. We have got, as I said on the last occasion, the very poorest who die in the streets of Calcutta and we have also got the Nizam of Hyderabad, the richest human being on the face of the globe. This is India; but why have the counterpart of this in the banking world? So far as the law and the regulation is concerned, why not try to see that the regulation of all the institutions is on the same basis and that they are treated in the eyes of law in the same manner?

Then, Sir, the third very important point in connection with this Bill which I wish to make later on is discrimination. There is discrimination intended and extended in favour of British banks in clause 18(3) and in clause 11(2), and there is discrimination against banks hailing from Indian States who are regarded as foreign banks and banks from the U. S. A. who also are regarded as foreign banks. The safeguarding clauses—I am sorry I have to bring this up whenever necessary—about which the House heard this morning are responsible for disfiguring two or three clauses of this Bill. The rules about this are contained in page 40 of the Manual, and if I wanted to move an amendment omitting the words "United Kingdom" whenever it is used in these two clauses, it would not be open to me to do so because you, Sir, would rule me out of order. With regard to the Indian States too, speaking on the date on which I am speaking, it does seem to me most extraordinary and absurd that we should regard the banks of Indian States in the same category of foreign-ness as we regard banks coming from Portugal or Brazil or Japan or any other foreign and distant and perhaps a hostile country. These States are an integral part of the Indian economy; and nothing has struck me as more absurd than the fact that some of them should be regarded as foreign, that they should be dealt with and handled as if they were aliens. Now, Sir, in 1946 when this whole issue is before the country in the form in which it is before us with the arrival of the British Cabinet delegation, it does seem to me extraordinary that we should call them foreigners and treat them as foreign alien banks. This is something which we ought to smoothen out in the Select Committee, if in the interval the foreign-ness of these Indian States has ended, as we all hope it will end.

Then with regard to clauses 16 and 17, I wish to refer to the question of multiple directorship. There is no great evil which attacks the health and soundness of business conditions in India—equal only to the evil of the managing agency system—than the evil by which one man will be director not only of two or three or fifty or sixty companies but of as many as one hundred companies. Is it physically possible for any man to attend properly to the business of a large variety of companies,—not only banks and insurance companies but steel companies, rubber companies, textile companies, glass works, pottery, railways and radio companies? Is it physically possible for any man to be aware of the technical or financial aspects of the work? And yet there are people who are attending to all these and deriving fat revenues without probably giving their money's worth to the companies from which they are receiving all these fat revenues. It is a very great evil which these two sections which my Honourable friend has introduced seek to some extent to check. My Honourable friend Sir Azizul Huque will come with his Bill which will also give a very necessary blow to the same evil, but to some extent only. I trust that some day frontally we shall make it impossible for a man to take up more work than he can physically do, more work than he can properly attend to under this multiple directorship.

[Mr. Manu Subedar]

which has become a feature of Bombay and Calcutta and of many other centres.

The Honourable Dr. Sir M. Asizul Huque (Commerce Member): Not so much in Calcutta as in Bombay.

Mr. Manu Subedar: Sir, these are the four great features under which I wish to offer some criticism on this Bill.

I come in the first instance to the position of the Reserve Bank. The Reserve Bank which is the apex bank of the banking system of this country, which ought to be the fulcrum and the pivot of the economic life of this country, which should be the instrument of the economic policy of this country as a whole, has not unfortunately given that satisfaction which it should have. After the fate of the Bank of England which we have seen in its nationalisation, I would not like to take a bet; but I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that it will not be very long before this institution also will be nationalised in India. The Reserve Bank, Sir, is under no obligation to help and guide other banks; as a matter of fact it has not helped and guided them. And since the Honourable the Finance Member mentioned this matter I will say that it was the view of one part of the financial press, which he constantly refers to, that one of the big failures, *viz.*, the Travancore Bank, could have been avoided had the Reserve Bank been free and had it been willing to act in time in order to help and had not merely looked on while that bank was sinking.

[At this stage, Mr. President (The Honourable Mr. G. V. Mavalankar) resumed the Chair]

What I feel is that the Reserve Bank ought to be saddled with the obligation to help the banks in the same manner as it is saddled with the obligation to guide and check and look after them. It should not be a mere Gestapo but it should also be a nurse. Additional powers are given to the Reserve Bank under various heads but the failure of the Reserve Bank in the past is nowhere greater than in their failure to carry out the obligations given to them under section 55(1), which requires of them the creation of a second schedule in order to take into the system of Indian banking the indigenous bankers of India who are great in numbers and vast in influence and who are at present entirely loose. They are not at all in link with the western type of banking system which we have created. The Reserve Bank has equally failed with regard to obligations under section 55 (1) (b) in the matter of financing of agriculture. Have they done anything in the last twelve years of their existence to carry out this obligation? If they have not done so, why is this failure written large on them? Still more striking is the failure of the Reserve Bank with regard to section 17 (2) (a) which gave the Reserve Bank the power of rediscounting bills. Sir, I had a talk with the Managing Governor of the Reserve Bank and I found that he was not willing to undertake this work unless the banks applied to him. I had a talk with some of the banks and asked them why they did not apply and take advantage of this rediscounting facility which was given to them; they replied that they could not do so as they would be marked out as needy and their credit would be affected. This is an issue which can be easily set right, and more specifically as the question of liquidity is brought in clause 19.

Sir, as it is now 4 o'clock, I will stop here and resume my speech tomorrow.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT

STARVATION DEATHS IN STREETS OF CALCUTTA

Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal (Presidency Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I beg to move:

"That the Assembly do now adjourn."

Mr. President: Motion moved:

"That the Assembly do now adjourn."

Before the debate begins I wish to state the scope of discussion on this adjournment motion as some Honourable gentleman from the European Group wished me to do.

As stated by the mover of the motion, it is not a motion to censure the Government, nor is it a motion for the purpose of discussing the executive administration of the food supply by the Provincial Government of Bengal. As the food problem is, in a material degree, an All-India problem, involving such vital questions as procurement of food from surplus areas, transport of food within the land from one place to another, import and export of foodgrains, etc., the question is obviously one which cannot be effectively tackled with unless both the Government of India and the Provincial Government concerned are fully co-operating with each other and have one mind in respect of the steps necessary to be taken in each province, with special reference to the peculiar position of that province. In this light, the question is of importance and, is as well, a concern of this House.

The scope of discussion will, therefore, naturally be to have such information as may be available, to make and discuss such suggestions to the Government of India as will be helpful for achieving and ensuring the fullest co-operation of Provincial Governments without undue interference with the autonomy of the province and to discuss and suggest such ways and means in respect of the problems of transport, export and import, etc., which are bound to arise, from time to time, and are incidental to a successful food administration on an All-India scale.

I believe, the Honourable Members will appreciate that it is not possible to specifically define in more concrete terms the scope of the discussion on this motion.

Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal: Sir, it is not with an object of receiving cheap claptrap that I move this motion, but I am anxious that all sections of the House will assemble their combined wisdom in order to face the impending peril. The magnitude of the last disaster is still in our memory. Sir, I am told that a Daily has described my motion as 'stabbing in the back'. I assure all sections of the House, political opinions and parties that it is not my purpose to stab anybody. If I want to stab, I want to stab this scourge of famine, and if possible kill it by frontal attack. Today the zero hour has struck and it would be unwise to think that these deaths are of sudden appearance. As far as we know 1945 crops in Bengal failed if not completely and now all the winter and spring crops have nearly failed. It has had an accumulative effect, and I expect the Members of this House to realize the seriousness of the matter so that they can meet the situation, a situation which will be affecting Bengal today, but which will shake the very foundations of the Governments in the Centre and the Provinces. If 1943 situation was bad, today the situation is worse, because people are already exhausted and their fighting capacity has gone very low.

Earlier in the course of the day my good friend, Mr. Sen, Secretary Food Department, laid before us two important propositions, but they left us unconvinced. In the first place he proposed to make a distinction between what the Health Department of the Bengal Government considers to be deaths due to destitution and deaths due to starvation. So far as we are concerned, we make no distinction between the two, and it is up to the Government to disabuse themselves of this artificial distinction which has been the source of a lot of mischief in the past. In 1943 we insisted upon the authorities preparing tables showing the figures of mortality directly or indirectly connected with destitution and starvation, but it is a pity that even the lessons of 1943 have not been properly understood. The very first thing that the Government of India should have done was to instruct the Provincial Governments to introduce a column in their mortality figures in which they should show the nature of deaths from week to

[Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal]

week and from month to month. And this is one of the constructive suggestions which I wish to make to the Government that they should call for mortality returns every month, because from these mortality figures they will be in a position to understand whether the economic condition is improving or getting worse.

Another proposition of fact which was given by the Secretary Food Department was that he had got a declaration from the Bengal Government to the effect that food stock is sufficient. Sufficiency is a very treacherous term. Are we to understand that the stocks in the custody of the Bengal Government are good enough to meet the requirements of the Bengal province? Certainly not. The stocks are good as a stock, but they are certainly much less than the requirements of the province. That does not indicate that Bengal is not faced with famine. In order to appreciate the correct position, we ought to know what is the exact food position of the entire province taking into consideration the actual or probable private stocks in the custody of private parties.

Then, Sir, I warn the Government against such complacency as has been indicated by the announcements which have been made by Government. In 1943 we had similar declarations and assurances. Here persons like Sir Azizul Huque proclaimed from the housetops that food was enough. There in Bengal no less a person than the Governor of Bengal, Sir John Herbert, announced several times that food was enough, and his announcements were followed by the announcements of different Ministers from time to time saying that there was no cause of panic or worry or anxiety and that food was enough. But this 'sufficient stock' did not stand in good stead, and people began to die like dry leaves. I would like to put one question to the Honourable the Food Secretary. If there is sufficient stock, why is it that hunger marches have begun? We know our people are conservative and they do not leave their villages so easily, but since food resources are gradually becoming shy and dry, these hunger marches have begun. It is no use shutting one's eyes to facts and it is better, as a proposition of wisdom, to look into the facts as they are in the background of what happened in 1943. This 'hunger march' has begun for two reasons. Today the stocks are shy in the villages because the 'Grow More Food' campaign has failed. Secondly, the agriculturists are put to large expenses in the production of food and they do not get proper return; they do not get a remunerative price in the market.

Apart from this the Defence of India Rules are applied, sometimes formally and sometimes informally, by the Collector, or the Sub-Divisional Officer, or the Food Supply Officer, who go into the villages and threaten the villagers to dispose of their stocks or else they shall have to face the consequences. These threats are used by the procuring agent. He jumps into the village, makes a raid into the village godowns and purchases the stock at a low price. Then they pretend that they have purchased at a higher price and they charge from the Government much higher prices. The result is that the consumer has to purchase at forbidding prices. Therefore, Sir, as was pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition in the course of the food debate, we must take steps on the lines of what England did during the war time, that we must subsidize the grower at one place and the consumer at another. Unless the Indian Government looks into the matter with clear eyes, the conclusion is clear that they want to pretend to do things but they do not mean what they say.

Then I come to the question of distribution. My friend does not believe that the existence of stocks is not enough. Will the stocks walk straight into the stomachs of the hungry people? They must be made available. For example in 1943 in Jessore railway station, loads of thousands of maunds of paddy stood exposed to the sun and rain until they became rotten. What happened in Sibpore godowns? Loads of foodgrains were wasted. The other day in the course of interpellation it appeared that in some of the districts of Midnapur, Nadia and Hooghly, these foodgrains were wasted. There is no proper arrangement for safe custody in the godowns and no arrangement for protecting them

from decay. In Bengal as the Municipa., the Local and District Boards have no authority under the Act to inspect, they could not inspect, as a result of which the decay could not be detected unless the things gave a foul smell that covered miles of space. Even today in Bengal, foodgrains are being wasted and decomposing. What steps are Government taking to prevent such things?

There is another matter. In rural Bengal, as in any other rural part of India, the people are suffering considerably. This is due to the fact that no extensive rationing is there. Rationing is in some towns of Bengal. Even this rationing is not compulsory. Unless Government undertakes to introduce a system of compulsory rationing, this overall cut of 20 per cent will add insult to injury.

I would advise the Government to start in every important place cheap kitchens and canteens and community kitchens. These latter are essential because these lower middle class people have not only little purchasing power, but their power for procuring fuel has been affected and they must be given every assistance. If they get ready-made food, cooked under sanitary circumstances they will avail of that, and it is up to the Government to advise the Provincial Government and to set up a machinery of its own to supervise all these things.

In this connection, free kitchens also come in. But while I would urge upon the Government to see that all public and private enterprises are combined for the purpose of setting up free kitchens, I must give a warning against the gruel they served in 1943. This gruel instead of doing real benefit, was responsible for the death of several thousands if not more, because this gruel, as scientists have found out, did not possess more than 600 calori value and it has been stated by scientists that if a man sleeps twenty-four hours, and even if his muscles and other parts of the body do not work, and only the blood circulates, the calori value of his food must be 1,000. And here is 600 for active people. Therefore, I would suggest that the Government should take steps to take the advice of scientists so that the experience of 1943 is not repeated.

Then two large questions come in. The narrow question affects Bengal and that leads to the question of imports and exports. Yesterday it was given out that the Indonesian people are willing to give 5,00,000 tons of foodgrains. May I know if the Government of India are prepared to avail themselves of the offer? When the Azad Hind Government of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose made the offer of foodgrains from outside India, they could not accept that because prestige stood in the way. Are we to understand that today the same superstition is working? Therefore, I suggest that the offer which has been given by the Indonesian people should be accepted at once and then exports should be stopped. Here is a very ticklish question. My friend, Mr. Sen, will probably stand up and refute all the allegations. But I have the information in my hands which will show that not only in 1945 but in 1946 from the ports of Chittagong and other ports of Bengal and India, shiploads of foodgrains have gone to unknown destinations. It is for the Government to find out actual state of things.

Mr. B. B. Sen (Secretary, Food Department): Give the particulars.

Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal: I will give him the particulars. Here is a full chart.

Then there is another question. The overall cut of twenty per cent has been made in the essential foodgrains. We are told that something is being cooked in Europe and something is being done by His Majesty's Government in Great Britain. I want to inform the members of the Government that in England, the United States and Canada, wheat which is essential, is not rationed. Bread is not rationed. But here our poor people, who eat only cereal, they are subject to rationing. Again the Government of India should make a representation to His Majesty's Government that they should submit themselves to a ration in wheat and bread so that the surplus may be available for us here. Here is an acid test of sincerity and goodwill. If they mean what they profess, then this test should be applied at once. Further, I submit that the matter should be

[Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal]

considered from all these aspects. I hope the Government will rise to the height of the occasion, and if necessary they will take all sections into their confidence so that the calamity of 1943, the disaster which happened at that time is not repeated.

Pandit Govind Malaviya (Allahabad and Jhansi Divisions: Non-Muhammadan Rural): In view of what was said this morning when the question of the admissibility or otherwise of this motion was being discussed, I have no desire to try in any way to apportion any blame or to try to lay down the responsibility for the deaths which have been reported, either on the Centre or on the Provinces. What we want is that a matter of such great importance should not be allowed to drift and that every step which may help to make a recurrence of the ghastly tragedy of 1943 impossible, should be taken not only in time, but even well before time. Our difficulty, Sir, is that we have not the statistics and the figures that are needed to make an intelligent appreciation of the situation. Members in this House and elsewhere have cried in vain not only now but in the past also, trying to impress upon the Government not only the desirability but the essential need of their providing every possible information to the public from time to time. We have been sitting here for three months now practically, and except for the meagre information that we had during the food debate in the beginning, we have no information as to how things are going on province by province, how stocks stand, what the requirements are, what the expected possibilities are and what are the ways in which the needs of every area are going to be met. In fact, I have a suspicion that the Government do not themselves have the necessary statistics and figures to an adequate degree. It is an appalling state of affairs, because in this world today, statistics and figures and correct data are the essential vehicles through which alone anything can be done. We do not know, for instance, how our acreage in the different provinces are yielding from year to year and how they stand today. A few weeks ago we were told of harrowing prospects of a terrible famine facing this country on account of the drought that we had on our heads. It was stated that during the last 35 years such drought had never occurred in this country. A few weeks later however the Government have said that the situation in those very provinces is vastly better and different. It was said that the entire winter crop in the U. P. was almost annihilated. If I am not mistaken, the Honourable the Food Member said that there was no prospect of the crop yielding anything like the normal yield or even very much less. Now reports from every district in the U. P. state that if there is any shortage anywhere it is very small. We were told that the production in the Punjab was going to be very much below the normal. The other day we had a statement by one of the largest cultivators in the Punjab, a certain European gentleman. He said, I hope it is correct, that he had 150,000 acres of land under his cultivation, and, he pooh-pooed the idea that there was going to be any deficit. This gentleman has been a member of the legislature. He said that the crops were such that they were going to have enough for themselves and plenty to spare. Take Bengal. We know that the average production of rice in Bengal during the last decade or two has been something like 8.6 million tons. The yield for the current year, according to Government information, is going to be 9.8 million tons. These are figures published by Government only last week. Thus, there is a surplus of 700,000 tons of rice this year above the normal annual yield. Then, only five or six years ago, before the war, we know, that the annual carry over in Bengal used to be something like 100,000 tons. We know the argument will be advanced that the population of Bengal has been rapidly increasing. I do not know about that nor do I want to go into that point, because I have very limited time at my disposal. But in the brief space of a few years the population could not have increased to an extent that,—with the permanent annual carry over of nearly 100,000 tons *plus* the 700,000 tons surplus that there should be this year if Government figures are correct, in all making 800,000 tons—that that surplus in Bengal should be nowhere. It is

amazing. I am not suggesting that the Government are deliberately trying to conceal things or to gloss over facts. My complaint is that the Government would not have statistics and figures collected regularly from time to time in a rational manner which alone can enable them to tackle this problem successfully. I should like to have an answer on this point.

There are other aspects of this question. Here is before me this very fine report of Dr. Burns about the Technological Possibilities of Agricultural Development. He has gone into the production figures of every single item of foodgrains. The total production of rice in the year 1942-43 (I take this as there are no later figures given, but I take it too that in subsequent years we must certainly have had an increase) was 23 million tons. Wheat was nine million tons and other foodgrains were in all over 16 million tons. Now, Sir, with your permission I should like to read to the House what Dr. Burns has to say about the possibilities

Mr. President: The Honourable Member seems to be going into the history of the whole question.

Pandit Govind Malaviya: No, Sir. I will be as brief as possible.

Mr. President: The Honourable Member has already taken seven minutes. He has got only eight minutes more.

Pandit Govind Malaviya: Very well, Sir. Speaking about rice Dr. Burns says that on a conservative estimate these yields can be increased by 30 per cent. I shall come to the end of his paragraph. He says:

“There should even be no difficulty in increasing the present average outturn by 50 per cent, namely, ten per cent, by variety alone”, and so on and so forth. About wheat he says something similar, about jowar 20 per cent., about bajra 25 per cent. about maize 25 per cent, and so on and so forth.

Now, Sir, of the total rice production of 23 million tons even a ten per cent, increase would mean 2.3 million tons. Wheat production having been nine million tons even a ten per cent, increase would give us .9 million tons and the other crops would give us 1.6 million tons. That will make a total of 4.8 million tons, which is more than the total amount of deficit which the Honourable the Leader of the House at one stage stated before the Combined Food Board. Now, Sir, three years have elapsed since Government had this report before them. I want to know what they have done in this direction; leaving alone the question of increasing the acreage in the country. Did the Government realise the magnitude of the tragedy that was facing the country? If so, why did they not arrange to supply even seeds to the cultivators which without the least further effort would have given us more than four million tons annual increase in foodgrains production in the country. Three or four years have passed and we are nowhere near that point. Months ago, I had privately brought this to the notice of the Honourable Food Member. (Based as my point was on Government published figures of incontrovertible authority, he could give no answer to it. It appears to me to be a matter of almost criminal negligence that when all the food shortage in the country could so easily have been met permanently, the Government have not cared to move their little finger in that direction. It should be unnecessary to make any further comments on the matter.

Similarly, there are other things. I have not the time to go into details but I should like to know why all this has not been done. Why did not Government take a rational view of the difficulties of procurement? Why did not the Centre give to the provinces sufficient money to subsidise the purchase and sale of foodgrains, so that they may be sold at a very much cheaper rate in the ration shops. With the rural rationing which my friend Mr. Sanyal has suggested and with those cheap grain shops which might cost us a great deal

[Pandit Govind Malaviya]

of money, but I suppose the problem is big enough for it, the difficulty of procurement will be minimised to a great extent and . . .

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava (Food Member): How will it be minimised?

Pandit Govind Malaviya: I am coming to that if the Honourable the Food Member will care to listen to me. We should thus reduce the sale prices of grains. And on the other hand, we should pay better prices to the producers not only better prices but tempting prices. For instance, today wheat is being sold at ration shops at something like three seers to a rupee. If we sell the wheat to people at these shops at four or five seers to the rupee and then offer to the cultivators a price of one and a half or two seers to a rupee, where is the cultivator in India who will not be willing to part with his wheat at that tempting price?

Mr. B. R. Sen: Where is the money?

Pandit Govind Malaviya: I say this not because I think that the cultivator should not have the wheat for himself but I want to take a practical view of things.

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: Where will you find the money? Have you calculated how much it will cost?

Pandit Govind Malaviya: My friend today speaks of the money for it. If I had the time I would go into the budget and show how much money is being wasted by the Departments in the Centre and elsewhere and how by diverting a major part of that money this problem could be successfully solved. I have not the time for it. I am not suggesting easily that we should deprive the cultivator of his wheat. The wheat and rice cultivators in various parts of the country did not themselves take wheat and rice normally. They lived upon some other cheaper and locally abundant spare and swift-crop grains. During these coming four months mangoes also largely made up their daily meal. Therefore, if we can appeal to his sentiment and tell him that the country is going to starve, he will be willing to live upon kodon and kakuni, birra and matar and savan and mangoes, the local products which he used to produce, and live upon largely, and part with his wheat and rice at tempting prices with which money he can serve his other needs. That is an easy method of doing it. You will say, "How are we going to induce the people to co-operate?" There are or will be in all the Provinces now Governments of the people. Let us have a representative from each one of these Governments and set up a Central Food Board here with representatives of the Central Government also on it, and in consultation with these representatives of the Provinces carry on a policy which would invite the co-operation of local committees made up of local representatives, whom the people respect and who by their advice and appeal would then induce the people whose confidence they possess to part with wheat and rice, and enable you to solve this problem.

Sir, the panic which has been created by the Government over this matter has done more harm in this country than even the foodgrain shortage which we have at present. As I have worked out, there is no foodgrain shortage in Bengal; there is no foodgrain shortage in Bihar; there is no foodgrain shortage in the U.P.; there is no foodgrain shortage in the Punjab; there is no foodgrain shortage in Sind. There is difficulty only in the South of India, and if we had not created this terrible panic, if we had not thereby goaded the poor and the rich alike to close upon the little which they had and to try to get everything more that they could lay hands upon, possibly the difficulties would have been very much less. I therefore suggest that this Government should not take it lightly whether two persons die in Calcutta or two hundred persons die. One single life is precious enough for a Government to take pains. I hope the Government will still see its way to adopt the suggestions which have been made by Mahatma Gandhi and which have been made in this House and by others, and, by thus winning the confidence of the people, will save the situation.

I should like to pay a compliment to the Honourable the Leader of the House for the conspicuous ability with which he tried to obtain foodgrains for India. We all admire him and except for the fact that he did not represent either this country or its people and that he was an agent of an alien Government which has not the confidence or the respect of this country, except for that impersonal reason, he should have even won our gratitude for his work.

I hope, Sir, this House will adopt this adjournment motion to impress upon the Government the vital need for their giving up their lethargy, inaction and inefficiency and for dealing with this problem in a manner that will ensure that no lives may be lost, and the people in India may be able to feed themselves properly.

Sri R. Venkatasubba Reddiar (South Arcot *cum* Chingleput: Non-Muhamadan Rural): Yesterday the *Hindustan Times* said that the Punjab Minister is doing his best over this food problem. I would like to draw the attention of the Honourable Member for the Food Department to an article in the *Hindustan Times*, dated the 8th April, on page 4, under the heading 'The 50-50 Muddle'. It says:

"One of the constant complaints received by Mr. Sachar concerns the rationing of wheat and rice on a 50-50 basis. It is said that many famished Bengalis died when they were forced to eat wheat in the absence of rice. Punjabis in rationed towns are complaining of mysterious ailments which they attribute to rice eating. Muscular pains, colds, indigestion and gout have been traced to the introduction of rice in the menu. Heavily displayed advertisements are appearing in several Indian language papers describing the woes of the Punjabis as a result of rice-eating!"

It is difficult to understand the utility of conserving wheat at the expense of rice when the Punjabis need wheat and people of other provinces want more rice."

Sir, even on a prior occasion I brought to the notice of the Honourable Secretary for the Food Department that where rice is not wanted rice is sent; where wheat is not wanted wheat is sent; where a man does not know how to prepare raw rice, raw rice is supplied; where a man does not know how to prepare boiled rice he is supplied with boiled rice. In spite of several attempts to draw the attention of the Department, Sir, they have not chosen to alter their decisions and try to send rice where rice is needed. Madras is a province which is accustomed to rice-eating. Punjab is accustomed to wheat-eating. But some time ago the rice ration in the Punjab has been increased and wheat ration has been cut short. In Delhi where most of the people are accustomed to eating wheat, I understand wheat ration has been cut short since yesterday or the day before yesterday. Now that the Government is getting a lot of wheat, or at least something, from the other countries, I would request the Government to take that wheat and distribute it to the provinces where wheat is being consumed habitually, and to divert the rice which the Punjabis and others who are not accustomed to eat, and on whom the rice is being sought to be thrust, procure as much as possible and send it to provinces like Madras or other provinces where rice is consumed on a large scale and where nothing but rice is consumed.

I wanted to help the Food Department by raising some short notice questions. Somehow or other I find that the Food Department in this Government has been accustomed not to accept any short notice questions. These questions were addressed not with a view to criticize the Government but only to help them, if possible, to get as much as possible from the ryots. Yesterday I addressed three questions, but two of them have been returned to me saying that the Food Secretary is unwilling to accept the questions. One of them is:

"Is it a fact that the Government of India insist on foodgrains being purchased and sold through wholesalers and retailers and do not approve of the idea of large scale producers or associations of producers supplying direct to retailers either as grain or as rice; and if so whether the Government propose to direct that if large scale producers or associations of producers are prepared to supply to retailers grain or rice directly without the intervention of the whole sales they shall be permitted to do so?"

I do not see any reason why this question should not have been accepted. I knew even before I sent these questions that the Food Secretary, as usual, would refuse and say that he is unwilling to accept the short-notice questions. I had no time to fulfil the ten days limit. So I made a special request in my

[Sri R. Venkatasubba Reddiar.]

letter. But somehow or other, the usual answer, that he is unwilling to accept the questions, has been given. The other question is:

"Is it a fact that the Bengal Government has repeatedly been saying that the rural population migrate to the province as they do not find foodgrains available in villages and die in the province. . . ."

Mr. B. R. Sen: Do these short notice questions have any relevancy to the adjournment motion, Sir?

Mr. President: The object of the adjournment motion is neither censure nor a mention of the past sins of what may be commission or omission. The object is to give such constructive suggestions that the Honourable Members may have to give with reference to the situation with which the country is faced. And if Honourable Members restrict themselves only to that aspect of the question, then only the adjournment motion will be well discussed. That is the view which the Chair takes.

Sri R. Venkatasubba Reddiar: It is only with that view that I am referring to this. We were told that in Bengal people emigrated to the cities because they did not find grain in the villages: they expected to get some food in the cities which were already rationed; and not being able to get any food they were obliged to die of starvation. My suggestion therefore is that whenever this monopoly procurement or any system of procurement is undertaken by the Government, a sufficient quantity should be left in the villages for those people who are living there—those who produce and those who do not produce—and only the excess over that quantity should be exported from that village. If that system is followed, I do not think these people would have gone to the cities in Bengal or anywhere else and died there. Their deaths could have been avoided by the Government pursuing this policy. This is the suggestion I wanted to make in putting that question: it was not with any idea of censuring Government.

We expect rationing to mean that what is available will be distributed to all people equally. There is a system of statutory rationing and informal rationing. Informal rationing has been introduced, I understand, throughout Madras province, in the villages. As the Honourable Food Secretary said a few days ago, informal rationing does not mean that the Government or authorities who introduce this rationing are obliged to supply to all those who need grain, whereas statutory rationing throws that duty on them. In informally rationed areas they procure whatever is possible from the producers; they do not care for the people who do not produce and they take away everything from them and they say they are not obliged to meet the demands of those people and they do not care: they say they are not bound in informally rationed areas to supply those who have no grain. This should be put an end to. When the Government thinks it has a right to take away a man's produce from the population of that village, for the benefit of those who do not produce, it is the first duty of the Government to see that they provide for all those people who live in that village, whether they are producers or landowners or landless people or nonproducers. There is no meaning in saying that they will take away what is available now and when they find that the village has no grain or insufficient grain, then they will send it back; because when they send it back they add to it the cost of taking it to the town and sending it back from the town to the village, with all the wholesale's and middleman's charges. I would suggest that just as they are running grain shops in the Railway Department and this Government is spending twelve crores of rupees on that account, all the poor people whose means of purchasing are very limited may be supplied with grain at below cost price or the price at which it is purchased in the villages.

Government has proposed virtual subsidies for the sinking of wells and also the supply of manure and granting of loans and free grants. These can only be paper propaganda. The other day the *Hindustan Times* had a caricature showing that the Honourable Member was only growing files and not growing crops. As a matter of fact the Madras Government have announced

that they would subsidise the sinking of wells and give half grants to those persons who are prepared to sink wells within three months. I understand that so far nobody has been able to get the sanction of the Government or the authorities concerned for sinking their wells; the time given is between the 15th February and the 15th June: the time is so short that no person can take advantage of it; and all this advertisement that they are subsidising or doing this or that will only go in waste, and any subsidy will not reach the man for whom it is intended.

So once again in spite of the fact that the Food Department and the food officials in the provinces have been turning a deaf ear to our joint proposal or request to give the producer a remunerative price, I would implore the present Food Secretary and the Food Member, so long as they are there, to assure this price only to induce the production of more grains. With these words I support the motion.

Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi (Calcutta and suburbs: Muhammadan Urban): Mr. President, I wish the Honourable and learned Leader of the Opposition had not allowed this motion to be put before the House. I am sure you have felt as sleepy as I have done in listening to the speeches delivered from my right: they were heartless, they were argumentless and they were meaningless, for the simple reason—I repeat with greater emphasis the quotation from some paper which the Honourable Mover brought to your notice—that I have passed through all the stages of the Famine through which the Honourable the Mover of the adjournment motion and the Honourable and learned Leader of the Opposition have passed. You must have noticed that most of the speeches including that of the Mover were beside the point. It is one of the tragedies of this House that ordinary members like us do not get copies of the adjournment motions and their exact language. I was successful in getting one. It speaks of "the recent starvation deaths in the streets of Calcutta." In 1943 processions began to come into Calcutta and the propaganda that was broadcast all over the world was that there was a famine in Bengal, but it was restricted to Midnapore and Calcutta, as if the rest of Bengal where almost two millions out of the three millions died, did not exist. These processions came only to Calcutta. I would like to ask the Honourable the Mover if he does make a reply to explain why Calcutta and no other town like Dacca, Faridpore, Mymensingh, Rajshahi and other places, had no processions? Speaking with some knowledge of Calcutta and the vital statistics as they are published, I declare here with all the sense of responsibility I can command that this trying to hang an adjournment motion, on just two deaths in Calcutta from starvation is a novel manner of welcoming a Muslim Ministry in Bengal. It has a very ugly meaning of opposing the possible chances of things coming to a sensible arrangement in Bengal. (Interruptions). Will you kindly ask these gentlemen not to interrupt? Otherwise I may have to hit back, which I should like to avoid.

Mr. President: Order, order. Let there be no interruptions.

Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi: Calcutta has a pavement population of anything from one lakh to two lakhs. Marriages take place on the pavement, children are conceived on the pavement, they are born on pavements, and they live and die on pavements. The Corporation of Calcutta, and the Government of Bengal have tried their best to eliminate this population; but religious-minded Hindu gentlemen will go on tolerating them, will go on allowing them to live on the pavement; and if any action is taken, then you are considered as possessing heart of stone. Deaths among them occur due to many causes including destitution and starvation. This is normal to Calcutta. There is nothing new in that. An adjournment motion because two old women died of starvation is not justified.

Sir, Honourable Members to my right are talking of Calcutta alone. God be praised. Bengal is reported on good authority to possess enough. Why don't they concentrate their efforts now on Madras, Bombay Travancore and leave Bengal into the safe hands of people who will now see to it that

[Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi.]

whoever is the Food Member at the Centre, Bengal is not neglected as in the past. We have now got, I hope, the power to make the people at the Centre wake up. During the famine there was unfortunately a Viceroy here who had peculiar notions regarding the governance of India. Within a period of four months, we had four Food Members and incidentally he himself had charge of the Department for a time. Now, whether the Secretary of State succeeds in India or not, we shall see to it that the Government of India does not play any of the tricks that it did during the last famine and to-day I assure you,—and through you Members on my right who are trying to make political capital out of the death of two old women who died in the hospital of destitution and starvation—that things shall improve soon. They have tried to make a distinction between the two words. Even if I accept that destitution and starvation are one and the same thing, let me assure you that the Health Officer of Calcutta does not acknowledge the seriousness of the position as the Honourable the Mover of the adjournment motion would have us believe. Sir, may I also draw your attention to the fact that all this talk of scarcity and the two deaths due to starvation are restricted to Calcutta. Why don't they realise that processions if restricted to 24 Parganas Hoogly, Howrah and Midnapore alone have a sinister meaning in them. The moment this is realised the game is exposed. They bring in conducted processions into the city of Calcutta, then, of course, nationalist newspapers publish photographs and shout a good deal but people who understand the meaning behind it realise that it is a *natak*, and a *tamasha*. This is something which disproves their case rather than supports it.

There is no danger in Bengal. I know Government statistics are not dependable. Government statistics in the matter of jute have been acknowledged by the Government of Bengal to be incorrect but, Sir, so far as conditions today are concerned things are not so bad as they are perhaps in the South. I, therefore, beg of the Honourable Member who have moved this adjournment motion to leave Bengal alone for the time being. We shall take care of ourselves and of them also. I guarantee, almost with a certainty, that I shall not allow the Honourable the Mover of the adjournment motion to die of starvation. I shall also see to it that those who are trying to create this unnecessary trouble, to create this sense of fear and panic on information which cannot be considered as dependable or reliable,—because two women have died of starvation—are not allowed to have their own way. Vital statistics as published by the Corporation are always questioned by gentlemen of the nationalist tendency of mind and they need not have brought this adjournment motion. I hope even, at this last moment, the Honourable and learned Leader of the Opposition will not allow this adjournment motion to be passed. I will repeat my appeal and say—if possible, withdraw it. If you cannot do it, then let it be talked out. Let there be at least for the coming months no repetition of the horrors not of the famine but of the attitude of my non-Muslim compatriots who gloated over the deaths in the Muslim community in the last famine, because they felt that in the 1951 census the Muslim majority will go down. I can speak with knowledge for I heard the statement with my own ears. I appeal to the Honourable and learned Leader of the Opposition not to allow that poisonous, that bitter experience of the past to be repeated. We suffered agonies last time. There is no danger of suffering agonies now. I beg of them to extend a helping hand to us and we shall see that starvation does not stalk the land now and in the future.

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: Sir, I welcome this motion as it gives me an opportunity to state clearly once again what the position of the Centre is *vis-a-vis* the Provinces. This is necessary at the present moment because new ministries are coming in and I think we should make it clear how the Food Department has worked in the past and what its powers and scope are. Speaking constitutionally, the Food Department at the Centre has no authority or very little authority over the Provinces.

[At this stage, Mr. President vacated the Chair which was then occupied by Mr. Deputy President (Sir Mohammad Yamin Khan).]

Food is a provincial subject, so is agriculture and we at the Centre have no real power to dictate to the provinces as to what they should do or they should not do. But in 1942, it was realised that if India was not to suffer from food shortage and starvation on a large scale, it was necessary to have an all-India plan. We should have a Food Department at the Centre. This Department was intended to co-ordinate the activities of the various Provinces and to bring

5 P. M. them into line with the all India plan, it was felt necessary that we should have an all India front for food. Some Provinces turned round and said, "You have no business to order us or to dictate to us." But we persisted and in the end we were able to evolve a policy which depended on four main points; the first was procurement, the second was controlled movement, the third was rationing, and the fourth was price control. I am glad to say that in the all India Food conference, which was held in Delhi in October 1943 the main planks of our policy were accepted unanimously. All the Provinces agreed to work according to them. That was the sanction that we had. In that conference, I said very clearly that public opinion in India and abroad looked to the Government of India to lead and to direct the united efforts of the various Provinces in connection with food within the common plan. I said that it was my inescapable duty as Food Member to accept that challenge and to carry out the policy. I said to the representatives of the Provinces that I looked to them, to give me their support and their co-operation. I went on to say that in the mobilisation of India's resources, the Government of India would be obliged to take and implement decisions which might at times conflict with what appeared to be local or sectional interests. I also said that whenever possible, to the greatest extent possible the Government of India would proceed after consultation with the Provinces and with their consent. But if circumstances should compel the Government of India to proceed otherwise, I said, that I looked to them to accept and implement those decisions which we, at the Centre, and which we alone could take in the interest of India as a whole. Sir, that was the statement of policy which I made in 1943 and since then by convention and by common consent, it is being carried out. Now, Sir, it is extremely important that when Member after Member in this House gets up and criticises the Government of India, he should understand what our limitations are and to what extent we can go. In a lot of these matters it is up to the Provinces to take decisions and it is not the intention of the Government of India to interfere unduly with the autonomy of the Provinces. A good deal of the criticisms which I have heard made to-day and which were made in the course of the Food Debate, some time ago pertains to matters which concern the Province. Now, we have popular Government functioning in the Provinces, we have Legislative Assemblies there; and it would be only right that those grievances should be ventilated there. In the last resort if there are matters which require co-ordination, matters which can be dealt with only by the Government of India, they may be ventilated here. Sir, I do not know whether it is understood that the only power which the Central Government have of control or guidance and co-ordination over provincial action are those which relate to the proclamation of emergency and the existence of section 93 Governments. For example, the Central Government have power to give directions under section 126-A. We have in the Food Department used these powers on two occasions only, to give directions to Provinces. Then, Sir, the other power of guidance and control is under section 54 of all actions in section 93 Provinces. I want to make it clear that the Government of India, that is to say the Governor General in Council, does not possess that power. It is the Governor General in his individual capacity who possesses this power. These are the two main powers. Now that section 93 Governments have disappeared, we shall have to leave things more and more to the Provinces and it will be their duty to carry out the main policy which may be agreed upon between themselves under the guidance of the Central

[Sir Jawala Prasad Srivastava.]

Food Department. It is with this object in view that I propose summoning a conference of all the provincial Premiers so that they may sit round the table and decide upon the main features of their food policy, which is urgent, as we all know. I hope that as soon as ministries are constituted I shall be able to call this conference. For example, there is the question of price. As I explained elsewhere the other day we take the responsibility for fixing prices on a regional basis or on an all India basis. If Provinces break away and fix their own prices, procure grain and sell grain at their own prices, there will be chaos and confusion and nothing else. Moreover, the importance of an all India plan has been shown by the fact that we have been able to make strong representations to the United Nations and the Combined Food Board at Washington and we have been able to get these imports or at least the promise of these imports. Now, Sir, if a Province went on its own begging for allocations I do not think it would have succeeded. There is also the question of transport and it is only the Centre which can control movement and provide transport. In a time of scarcity and emergency like this it is most important, to my mind, that all the Provinces should work together and work to a common plan. I do not have much doubt that Provinces will agree to continue the policy that we have so successfully pursued so far. There is a good deal of agreement between the Provinces today as there has been in the past, and I hope that nothing would be done to break that.

Sir, mention was made of an offer said to have been made by the Indonesian Premier of a large quantity of rice. I received information about it only today and I am looking into the matter. I do not know whether an offer was really made and when, but I shall pursue the matter and if there is any rice to be obtained from Indonesia the House may rest assured that we shall try to get it.

Mr. Manu Subedar (Indian Merchants' Chamber and Bureau: Indian Commerce): It is one-half million tons, mentioned in an interview by the Indonesian Prime Minister.

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: We have not received the offer in the Food Department. I received a telegram today from my friend Mr. Sadanand of the *Free Press of India*, and I am looking into the matter. If that rice is available there we shall be very glad to have it.

Sir, this debate has taken the usual course; I do not think there are any major points which have been ventilated this evening and which I am required to answer. We have discussed almost threadbare all the details of food policy and administration. If there are still any points left or points made by speakers after me; my Honourable friend Mr. Sen will reply to them.

Shri Sarat Chandra Bose (Calcutta: Non-Muhammadian Urban): Sir, I can assure you that I shall not detain the House for more than a few minutes, and that I am particularly anxious that Mr. Sen, the Food Secretary, should make his contribution to this debate. If I have decided to speak it is because of certain remarks which fell from my Honourable friend Mr. Siddiqi. The debate which we initiated this afternoon was not initiated in a light-hearted manner; and even if it were possible for me or for any Member of my party to emulate the manner and tone of Mr. Siddiqi we would not do so, particularly on a question of the nature and of the magnitude now before the House.

The Honourable the Food Member has laid down the policy of the Central Government in regard to this matter. I desire to impress upon him the lesson which we and others have learnt since the year 1943. It is this. The famine of 1943, and its aftermath have demonstrated the necessity of a strong Central Government which would be able to coordinate the activities of the different Provincial Governments in this country.

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I agree.

Shri Sarat Chandra Bose: The Honourable the Food Member says he agrees. I have no doubt he does; but if I have raised this subject, it is because I consider it necessary to give him a warning against the fissiparous tendencies

that we see all round. Not only should this food problem be one which should engage the attention of the Central Government more than it has done in the past; there are other problems too in regard to which it is necessary that the Central Government should be the co-ordinating body with reference to the activities of the different Provincial Governments. And if I may venture to make a suggestion, one of the subjects to which the Central Government should apply its attention, energy and knowledge and also advise its officers to do so, is the subject of agriculture. In the course of this debate several suggestions have been made by the Honourable the Mover of this motion and by other speakers on behalf of my party who followed him; and I would request the Food Member and the Food Secretary to give careful consideration to the concrete suggestions already made. It was my privilege during the first food debate which took place—as far as I can remember—on the 30th January last to make six concrete suggestions. I do not know how many of these suggestions, which were welcomed by the Food Member himself, have been implemented by now.

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: Every one has been pursued.

Shri Sarat Chandra Bose: I suppose there is a difference between pursuing a subject and implementing certain suggestions. However, I want to add to the suggestions I made that the attention of the Central Government and the Provincial Governments should be concentrated more than before on the rural areas, because we have all found from experience that the rural areas have been neglected in the past. This lesson we learnt in 1943. Neglect of rural areas was what we were apprehensive of yesterday when news of starvation deaths came through the papers. I would ask the Food Member and the Food Secretary either directly or through the Bengal Government to give more attention to the rural areas than has been given in the past. The people of the rural areas do not start hunger-marches for the fun of the thing, notwithstanding the light-hearted effusions of my Honourable friend Mr. Siddiqi. Hunger-marches are due to hunger and not for the purpose of making political demonstrations. I would therefore request Government—particularly the Food Member and the Food Secretary—to pay particular attention to the rural areas, to examine the figures that may reach them regarding the stocks in the rural areas and to apply themselves more vigorously to the question of transport of food. That is a matter in which the Central Government can certainly do a great deal of good to the rural population.

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: We always do that. In November last I personally visited 18 districts of Bengal and went into the rural areas.

Shri Sarat Chandra Bose: I am glad to hear that the Food Member has applied himself to this question. But the distress in the rural areas continues, and there can be no doubt whatever that unless we are vigilant the distress will increase. And it is because we desire the Government of India to be more vigilant than before that we moved this adjournment motion.

Sir, I shall not detain the House any longer because we desire that before this debate ends the Food Secretary should make his contribution to it.

Mr. B. R. Sen: The debate this afternoon has covered a wide ground, but I propose to confine myself to the actual motion moved, i.e., deaths in the streets of Calcutta. I have this morning given the facts of the case as far as they are known to us. There have been two deaths from starvation in the second half of March. The other deaths reported were deaths due to other causes in hospitals, and deaths of paupers which are usually taken care of by the Municipal authorities. The admissions in the Auxiliary Hospitals in Calcutta have increased in recent weeks which shows that there has been some increase in the influx of destitutes from the surrounding areas. Bengal Government's attention has already been drawn to this and they have taken up the question of stopping the flow of the destitutes into the city. They have got three relief centres for the destitutes already working on the roads to Calcutta. They have taken up the setting up of another three homes for the destitutes.

[Mr. B. R. Sen.]

As for the destitutes in the streets of Calcutta, daily patrols have been arranged to remove these destitutes to the hospitals when necessary. In spite of all these arrangements, there have been deaths which are greatly regrettable, but the Bengal Government we are assured, are taking all possible steps to prevent such deaths in future.

The question arises whether the Bengal Government have got sufficient stocks to meet the situation. My Honourable friend, the mover of the motion, said that the 1945 rice crop in Bengal has been a total failure. He is not correct in his statement. The Bengal Government had themselves issued a press note some months ago to say that the crop position this year which had looked very dangerous in the month of August improved with the rains in September and their estimate was that they would get 94 per cent. of the normal rice crop this year. The normal rice crop is about 9·7 million tons.

Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal: Is the Honourable Member aware that this report of the Government was challenged by the national press and that there was no further communique issued by the Government?

Mr. B. R. Sen: We are satisfied that the best possible assessment has been made. Challenges are always made, but they are not proved. We are satisfied that the Bengal Government have made as good an estimate as anybody could. Their estimate is that there will be 9·2 million tons of rice as against the normal crop of 9·7 million tons. On this basis the Bengal position is better than that of most of the deficit provinces this year, and we do not think that the stock position need cause anxiety for the coming few months. We are constantly watching the situation in Bengal; we are in daily contact with the situation in Bengal; stock position is telephoned to us every morning. If at any time we find that the Bengal position has deteriorated or shown indications of deterioration, we shall do whatever is necessary to be done.

My Honourable friend, Mr. Sanyal, also asked the question what we meant by Bengal Government having sufficient stocks. It is true that the Bengal Government have not under their control all the surplus stocks of the province. But they have got sufficient stocks to meet their present commitments in rationed areas and to maintain their provisioning scheme. In Bengal certain areas are covered by statutory rationing and certain other areas are covered by provisional rationing, i.e., cards are issued to poorer sections of the people and they are assured of a certain ration on the production of cards.

Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal: May I know if the Honourable Member will consider the advisability of introducing extensive rationing in rural areas either on compulsory basis or otherwise?

Mr. B. R. Sen: That has been one of the main planks of our policy. We have constantly advised the Provincial Governments that they should extend rural rationing, especially in those areas where there is any apprehension of scarcity. In Madras there is statutory rationing over the whole of the Malabar district. In other districts there is informal rationing which is very much the same but without statutory backing. It is one of the main points of our policy that rationing should be extended to rural areas where trouble is apprehended and we have constantly pressed this on the Bengal Government and we have no doubt that Bengal Government will extend their rationing to rural areas where it is necessary to do so.

It is true, as I have said, that there have been two deaths, and I entirely agree that if there are deaths we must see why these deaths took place in spite of sufficiency of stocks and in spite of adequate arrangements for the destitutes. This is a matter which requires further examination and I assure the House that the Central Government will take up this matter with the Bengal Government, and if it is possible to remove any defects in the administration, we shall do so. We have every hope that the Bengal Government will fully co-operate in making their administration successful in this matter.

With your leave, I will read out a passage from a Press Note which has been issued by the Bengal Government on this matter:

"The Bengal Government have under close observation the first signs of the appearance of destitutes in Calcutta."

Indicating the lines on which the problem is being dealt with, Government state that:

"ample accommodation is available in destitute camps in Calcutta which have been kept in existence since 1943, and steps to remove destitutes from the streets to these camps have been resumed. At the same time preventive measures are afoot in the two districts from which destitutes have begun to drift in, the 24 Parganas and Howrah, to arrest this flow both by the provision of home relief and employment at relief works in the district at the point where distress originates, and by opening destitute camps to accommodate persons who have left their villages and intercept them so far as possible on the way to Calcutta."

So the Bengal Government now are seriously tackling the situation. Apart from running these destitute homes in Calcutta they are trying to provide home relief to people in the rural areas. I think that the House should feel satisfied that the Bengal Government would do whatever is necessary to be done to prevent deaths from starvation in future.

Question has been raised as regards exports. My Honourable friend, Mr. Sanyal, said that one of the causes of the present development must be the panic which has been caused by reports about exports. I entirely agree that statements about large exports do create panic, but I do not agree with him that these statements are correct. Several statements had appeared in the press. The first statement that I saw was by the President of the Marwari Chamber of Commerce in which he gave certain figures. I investigated this matter through the Chief Controller of Exports here and through the Exports Trade Controller in Calcutta, and on the figures that we were supplied I issued a contradiction. In spite of the contradiction, another statement was issued by the President of the Marwari Chamber of Commerce. I contradicted that statement again in a weekly Press Conference that was held in Delhi. There have been several questions both in this House and in the Upper House in regard to this matter and on every occasion we have stated that the policy of the Government is that there should be no export of foodgrains from India.

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: And there has been none.

Mr. B. R. Sen: Mr. Sanyal said that he had documents with him. The document which he is referring to is the daily export list. The President of the Marwari Chamber of Commerce also referred to that daily export list. I was in Calcutta last week and one of the things I did was to meet the President of the Marwari Chamber of Commerce, and ask him on what basis he was making those statements. He explained to me the document on which he had based his reports. I went with him to the Export Trade Controller's office and set round with him and the Export Trade Controller and discussed the whole matter. It was quite clear to him after the discussion that he had made his statements on incorrect and inadequate information. He said that he was prepared to issue a statement to that effect. The point is that the daily export lists are supplied with the shipping documents of the shippers. These export list do not necessarily represent the actual shipments made. The shipments very often fall short of the figures given in the export list. Sometimes they exceed the quantities mentioned there.

Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal: Is the Honourable Member in a position to say which of these items in the shipment report is incorrect, that is to say, which are the ships supposed to reach foreign countries and do not reach?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: Every one.

Mr. B. R. Sen: I discussed this very point. According to him certain exports have taken place to foreign countries other than Ceylon and Ceylon is not one of the foreign countries. It was explained by the Export trade Controller that during the war, in order to prevent information being given, all exports outside India were shown as exports to foreign countries. This practice continued till December 1945. Though there is a column in that daily export list to show exports to foreign countries and another to show exports to Ceylon, actually during the war all exports outside India were shown as exports to

[Mr. B. R. Sen.]

foreign countries. Therefore the statement that I made that out of 62,000 tons mentioned altogether 42,000 tons went to Ceylon though shown as to foreign countries, that statement was fully correct. Another item was export of 16,000 tons. It was actually an export to Mysore through the Port of Marmagoa and Marmagoa is a foreign port.

Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal: Will the Government of India consider the desirability of issuing a statement showing in the communique that consignments which were meant for foreign countries, giving the details, actually reached such Indian ports and they were availed of by such and such?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: We have done that already.

Mr. B. R. Sen: It is very hard to allay the suspicions of Mr. Sanyal. We have done our best to place the facts before the House.

Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal: Incompetence and inefficiency will necessarily lead to suspicion.

Mr. B. R. Sen: Well, we shall leave it at that.

Sir, very valuable suggestions have been made in the course of this debate. For instance on the subject of distribution, Mr. Sanyal said that in 1943, there was wastage of foodgrains owing to inadequate arrangements for distribution. Since 1943, a good deal of improvement has been made in the matter.

Then as regards storage, it is true that a good deal of food was wasted owing to defective storage. The Bengal Government have since constructed storage to the capacity of 760,000 tons and the wastage has been greatly reduced. Several Members have raised the question of remunerative prices. This is a matter which we have discussed on innumerable occasions both inside and outside the House, and the Members opposite I am sure have no doubt as regards the views that we hold in this matter. The Honourable the Food Member has just mentioned that he would try to bring together the Premiers of the different provinces as soon as possible and discuss with them this among other subjects which vitally effect us at the present moment. Sir, I think this is about all I have to say. There are certain other points. We have made a note of them and we shall attend to them with the urgent consideration that they deserve.

Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal: Will the Honourable the Food Member please give an assurance that he and his Government will see to it that no such deaths occur in the near future. I express this because I appreciate the points made by the Government and as such I will not press the motion. Will he say that he will do all that lies in his power?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I would very much like to see that no deaths take place. But as I stated before, it depends mostly on the Provincial Governments and I could not give a guarantee of that kind. It is not possible for me to do so. I have not the machinery in the provinces to see to a thing like that.

Shri Mohan Lal Saksena (Lucknow Division: Non-Muhammadian Rural): Will he give an assurance that whatever lies in their power will be done?

Mr. Deputy President: He has already said that.

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: Certainly we will do that.

Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal: In view of the statement made by the Honourable Member, although I do not agree with all that he has said, still as he expects the Provincial Governments to play their part, and I believe the Provincial Governments will play their parts, I beg leave of the House to withdraw my motion.

Mr. Deputy President: Has the Honourable Member leave to withdraw? The motion was by leave of the Assembly withdrawn.

The Assembly then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Thursday, the 11th April, 1946.