

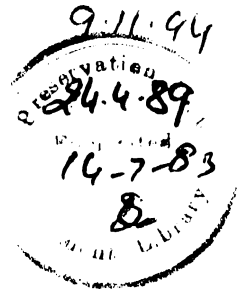
THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY DEBATES

Official Report

Volume I, 1946

(*21st January to 11th February, 1946*)

FIRST SESSION
OF THE
SIXTH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,
1946



i
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

President :

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. V. MAVALANKAR.

Deputy President :

SIR MUHAMMAD YAMIN KHAN, M.L.A.

Panel of Chairmen :

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

SYED GHULAM BHIK NAIRANG, M.L.A.

MR. P. J. GRIFFITHS, M.L.A.

Secretary :

MR. M. N. KAUL, BARRISTER-AT-LAW.

Assistants of the Secretary :

MR. M. V. H. COLLINS, M.B.E.

MR. A. J. M. ATKINSON.

MR. S. DAS.

Marshal ;

CAPTAIN HAJI SARDAR NUB AHMED KHAN, M.C., I.O.M., I.A.

Committee on Petitions :

SIR MUHAMMAD YAMIN KHAN, M.L.A. (*Chairman*)

SYED GHULAM BHIK NAIRANG, M.L.A.

MR. SRI PRAKASA, M.L.A.

MR. T. CHAPMAN-MORTIMER, M.L.A.

SARDAR MANGAL SINGH, M.L.A.

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 30th January, 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.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO STANDING FINANCE COMMITTEE

Mr. President: I have to inform the Assembly that the following non-official members have been elected to serve on the Standing Finance Committee for remainder of the financial year 1945-46 and for the financial year 1946-47: (1) Lt.-Col. Dr. J. C. Chatterjee, (2) Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad, (3) Sgt. N. V. Gadgil, (4) Mr. B. P. Jhunjhunwala, (5) Diwan Chaman Lall, (6) Mr. P. B. Gole, (7) Sri T. V. Satakopachari, (8) Raja Bahadur of Khallikote, (9) Mr. Muhammad Ismail Khan, (10) Mr. Manu Subedar, (11) Mr. Geoffrey W. Tyson, (12) Mr. Leslie Gwilt, (13) Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi, and (14) Haji Abdus Sattar Haji Ishaq Seth.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO CENTRAL ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RAILWAYS

Mr. President: I have also to inform the Assembly that the following non-official members have been elected to serve on the Central Advisory Council for Railways for the unexpired portion of the current financial year, 1945-46 and for the year commencing 1st April, 1946: (1) Shrimati Annu Swaminadhan, (2) Mr. S. Guruswami, (3) Hafiz Mohammad Abdullah, (4) Shri Sri Prakasa, (5) Mr. H. G. Stokes, and (6) Sri Jagannathdas.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO GOVERNING BODY OF INDIAN RESEARCH FUND ASSOCIATION

Mr. President: I have to further inform the Assembly that upto 12 Noon on Tuesday, the 29th January, 1946, the time fixed for receiving nominations for election of members to sit on the Governing Body of the Indian Research Fund Association two nominations were received. As the number of nominations is equal to the number of vacancies, I declare Sir Hassan Suhrawardy and Shri Sri Prakasa to be duly elected.

DECLARATIONS OF EXEMPTION UNDER REGISTRATION OF FOREIGNERS ACT

The Honourable Sir John Thorne (Home Member): Sir, I lay on the table a copy each of the following Declarations of Exemption issued under the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939;

- (i) No. 1/10/45-Poll(E), dated the 20th March 1945,
- (ii) No. 1/13/45-Poll(E), dated the 20th March 1945,
- (iii) No. 1/18/45-Poll(E), dated the 26th April 1945,
- (iv) No. 1/18/45-Poll(E), dated the 30th May 1945,
- (v) No. D. 41/45-Poll(E), dated the 23rd October 1945, and
- (vi) No. D. 167/45-Poll(E), dated the 8th November 1945.

No. 1/18/45-Poll. (E)

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

HOME DEPARTMENT.

Simla, the 20th March, 1945.

Declaration of Exemption

In exercise of the powers conferred by section 6 of the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939 (XVI of 1939), the Central Government is pleased to declare that the provisions of the Registration of Foreigners Rules, 1939, except rule 8 and such of the provisions of rules 4, 14, 15 and 16 as apply to, or in relation to, passengers and visitors who are not Foreigners,

shall not apply to, or in relation to Mr. Claude Marcus Cannon, U.S. citizen, for so long as he is employed as Assistant Business Manager, United States Foreign Economic Administration in India.

A. W. LOVATT, *

Under Secy. to the Govt. of India.

No. 1/18/45-Poll. (E)

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

HOME DEPARTMENT.

Simla, the 20th March, 1945.

Declaration of Exemption

In exercise of the powers conferred by section 6 of the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939 (XVI of 1939), the Central Government is pleased to declare that the provisions of the Registration of Foreigners Rules, 1939, except rule 8 and such of the provisions of rules 4, 14, 15 and 16 as apply to, or in relation to, passengers and visitors who are not Foreigners, shall not apply to, or in relation to Miss Janet D. Corwin, a U.S. national, for so long as she is employed with the Regional Director for the Far East, the Rockefeller Foundation, Delhi.

A. W. LOVATT,

Under Secy. to the Govt. of India.

No. 1/18/45-Poll. (E.).

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

HOME DEPARTMENT.

Simla, the 26th April, 1945.

Declaration of Exemption.

In exercise of the powers conferred by section 6 of the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939 (XVI of 1939), the Central Government is pleased to declare that the provisions of the Registration of Foreigners Rules, 1939, except rule 8 and such of the provisions of rules 4, 14, 15 and 16 as apply to, or in relation to, passengers and visitors who are not Foreigners, shall not apply to, or in relation to—

(i) Rev. Father Michael D. Lyons, an employee of the U.S.A. Foreign Economic Administration.

(ii) Mr. Ernest Llewellyn Curry, Port Engineer, United States War Shipping Administration.

(iii) Mr. Jasper R. Marlowe, United States Foreign Economic Administration, China Mission, New Delhi.

for so long as they remain in their present posts.

A. W. LOVATT,

Under Secy. to the Govt. of India.

No. 1/18/45-Poll. (E)

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

HOME DEPARTMENT

Simla, the 30th May, 1945

Declaration of Exemption.

In exercise of the powers conferred by section 6 of the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939 (XVI of 1939), the Central Government is pleased to declare that the provisions of the Registration of Foreigners Rules, 1939, except rule 8 and such of the provisions of rules 4, 14, 15 and 16 as apply to, or in relation to, passengers and visitors who are not Foreigners, shall not apply to, or in relation to—

(i) Mr. James K. Brinker Port Operations Assistant, Calcutta, an employee of the United States War Shipping Administration.

(ii) Mr. Horatio B. Hawkins, United States Foreign Economic Administration, New Delhi,

(iii) Mr. John Martin Cates Recruitment and Manning Representative of United States War Shipping Administration in Bombay,

for so long as they remain in their present posts.

A. W. LOVATT,

Under Secy. to the Govt. of India.

No. D.-41/45-Poll. (E.)

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HOME DEPARTMENT

New Delhi, the 23rd October, 1945

Declaration of Exemption.

In exercise of the powers conferred by section 6 of the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939 (XVI of 1939), the Central Government is pleased to declare that the provisions of the Registration of Foreigners Rules, 1939, except rule 8 and such of the provisions of rules 4, 14, 15 and 16 as apply to, or in relation to, passengers and visitors who are not Foreigners, shall not apply to or in relation to Mr. Morton S. Cressy, United States citizen, for so long as he remains in India in connection with the work of advising the Government of India on the development of Chemical Industries.

A. W. LOVATT,

Under Secy. to the Govt. of India.

No. D.-167/45-Poll. (E.) (U.S.)

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HOME DEPARTMENT

New Delhi, the 8th November, 1945

Declaration of Exemption

In exercise of the powers conferred by section 6 of the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939 (XVI of 1939), the Central Government is pleased to declare that the provisions of the Registration of Foreigners Rules, 1939, except rule 8 and such of the provisions of rules 4, 14, 15 and 16 as apply to, or in relation to, passengers and visitors who are not Foreigners, shall not apply to or in relation to Mr. C. V. Coes, who is in India in connection with the work of advising the Government of India on the post-war development of the machinery and engineering industries.

A. W. LOVATT,

Under Secy. to the Govt. of India.

MOTIONS FOR ADJOURNMENT

FAILURE TO CARRY OUT ASSURANCE re RAIL ROAD CO-ORDINATION SCHEME—contd.

Mr. President: May I know how the position stands with regard to the adjournment motion?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall (Member for Railways and War Transport): Sir, I held a meeting with the representatives of Parties this morning and on the understanding that the adjournment motion will be withdrawn, we agreed to the appointment of a Committee. Whether I should move for the appointment of a Committee today or whether it should be on the next day for official business is a matter for you, Sir, to decide.

Shri Mohan Lal Saksena (Lucknow Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Are you permitting the motion to be moved today, Sir? If so, I have to make a statement.

Mr. President: Is the motion ready?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: With your permission, I can move it straightaway.

Mr. President: Yes.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Provided the Honourable Member withdraws his adjournment motion.

Shri Mohan Lal Saksena: On the understanding that this motion is moved, will withdraw the adjournment motion.

Election of Members to Committee re Road-Rail Co-ordination Scheme.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Sir, I move:

"That this House do proceed to elect, in such manner as the Honourable the President may direct, seven Members to serve on a Committee to examine the progress made in carrying out the principles of road-rail co-ordination scheme approved by this House on 12th April, 1945, and to report to the House within fourteen days."

Mr. President: Motion moved:

"That this House do proceed to elect, in such manner as the Honourable the President may direct, seven Members to serve on a Committee to examine the progress made in carrying out the principles of road-rail co-ordination scheme approved by this House on 12th April, 1945, and to report to the House within fourteen days."

Shri Mohan Lal Saksena: Before you put the Motion finally to the House, I wish to say a few words.

Mr. President: On the adjournment motion?

Shri Mohan Lal Saksena: The motion is now before the House and I am entitled to say a few words on it.

Mr. President: Is it necessary at all?

Mr. Muhammad Nauman (Patna and Chota Nagpur *cum* Orissa: Muhammadan): It is an agreed motion.

Mr. President: I am putting it to the Honourable Member, that if the motion is an agreed motion, is it necessary for him to say anything?

Shri Mohan Lal Saksena: I wanted a certain clause to be put there. This clause was:

"that in the meantime the Government of India should not co-operate in the promotion or execution of provincial road rail transport schemes."

But the Honourable Member did not accept it, and I agreed to the motion as it is worded on the understanding that instructions will be issued by the Honourable Member for Railways and War Transport accordingly. Accordingly we did not insist on its inclusion in the motion. I only wanted this point to be made clear.

Mr. President: If the Honourable the Leader of the House has given any such assurance as is alleged, he may state it on the floor of the House.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: The agreed motion, as Honourable Members present will corroborate, was in the terms which I have read out. In the course of discussion, I said that the Central Government will make no financial commitments in the meanwhile. That follows.

Mr. President: Is that all right?

Shri Mohan Lal Saksena: Yes, Sir.

Mr. President: I put the motion to the House. The question is:

"That this House do proceed to elect, in such manner as the Honourable the President may direct, seven Members to serve on a Committee to examine the progress made in carrying out the principles of road-rail co-ordination scheme approved by this House on 12th April, 1945, and to report to the House within fourteen days."

The motion was adopted.

Mr. President: The Honourable Member, Shri Mohan Lal Saksena, will withdraw his adjournment motion formally.

Shri Mohan Lal Saksena: I beg leave to withdraw my motion.

Sir Mohammad Yamin Khan (Agra Division: Muhammadan Rural): As it was not moved, there is no necessity to ask leave of the House. He can withdraw himself.

Mr. President: The motion was admitted. There was some kind of understanding about it. It had better be on record that the Honourable Member does not wish to move it.

Shri Mohan Lal Saksena: Yes, Sir, I do not wish to move the adjournment motion.

Mr. President: This means that we have to consider the other motions for adjournment before us.

Point of Order re Admissibility of Adjournment Motion of Absentee Member

Mr. President: The first motion on today's list stands in the name of Sardar Mangal Singh who wishes to discuss

An Honourable Member: He is not in his place.

Some Honourable Members: That does not matter.

The Honourable Dr. Sir M. Azizul Huque (Commerce Member): Sir, on a point of order. An adjournment motion is only the privilege of the individual Member and the House if he gives notice of a motion. If he is not present in his place no one else can move it. I do not see how you can admit a motion when the Member himself is not present in the House.

Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar (Madras Ceded Districts and Chittoor: Non Muhammadan Rural): Sir, may I reply to this point of order? The point is that I may give notice of a motion of adjournment just before 11 o'clock in the manner prescribed by the rules. Then the motion is read in the House and the Government Member is asked whether there is any objection; he may say that it is not definite or urgent, and so on. Then once you decide to admit it you ask the House whether there are 25 Members to support it. You do not ask anything of the Honourable Member who sends notice of the motion. The question comes in at 4 o'clock if the motion is admitted, and if the Mover is not present in the House at that time, no one else can take it up. Therefore the point of order does not arise now.

Mr. President: I do not propose to decide the point just now; but at present—during what I may call the interim period—I shall follow the procedure that was adopted by the Chairman in respect of these motions. I believe some such point was taken up on the first day, when the Chairman said that when the time for moving the motion comes, we shall see whether the Member is present or not. So, without prejudice to any formal ruling which may be given on this point later on by the Chair, I think we may follow the procedure adopted so far in regard to these motions.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Sir, I think the procedure followed by the Chairman was contrary to the previous procedure.

Sir Mohammad Yamin Khan: Sir, I should like to point out that the procedure as regards questions is that the question is put down on the agenda. The President calls out the name of the Member and if he is not present no reply is given. I think the same procedure should be followed here also.

The Honourable Dr. Sir M. Azizul Huque: That is still more important in the case of an adjournment motion which is not in the nature of normal proceedings of the House but a step to obstruct the proceedings of the House. I do not mind what your decision is with regard to Resolutions or Bills; but in this case the normal proceedings of the House are obstructed with a view to bringing in a matter which the House decides and you also decide as being very urgent. It is well known that even in the case of an ordinary motion if the Honourable Member is not present he forfeits the right of moving it and the next motion is taken up. In the case of balloted Resolutions, for instance, that is the procedure.

Sir Cowasjee Jehangir (Nominated Non-Official): Sir, the circumstances are just now exceptional. This is a new session and a large number of adjournment motions were handed in long before the Session began. It was therefore difficult for an Honourable Member who gave notice of a particular motion of adjournment to know when his adjournment motion will be read out by the Chair. In ordinary circumstances notice of such motions are given a little before 11 o'clock. The Member knows that on that particular day and at a particular hour his adjournment motion will come forward; but in the present circumstances it is not possible for him to know when his motion will be coming up. If there are 20 adjournment motions on the paper, the Chair may rule out half a dozen or a dozen and the next one may suddenly come up. How is the Honourable Member to know which one will come up?

Mr. P. J. Griffiths (Assam: European): Sir, I submit that under the Standing Orders 21 and 22 there is no discretion in this matter. No. 21 lays down that leave has to be asked for before the commencement of the business of the

[Mr. P. J. Griffiths,

day; and 22 makes it clear who is to ask for the leave, namely, the Member who has given notice. No one else can ask for leave. If leave is not asked for the motion cannot be admitted. I submit with great respect that there is no discretion at all in this matter. The Member must be in his place or the motion falls to the ground.

Mr. M. Asaf Ali (Delhi: General): Sir, I should like to invite your attention to Rule 51 on page 20 of the Manual which reads as follows:

"If the President is of opinion that the matter proposed to be discussed is in order, he shall read the statement to the Assembly, and ask whether the Member has the leave of the Assembly to move the adjournment. If objection is taken, the President shall request those Members who are in favour of leave being granted to rise in their places, and if not less than twenty-five Members rise accordingly, the President shall intimate that leave is granted and that the motion will be taken at 4 p.m., or, if the President with the consent of the Member of the Government concerned so directs, at any earlier hour at which the business of the day may terminate. If less than twenty-five Members rise, the President shall inform the Member that he has not the leave of the Assembly."

As far as this rule goes, there is no question of the Member being present in his place at the time the President admits the motion. The time for the Member to rise will be at 4 o'clock or earlier if the House so agrees; and if the Member does not happen to be in his seat at that time he cannot move it. Therefore I do not see any difficulty about it. All that is required to be done at this stage is that you, Sir, will read the adjournment motion, and if any objection is taken you will ask those who are in favour of leave being granted to rise in their places; and if 25 Members or more stand up the motion will be admitted for discussion at the proper time. If the Member is not present when he is called upon to move the motion it naturally falls to the ground.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Sir, I respectfully suggest that in view of the discussion that has taken place it may be more convenient to you to consider the matter carefully and give your ruling on another occasion, and in the meantime this particular motion may be held over.

Shri Sri Prakasa (Benares and Gorakhpur Divisions: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, for the last ten years during which I have been a Member of this House, the procedure has been this. The President did not very often even call upon the Member who had given notice of an adjournment motion to stand up in his place. If the motion was in order he simply asked the Government if they had any objection. If objection was taken, he would ask those in favour of leave being granted to stand up, to see whether 25 Members supported it. The Mover of the motion does not come into the picture at all at 11 o'clock. He comes in only at 4 P.M. That has been the procedure and Mr. Griffiths ought to stand by that procedure.

Mr. President: I do not think any further discussion on the point is really necessary at this stage. It has practically been admitted that the practice followed since this Assembly met is contrary to what had been followed before. Whether it was contrary or not I do not know. In any case I cannot give a considered ruling just now. As the point involves an important right I wish to take time. In the meanwhile, in view of the exceptional circumstances, as pointed out by Sir Cowasjee Jehangir (Chairman), what I propose to do is this. In regard to the adjournment motions received by now, without prejudice to whatever further ruling may be given and without treating the present procedure as a precedent, and keeping the matter quite open, I propose, till all the accumulated motions are discussed, to follow the procedure which has been followed by the Chairman since this session of the Assembly met. I have heard the arguments advanced and I will consider the point. In the meanwhile, we will go on as we have been going on in the past week. I think there will be no occasion for Honourable Members to regret, the course we have been taking.

DEATHS OF LT. MAGHAR SINGH AND LT. AJMER SINGH IN DELHI RED FORT

Mr. President: The next motion is No. 26. This motion is for discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely the reported deaths of

Lt. Maghar Singh of Kapurthala Infantry and Lt. Ajmer Singh of 6/1 Punjab Regiment in the Red Fort, Delhi, as announced by the Government *communiqué* of 1st December, 1945.

There is a similar adjournment motion coming later on which is wider in scope; and that is to discuss the brutal treatment meted out to I. N. A. personnel detained in the Bahadurgarh Camp. During the course of discussion over an adjournment motion, if I remember aright, it was stated by the Chairman that instead of taking up these motions separately with reference to each camp, a general motion may be taken up and then particular camps may be referred to by way of illustration, so that the whole subject may come before the House. I do not therefore propose to give my consent to this adjournment motion on the clear understanding that the matter referred to here may be included as a subject of discussion, when we come to the motion about the Bahadurgarh Camp. All matters should be taken up together; that was, I believe, the understanding. So this matter may be discussed along with the motion relating to the Bahadurgarh Camp.

Diwan Chaman Lall (West Punjab: Non-Muhammadan): May I make a suggestion that since the motion about the Bahadurgarh Camp, which stands in my name, is going to be taken up at a later stage, this motion may be taken up today and the two may be combined instead of deferring this adjournment motion on to a later date. Both these motions may be amalgamated and discussion may take place today.

Mr. President: I may inform the Honourable Member that, in between the two, there are no motions to which I propose to give my consent. So that is coming up today.

STOPPAGE OF PASSENGER TRAFFIC BETWEEN BADNERA AND AMRAOTI

Mr. President: There is another motion for adjournment of the business of the House for the purpose of discussing severe discontent, hardship and inconvenience caused by the stoppage by the G. I. P. Railway of passenger traffic between Badnera and Amraoti in defiance of public protest.

I do not give my consent to this.

Mr. P. B. Gole (Berar: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, I should have been heard before you decided about this motion.

Mr. President: I do not think it is strictly necessary.

Mr. P. B. Gole: Before giving your decision, Sir, it would have been much better if you had heard me.

With your kind permission I may point out to you that this is a breach of statutory duty by a Railway Company. Badnera-Amraoti section is still operating and goods traffic is still continuing, but passenger traffic has been stopped. This cannot be done under the Statute. It is the statutory duty of the Railway, when once the Railway is opened, that they must continue passenger and goods traffic unless that traffic is closed under Section 23 of the Railways Act. It is binding upon the Railway authorities to carry on the passenger traffic. My humble submission, therefore, is that there has been a breach of statutory duty in this case which has resulted in discontent, hardship and inconvenience to the general public, specially the travelling public. The Railways have no authority to stop or close a line to passenger traffic unless they follow the provisions of Section 23 of the Railways Act, and under the circumstances I submit that this is a motion which is clearly of great public importance as it takes away the right of the public which the Act, really speaking, gives, and therefore my motion should really not be ruled out of order.

If you permit me, I will read section 23 of the Railways Act.....

Mr. President: I do not think that is necessary. An adjournment motion is a special privilege for bringing forward for discussion before the House, something of importance, and not only of importance but something of urgency.

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setting aside the regular business of the day. If one were to accept the statement that any breach of the statutory duty, howsoever regrettable it may be, must be a proper ground for an adjournment motion merely because it is a breach of statutory duty. If that were so, I do not see how we shall escape an adjournment motion every day. Where is the question of urgency in this matter? I quite appreciate there may be a considerable amount of difficulty to the passengers, but the question can be settled in other ways.

Mr. P. B. Gole: Sir, it is a definite act which took place on the 15th of December last; from the 15th of December this passenger traffic is closed, and therefore this is the only time when it could come before this House in the form of an adjournment motion. I do not understand how else it could be discussed here. There may be other ways, but this is a breach of duty which cannot be condoned and I suppose that your honour will kindly see your way to allow this motion. We cannot persuade the Government in any other way. Stoppage of passenger traffic on this section has caused considerable inconvenience to the travelling public and therefore I submit that the only way in which this matter, which is a definite matter of urgent public importance, can immediately come before this House is through an adjournment motion, which should be admitted.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: May I suggest that while this is a matter of considerable local importance to the people concerned, it is not a matter which is of such vital interest that the ordinary business of the House—today the consideration of the food situation in India—should be adjourned for discussing this matter. The question of time tables and the running of trains is one for Local Advisory Committees of Railways, on which a representative of this House sits. The position is that there is only a certain amount of coaching stock available and it was thought to be in the general public interest that that stock should be run on the Bina-Kotah Section rather than on the Badnera-Amraoti section. The matter is, therefore, of local importance and if coaching stock were to be taken away from the Bina-Kotah section and run on the Badnera-Amraoti section, then those interested in the Bina-Kota section would be equally entitled to move an adjournment motion. I suggest, therefore, that this is not a matter of sufficient public importance to adjourn the urgent business of this House. It is a matter for the Local Advisory Committee.

Further, I may add that I have offered to discuss this matter with the Honourable Member, and if the public interest requires it, we will restore the traffic as soon as the coaches are available.

Mr. P. B. Gole: May I point out that there is no Member of this House on the Local Advisory Committee at all.

Mr. President: The Honourable the Leader of the House, I understand, is prepared to discuss the question with the Honourable Member. It is a question of importance and urgency. After having heard all that the Honourable Member has to say and with the best of my sympathies for the inconvenience caused to the travelling public, I regret I cannot give my consent to this motion.

Mr. President: I do not think I need read fully every one of the other motions. Nos. 28 and 29 refer to the Bretton Woods matter which has been already discussed. So they do not stand.

INACTION *re* DELETION OF SECTIONS 111 TO 121 OF GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ACT

Mr. President: The next adjournment motion, No. 30, is about "the failure of Government to make any progress in regard to the deletion from the Government of India Act of Sections 111 to 121 (both inclusive) inspite of the overwhelming opinion in all sections of the population of India as expressed in the Assembly resolution on this subject passed by the House on 4th April, 1945".

Mr. Manu Subedar (Indian Merchants' Chamber and Bureau: Indian Commerce): Whose notice is that?

Mr. President: Pandit Balkrishna Sharma's. A similar motion was ruled out by the Chairman. So this is ruled out of order.

The next motion is the same one as I have just read out. That is also ruled out.

Mr. Manu Subedar: There is one which I have subsequently given notice of. It seeks to censure the Government of India for their failure to give requisite information to this House. If it is under the same terms that you are ruling out this, it is all right.

Mr. President: When was it given by the Honourable Member? On what date? This is a motion by Sjt. Seth Damodar Swroop.

ILL-TREATMENT OF I. N. A. MEN IN BAHADURGARH CAMP

Mr. President: The next motion (No. 32) is in the name of Diwan Chaman Lall. He wishes to adjourn the business of the House to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely: "the brutal treatment meted out to I. N. A. personnel detained in the Bahadurgarh Camp".

Mr. P. Mason (Government of India: Nominated Official): There is no objection. In fact I should be very glad indeed to lay the facts before the House.

Mr. President: So this motion will come up for discussion before the House at 4 o'clock.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO COMMITTEE RE BRETTON WOODS CONFERENCE AGREEMENTS

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

"That this Assembly do proceed to elect, in such manner as may be approved by the Honourable the President, nine members to serve on the Committee referred to in the motion relating to the Bretton Woods Conference adopted by this House on Tuesday, the 29th January, 1946."

Mr. President: I do not think anything need be said of this. This is consequential to the resolution passed by the House only yesterday. The question is:

"That this Assembly do proceed to elect, in such manner as may be approved by the Honourable the President, nine members to serve on the Committee referred to in the motion relating to the Bretton Woods Conference adopted by this House on Tuesday, the 29th January, 1946."

The motion was adopted.

INDIAN MINES (AMENDMENT) BILL

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar (Labour Member): Sir, I move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the Indian Mines Act, 1923.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the Indian Mines Act, 1923."

The motion was adopted.

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: Sir, I introduce the Bill.

MOTION RE FOOD SITUATION

Mr. B. R. Sen (Government of India: Nominated Official): Sir, I move:

"That the food situation in India be taken into consideration."

In a debate of this kind it is the practice for the spokesman of Government to place before the House the general framework of the policy which Government have adopted, the progress that has been made in implementing that policy, a review of the general crop position in the country, and lastly the problems with which the country is likely to be faced in the coming year

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and the proposals that Government may have in dealing with them. In doing so, the object has been to place before the House a picture of the situation as a whole so that the House, in debating upon it, may help Government with critical suggestions. I propose to follow that practice on this occasion. If in making a survey of the working of Government policy during the last 3 years I claim success for that policy in some directions, I hope the House will not misunderstand me as being self-satisfied or complacent. The situation that you are facing in this country in this year is going to be very difficult and it is all the more necessary therefore that the House should know exactly what policy Government are following and with what results.

The House is aware in what circumstances the Food Department was established in December 1942. The House is also aware of the sequence of events which led up to the Bengal Famine of 1943. I do not propose in this debate to recapitulate those circumstances. In 1943 Government set up a committee which was later called the Policy Committee to analyse the events and to suggest for the guidance of Government a policy which Government should adopt. This committee within a few months submitted a report which has since then been adopted as a Blue Print by the Food Department. This Blue Print was subjected to an examination by the Famine Enquiry Commission who were appointed in 1944 to go into the causes of the Bengal famine, into the food shortage of India and to suggest measures which Government should take to avoid such calamities in future. That committee also approved generally the suggestions which the Policy Committee had made and which the Government of India had adopted.

The four main heads of policy which the Government of India have adopted on the basis of the recommendations of the Food Policy Committee are Basic Plan, Procurement, Rationing and Prices. The essence of the Basic Plan is that the general deficiency in the country should be shared by surplus and deficit provinces alike. For the Basic Plan we have laid down a formula by the application of which such distribution of the food resources of the country could be made. We have administered this Basic Plan for the last three years and we find that the main weakness in our position at present is the unreliability of agricultural statistics in different parts of the country. We have taken certain measures to improve agricultural statistics particularly in the permanently settled areas where there is no revenue staff. In Bengal, for instance, a random sample survey has been going for the last two years. The Government of Bengal have also instituted a plot to plot enumeration and the results that we have obtained are certainly much more reliable than when they were when the famine took place in 1943. Similar steps and enquiries and random sample surveys have been done under the auspices of the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research in different provinces, in several other provinces of India and we hope that with these measures we shall have much more reliable statistics in the future. Though the position with regard to agricultural statistics is still more than unsatisfactory, by working of the Basic Plan for the last two years we feel we have a much clearer idea of the needs of the different provinces and States than before.

The success of a Basic Plan must depend on adequate procurement. The problem of procurement is one which is much bigger than mere abstraction on grains for export under the Basic Plan. Though a few provinces have surpluses of all kinds of major foodgrains, in other cases a province may be surplus in one foodgrain and deficit in all others, or deficit in one and surplus in all others. Again, a province, though it may be self-sufficient on balance, some of its districts may be surplus and others again deficit so that the inter-district procurement may be of the utmost importance to that province. The essence of the problem is thus not moving of supplies from a surplus province to a deficit province but of acquiring from the cultivator the maximum amount to be obtained from every part of India. In the last two years the most outstanding feature in the matter of procurement has been a steady and progressive development of Government monopoly both in British India and in the

Indian States. Particularly in the deficit provinces and States like Bombay, Travancore, Cochin, Mysore, and since last year in Madras, the development has been most striking. The monopoly schemes vary from a complete monopoly as in Malabar, where the entire surplus from each holding after deduction of seed and consumption requirements of the cultivator and his family is taken over by Government, to a semi-monopoly as in Orissa, where no attempt is made to assess individual surpluses and private trade is allowed up to small quantities in each transaction. In some Provinces and States, the attempt to procure the producer's surplus has taken the shape of a levy. It must be clear that if shortage of foodgrains in this country is to be distributed on an All-India basis, the system of procurement which should give the most complete results would be the system which takes over the entire surplus of the producer from as near the threshing floor as possible, so that the entire surplus could be distributed to deficit areas. The Government of India have, therefore, encouraged this development towards monopoly purchase and, as I shall presently explain, this system of procurement has now acquired added significance in the conditions which we shall have to face this year in this country.

The House will no doubt like to have a clear statement from Government on the question to what extent the results of the "Grow More Food Campaign" have kept pace with the increasing needs of the country, and whether the claims made by the Government of India in the Agricultural Department under the "Grow More Food Campaign" can be justified by actual results. The question is important and I should like to take the House over some essential figures. During 1943-44 and 1944-45, the rice acreage, as published on the authority of the Government, has shown an increase of 7 million acres over the five year average, and rice production, an increase of 5.8 million and 2.8 million tons respectively. The rice surpluses declared to the Food Department under the Basic Plan, however, have shown an increase of only 3 lakh tons over the pre-war internal surpluses known to have been available for inter-provincial distribution. The main claim under the "Grow More Food Campaign" has been the switch over from cash crops like cotton to food crops like millets. While the reported increase in the All-India millets acreage has been of the order of 7 million in 1942-43, 5.8 million in 1943-44 and 1944-45 and of the reported increase in production over the five year average about 1.4 million tons, 1.2 million tons and 100,000 tons in the three years respectively, the surpluses made available to the Food Department for distribution under the Basic Plan have gone up only from 1½ lakh tons to about 3 lakh tons. In the case of wheat, though several provinces and States have reported an increase in area and production, the surpluses declared to the Food Department have decreased from year to year.

On these figures, one's first reaction would be that the claims made under the "Grow More Food Campaign" are unsustainable. The discrepancy, however, is capable of a logical explanation. The factors which explain the discrepancy are these:

(1) Agricultural production in India is a gamble in rains. Only 25 per cent. of the area is irrigated and even a substantial increase in acreage can be offset by the failure of rains at the time needed. In 1942 we had a bumper wheat crop, in 1943 a bumper rice crop. But the crops in 1944-45 were in many areas below normal. The reported increase in acreage in 1944-45 was 5.8 millions, while the reported yield showed an increase of only one hundred thousand tons. This was very largely due to adverse climatic conditions in the famine tracts of Bombay, the Ceded Districts in Madras and Mysore.

Out of the total crop production, about 60 per cent. is retained by the producers themselves for consumption, seeds, wages in kind, etc. This ratio of retention and sale is elastic depending upon the prices of foodgrains and the means of producers. In pre-war times, owing to low prices of foodgrains the producer had had to place a larger proportion of his produce in the market to get the cash he needed for meeting his obligatory charges, such as rents and taxes and for buying essential consumer goods, such as cloth, oil, etc. During

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the war, prices of agricultural produce have gone up 3 to 4 times and the producer can now meet his obligatory charges by selling a smaller proportion of his crop. The steady tendency during the last three years has therefore been for the producer to consume more himself, thus reducing the surplus which would otherwise have been available for marketing. While this is no doubt a very desirable development, the fact has to be recognised that this has prevented the increase in food production from being reflected in the surpluses made available to the Food Department to meet the requirements of deficit areas.

The population in India is increasing at the rate of 5 millions a year. The net increase in consumption demand due to this factor alone is about 500,000 tons a year. The danger of an increase in population at this rapid rate without a corresponding increase in food production must be obvious and measures to deal with a problem of this magnitude must be on a long term basis.

One of the basic principles of our food administration policy, as I have said, has been price control. I need hardly explain why. If prices are high, there will be a section of people in India who will go short of food. There may be what can be called "a sectional famine", as happened in 1943, owing to high prices even where there is no actual shortage of supplies. With the end of the war, the position in this respect must further deteriorate. Curtailment of war expenditure in the country will mean less income to a large labouring population who had been employed in war works and also lead to unemployment among the middle classes though efforts are being made to make the switch-over from war to peace conditions as smooth as possible. In the matter of price control the firm policy of the Government of India has been the institution of statutory price control for all major food-grains. We have accordingly been directing our efforts to bring Provincial and Regional prices of foodgrains into parity with each other with a view to eliminate the wider local variations and eventually to establish an integrated parity in price control on an all-India basis: prices being fixed for the respective crop season ensuring a fair return to the cultivator.

Prof. N. G. Ranga (Guntur *cum* Nellore: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Oh! I see, you have got it.

Mr. B. R. Sen: In 1944, statutory price control was instituted for wheat, gram, barley, bajra, jowar and maize. The statutory maximum price of wheat is now Rs. 9-8-0 per maund in the primary assembling markets in the Punjab and Rs. 10-4-0 in the United Provinces. In other wheat producing provinces differentials based on these figures have been allowed. The prices of bajra and jowar have recently been reduced to Rs. 7-4-0 and Rs. 6-12-0 per maund respectively. In order to protect the producers against an uneconomic fall in prices, Government have given an undertaking to purchase all wheat offered at Rs. 7-8-0 and bajra at Rs. 5-12-0 and jowar Rs. 5-4-0 per maund.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: Is it being implemented anywhere?

Mr. B. R. Sen: No occasion has arisen to implement this minimum guarantee: the prices are still higher than the minimum. As regards rice, an all-India statutory price was not fixed, partly because of the absence of a homogeneous market and partly because of the large variations from province to province. The Provincial Governments themselves imposed statutory maximum prices for rice, and during the last two years have steadily brought them down. In Bengal, the fixed Government buying prices in the surplus districts now are Rs. 9-8-0 to Rs. 11-4-0; in Assam, Bihar, Orissa and Sind it is Rs. 11-10-0, Rs. 9 to Rs. 10, and Rs. 7-2-0 to Rs. 7-12-0 respectively. Rice prices in Madras have been generally kept below Rs. 10 per maund, while the statutory maximum which was fixed at Rs. 13-8-0 per maund in U. P. and in the Punjab has now been brought down to Rs. 13-6-0 in the U. P. and Rs. 12-4 in the Punjab. Viewed against the background of price levels reached in certain parts of India in 1943, the progress made in the control of prices, in accordance with the policy adopted by the Government of India, in

spite of the shortage in the country, must be regarded as satisfactory. A Price Advisory Committee, consisting of experts, are constantly bringing the level of prices in different foodgrains under review. A committee has also been set up to suggest the machinery and organisation necessary to stabilise agricultural prices under conditions of control or without control.

Not the least important factor in our co-ordinated food plan has been the introduction of food rationing in all large cities and towns in India and also in rural areas where conditions of scarcity necessitated a controlled distribution of available supplies. The progress in this respect has been considerable. The total population now under ration, whether full or partial, has come to over 53 millions, distributed over 556 towns, of which 90 are with a population of one lakh or over, and also throughout rural areas in certain districts such as Malabar. The largest number of towns rationed is 125 in Bombay, 94 in Madras and 42 in U. P. The province with the largest population under rationing is Madras—10.3 millions; then comes Bombay with 7.5 millions, and Travancore 6.3 millions. Calcutta is the largest city under rationing—with a population exceeding 4 millions; whilst Bengal province has a food control organisation covering 12 millions. In the Bombay Presidency, however, the entire population of non-producers or inadequate producers are supplied by Government on a rationed scale through Government depots. In the Madras Presidency, there are several districts which are covered by what is called "informal" rationing, which is practically the same as formal rationing: only it is not backed by statutory rules or regulations

Prof. N. G. Ranga: In how many districts?

Mr. B. R. Sen: So far as I know it is in 5 districts. The reason why I give these details is to show that unlike in 1948 we have now in India a rationed system of distribution of supplies over a wide area both urban and rural and over a large part of the population. In fact, the population now covered by rationing in India exceeds the total population of Great Britain. This established system of controlled distribution which is capable of fairly rapid extension must be an invaluable instrument in controlling food situation in India, should the distribution of available supplies owing to adverse seasonal factors demand more extensive Governmental control.

In producing the blue print for food administration in India, the Foodgrains Policy Committee recommended the creation of a Central Reserve of not less than 500,000 tons of imports, apart from a quantity equal to the average net imports of the preceding five years, namely, about 1 million tons for current consumption. The Foodgrains Policy Committee considered the reserve to be essential to prevent a breakdown in the machinery of procurement, rationing and price policy. The whole matter was subjected to an examination by the Woodhead Commission in the light of the developments in the food administration of the country since the Foodgrains Policy Committee submitted their report. The view expressed by the Famine Enquiry Commission was that such a central reserve was necessary, not so much to prevent a breakdown of the machinery of the procurement and price policy, as to meet an emergency such as may arise owing to failure of crops or failure of procurement at the end of a crop season. They cited the instance of the situation which had developed at the end of the wheat season in U. P. last year, and which was met by the prompt use of the small reserve which the Centre had been able to accumulate at Karachi. They gave the warning that since the beginning of the war there had been no serious failure of the monsoons, but the danger of a poor monsoon, before normal conditions returned, existed. If the monsoon failed, the knowledge that the Centre had a reserve must prove of great value in preventing breakdown and maintaining public morale. The authority responsible for the allocation of wheat surpluses is the combined Food Board in Washington and on that board we are entirely dependent for imports. The recommendation of the Foodgrains Committee for imports to build up a Central Reserve and for imports for current consumption to the extent indicated has all along been strongly pressed before the Combined Food

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Board by His Majesty's Government. While the war lasted, the difficulty of the shipping position due primarily to the necessity for carrying on a global war on two widely separated fronts, did not permit sufficiently large quantities to be shipped. The imports actually received have been as follows:

October to December 1943—197,700 tons

January to December 1944—653,500 tons

January to December 1945—840,300 tons

Up to 21st January 1946— 62,700 tons.

With these imports at no time have the Government of India been able to accumulate more than 50,000 to 100,000 tons as central reserve.

It will thus be seen that we have been living from hand to mouth over the whole of the last three years: on the one hand, owing to factors I have already explained, domestic procurement has declined in relation to the increasing requirements; on the other hand, imports have fallen short of our requirements even for current consumption. The whole system of India's food economy has therefore remained exposed to the danger of a failure of harvest in India all the time—a weakness which before the fall of Burma had been covered by unlimited imports from Burma, and what is more, by an expectation of unlimited imports which had kept prices under control and had acted as a steady influence on the morale of the population. The first signs of such danger came in August-September last when the south-west monsoon was delayed in Bengal and other parts of north-east India. We brought these danger signs to the notice of His Majesty's Government and asked them to arrange imports of at least one million tons of rice and half a million tons of wheat in 1946. In October there was fairly satisfactory rainfall in Bengal, which improved crop prospects in that area to an appreciable extent. This improvement in Bengal was, however, more than offset by a failure of the south-west monsoon in the southern districts of Bombay and a devastating cyclone in the Godavari-Kistna delta on the 17th-18th October. These developments were brought to the notice of His Majesty's Government as soon as detailed reports were available. Our demand for imports remained at the figure already given to H. M. G. In December, however, reports came of a failure of the north-east monsoon in Madras and Mysore. Reports of failure of crops were also received from the Deccan States and Western India States. I paid a visit to these areas in the third week of December to get a closer appreciation of the situation. It became clear that both the rice and millets crops would fail over extensive areas in Madras and Mysore unless there were adequate showers before the end of December and in January. A fresh assessment of the situation was forwarded to His Majesty's Government and the urgent importance of pressing before the Combined Food Board, the necessity of adequate imports to stabilise the situation was again stressed. Since my visit to that area, there has been practically no rain, and crops which, during the time of my visit, looked green and flourishing, have dried up over large tracts of the country. Side by side with this failure of the North-East monsoon in Southern India, there has been a failure of winter rains up till now in U. P. and North Western India.

12 Noon **Shri Sri Prakasa** (Benares and Gorakhpur Divisions: Non-Muhammadian Rural): Anything to do with the visit?

Mr. B. R. Sen: Unless we have rain in this area within the next few days, crops in unirrigated places will largely fail. This year, therefore, we have had a devastating cyclone, a failure of the North-East monsoon in Southern India and now the threat of a failure of winter rains in U. P. and North Western India. It need hardly be pointed out that the cumulative effect of all these factors must be serious on the food situation in India. On the assessment of the situation in December we had thought it necessary to send the permanent Food Secretary, Sir Robert Hutchings, to Washington to help the British Food Mission to place our case before the Combined Food Board. His discussions are yet incomplete but from the indications he has given, it is not

likely that in the present global shortage in foodgrains, with even the greatest sympathy and appreciation of our difficulties, we are likely to get even the minimum quantities we need. Since his deputation, owing to continued drought, the situation has further deteriorated as I have explained. We are now considering, in consultation with His Majesty's Government, in the light of the latest crop position, the further steps we must take to persuade the Combined Food Board to re-open and reconsider the whole case of allocations for 1946, irrespective of any allocations and priorities they may have already decided upon.

The question on which the House will no doubt wish to be informed is that if we are to depend largely on our own discipline and resources, what measures we propose to adopt to stabilise the food position in the country in the coming months. The following are some of the measures we contemplate.

Firstly, we must mobilise the internal resources of the country much more completely than we have done in the past. This, from our experience of the last two years, we think, can only be done by the introduction and extension of some form of monopoly procurement. The Provinces in which there is scope for improvement in the system of procurement are, in our view, Punjab, Sind, U. P. and Bihar.

We have therefore called upon these provinces immediately to go in for monopoly or semi-monopoly types of procurement that will, without depriving the producers of their legitimate rations, enable them to procure much larger quantities of foodgrains than they have been able to do so far. There is agreement on the introduction of a levy on the bigger producers which would give Government control over substantial quantity of the produce.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: And spread the famine all over?

Mr. B. R. Sen: For the improved procurement to be successful, it is necessary that it should commence at the beginning of the crop year, and I am confident that by the coming April or May, when the rabi crop will come to be harvested, an effective procurement system more suited to the present emergency will be in operation in all these provinces. It is hardly necessary to point out that local variations due to differing local conditions must be allowed for in the details of procurement, but the result must be the same everywhere, *viz.*, maximum procurement of foodgrains consistently with the interests of producers.

Secondly, if there is to be a shortage, the shortage must be distributed among the population as evenly as possible. This can best be done by extension of rationing particularly in the deficit provinces, to the fullest extent possible, and by revision of ration scales to the extent necessary. The areas which are affected most this year are areas where rationing has established itself not only in urban but also in rural areas. The Provincial Governments concerned can therefore be trusted to make an effective use of rationing organisation in dealing with the situation. As to revision of ration scales, this, on principle, should be on an all-India basis. The matter is now under examination with the Provincial Governments who have already been warned to take all preliminary steps so that any reduction in the scales of ration which may be decided upon, may be given effect to without delay.

Thirdly, the Government of India are determined to maintain their policy of price control. To do that in a year of scarcity will be difficult and measures such as requisitioning of stocks from traders and producers where there is no Government monopoly as yet may be necessary.

I have now placed the whole case before the House. I have done so deliberately and with a purpose. In no country food administration, in conditions of shortage, can be a success without the full co-operation of the people. In India, with a population of nearly 400 millions, largely agricultural, who react quickly to any sign of failure of rains, this is particularly so. We feel that the time has come when we must take the leaders of the people into our confidence.

An Honourable Member: This has occurred to you only now!

Mr. B. R. Sen: We feel that the leaders of the people must know, so that in the difficult months ahead they also can play their part, in the interests of our own people, in keeping the food administration of the country on an even keel.

An Honourable Member: Let the whole Government resign.

Mr. Manu Subedar (Indian Merchants' Chamber and Bureau: Indian Commerce): Having regard to the many statistics which I found it difficult to take down, may I suggest that, as on the last occasion when the food debate took place, a copy of the speech may be circulated?

Mr. President: This suggestion is made in the interests of the debate. I trust that the Government will do what they think best.

Motion moved:

"That the food situation in India be taken into consideration."

There are some amendments to this and I would call upon the movers of the amendments to formally move their amendments.

Pandit Govind Malaviya (Allahabad and Jhansi Divisions: Non-Muhammadan Rural): I sent a slip to the Honourable the Food Member yesterday requesting him to supply us with information on a few points in the opening speech that is going to be made today. When are they likely to give that information?

Mr. B. R. Sen: I have collected the figures. I shall be glad to hand over the papers to the Honourable Member. He has asked for prices in different parts of India. The statement runs into three or four pages. I do not think the House will be interested

Seth Govind Das (Central Provinces Hindi Divisions: Non-Muhammadan): The House is interested and I would suggest it be circulated.

Mr. President: I take it that the Honourable Member-in-charge will have this circulated.

Mr. B. R. Sen: Yes.

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

"That for the original motion the following be substituted:
"That the Food Department be abolished'."

Mr. President: Amendment moved:

"That for the original motion the following be substituted:
"That the Food Department be abolished'."

Mr. M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar (Madras Ceded Districts and Chittoor: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Is this amendment in order? It is not in order at all. The motion is about Food situation.

Mr. President: I suppose he means the Food Department of the Government of India, so far as the Food Administration is concerned—not the domestic Food Department.

Mr. M. R. Masani (Bombay City: Non-Muhammadan Urban): Sir, I move:

"That at the end of the motion the following be added, namely:
'and having considered the same, this Assembly expresses its dissatisfaction at the failure of the Government of India to import adequate supplies of foodgrains for building up a reserve and meeting the needs of deficit areas and records its grave apprehension that, unless substantial imports are immediately made available, a situation will arise, particularly in the Southern and Western parts of the country, in which the existing ration, which is already inadequate, will be endangered and large sections of the people will face starvation'."

Mr. President: Amendment moved:

"That at the end of the motion the following be added, namely:
'and having considered the same, this Assembly expresses its dissatisfaction at the failure of the Government of India to import adequate supplies of foodgrains for building up a reserve and meeting the needs of deficit areas and records its grave apprehension that, unless substantial imports are immediately made available, a situation will arise, particularly in the Southern and Western parts of the country, in which the existing ration, which is already inadequate, will be endangered and large sections of the people will face starvation'."

MOTION *re* FOOD SITUATION

Sri N. Narayanamurthi (Ganjam *cum* Vizagapatam: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I move:

"That in the amendment proposed by Mr. M. R. Masani, between the words 'deficit areas' and 'and records' the following be inserted, namely: 'and to assure remunerative prices for the producers of foodgrains so as to encourage them to produce more foodgrains and make India less dependent on imports'."

Mr. President: Amendment to the amendment moved:

"That in the amendment proposed by Mr. M. R. Masani, between the words 'deficit areas' and 'and records' the following be inserted, namely: 'and to assure remunerative prices for the producers of foodgrains so as to encourage them to produce more foodgrains and make India less dependent on imports'."

Mr. C. P. Lawson (Bengal: European): Sir, I move:

"That at the end of the original motion the following be added, namely: 'and having considered the same, this Assembly unanimously urges the United Nations Organisation to grant assistance to India by making available such quantities of foodgrains as will prevent a repetition of the disasters which occurred in 1943'."

Mr. President: Amendment moved:

"That at the end of the original motion the following be added, namely: 'and having considered the same, this Assembly unanimously urges the United Nations Organisation to grant assistance to India by making available such quantities of foodgrains as will prevent a repetition of the disasters which occurred in 1943'."

Lt.-Col. Dr. J. C. Chatterjee (Nominated Non-Official): On a point of information, Sir. If the Honourable Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad's amendment is accepted or discussed, is there any point in the other amendments? There will be no Food Department left to deal with them. So, do you propose to take up Dr. Zia Uddin Ahmad's amendment first? If that is accepted, then nobody will be left to deal with the other amendments.

Mr. President: That stage will come when I put the motion to the House for their vote. At present all these amendments are before the House and they are all open to discussion.

Lt.-Col. Dr. J. C. Chatterjee: I merely wanted to ask as to which amendment you are going to put first. Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad's amendment is rather sweeping.

Mr. President: I do not want to commit myself at this stage to anything. We will see to it later.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: Sir, my friend Lt.-Col. Chatterjee was very apprehensive. I would like to follow the debate and the final reply of the Honourable Member and then I will decide whether I should press my amendment to a division. So, there is no question of the abolition of the Department at the present moment.

I will now put my arguments before the House. We discussed the question of food in 1944 and also in 1945. The Members present pressed their viewpoints, but the condition of food is different in different localities and naturally the people had a different story to tell. There could not be a unanimous policy when different situations were laid before the House. The Honourable the Food Member took advantage of this position and he made no improvement whatsoever. The position in 1945 was worse than what it was in 1944 and the position in 1946 is worse than what it was in 1945. Therefore, the position is getting worse year after year and no step has been taken by the Food Department to improve it. I am rather in a position of embarrassment as to how to begin and develop my arguments. I am in the same position as the camel, about which it is said:

"*Unt re unt teri kon se kal sidhi.*"

An Honourable Member: Please translate it.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: It means that the camel does not know which is the most elegant part of his body.

First of all, I wish to take up the question of the administration by means of Defence of India Rules. I know that I was a party in voting a two-section some years ago, but we never considered at that time that it would give rise

[Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad.]

to a very big Code, bigger and more important than over other enactments, by which the country is now being governed. The position is the same as that of Adam and Eve. The two clauses of the Bill like Adam and Eve, gave birth to a number of persons who instead of praying God invent atomic bombs and use all poisonous gases to kill humanity. The same is the case with the Defence of India Rules. We never considered that these two Bills will produce such a large number of ordinances and rules which were never anticipated. These Defence of India Rules have now become so important that, like Parliament, one can say that these Rules can do anything except to make a man a woman and woman a man. I think the position is still worse. The position of Parliament could be criticised, but the action taken under the Defence of India Rules could not be criticised by the public or the press. They have a super-parliamentary position.

My first objection is that the distribution of food is not regulated by the ordinary rules of law or common sense, but is regulated under the Defence of India Rules. So, if there is a corruption anywhere—and we know there is a corruption; you take the vote of this House and I am sure cent. per cent. elected Members will vote that there is corruption in the Food Department and to a level which never existed in the Government of India before—there is no remedy open to the public. This thing ought not to have been administered under the Government of India Rules. So, the people have to face corruption, and mismanagement and our mouths are shut. We must be able to have some say in the matter, especially when the question of food is concerned. This is my first difficulty.

I said on the floor of the House before that there were four enemies of honest trade, which vitiate its position and Government discarded trade channel for the distribution of food—their monopoly, their combine, their hoarding and their profiteering. In order to overcome these difficulties they followed the Defence of India Rules for the distribution of food and from our experience we say that this method has proved to be worse than the method adopted by the ordinary trade channel.

Now, I start with the assumption that it is the duty of the Government to provide food for all. I have got census figures before me. According to the printed reports, the population of India is 389 millions. The total quantity of food including rice, jowar, bajra, etc., now available is about 56.8 millions and this works out to about 12½ oz., or 6½ chhattaks *per capita* per day. This is the entire food that is available. The Honourable Member who moved the Motion did not give us figures for the other countries in the world. If he had given figures for the world, then we would have been in a position to determine how far we have got any chance to get more food from foreign countries. Now, Sir, I think it is the first and primary duty of any Government to procure more food so that this 12½ oz., or 6½ chhattaks per day per head could be substantially increased. This can be done in two ways. You approach the International Organisation and that was one of my arguments for supporting the Bretton Woods Agreement, namely that we can approach them and get more food from some other countries for our bare existence. The other alternative is you grow more food on our existing land by improved methods of irrigation, by providing artificial manure and so on. The next method is we should bring in more land under cultivation. We should remember our population is increasing by 1.4 per cent. according to the figures given by Dr. Sen. With this increase in population every year, we must devise ways and means by which more food can be procured every year. This thing has not been done effectively by Government so far and I do not know what solution can be obtained for getting more food in this country. As regards grow more food, well, you can get us lands either here in India or from anywhere else. We first entered Ceylon and developed Ceylon, then we were externed from Ceylon; then we developed Burma, Malaya South Africa, East Africa and many other places from all of which we were externed and chances of getting more food to this country were cut off. Now, Sir, we should consider that on account of

increase of population, some arrangement should be made for people to get us more food or give us some land where we can send our men to cultivate more food for us and send the same to this country. Some such arrangement ought to be made. Otherwise the future is very dark. It is not merely the problem of today, but it is also the problem of tomorrow. I have not much faith in the Government. They allowed the people of Bengal to die, but did not permit them to grow more rice in Assam on account the line system. The sooner the Department is abolished, the better it is for the people. I have not got before me any vivid proof of the effective steps they are taking to give us more food.

My friend Mr. Sen has been alluding us by his four points. I believe he is an economist. I have been complaining for the last three or four years that you cannot have effective price control unless you control the stock. You are putting the cart before the horse, if you control the price without controlling the stock.

Mr. B. E. Sen: Where do you get the stocks?

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: Then, why do you talk of price control? If there is no stock to control, it is meaningless to talk of price control. This is the fundamental principle, the a, b, c of economics. If the supply is not there, how can you control the price? People would not like to sell, and little that is available will go under ground and into the black market and it will disturb the normal trade channels and not even the Defence of India Rules will be effective.

My Honourable friend also talked of rationing. I understand total rationing, but I cannot understand partial rationing. According to the figures which he has given, only 15 per cent. of the population are under rationing, and 85 per cent are not under rationing. I can tell you from my experience in Aligarh where I live. I am allowed only four chattaks or 8 oz. of wheat per day. I walk two miles outside Aligarh University grounds, I find the villagers are feeding their cattle with wheat. I am not permitted to bring wheat so wasted in side the University. In Aligarh, under the Defence of India Rules, I am not allowed to eat more than four chattaks a day, not even the full quota which is given here, but if I can walk two miles beyond Aligarh, I find there is absolutely no rationing at all, and people are feeding their cattle with wheat. (Interruption.) These are facts. Rationing presupposes certain things without which the system cannot be worked. You must have complete control over stocks just as we have complete control over petrol. Petrol rationing can work because Government have got complete control over the stock. Here you have got no complete control over the stock and yet you introduce rationing.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: There is black market.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: Therefore, rationing must be for all, and not for a small population. You simply give trouble to those people who have the misfortune to reside in towns and those people who are not residing in towns are free to eat as much as they like and use wheat in whatever way they like. They are outside the Defence of India Rules. As far as rationing is concerned, it applies only to 15 per cent. of the population who have the misfortune to live in great towns. The rest of the population, 85 per cent., are absolutely free. This kind of rationing is unheard of. I can understand total rationing, I can understand no rationing, but I cannot understand partial rationing, Department is there. They must talk and they must produce files. They are talking again about control of price without controlling stock although the scheme failed under the regime of Diwan Bahadur Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar.

The second of his four points is to mobilise internal resources. I do not know how he is going to do it. I have been pressing for the last two years that you should have compulsory purchase of foodgrains. But the Government have always refused to adopt my suggestion. The Central Government never helped us. What are they here for? They cannot even procure food which already exists. What are they going to distribute then? What do they exist for? Is my honourable friend helping the poor people?

Prof. N. G. Ranga: He is helping the black marketeers and the corrupt Government servants.

Sir Mohammad Yamin Khan (Agra Division: Muhammadan Rural): Notes of Rs. 500 and above.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: My next charge is that this Food Department is responsible for very serious mistakes. They are void of common sense. They have taken the total quantity of food available in the country and divided it by the number of persons living in the country and it comes to 12½ oz. Is that enough? This is just like the man who was carrying his family across a river. Then, he said, what is the depth of the river. It is ten feet. Then he calculated the height of every person in the cart, and the total height of all the persons sitting in the cart came to more than 10 ft. which was the depth of the river. He asked the cart to proceed when unfortunately all the people were drowned. The man calculated once more and said, how could it happen, I have calculated properly? As the Urdu proverb says:

"Hisab jun ka tun, Kunda duba kyun."

The Food Department have done the same thing. So many people died in the Bengal famine. Their calculations were right but they died unmathematically.

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava (Food Member): That is what the mathematician does, not the Food Department.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: That is due to the absence of common sense in the use of mathematical knowledge characteristic of Food Department. Another example of the absence of common sense. I ask the Honourable Member whether, if we give him only jwar and bajra to eat, he can live on that throughout the year. People from time immemorial have been accustomed to consume a certain quality of foodgrain. My honourable friend knows that in the U.P. we eat rice from the Punjab and cannot eat Bengal rice. But he forces rice from Bengal in U. P. and not Punjab rice, and he sends it to an area where they do not eat that particular quality. The Food Department should know that there are different qualities of rice and people of different localities like a particular quality and not the other qualities. But in distributing it they think that all rice is of the same quality just as all petrol is of the same quality. My honourable friend will remember that he sent bajra to Travancore and the people there did not know how to eat it. So they must know the particular quality of grain consumed in a particular locality and send it to that place. They themselves, I am sure, will never be able to manage this whatever money they may spend; but if they leave it to the trade channel they from their practical experience know what particular quality is consumed in a particular locality. This knowledge which is so essential for the proper distribution of food, our Food Department does not possess, and they showed particular want of common sense in the matter of distribution. They made calculations as to the amount of rice required, but they never considered what variety people eat.

I will now mention what Food Department should do and what it should not do. What is really needed is the import of rice and wheat from outside not only for immediate use, but for building up a reserve which can also be utilised, if necessary, in stabilising prices. Then, I suggest the Statistics Department should be maintained and it should, just like the Finance and Information Departments, be centralised. There should be one Department of Statistics with branches for different work. They will keep figures as to the quantity of food grown in a certain year in particular localities and provinces, so that we can decide where to send any surplus food. This statistical branch may be attached to the Agriculture Department and it will serve the same purpose as the Food Department.

We hand over distribution to the normal trade channels with proper safeguards—for which legislation may also be necessary—against combine, monopoly, against hoarding and profiteering. It should be under Home Department. For this purpose a committee may be appointed. My honourable friend has been discussing this matter in various committees but they only considered Government interests and seldom considered the consumers' interests. There were very few consumers who were invited to these deliberations. I once charged Sir Joseph Bore with not consulting the consumers; he said he was himself representing consumers. I said he was a very bad specimen of a consumer. A consumer is not a person to whom money is of no consideration and who can buy from the black market. A consumer is a person who is financially not in a position to go to the black market and buy food. That is my definition of a good consumer.

I think we are suffering from two things,—not having sufficient food and not having enough clothing. On my ration card, for instance, I was given half a saree.

An Honourable Member: Did you wear it?

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: No, I am living on my pre-war reserves. But that is the kind of common sense that the Department is showing and it shows how hopeless and helpless they are.

Sir, now that the war is over, I desire that distribution should go to the normal trade channel. During the war there was some justification for their action but now with the end of the war I do not see any reason why this Food Department should be administered under the Defence of India Rules. Only we must guard against the abuses of trade. I have just now mentioned.

As regards rationing I will say one thing. We take pride on our hospitality, but since rationing came we tell guests we have no food or ask them to bring their own food. The way in which these cards are distributed is also troublesome and no cards are given to guests. The public also are not associated in the distribution of food; everything is arranged by officials only. The moment non-officials are brought in and things are arranged through the trade channel we will be in a better position as regards food. So I suggest that now with the end of the war the Food Department has no justification for its existence any longer; and the Agriculture Department should make arrangements for growing more food and collection of statistics. Distribution should be through the trade channel. If anybody is monopolising or is hoarding, steps must be taken under the provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code, and it ought to be done by the Home Department. Purchase from outside should be done by Commerce Department.

I may tell the House before I sit down that when I was young we used to hear a lot about the abuses by the Police, but we forgot them all when the Goods Department of the Railways started operating. When the Supply Department came into existence, we forgot both the Police and the Railways, and thought that they were comparatively honest, but when the Food Department started functioning, we forgot the abuses committed by everybody else. This is the experience of every elected Member of this House. Abolish it for its corruption if not for anything else.

Mr. M. R. Masani: I rise to support the amendment, of which I have given notice. This amendment focuses attention on an aspect which is much more material just at present than all the other factors referred to in the statement made by the Secretary of the Food Department.

We have had statements of policy before on the various aspects of the food problem and food administration in this country, and the Mover of the motion before the House has given us yet one more. There are things in that statement with which one can agree and others with which one may quarrel; but whatever we may have to say on that point, the fact remains that nothing can be done in the next few months with regard to those aspects which will have

[Mr. M. R. Masani.]

any bearing on the question as to whether the people of this country are to have enough food or are to starve. The one aspect which will have a definite effect on this question will be the question of imports into India from abroad

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I agree.

Mr. M. R. Masani: . . . and therefore the amendment, of which I have given notice, is one which, Sir, I hope all non-official sections of the House will find it possible to endorse.

Before I speak on the responsibility of the Government of India and the way in which they have acquitted themselves on this point, I would like very briefly to give the House some idea of the gravity of the position in the Southern and Western parts of this country. Speaking in the House of Commons on the 19th of January this year, the Under-Secretary for India, Mr. Henderson, mentioned that the shortage in the South and West was of the following order. He said that four-hundred-thousand tons had been destroyed in Madras and that five-hundred-thousand tons were lost in Bombay and Mysore owing to the factors which have been referred to by the Mover of the motion. I believe, Sir, that these are gross under-estimates and I think the Honourable Member for Food will agree with that. This morning one finds that the person in whose hands the administration of the Food Department rests in the South has himself contradicted the figures given by the Under Secretary in Parliament. This is what Sir S. V. Ramamurthi, who was in Delhi the other day and is presumably acquainted with the latest position, says according to *the Statesman* of this morning:

"If the present scale of daily rations, 1 lb. of cereals per head, was to be maintained, about a million tons of cereals—rice, wheat and millets—had to be imported into the province. If Madras was not able to obtain this quantity, the scale of rations would have to be reduced. But it could not be reduced in the case of agricultural producers, because such a step would give no incentive to them to grow more food. If the ration in respect of non-producers was cut, this would produce economic disturbance and suffering."

That, Sir, I am prepared to accept as a correct estimate of the position in the province of Madras, and no doubt Honourable Members who will speak after me from that Province will underline what I have said.

So far as my province of Bombay is concerned, there again, I believe, the problem is of greater magnitude than is appreciated at this stage. Let me at the outset say that no blame can possibly attach in this regard to either the people or the administration in that province. Bombay province has done all it can to harbour and mobilize its own resources and when the Provincial Rural Development Board met the other day in Bombay this was what was placed before it:

"Everything has been done in that province by way of procurement and of levy to mobilize the provincial resources. The results of the working of the grain purchasing monopoly and procurement scheme in 1944-45 season show that as compared to the previous season there was a considerable increase both in the total quantity of grain purchases and in the proportion of the total production which had come into the hands of the Government under its monopoly. The average percentage of the levy demand realized for the whole province, was 84.7 in the 1944-45 season."

In addition to the grain levy which exists in the province, the rationing restrictions are much more severe than in any other province, and I realized the full force of that when I came up to this city and saw that one could get not only whole milk for tea and coffee but even pure cream

Mr. Manu Subedar: And white bread.

Mr. M. R. Masani: White bread is another instance that has been given, and one could go on multiplying these by pointing out that in Bombay you can't have pastries made out of wheat flour, and so on. The point is that what Bombay is today facing is purely an act of nature and Bombay therefore deserves the co-operation not only of the people of this country but also of peoples in other lands.

What is the magnitude of the problem in Bombay? I propose to place before this House certain tentative figures which I understand, to the best of my knowledge, obtain there, and if I am wrong, no doubt the Honourable Member for Food who, I presume, will speak later, will correct me. Bombay requires for this year—1946—15½ lakhs of tons of foodgrains, but as against that our provincial stocks and supplies are only 6½ lakhs, leaving us with a gross deficit of 8½ lakhs. I understand, again speaking subject to correction, that we have been assured by the Central Government of imports to the extent of nearly 6 lakhs, but not quite six lakhs. That will leave us with a net deficit of 2½ lakhs. The question arises; what is to happen if this gap of 2½ lakhs is not filled up? I am still hopeful that an expression of opinion by this House and by the public generally will make it possible for more imports to be made available, but it is time, and high time that we face the alternative, because the mover of the motion in his speech already gave a mild hint that we must be prepared for a reduction in ration and Mr. Ramamurthi has also harped on the same thing.

What would this reduction in rations mean? It is very easy to talk of a reduction in ration without realizing the human and social consequences of such a step. The present ration in Bombay—and I take it the same is the case in Madras also—is 1 lb. per head per day for adults.

An Honourable Member: It is so only in towns.

Mr. M. R. Masani: Anyway, I will stick to the ration in my province, and other Honourable Member will no doubt inform the House about the state of affairs in other provinces.

What I am arguing is that, even if it is one full pound per head per day, it is a ration which cannot and should not be reduced any further. The very fact that this ration of one pound a day is prescribed in the Jail Manual of the Province and in the Famine Relief Code shows that it is a ration which should only be brought into existence or enforced in extreme emergency or for those classes of society which are rightly or wrongly to be punished. If that is so, then the whole province of Bombay is today on the ration of a criminal or a starving population. And yet the possibility of a reduction in the ration is being discussed.

Dr. Ackroyd, the Nutrition Expert of the Government of India, has adopted the position that anything between 2,600 and 2,800 calories of food are necessary for a grown-up person, and Mr. Kirby, another expert of the Government of India, has said that one pound of cereals yields on an average only 1,600 calories. Thus deficit is left of over 1,000 calories in a man's daily ration. To look at it another way: Dr. Ackroyd's specimen balanced diet lays down that a grown-up person should have a ration of 20 ounces of cereals, 3 ounces of pulses, 12 ounces of vegetables, 2 ounces of fruits, 2 ounces of fat and oils, 8 ounces of milk, 2 ounces of sugar and, if he is a non-vegetarian, 4 ounces of meat and fish. That, according to the Nutrition Expert of the Government of India, is a minimum balanced diet which every grown-up person should have. Now, even that prescribes for 1½ pounds of cereal and 3 ounces of pulses. You can imagine how much worse the position is if neither the milk nor the vegetables nor the fruits which are prescribed in that diet are available to the masses of the people, and that is a fact which obtains so far as the masses of the people are concerned. Therefore, from a nutritive point of view, a ration of 1½ pounds will not be adequate. It will have to be increased still further. That is the position, and I think this House should look with the gravest apprehension at even a suggestion that this ration should be reduced. I do not think we should consider such a suggestion seriously. We must make the Government of India find another way; that way is open, and that is by increased imports.

Today, in the City of Bombay and elsewhere, manual workers in what were during the war "essential" industries are getting 1½ pounds and therefore the Government has accepted the position that, for a grown-up man doing hard work, 1½ pounds is a bare necessity. What the result of reducing the ration

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in the country-side would be, has been mentioned by Sir S. V. Ramamurthi of the Madras Government. As he says, you can hardly expect a peasant to grow more food or be more efficient at his job if you are going to starve him! A whole generation of stunted people will also be produced if the rations are reduced. If you are going to have plans for agricultural regeneration, such as the plan produced by an Honourable Member opposite, we must have first of all a healthy and efficient population; and to reduce the ration further, I cannot help feeling, it will be to breed a whole generation of stunted children who, in their time, will fail to carry out any of the programmes and plans now devised. Having pointed out the gravity of the situation, I would now turn to the responsibility of the Central Government.

The Government of India's obligations are to meet a normal deficit which the other day was, on an official estimate, stated to be 6 million tons of cereals, $1\frac{1}{2}$ million tons of pulses, that is, $7\frac{1}{2}$ million tons of foodgrains. This, I presume, was worked out on the basis of a balanced diet. I am glad the Honourable Mover agrees. But in the present conditions, when a balanced diet is not possible, that deficit is not $7\frac{1}{2}$ million, but certainly 10 million and perhaps more: and the Government of India have now as a matter of broad policy accepted the obligation to feed adequately every man, woman and child in this country. Therefore, their obligation is to make good anything over 10 million tons of foodgrains in a year.

The Gregory Foodgrains Policy Committee Report, to which reference was made by the Mover, has dealt with this matter and I shall take the liberty to read a few sentences from that report in view of the direct bearing they have on the position today. This is what the Report says:

"The role of imports in the economy of India cannot be judged solely in the light of the percentage difference made to the over-all absolute Indian food supplies. The position of certain deficit areas is normally bound up with the maintenance of imports and they constitute an important buttress to the strengthening of public opinion and an important weapon in the battle against the profiteer and the hoarder There is very little room, taking the country as a whole, for the process of tightening the belt."

And then going on, the Committee made recommendations that:

"As regards imports, the Government of India should (a) press for imports to create a Central Foodgrains Reserve which should not be less than 500,000 tons. Such a quantity is absolutely necessary to prevent a breakdown of the machinery of the procurement, rationing and price policies outlined in subsequent chapters. It is not a substitute but a complement for more vigorous administrative action in other fields, (b) press the United Nations to arrange for imports for current consumption until further notice, equal in amount per annum to the average annual net imports of the last five years or about one million tons."

The question arises, to what extent the Government of India have or have not carried out these recommendations which they themselves accepted. The figures given by the Mover of the resolution show that in the twenty-seven months that have passed since these recommendations were made, a total of 1,750,000 tons of foodgrains have been imported from abroad. If you apply the Gregory Report recommendations, accepted by the Government of India, that figure should have been 2,750,000 tons. That is worked out at 1 million tons a year; $\frac{1}{2}$ million for the Reserve which was initially recommended; and for the last three months another $\frac{1}{4}$ million; making in all 2,750,000 tons. The Government of India therefore have failed on their own confession to the extent of 1 million tons. In fact, I took it that when the Mover of the resolution gave his figures he was more or less making himself party to my amendment; and on the facts of the case the Government of India have to admit that they have failed to secure adequate imports into this country.

The question arises to what extent that position can now be alleviated. The Food Member, speaking on the 18th of this month in Lahore, stated that our battle for food was being fought in Washington. But since that was said, we have had very disturbing news which has been given in the press and that is that Sir Robert Hutchings, who was sent there to represent the Government of

India's case before the Combined Food Board, not only got there a little late owing to some weather inclemency or accident, but even after that when he put the case, he was unable to shake them from their resolve to ignore the case of this country. What one understands is that some indeterminate part of the "reparations rice" is being extorted from Thailand (I call it Thailand and not Siam, which is a name deliberately given by British imperialist policy) amounting to $1\frac{1}{2}$ million tons of rice. Some of this might come to us. But here again, a message from Washington sent by the United Press of America on January 24th, points out that in counting on Siam's rice we shall be counting our chickens before they are hatched, because the same source in Washington reveals that the figure is 1 million tons and possibly less, and that the British conceded that their early estimate of $1\frac{1}{2}$ tons was high and indicated their willingness to settle it at a lower figure, and that Thailand is finding it difficult to obtain the rice from its own peasantry. So all that Sir Robert Hutchings seems to have brought is a "No". He has been sent back empty-handed.

It was in 1943, Sir, that the International Conference on Food took place at Hot Springs and on that occasion the leader of the British Delegation, Mr. Richard Law, made a very wise and profound declaration. He said that, in the matter of food, "if we do not hang together, then most assuredly we shall hang separately." He was talking of the nations of the world. All that has happened since—and that includes the Bengal famine and it may include the famine which threatens in Madras and Bombay today—shows that certainly the British Government have not lived up to the very statesmanlike pronouncement of their representative. It appears to be a case where, as the poet put it, "knowledge comes but wisdom lingers". Perhaps further famines and further wars are necessary to prove to the people in the West that they cannot maintain their high standard of living, if they are going to keep down the standards

I P. M. of living in the East at coolie level. The irony of the situation is this. According to Sir John Boyd Orr, Britain's leading nutrition expert, the British population—men, women and children—were better fed throughout the war than they were before the war. That is one picture, and there is the other picture of this country—this country which was dragged into a war against its wish and in the interests of Britain—which has been made to starve, and is still being made to starve. The war-mongers have done well for themselves and we, the victims of the war, are made to go on short of rations even after the war is over.

The other day it was mentioned by the Leader of the House that we had emerged from this war as a great power, as one of the great victorious powers! But we seem to be in a very sad plight, if this is what victory has meant to us! We also happen to be the creditors of our ruling race and we are told that we have big balances on which we shall assuredly be free to draw, as the British never break faith! I should be very much more interested, Sir, in seeing some part of those balances come into this country in the shape of wheat, of rice, of milk products, and other things of that kind.

There is a further responsibility on the British Government beyond that of dragging us into this war and of creating the situation that they did in our country, and that responsibility was fully accepted by no less a person than the present Secretary of State for India in 1943. Speaking then as a non-official, the present Secretary of State for India said:

"He thought that the main cause of the present famine in India was that a large number of people in certain provinces had not got the purchasing power to pay for such foodgrains as would keep them alive. The main cause of this increase in prices was inflation. For that policy the Government of India and nobody else could be held responsible."

He was slightly inaccurate there. He should have said that the overlords of the Government of India were really responsible. The fact remains that we, the creditors, by virtue of this inflation which was deliberately created by the British in order to meet their war expenditure in this country, which they could not have met by payments in goods or services; we their creditors, we have the

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right both legal and moral,—were it not for the fact that we are a subject nation.—to demand that part of those claims should be met in food for our men, women and children. The tragedy is that the present Government of India seem quite unable to make the British Government see their responsibility. Sir Robert Hutchings evidently went all the way only to be told that he could not address the Combined Food Board direct, because this “great victorious nation emerging out of this war” is not even given direct representation or a seat on the Combined Food Board! It must go and place its case before the representative of the British Government there, and through him before the Combined Food Board. The British Government have reduced us to this plight. The Government of India should have been able to secure in the last two years direct representation on the Combined Food Board. If they could not get it, they should have considered whether it was worth while carrying on the administration of this country on those terms. What kind of creditors are we that we must starve while our debtors are better fed than we are? What kind of victors are we? I know it will be argued that the failure to secure adequate imports is not due to lack of effort on the part of the Government of India and that, as the Mover of the motion put it, they have “strongly pressed” India’s case through the British representative before the Combined Food Board. I am quite prepared to believe that the Honourable the Food Member and his Department have done their best, but if it is their best, then it is a very poor best, and it is just not good enough for this country. I would like to know, for instance, when the Food Member speaks, whether he would take the House into his confidence and tell us the kind of language they have used in communicating with London and Washington.

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: Abuse them.

Mr. M. R. Masani: Have they pointed out that, if their demands are not met, there will be corpses littering the streets in the cities and towns of the provinces of the South and the West as they did in the city of Calcutta in the provinces of Bengal? Has it been made clear that the responsibility for such mass murder will fall on the United Nations? If they have not, then I suggest that they have not been doing the best that this country expects of them.

Sir, the food administration and its shortcomings are not a matter of departmental responsibility alone. The question whether millions of people should eat a normal human diet or starve, is, I suggest, a collective responsibility of the Governor-General in Council, and particularly of the Indian Members of that Council, who at least belong to this country. The Mover of the motion has mentioned three or four measures which the Government are proposing to take in the next few months. Having listened to what he said, and while being in agreement with what he proposed, I must confess that none of these three or four measures will have any immediate bearing on the situation. They are long term measures, which will have their effect in course of time. I would suggest therefore to the Government of India that if they cannot do better than this, they might add one more measure to those that they have adumbrated, and that measure is to resign and to make way for another government whose voice will be heard with a little more respect and with more attention by the other countries of the world.

Yesterday, I think it was, that the Honourable the Finance Member said that he would be very happy if the matter of the sterling balances was taken up by his successor in office, because he realised that the Government which would take the place of the present one would have a much better chance of securing a fair deal for this country. Unfortunately, food is not a matter where we can wait for a change of government or allow even a few months to pass for some constitutional change. We are now discussing whether the people in the South and West shall eat or starve in the coming months of this year. We cannot wait for political changes or constitution-making and therefore the

remedy suggested by the Honourable the Finance Member that we should wait till the new Government comes into being cannot apply to this case. Evidently, the Honourable the Finance Member regards the present Government as a care-taker's government.

An Honourable Member: An undertaker's government.

Mr. M. R. Masani: As my Honourable friend rightly points out, they will prove, if they go on at this rate, not to be a caretaker government but an undertaker's government. I would, in conclusion, say this: that there is only one course open to the Indian Members of the Government, if they choose to remain in office. That is, within the next few weeks, to talk a language different from the one they have used before to their British masters, to talk in a language which they would understand and, if a response is not forthcoming in the terms in which it ought to, their duty, the duty of the Indian Members, will be to resign collectively.

Mr. C. P. Lawson: Mr. President, I have listened with great attention to the speech made by Mr. Masani. I am very glad that he introduced a note of seriousness into this debate which up to that point, I felt, was rather lacking. (Interruption.) My friend opposite twits me on what I have just said but he and members who were here in our previous incarnation will know that we on this side have raised this point on our own initiative on more than one occasion during the past four years and to suggest that we are not extremely serious over this, I suggest, is unworthy.

We are glad that the Food Department have raised this debate. Indeed, if they had not, we should have raised it ourselves. The situation is indeed, I think, unpleasant to hear about and it is still more unpleasant to realise that the Food Department to some extent are in a cleft stick. If they are pessimistic they face the danger of supplies disappearing and going underground. If they are optimistic, they face the danger of being hauled over the coals when things turn out bad. So, they have considerable sympathy from me on these grounds, and equally on the grounds that they act as distributors for an agricultural department over which they only have cooperative control and for Provincial Government over whom they have no control at all. I will say this about the Food Department: they have established in a few years the machinery of rationing, of procurement and a system, imperfect though it may be, which will place us in a better situation to meet the difficulties which I fear are coming during the current year. I wish I could feel with Mr. Masani that it was open to this Government to import as much grain as it wanted. I am afraid that in the whole world there are people talking like this, and I am afraid it will need considerable special pleading on our part to make clear our situation. I doubt, for instance, whether in other countries it is fully realised—and indeed I sometimes wonder whether it is even realised in this country—that every year we have some five million more mouths to feed. That is a point which I feel has got to be made known. The fact that one or two million people may be starving in Europe carries weight with the nations of the world, but I wonder how many of them realise that in this country we have to feed five million more people every year

Mr. M. Asaf Ali (Delhi: General): They feed on mother's milk every year: you do not feed them on cereals and rice and wheat.

Mr. C. P. Lawson: I am grateful to my honourable friend for giving me that assistance, but I hope he will treat the matter with the seriousness with which I am trying to treat it. Sir, the Honourable Secretary for the Food Department brings up a problem which to my mind is split into two parts

Mr. President: Order, order: if the Honourable Member is going to develop that point, we may just think of adjourning. I have an announcement to make—so that he may not have to stop in the middle of his speech.

Mr. President: I have to inform the Honourable Members that for the purpose of election of members to the Committee to examine the proposals of the Bretton Woods Conference and the Committee to examine the Road Rail Co-ordination Scheme, the Notice Office will be open to receive nominations up to 12 Noon on Friday, the 1st February, and that elections, if necessary, will be held on Monday, the 4th February. The elections, which will be conducted in accordance with the Regulations for holding of elections by means of the single transferable vote, will be held in the Assistant Secretary's room in the Council House, between the hours of 10-30 A.M. and 1 P.M.

The House will now adjourn and re-assemble at 2-30 P.M.

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.

Mr. C. P. Lawson: When the House rose I was saying that the statement which we have just received from the Food Department, to me, fell into two sections. There was the situation as regards the present and the situation as regards the future. The present in all conscience sounds bad enough. How bad it is I am not in a position to say. Nor is the Government itself in a position to say. We know that serious losses have occurred but we are unable to relate those losses to any particular figures. We do not know, for instance, whether a loss of, say, 5 million tons owing to climatic conditions may not have been replaced by increase in acreage and increase in yield but on this question of statistics I shall have something to say later in my remarks. One thing is quite certain, that the danger of stocks going underground is a very present danger and one which will need every kind of precaution and every kind of effort to avoid. When one realises that if all the people of this country were to put aside one month's supply that five million tons of foodgrains would be removed from circulation, we get some idea of the seriousness of that possibility. I will be told, of course, that the majority of the people are unable to carry so much. I agree but many can carry so much and many will. For that reason I do see that there is a necessity on the part of the Food Department not to paint the picture in too pessimistic terms and I propose as regards the immediate present to apply my mind more to what can be done to help the situation than to criticise Government for allowing the situation to come about.

In the first place, Sir, I consider it more than necessary that in view of the fact that much grain (how much we do not know,) is taken into storage there should be a drive to watch the storage conditions. Once again how much grain we lose in storage even in Government storage no one knows. It is suspected to be something around 5 per cent in Government storage and in private hands it may even be more and I therefore recommend to Government that they very closely and intensively go into the question of the protection of stocks in storage particularly against rats and against insect pests. There have lately been a number of very important discoveries in this regard and if Government can speed up supplies of these new discoveries I think much can be done to save the stock that is in storage.

There is another suggestion that I wish to make and coming from Bengal it touches me particularly. On other occasions in the previous Assembly I have recommended that the question of fisheries and fish supply should receive very urgent attention. It has received attention but not nearly as urgent as I would have desired and I do not think there is any doubt that if fish supply could be speeded up and speeded up quickly it would, at any rate, fill some of the gap. When I raised this question before I was told that the war being on, it was impossible to get trawlers for intensive production of fish and that the ice shortage limited the possibility of transport. I suggest to Government that neither of these factors now apply and that it should be possible to get the

means of bringing in the fish from what is after all an inexhaustible supply and it should be possible to produce enough ice to transport it.

Sir, the danger in the present is undoubtedly there and I entirely support those who say that every possible effort must be made to import all we can in the way of foodgrains but it is equally obvious that the Lord will help those who help themselves and I think we have got to get particularly busy on the production of foodgrains in this country.

That brings me rather to the future than to the present, although much can be done if even now we get busy on the coming year's sowings. I have in front of me a document circulated to me with my papers entitled "A Statement on Agriculture and Food Policy in India." I find it difficult not to express disappointment not so much at the contents of this paper as at the fact that so much of that paper is still a project rather than a reality. It is full of the most excellent suggestions—"It is intended to—," "We expect shortly to do this and that" and things of that kind. But when all is said and done the organisations that the Food Department itself has produced in three or four years are a lesson perhaps to the Agricultural Department for the lag of agricultural development in the past 20 years. I have as a matter of interest been comparing this document with the Report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture in India. This report is nearly 20 years old and I say without hesitation that even if 50 per cent. of the recommendations of this report had been put into effect we would not find ourselves in the situation in which we are today. In particular I have been concerned with the lack of statistics. I have raised that before in this House and I am raising it again. I cannot see how the Food Department can ever produce an adequate and sound food policy unless they have behind them a better system of statistics. At present we do not know what the country is eating. We do not know what the carry-overs are. We do not know what is in storage. Some improvement may have been made and indeed when I raised this question on the last occasion I was told that a gentleman by name, Dr. Mahalanobis, was touring the provinces and was going to produce a system of statistics which would put things right. Sir, I do not know what happened to Dr. Mahalanobis or his report. I have never seen either.

Going through this report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture, which is nearly 20 years old, I pick three recommendations at random. "The statistics relating to production and consumption of the cotton crop should in future furnish a model for statistics relating to other crops." "Statistics of inland trade, rail and river borne, should be revived forthwith for all commodities of economic importance and not only for cotton. Advantage should be taken of the gap in their publication to re-consider their form and contents." "The present statistical organisation of the Government of India should be strengthened by the appointment of a statistician of first-rate ability as head of a separate Department of Statistics. The appointment of this officer should precede any changes, etc." I quote that merely to show how slow the progress has been.

Then, I want to mention the question of price stabilisation. I consider this to be extremely important because, as a permanency, it is upon this that increase in yield will depend. We have heard of considerable increase in acreage and indeed, speaking from memory, there are in this country something over 200 million acres under the plough. An increase of 5 or 7 million acres is, I admit, a good thing. But it is a method which is not always economical because of the position of this uncultivated land and in course of time the cultivable land which remains in this country uncultivated would soon be exhausted. The only hope is an increase in yield and it is upon the stabilised price factor that the increase in yield is to come. Perhaps I may go a little further into this point and explain what I mean. Fertilization in this country has not paid except for certain money crops. It may be interesting for the House to know, if they do not know it already, that for 16 million acres of cultivable land in Japan before the war no less than 4 million tons of chemical

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fertilizers were applied. In Russia in ten years from a consumption of nil in the matter of chemical fertilizers their consumption has reached a figure of 4 million tons. That, in Russia, is for a population less than half the population of this country. Now, in this country for food crops, other than sugar, and I exclude sugar because it is to some extent a money crop, no more than 20,000 tons of chemical fertilizers were used. Something like a further 60 or 70 thousand tons were used for such crops as tea, coffee, vegetables and sugar. Now, that is purely because the money crops yielded enough return for their fertilisation. I have used the figures for chemical fertilizers for no other reason than that these figures are readily available. Any other fertilizer can be used, manure, green manure and the rest, but the fact of the matter is that, whatever it is, it costs money, and unless an adequate return comes from the crop, that crop will not be manured. So, Sir, I consider the price stabilization to be a most important point and I would like to hear if some progress has been made.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: No progress at all; they are bringing the prices down. That is their only record.

Mr. C. P. Lawson: Now, Sir, one good word I have to say about this report which has been circulated to us. It applies a very useful principle, the principle of targets, year after year. It announces, once again in the future, that a system of targets for a period of years will be arranged and presumably, although it does not say so, provinces will be asked to guarantee those targets. That, Sir, I think is a good method of approach. If we can definitely decide on a certain stepping up of production and a stepping up of diet, a balancing of the diet, then a system of targets could be applied and the provinces could be got to guarantee those targets if they agree to them beforehand. Naturally, there would be failures according to weather and so on and reserves must be kept to deal with such failures. But what I am particularly concerned with is the possibility, and I believe it is a present possibility, that provinces, underestimate their production for obvious reasons. They would like to keep the prices up and they would like to keep themselves on the safe side. Now, Sir, price stabilisation should deal, to some extent, with this bad question of keeping the prices up. If targets can be approved and guaranteed by provinces, the question of under-estimates should not be so damaging.

Now, Sir, I want to say one more word before I finish on the subject of rice. It concerns us in Bengal very particularly and is most important for the rest of India as well. We know that something like 80 to 90 million acres in this country are under rice and that an yield of something like 12 or 13 maunds to the acre can be got on an average. Now, that is still less than half of the production of China and less than a third of the production of Japan and some other countries. There is no question that there is scope here for a very considerable improvement in yield and this will depend upon improved seed and upon improved manuring. Possibly, in the course of this debate someone from the Government Benches will tell us just how far they have progressed in the matter of improved seed, which in rice is most important. I have asked this question before and I am particularly anxious to know how we are going on.

When one realises that even to maintain the present standard which is not a good one, we must produce half a million tons every year extra food grains, one realises the absolutely vital necessity of looking forward. It is somewhat staggering to think that in ten years time, we shall have to be producing anything from five to eight million tons more food grains as an ordinary thing. Unless we have that, we are definitely heading towards famine conditions. If we can increase our rice crop, the yield of our rice crop per acre by only 50 per cent, it would still leave it well below the rice production of China, but we would have something like eight million tons to go on with and it would be really a good portion of the increase that we have got to make up.

In all these documents before me, I am a little distressed always to see the problem approached as a static problem. We are asked to increase on the present basis, but the problem is not static, the problem is a moving one, it has got to move with the population and it has got to move also with improvement in diet. But I am convinced, Sir, that what is required to be done can be done, and if now we can get on a little bit quicker, if the Agricultural Department can produce something definite to put before us, even if they go back to this nearly twenty year old report, I shall be only too pleased.

In conclusion, Sir, all I can say is that we must undoubtedly do all we can, individually and collectively to help the present situation by public opinion and to ensure that the steady flow of food grains is maintained. In the future, I am convinced that adequacy and indeed excess in production can and must be accomplished.

Sri N. Narayanamurthi: Mr. President, it is indeed a strange and happy coincidence that this my maiden speech on the floor of this Assembly should have been on the same theme which was on the lips of my late lamented friend Mr. K. S. Gupta who was representing my constituency and who died with the last words on his lips: "no medicine, no food and no clothing" describing the conditions prevailing in my constituency. He was then referring to the conditions prevailing in my District, North Vizagapatam, and parts of Orissa. But today, since those memorable words were uttered, and that heart-rending appeal was made on the floor of this House, has there been any improvement in the conditions? What is the condition today? It is much worse than it was. Only in one part of the Madras Presidency famine conditions were prevailing then, but today even according to the admission of the Government Member, a very grave situation is facing the whole of the Madras Presidency, not only in the District of North Vizagapatam and parts of Orissa, and Rayala Seema, but also rich districts like Nellore, districts in the far south and the west coast of Madras Presidency. We are today face to face with a crisis, the like of which has never been experienced before. This morning, Sir, we were given an account of what is being done by the Food Department here. It is not statistics, good intentions, resolutions and recommendations of committees that are wanted, but real remedial measures as have been suggested by my Honourable friend, Mr. Masani. Immediate import of necessary quantity of food supplies is what is wanted. That is what has got to be done. In that respect the Government statement this morning does not throw any light whatsoever. We are told that Sir Robert Hutchings and others are going to Washington and London to get more food supplies. We are only told that the matter is engaging the attention of the Honourable the Food Member. The Adviser to the Madras Government Sir Ramamurti was here only last week in connection with food supplies to Madras Province. We are told that a discussion took place on this subject at a conference, but the inner workings of the Food Department and the outcome of that Conference are not known to us. We do not know exactly what is going to happen. We are not fully informed on the subject. This morning's papers announce that the Honourable the Food Member is to lead a delegation to London and Washington with regard to the arrangement of adequate food supplies to this country. The object of my amendment to the amendment of Mr. Masani is to point out that the mere importing of necessary supplies does not solve the whole problem. In the case of Bengal famine, it was not want of supplies in this country that was responsible for the same. It was admitted on all hands on the authority of economists, politicians and everybody that the Bengal famine of 1943 was a "man-made famine" it was due to the artificial conditions, to corruption that was rampant in the whole hierarchy of Supply and Food Departments of the Government of India that the Bengal famine was brought about. Then, Sir, it was only in Bengal and Orissa. Tomorrow it is going to be an All-India affair, Not only in Madras presidency, but even in interior parts of the country, the conditions are no better. We hear harrowing accounts of misery, woe and privation that are facing the people. As has been pointed out by Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad this morning, even in interior parts of

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U.P. even in Mewar, in fact all over India the same problem stares in the face, both of the people and of the Government. What is required now is not mere recommendations or reports or statistics but real food to the people. The people are crying for a morsel of food. It is up to the Government to take immediately the necessary measures to bring about satisfactory conditions as early as possible.

Next I must say that the manner in which the procurement system, for which the representative of the Government claimed some credit this morning, is being worked is nothing short of a scandal. The way in which these D.S.O.'s and C.S.O.'s and other petty officials are working out this procurement scheme in rural areas is scandalous in the extreme. These officers themselves are shareholders in the booty of the black markets. Rationing is not being properly done, with such care in rural areas as is being done in urban areas. In fact in the name of requisitioning of food grains, these procurement officials pay a mere pittance to the cultivators, and rob them of their yield. They are in fact shareholders in the black market. They sell licences and permits to the highest bidder. In this way the procurement department in the mofussal is rampant with corruption. My point is that if even tomorrow sufficient supplies are obtained from out of India, unless the Government Department is wholly purified, let it better be abolished as suggested by my Honourable friend Sir Ziauddin Ahmad. However, I am not for the complete removal of controls immediately. I am only for a wholesale purification of the whole system. Unless this is done, there is absolutely no hope for the future of the food problem in India. Mere importing of supplies will not solve the whole problem. Unless the cultivator is actually assured of a reasonable return for his toils, and unless he is assured also of a real and adequate supply of his own requirements, there will be no inducement on his part to work the grow-more-food campaign in the manner in which we want him to work it. This in fact is the object of my amendment to Mr. Masani's amendment, and unless the Government wakes up betimes and makes necessary arrangements to overhaul the whole system a grave situation is sure to face them. This is admitted even by the Government. And, when there is mutual agreement on that point why

3 P. M. should not the Government immediately take recourse to measures to purify and overhaul the working of the whole procurement system and establish a better type of food distribution machinery in the country? Sir, I support the amendment of Mr. Masani and move my own amendment to it.

Sir Cowasjee Jehangir (Nominated Non-Official): Sir, to say that the position is most depressing is to characterise our sentiments in very mild language. Sir, for my sins I come from a deficit province, but it is our good fortune that so far as food is concerned the administration is far better perhaps than in most other parts of India. Good administration cannot make up for the deficit and when nature is unkind on the top of other handicaps in a deficit province the House can well imagine the condition of not only my province but the southern provinces of India. Those who live in surplus provinces do not, I am afraid, understand the critical condition of those other Indians who live in the south. It is no use today to cry over spilt milk. We are in a situation where desperate remedies are required. One suggestion in what I may respectfully characterise as the very able speech of my Honourable friend, Mr. Masani, is about imports. True, that is the easiest way out in a crisis. But we have heard the tale of woe about these imports. Certainly we must do everything we possibly can to help Government to get larger imports at this critical time; and I am sure there is not a single Member in this House who would not do his utmost to see that larger imports are brought in. That is a remedy which is certainly the easiest for us and has been most difficult of accomplishment in the last three or four years. But I have always had one serious complaint against the Food Department of the Government of India. I have voiced that complaint in this House on several occasions and I desire to voice it once again most emphatically

and that is, their lack of control over surplus provinces. We who suffer must feel bitterly the Government of India not being able to take steps which we believe are in their power to take to procure surplus food from surplus provinces to be distributed to those who are starving. On more than one occasion I have had reason to point out where the Government of India's orders have been defied; and the Honourable Member in charge of the Food Department sat with folded arms and said he could do nothing.

Now, Sir, we are told at this critical time of certain steps which the Government of India are taking. I do not wish to repeat all that other Honourable Members have said with which I am very heartily in agreement. I wish to make a new point; and it therefore must not be taken that I do not support a great deal of what has been already said. It has been said that they are taking some domestic steps and they are approaching four provinces—I think they are Punjab, Sind, U. P. and Bihar—and calling upon them to organise a monopoly of procurement. Surely that ought to have been done long ago; that was suggested in this House two years ago. And is it only now that these steps are taken with these surplus provinces? Sir, I am unable to understand that statement. When our Government in Bombay have been appealing for the last three or four months for assistance in their critical condition, we are today told that the Government of India are approaching surplus provinces to go in for a monopoly procurement. And what reason have we to believe that the instructions of the Government of India will be carried out? What reasons have we to believe that these surplus provinces will place their surpluses at the disposal of the Government of India? We have no reason to believe that they will do so. Our past history and past experience tells us that the Government of India may be flouted in the future as they have been flouted in the past.

A province like mine also produces a necessity of life. Sir, your city and my city are responsible for the production of the largest quantity of cloth in India. That cloth is taken from us under control at controlled prices and is given to those very provinces which refuse to give us their surplus food when we starve. If the Government of India cannot control these provinces I suggest that they should hand over the control of cloth to us in Bombay, to the Bombay Government, and let us distribute that cloth equitably and we will see how the surplus provinces refuse to give us their surplus food. Cannot they withhold that cloth from surplus provinces that have refused to give us their food? Have the Government of India that power? If they have, will they exercise it? If they cannot do it let them hand over the management of control of cloth and procurement of food from other provinces to the Government of Bombay, and we will see whether we cannot procure the food we require to save our people and the people of southern India from utter starvation and death. Will Government consider that position? If it is a question of one province against another (*Mr. Manu Subedar*: "And one department against another") let us be equitable in all the necessities of life. If we have some necessity of life which is required by everybody let us distribute that necessity of life in exchange for that first great necessity of life, namely, food. You do not let us do it and you say you cannot get us the surplus from other provinces.

Sir, I do not wish to delay the House much longer. The position is critical in my province and, as *Mr. Masani* has very ably placed figures before us, if there is to be a further cut in rations we are going below the sustenance level. It is bad enough today but to make it worse would be criminal; and it is threatened that if the Government of India do not come to our assistance our rations will be cut, yours and mine, *Mr. President*, in Bombay and in the whole of the province.

Well, if that is the position and if our rations are to be cut further and if our people are to be starved then the time has come when we must take steps for ourselves and I demand, *Mr. President*, that we should be allowed to take steps in the directions I have just urged, if the Government think that is going

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too far, then I ask them to take such steps and to withhold giving our cloth made in our part of the country to those who refuse to give us food.

We have heard for the last three years about increased acreage. Perhaps some of my Honourable friends who have been members of this Assembly during the last year or two will remember that I challenged the figures given by Government. We were told so many more millions of acres had been brought under plough; then we were shown shortages. In other places I have had to protest that it was misleading. Today, for the first time, so far as I am aware, we have been informed that those grand figures of acreage resulted in small figures of yield, that is to say that all those encouraging figures which we were given of increase in acreage—which I did not believe in and I said so in the House, and there was a strong protest when I said so—were incorrect. I say, my statement has come out correct today; those figures were wrong as the yield shows. I know my Honourable friend, the Secretary of the Department, has given same reasons why the yield is not in correspondence with the increased acreage. Yes, some of those reasons might come into effect sometimes, but they did not come into effect during the last three years. We did not have nature against us all these three years; we did not have famine in those parts of India where there was a large increase in acreage. How is it that we are told today that the yield is less than was expected. It is most unfortunate, Mr. President, and I do urge on the Government of India to take this matter of our provinces in the South seriously and that if they allow us to starve, our Governments will hold them responsible. They have done their best; they are doing their best; and if I may say so on behalf of our Governments, we will hold the Government of India responsible for any starvation or any death that overtakes us in future in Bombay and in the southern provinces.

Maharajkumar Dr. Sir Vijaya Ananda (United Provinces: Landholders): Sir, I shall not take very long. I have very great pleasure in endorsing my Honourable friend, Mr. Narayanamurthi's speech in regard to the districts to which he belongs. I myself belong to Vizagapatam district although I represent the United Provinces—I happen to sail in two boats. He and I worked in the Ceded districts two years ago over this famine question, and in spite of what the country has gone through—the sins of Bengal which ought to recoil on the heads of Government—and in spite of that, we find that districts like Godavari, Tanjore, Mysore, Gujarat, and the Ceded districts are again heading for a terrible famine. This is no doubt due to the Government being absolutely incompetent.

This morning's paper says that Sir Ramamurthi has given a very sad picture of what might happen. Sir, the proverbial '*muthi bhar channa*' is also now a doubtful factor. Whether our poor people will be able to even get that I doubt very much. Whilst all this is going on in our country, we find Sir Girja Shankar Bajpai saying that all is well in India. His propaganda there has reached the very limit. I suggest to this House that it is high time that he was recalled.

My second suggestion is that whilst we all in this country are facing such a terrible famine is it right that the British and the American troops should stay on in this country and take large supplies from us? The war is over and it is high time they left our shores. If they are staying here merely for the purpose of protecting us, I can tell you, Sir, that we do not wish to have their protection. We are quite happy; we do not want other people's country; we want to be self-content and we want our own foodstuffs to be kept to us and not sent abroad.

It is scandalous indeed that a European official is sent from this country to represent us in America and in England. Is it not time for the Government to select somebody who represents the people, who can give the people's point of view and not official? It is said that a delegation is soon to proceed to America and that it will again consist of officials. I think that is what is on the cards.

May I suggest that the Government should, even at this late hour, think of inviting at least three or four elected Members of this House who can go to America and tell them the true state of affairs. In my opinion the Food Department's behaviour of utter disregard to public opinion is nothing short of water on duck's back. I submit that if even now they are not prepared to see to the comforts of the people, it is high time that they should vacate their positions for someone who represent this country in the truest spirit.

Shri Sarat Chandra Bose (Calcutta: Non-Muhammadan Urban): As I may not be in this House during the later stages of this debate I desire, with your leave, to make my own contribution to it today. The subject matter of the debate is one which has agitated the minds of our people ever since the year 1941. It assumed larger proportions in 1943 when the man-made famine broke out in Bengal and in certain other parts of the country. The agitation in the public mind became greater. As the House knows, famine and pestilence began to stalk over my own province of Bengal and also in other parts of the country in the year 1943. The angel of death began to beat its wings. But the light-hearted revellers in the Government of India and the Government of Bengal went on merrily with their revels. Sir, it makes one sad to contemplate these things.

For feeding a nation in peace and in war, three things, to my mind, are necessary: firstly, that the Government should have a strong Scientific Division which is capable of advising on a food and nutrition policy; secondly, that the Government should wholeheartedly implement their advice; and thirdly,—and that is, Sir, by far the most important of the three,—that the Government should be completely identified with the people and enjoy their absolute confidence. It is such an organization and such a spirit that created a far better food situation in countries like Britain, the United States of America and the Soviet Union than we had in this poor country of ours during the last war.

In England, the policy followed and the action taken by the British Government have, it has been claimed, actually raised the nutritional level, particularly of the poorer sections of the population. In fact, Sir, it has been stated that the average stature of the British boy of 12 today is about 2½" higher than it was before the war. Britain, as is well known, is a country which normally produces far less food than she requires for her consumption; and yet, so successful has been the policy of the British Government regarding home production and imports of food, that not only has death from starvation been prevented, but people have been given more nutritious, if rather monotonous, food, during the war than before.

Let us examine, now, Sir, the steps that were taken by the British Government which led to such good results under such difficult conditions.

The Scientific Division of the Ministry of Food in England calculated first the nutritional needs of the total population of Great Britain in terms of various categories of foodstuffs according to an internationally accepted optimum nutritional standard. In looking after these nutritional needs, they considered the requirements for different age groups of the population of different occupations, as well as the special nutritional needs of expectant and nursing mothers. It was, indeed, Sir, a most thorough calculation of the exact needs of the population and, if I may add, a most thorough consideration of all the essential nutritive elements required for maintaining the highest nutritional level. After such calculation and consideration, the Scientific Division in Great Britain proceeded to get the figures of pre-war home production of food and decided which categories of foodstuffs should be grown in larger quantities according to a "Grow More Food Campaign"—unlike the 'Grow More Food Campaign' in India—and which should be imported in order to meet the deficit in existing home production. They advised increased production of the bulkier foodstuffs like cereals, potatoes, etc., and recommended importation of certain quantities of wheat and wheat products, and more particularly of concentrated protective foodstuffs like egg powder, milk powder, cran-

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juice, liver oils and other vitamin concentrates. They recommended compulsory feeding of milk and certain protective foodstuffs particularly to the so-called vulnerable groups of the population, namely, children and expectant and nursing mothers. They also advised the establishment of community feeding centres called "British restaurants" where cheap and nutritious meals were to be provided. Community feeding was also recommended through factory canteens. Milk was recommended to be distributed to the vulnerable groups of the population first and then, if available, to others. The Scientific Division of the Ministry of Food also carried out regular investigations with human subjects regarding the effect that the current rationing and other administrative measures had on the health of selected groups of the population. The rationing policy was subject to periodical reviews in the light of those results.

Sir, that was not all. The British Government showed a high degree of responsibility to the British people under its charge by loyally implementing almost all the scientific advice without exception. They provided shipping space for all the food that was needed to be imported into the country and also helped the increased production of more food in the country principally by means of the system of subsidy. Let me remind the Government of India, which is represented on the Treasury Benches before me, that throughout the war period the British Government subsidised the growing of food directly from the Exchequer to the tune of over Rs. 200 crores annually and recently they have sanctioned about Rs. 400 crores for direct subsidy for food production. The policy of the Government there was to buy foodstuffs at remunerative prices from growers and to sell them at greatly reduced prices to the consumers. That policy was mainly responsible for the success of the "Grow More Food Campaign" and for stabilising prices and bringing foodstuffs within the means of all consumers, rich and poor. In no case of a staple foodstuff did the price go up more than 25 per cent. above the pre-war price level. The British Government's subsidy covered all the important foodstuffs including cereals, potatoes, milk and meat. Potatoes were sold in England at 2½ annas a seer during the war. And I call to mind today that during my detention days I read in the papers that potatoes were sold at some places in India at the rate of Rs. 5 per seer!

As regards imports of food, the British Government never pleaded inability to provide shipping space for the importation of food that was necessary for feeding the people at an optimum nutritional level. In fact, Sir, throughout the war, sufficient stores of food were maintained in England, not only for current consumption, but also for consumption over a period of many months. It is this complete synthesis between scientific advice and administrative measures, a synthesis which is altogether absent in our country, which has given such good results in England.

When, Sir, we compare the policy of the Government of India with that of the British Government, what do we find? The contrast is glaring, indeed. Rationing was introduced in India quite late in the war, although the position of food supply was not unknown to the Government, and nothing was done even when the price-index of foodstuffs should have indicated to the Government that large masses of people were already living on a starvation diet. Yet, the Government of India keeps on its pay-roll an Economic Adviser, whose duty ought to have been to draw the attention of the Government to the serious economic and food situation in the country as early as 1941 or 1942. The Government of India later pleaded ignorance of the impending crisis, whereas even lay people knew from a general knowledge of the soaring prices of the basic foodstuffs like rice and wheat that tens of millions of people were already going hungry. Sir, a complete cleavage such as this between the Government and the people, whom it has undertaken to govern, has not any parallel at all in history, modern or ancient.

Rationing began in India, as the House will remember, almost towards the end of the war, except in the Province of Bombay, which had introduced rationing earlier with commendable foresight. When ultimately rationing was introduced, the system was not based on the optimum nutritional requirements of

the people of India; and even now rationing covers only the cereals and sugar, whereas practically all foodstuffs, including potatoes, eggs, meat, fish, etc., are in short supply and should have been rationed. The rationing system therefore does not seem to take cognisance of the effect of its operation on the health of the people and does not even tend to meet the nutritional requirements of the people according to modern nutritional standards. It is typical of the Government of India that it has a Rationing Adviser—I repeat, it is typical of the Government of India and the Government of India alone among all the governments in the world that it has a Rationing Adviser,—who is not an expert on food and nutrition, is not even an Indian, and is hardly familiar with the intimate food habits of our people!

In spite of the fact that food subsidy has played a most important rôle in the production of more food in England and in stabilising the prices there, no approach even to this question has been made by the Government of India. It is well known that large sections of the population are not able to buy even the ration of rice that is allowed. There is no reason why the Government of India should not follow the same policy as England and buy at least the food-grains—rice, wheat and millets—at remunerative prices from the growers and sell them at reduced prices to the consumers. In Britain the Government is doing it for all foodstuffs and the Government is finding money for it there. Thereby the Government in England is distributing the burden of the higher cost of foodstuffs over the entire nation instead of compelling the lower income groups to starve. Why cannot this policy, I ask, be followed with respect to at least one or two important foodstuffs like rice and wheat? If money can be found to finance the war, surely money can be found to finance the feeding of the people. If money can be raised by loans for making weapons of destruction, surely money can easily be raised by loans for keeping the people alive. The Government of India says that it is making huge plans for the future reconstruction of India; but apparently it has no plan at all for putting nutritious food into the mouths of the people who are required to reconstruct the country! Budgets running into thousands and thousands of crores of rupees are being produced on paper,—on paper, I say,—for future plans of development; but at present no sufficient or substantial amount has been allotted for subsidy to the growers, which could have helped immediate production of more food and also the bringing of foodstuffs within the means of the poorer sections of our people.

Regarding imports, again, the lack of shipping space has often been pleaded in the past for not getting food into our country, while that plea was never put forward by the British Government to justify starvation in their own country. Even now, allocation of food to India is going by default, because the Combined Food Board at Washington, to which reference was made by my friend, Mr. M. R. Masani, which makes the allocation of the world's food supply for the United Nations, has no representative who can speak directly for India. It was reported in the press the other day that even the Food Secretary of the Government of India, who went to Washington to plead for the import of, as far as I remember, about 1½ million tons of rice and wheat into India, was not allowed to represent the case of India directly to the Combined Food Board by the representative of the British Government,—our Trustees, as they describe themselves! I repeat Sir, that the Food Secretary of the Government of India who went to Washington to plead for the import of about 1½ million tons of rice and wheat into India was not allowed even to represent the case of India directly to the Combined Food Board by the representative of the British Government, but had greatly to scale down India's demand and channel it through the British Government's representative to the Combined Food Board. That the case for the feeding of a nation of four hundred million people should receive such treatment is a strong pointer to and also a sad commentary on our national status. If the food prospect in India is grim, the Government of India and the Treasury Benches who represent the Government of India in this House, must hold themselves responsible for it.

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Sir, there has been a lot of talk about hoarding and mal-practice in India in relation to the food situation, and the Government of India during the last three years has always taken cover under that plea. Some of it is, of course, undoubtedly true; but it is clear that even the tendency to hoard in this country results largely from the fact that the people do not trust the Government to give them the food they need. And who can say from millions of deaths from starvation that that mistrust is unjustified? The crux of the problem lies in this—that a national government does not exist either at the Centre or in the Provinces, which could have inspired the confidence of our people, could have put through measures of subsidy by raising loans, if necessary, and would have considered itself responsible for even a single death occurring in this country from starvation. If only the Government of this country had identified themselves with the joys and sorrows of our people, with their fortunes and misfortunes, as the British Government at home did with reference to the people of Britain, it would have pursued the same or similar measures which were taken in Britain and would not have allowed a single Indian to die in this country from starvation. Science is at our bidding, even to produce food from wood, as was done in Germany. But nothing is of any avail if the Government has neither a heart nor brains, and if the Government continues to be what it was, say thirty years ago, when one of the Secretaries of State for India described it as "too wooden, too inelastic, too antediluvian."

Sir, I have had considerable opportunities given to me by the Government of India between December 1941 and September 1945 to study the subject and I have given much thought to it; and I desire now to place before this House certain concrete proposals of my own to deal with the situation.

The concrete proposals I would put forward are:

- (1) that the Government must subsidise the production of staple food-stuffs by raising loans, national or international, if necessary;
- (2) that the Government must bring the prices of staple foodstuffs within the means of the poorest of the poor;
- (3) that the Government must base the rationing system on the optimum nutritional requirements of our people and not merely on the basis of giving our people a few grains of rice or a few grains of wheat;
- (4) that the Government must take all help from science and technology to grow and produce more food;
- (5) that the Government must bring pressure to bear on the Combined Food Board to see that from the world pool of foodstuffs this country's requirements are met, no less than the food requirements of Britain; and
- (6) that constant checks are kept regarding the effect of all food measures on the health of the population.

The *raison d'être* of a civilised government, according to modern concepts, lies in raising the standard of living of the people. I know that the Government of India is neither civilised nor Indian nor even a Government worth the name. But every Government, which calls itself civilised, has to accept responsibility for not only feeding the people but feeding them at an optimum nutritional level. In so far as the Government cannot do it, it must quit and make room for another government which can take and discharge the responsibility for feeding the people. The Government of India have one of two alternatives before them—either to root out corruption, inefficiency and nepotism within their own ranks and work hard for the well-being of the people, or to work their way out of this country, which they turned into a graveyard in the years 1943 and 1944.

Mr. Tamizuddin Khan (*Dacca cum Mymensingh: Muhammadan Rural*): Mr. President, I do not know whether any fruitful result will come out of this debate, because I think that we are moving and having our being in an atmosphere of unreality. I think the crux of the present situation is that we must get adequate food from somewhere and that case was given away by the Government of India representative when he stated that Sir Robert Hutchings

is coming back empty-handed from America. If that, is so, I do not know what fruitful purpose will be served by a debate like this. The very fact that Sir Robert Hutchings has not been able to do anything in America is a sad commentary on the tall talk that we had on the floor of this House yesterday about the status of India. It shows that we have hardly any status anywhere in the world, and we cannot have that status unless we acquire that status ourselves. I do not know how the case of India was put before the Combined Food Board, and I have a good deal of suspicion and I agree with Mr. Masani that the case was not properly put.

Many things have been said about the Bengal famine or the famine in India that we had in 1943; and a good deal has been said about the responsibility for that famine. I do not like to enter into any controversy over that unfortunate chapter. But I would like to say one thing. Had there been no war, would there have been any famine in Bengal in 1943? Certainly not. Therefore, whoever was responsible for the war was responsible for the famine of 1943. If that is so, then the 3 millions of people who died, either as the direct result of famine out of starvation, or who died of diseases that came in the wake of the famine were none but war casualties. If that is so, then I think that India suffered in the last war far more than any other country in the world; and in that view, was not India entitled to have a few millions of tons of wheat that India demanded from the Combined Food Board? I think our case was not put there properly. That was one reason; and the other reason was that actually we have got no status. As long as the present conditions prevail, we shall not have that status, and our voice will not be heard with that respect in the comity of nations with which it would have been heard had we acquired that status. Now, it is futile to talk about that just now on the floor of this House, but I would like to ask the Government whether the Government have actually done what little it was possible for them to do. I think not. Did they do anything in 1943? The Food Department itself was started very late, as has been said by everybody. Let that go. But still I think so far as the present position is concerned, the only thing for us to do is to get food from somewhere outside India, and I have already dealt with that.

The next thing is about more production in India. So far as that is concerned, it is not going to produce any immediate results and it will not avert the present danger; but still, if the Government of India was careful in 1943, then something perhaps might have been done. They did not do anything in 1943. Did they do anything in 1944? Did they do anything much in 1945? Probably they will say they did a great deal. Yes, they did in their own way. It has been said and we know it, that every 5 million mouths are being added in India. Are we making adequate preparation for that? We must stand on our own legs if we have to feed the future generations that are coming; and for that what is necessary is adequate planning, somewhat on the lines of Russia. If the Government of India had thought of making some five-year plan or seven-year plan in 1943, probably some result would have been produced by now. If they had done something in 1944, that also might have produced some results now. But they have not done that. I therefore think that the Government of India has not done what it was possible for them to do. Now, of course, they are talking of planning. I do not know when these plans will be made and when these plans will be executed and how we are going to fare till these plans begin to bear fruit. However, that is another question. What I would like to say is this, that as long as we live under the present conditions, it will not be possible for the Government that holds sway today to make any such plan. Unless the real representatives of the people are on the Treasury Benches, nothing like that plan can be produced by people who are not responsible to the people. I am very glad that I am being appreciated by my friends on my right. (*An Honourable Member*: "Every one will do it".) The only trouble is that we are not able to combine to wrest power from unwilling hands.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall (Leader of the House): May I ask the Honourable Member whether he will come on to the Treasury Benches—he himself?

Mr. Tamiruddin Khan: I am very thankful for the invitation and in reply I would like to say that our offer is quite open; it is open to England and open to our friends on my right. To the latter I would say "Just come in the wake of the Muslim League and follow the lead of the Qaid-e-Azam and then only we shall be able to wrest power from unwilling hands".

However, Sir I would like to say that as long as the present conditions continue, there is hardly any hope of relieving the present situation. Conditions in Madras and Bombay are very precarious, we have been told. Conditions in Bengal also are none too bright. There are other provinces where also similar conditions are probably prevailing. What are we to do. Sir Zia Uddin has said that he is not very much impressed by the partial rationing that has been introduced in some parts of India. I agree with him there. In spite of the difficulties that prevailed in Bengal in 1943 I think that so many people would not have died if wholesale rationing could have been introduced in Bengal but in those days that was not possible. We have however learnt lessons now and I do not know why at least on regional basis full rationing should not be introduced in those areas where there are either famine conditions prevailing or where there are apprehensions of famine in the near future. Under full rationing some people will eat less, but people who are in danger of starvation will be saved. Therefore I think if it is impossible to introduce rationing in the whole of India, at least in those areas where there is danger of famine full rationing should be introduced on a regional basis. In that case people will not die and they will be saved. I trust that some consideration will be given to this suggestion.

Sir Zia Uddin has suggested in his amendment that the Food Department should be abolished. I do not think he was serious in making that suggestion. He said so because he saw so many failings in the Food Department, because he saw corruption rife everywhere in the Food Department. That is why he said so rather in bitterness but I do not think that he actually meant that the Food Department under present circumstances should be abolished. (*An Honourable Member:* "Why not?") I think something must be done about food and that can be done only by a proper department. Whether there should be a separate Food Department or whether there should be a Department of Agriculture which will deal with the food question is a matter which requires consideration but I do not think that the Department can be abolished here and now.

With these words I support the amendment.

Babu Ram Narayan Singh (Chota Nagpur Division: Non-Muhammadian): Sir, the situation in my province of Bihar is worse than the situation described hitherto. There the question is what to eat and how to live. Last monsoon was not favourable. The result is that paddy seeds were not sown in time. Transplantation was not also done in time and the result is that produce is very very low throughout the province and especially in my constituency of Chota Nagpur the yield is hardly over 15 per cent. The yield has gone down at least by 75 per cent. This is not an imaginary figure. I am a cultivator myself. In the fields where I used to get some 100 maunds of paddy, I have got 10 to 15 maunds. This is the situation throughout Chota Nagpur. In the parts of the province where there is canal or good irrigation system, the situation may be a bit better but on the whole the situation throughout the province is the same. The foodgrains which are surplus in one area are not allowed to move to other areas which are deficit and the result is plenty in one area and starvation in another. Take for instance the district of Darbhanga. It is a rice producing centre. It used to produce sufficient paddy to export to the surrounding districts but now owing to the ban on inter-district movement of food grains, there is scarcity of rice even in the Darbhanga district. The situation is the same in Champaran district. There is a *thana* called the Dhanhar Thana. My

Honourable friend, Mr. B. B. Varma, has just got a letter from his home district with the information that poor people have not got any paddy to eat *kichdi* on the *Sankrant* day. At the same time we know that Champaran district can produce sufficient paddy which can also be exported to other districts. Thousands and thousands of carts loaded with rice used to go from Champaran district to the Saran district. Now, the inter-district ban has prohibited that and the result is that the cultivators are not getting sufficient price for their rice in the Champaran district while people in Saran district are actually starving.

(It being Four of the Clock.)

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT

ILL-TREATMENT OF I.N.A. MEN IN BAHADURGARH CAMP

Diwan Chaman Lall (West Punjab: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, I beg to move the adjournment of this House to discuss a matter of urgent public importance of recent origin, namely: "The brutal treatment meted out to I.N.A. personnel detained in the Bahadurgarh camp".

With your permission, Sir, I intend to deal not only with the Bahadurgarh camp but also with the reports that have come in regard to other camps, namely, the Attock camp, the Multan camp, the Nilganj camp and the Jubbulpore camp. As is apparent, the reports that we have received are not of a very detailed nature and in the very nature of things it is impossible to have received detailed reports. It was up to my Honourable friend the Army Secretary, up to the Commander-in-Chief and up to the Government of India to have taken the public into their confidence and told the public exactly what the state of affairs was in regard to these detained men.

Taking the case of Bahadurgarh camp first, I understand that there were about 3,000 men who had been brought back from Germany, who had formed themselves into an Indian National Army, originally under the inspiration of Shree Subhas Chandra Bose. But when they were captured after having engaged in a fight, which, as they believed, was a fight for the liberation of India, they were, I am told, interrogated in Europe. But having been brought to this country and having already been interrogated, they were taken to the Bahadurgarh camp and were subjected to interrogation again there. In fact, they are still being interrogated in the Bahadurgarh camp. I have no objection to my Honourable friends interrogating these men but I have a very serious objection to their importing into this country in the treatment of our men whom we consider to be patriots the methods of brutality to which some British people abroad have got accustomed through the centuries. In the Bahadurgarh camp, today, I am told, there are about 1,800 men out of the original number that was detained there. The treatment that they are subjected to is in no sense less brutal than the treatment against which my honourable friends over there raised their voice in protest throughout the Councils of Europe, the treatment meted out by the Germans to their own men. I am surprised, when I am told, that some of these I.N.A. men—about 30 or 40 or 50 of them—are going to be detained out of the large number that they have under arrest and that they will be tried, and tried for what? On account of the brutality alleged against them. Is my honourable friend also going to try those officers who were guilty of brutality against these innocent, unarmed men in these camps? I want an answer from my honourable friend when he gets up to speak. In this camp, which covers an area of 4 miles, the men are segregated into various barbed wire cages such as those which we ourselves used when we were the detenus of my honourable friend over there. In these barbed wire cages they were given the most abominable treatment that any human being could be given. They were not allowed to correspond with their relatives; they were not allowed to see their relatives; they were not allowed any books; and if anyone of them dared to utter the national cry or sing a national song to keep up his courage, my honourable friend's bayonets were there to see to it that they did not repeat this process of shouting national cries.

Prof. N. G. Ranga (Guntur *cum* Nellore: Non-Muhammadian Rural): All this happened to us also.

Diwan Chaman Lall: It did happen to all of us.

Sjt. N. V. Gadgil (Bombay Central Division: Non-Muhammadian Rural): I have marks of lathi charges on my head.

Diwan Chaman Lall: 64 of our men also bore the marks of lathi charges on their heads in one of the jails in Multan. But my honourable friend sitting over there is proud that he has done these things. The time will come when he will rue the day that he did these things. My honourable friend should realise that this is a matter of very grave national concern. We do not consider these men who have fought for the freedom of their own country anything but great patriots. We look upon them as patriots. It is possible that there may be two views taken on this matter, but there can be only one view regarding the patriotism of these men. I cannot believe that any reasonable man in this country would not raise his voice in protest against the brutal treatment that has been meted out to them.

On the 7th of January, a gentleman of the name of Mr. Huelin, I believe, who was the Commandant of Bahadurgarh camp, issued a proclamation. In that proclamation he said: "It is my object meanwhile to give you"—addressing the prisoners—"a high standard of administration". What was this high standard of administration that this Commandant was guilty of? One of the men in this camp was ordered on fatigue duty. He was sick and was unable to do this duty. Because he was unable to do this duty, he was ordered by Huelin or whoever was in charge—some Subedar Major—to be bayoneted. When the order was given to the Guard to bayonet this man, he it said to the glory and honour of that Guard that they refused to bayonet this man. And I hope whenever similar instances take place Indian soldiers in the Indian army will refuse to obey such brutal orders. This Subedar Major then reported to the British Major as to what had actually happened. The British Major arrived at the scene of action, rebuked the men, insulted the men, insulted the national tri-colour flag, hurled abuse upon our leaders and insulted the nation. It was a bit too much for these prisoners, unarmed as they were; powerless and helpless as they were, it was too much to bear this, and there is no doubt that the Major was roughly handled.

Some Honourable Members on Congress Benches: We would have done the same.

Diwan Chaman Lall: If I had been in the same place, I would in all probability have done the same thing. What was the result? This particular Major reported the matter to the Colonel. The Colonel then called in the Indian Cavalry No. 76 and ordered this Cavalry also to bayonet the men who had taken this action against the Major. And you will here pay a tribute to the men of the Indian Cavalry No. 76 that each one of them refused to obey this order. Not satisfied with this, the Colonel resorted to the Gurkhas. Thinking that they are not part of India, he got hold of a Gurkha company. The Gurkha company was called and may I also pay a tribute to them that even they refused to bayonet the men. Next morning, 300 of these men were taken to an empty cage and ordered to double for a period of two hours. Irrespective of the fact whether they were sick or fit to undertake such arduous duty, they were ordered to perform this duty. When these men refused to do this because they were exhausted, another company, a more pliant company, of Gurkhas was called and the exhausted men lying on the ground were bayoneted by my honourable friend's representatives in that camp. Thirty-four of them received injuries. One of them, a man named Paras Ram, received as many as seven wounds in that particular condition. And all this was done because these men would not stop from shouting the cry of 'Jai Hind'

Honourable Members on Congress Benches: Jai Hind, Jai Hind.

Honourable Members on Muslim League Benches: Pakistan zindabad.

Diwan Chaman Lall: My honourable friends on my left ought to realise when I say this that a large number of them were Muslims and I hope my honourable friends will give due credit to these men for having stood bravely as brave patriots irrespective of the fact that action was taken against them by the brutal representatives of my honourable friend over there. What was the sequel? The punishments that were inflicted upon these men thereafter became of a frightful and exceedingly fanciful nature. My honourable friends over there happen to be Christians, they are familiar with the Cross, the cross of suffering. Apparently my honourable friends also invented the cross in Bahadurgarh camp. Two poles were put three feet apart, and four pulleys attached to these poles. The two hands of the prisoner were tied with ropes to the two legs and the ropes of the hands were pulled until the hands were parallel with the legs. In that condition, these men were kept until they fell senseless and no medical attention was paid to them.

An Honourable Member: Court martial them.

Diwan Chaman Lall: My honourable friend can rest assured that there will be court martial for these torturers when we get power. They should be court-martialled for such brutalities committed against our men. These people became sick, they were dangerously ill, and when they were taken to the hospitals, some of them died on the way. If that is the treatment meted out to our men, we can well believe that they did much worse things. Now, Sir, what does the Press Communique issued by the Government say? Some members of a press agency visited this camp. The Commandant seems to have said to them that punishments inflicted for serious offences were strictly according to rules. May I ask my honourable friend whether this particular punishment was strictly according to rules? Punishment for what? Punishment because these people wanted to sing their national songs, punishment because these people raised their voice of protest against the brutal treatment meted out to them.

Mr. President: The Honourable Member has three minutes more.

Diwan Chaman Lall: Sir, I will not take up more of your time in regard to this matter. But there is one little matter which I want to bring to the notice of this House before I sit down. The same story is narrated as far as Attock is concerned, as far as Multan is concerned. There are allegations that men were taken out and they were beaten and their bodies were thrown into the river. No information is available to us in regard to that matter and why this action was taken in regard to those persons. In regard to Nilganj also, in a similar manner at dead of night on 25th September, 1945, a Captain and a Major came in and one of the prisoners was abused by these two men and when the prisoner protested and asked them as to why they were abusing him, they said: "we will show you exactly what we are going to do to you." The Major and the Captain, named, I believe, Corner, ordered that the British troops should be called in, an alarm was given to the British troops and they arrived. Ammunition was collected, positions were taken on the east, south and west of the camp. Arms were loaded. There was one Bren gun and one Tommy gun in the east, south and west corners each and the remaining troops had rifles. The Captain came in the Camp with a strong Guard and gave orders that all the prisoners should fall in in the Volley-ball ground. At that time 700 prisoners had gathered. The Captain again started abusing the men. One of the prisoners protested and in reply the Captain gave orders to fire and also opened fire himself. In the meantime the fire started from all sides inside the camp. Nine were wounded and five died on the spot. Their names were, Karnail Singh, Thanga Raju, Mariappan, Mohammad Kasim and Karuppayya. Although all of them were wounded and lying on the ground, what was the cry that issued from their lips? The cry of 'Netajiki Jai'. The cry of 'Jai Hind'. Such is the brave material which is being treated in this fashion by the representatives of my honourable friend over there. I hope my honourable

[Diwan Chaman Lall]

friend will agree that this is serious enough a matter which merits the immediate attention of the House.

Mr. President: Motion moved:

"That the Assembly do now adjourn."

Sardar Mangal Singh (East Punjab: Sikh): Sir, I rise to support the motion that has been so ably put forward by my Honourable friend, Diwan Chaman Lall. The whole question of the treatment of I.N.A. is a very sad chapter of the present day British administration, especially when we find that the national armies similarly raised in similarly situated conditions have been differently treated. I should like to remind the House that the National army raised by the Burmese have been absorbed by the Government in their present day armies, and I submit a similar treatment could have been given to the I.N.A. men. Public opinion is greatly agitated over the treatment of I.N.A. people here. I am glad, Sir, that His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief remitted the sentences on the three I.N.A. officers who were the first to be court-martialled. This act has created good feeling in the country, but the news of ill-treatment from various camps, as has been stated by my Honourable friend, Diwan Chaman Lall, is spoiling that good feeling. I submit, Sir, that the Government of India should reconsider the whole situation and drop the prosecutions and release the I.N.A. men. I would not take up much of the time of the House.

I wish with your permission, Sir, to draw the attention of the Government to the sad incident which happened in the Red Fort, Delhi, more than a year ago. I refer to the deaths of two I.N.A. officers who were detained in the Red Fort. They are Capt. Maghar Singh of Kapurthala infantry and Lt. Ajmer Singh of 1/6 Punjab Regiment. It is alleged that these two officers were captured on the Imphal front in September, 1944. They were taken to the Red Fort for interrogation. It is further said that on 5th November, both these officers snatched away the rifle of the sentry who went there in the verandah to switch off the light and that by that gun they shot themselves dead. This is the only piece of information which we came to know after thirteen months of the incident. The Government of India did not even whisper a word that such an incident had happened. It is said that they shot themselves on 5th November, 1944, but the Government of India communique was issued on 2nd December, 1945, exactly thirteen months after that. And this even was done when the news leaked out in the press. Then the Government of India came forward and issued a communique which runs as follows:

"Reports published in certain sections of the press that three I.N.A. officers imprisoned in the Red Fort, Delhi, committed suicide in the past few days due to ill-treatment and that the fourth had gone mad and was in mental hospital, are inaccurate, says a Press Note.

Facts are that two officers, Lt. Jiwan Singh and Lt. Ehsan Qadir are now patients undergoing treatment in a military hospital, the former suffering from malaria and the latter from nervous breakdown.

Lt. Ajmer Singh and Lt. Maghar Singh were captured on Imphal front in June last year and were brought to Delhi where they were imprisoned in Red Fort. These two officers committed suicide on the evening of November 5, 1944, by snatching away a gun from a sentry who entered the officers' quarters to switch on the verandah light.

A letter addressed to the Officer Commanding signed by the two officers and found on one of them says, 'We could easily escape from here but did not think it to be proper. This action of ours is purely voluntary and nobody is to blame. Lastly, we thank you very much for the good treatment we received while under your command. Adieu, adieu. Sd. Maghar Singh and Ajmer Singh.'

This is the communique which the Government of India issued 13 months after the incident took place and it is very interesting. It says that these officers could escape but they did not, and then the sentry went to the verandah to switch on the light, and then they snatched the rifle and shot themselves. The question arises, why did the sentry go to the verandah to switch on the light? They themselves could have done it very well. Then, again, a letter found on one of the officers was demanded by the widow but so far Government have not replied to her letter. Then again how these officers died is still a

mystery. Obviously no one in his senses commits suicide, and they must have been driven to this course of action by long-continued brutal treatment and persecution.

The treatment which was later on meted out to their relatives also speaks for itself. On the 9th December, 1945, a few days after this news was published the widow of Maghar Singh sent a telegram to His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief when he paid a visit to Kapurthala State. The telegram is as follows:

"Captain Maghar Singh Kapurthala Infantry alleged shot himself and Captain Ajmer Singh, Delhi Fort 5th November 1944. His young widow minor son and daughter pay your Excellency humble respects. No pension granted Dark future before us. Pray grant interview. Also requesting for restoration of his ashes, iron bangle, remaining balance due, and last letter alleged found on him to serve as souvenir and solace."

This telegram was sent on the 9th December, at Kapurthala when His Excellency was there, and so far no reply or even an acknowledgment has been sent by the War Department. And even his ashes have been refused and the iron bangle which every Sikh wears has also been refused. The last letter or anything found on his person has not been given to the widow. I do not know how the bodies of these two officers were disposed of and whether or not their last ceremonies were performed according to Sikh rites. The relatives of Maghar Singh are very much upset. They come from a very loyal family. The father of the man came to me and he was in tears. They know nothing of what happened. They sent letters to the G.H.Q. and the only reply that they got was that their son Maghar Singh was captured as a prisoner of war; they do not know where he is. That was the only reply that was given to the father's inquiries. I submit to the Government of India that even if they are very angry with these I.N.A. officers there should be some decent standard of treatment when they die. If their bodies cannot be handed over to their relatives—which I think should be done—at least their ashes should be given, so that they may perform the last rites. In India Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and all other people perform last rites over the bodies of their dead relatives according to their own religion, and if these rites are not performed properly it is generally believed that the soul of the person suffers. So in this case, no reply, no ashes and nothing has been given to the bereaved widow and the relatives. I think this is an important matter. The circumstances in which death took place demand an inquiry. I believe the spokesman of the War Department will get up and say that an inquiry has been held. It may be, I do not know. But the public will not be satisfied unless the circumstances under which these deaths took place are made public and a satisfactory and proper inquiry is held. Sir, I support the motion.

Several Honourable Members: Let the War Secretary speak now.

Mr. P. Mason (Government of India: Nominated Official): Sir, I am ready to explain now if the House wishes that, but the point is that if I do reply now and any Honourable Member wishes to raise further points—and I take it that what the House wants is information—I shall not be able to answer those points. May I know if there are any other allegations which any one wishes to make?

Mr. President: I believe the Honourable Member will have a right of reply with the permission of the Chair.

Mr. M. Asaf Ali (Delhi: General): Sir, I doubt if the Honourable Member will have a right of reply. It is only the Mover who has got that right.

Mr. President: No. Paragraph 64 says this:

"A member who has moved a motion may speak again by way of reply, and if the motion is moved by a non-official member, the Member of the Government to whose department the matter relates may, with the permission of the President, speak (whether he has previously spoken in the debate or not) after the mover has replied."

That is clear. But I will remind the Honourable Member that, in case the matter is to be taken to vote he must not expect further time.

Mr. P. Mason: Thank you, Sir.

The first point that I should like to make is that what we are discussing now is not the policy regarding the I.N.A. For that a day has been allotted and we are going to talk about that on Monday the 4th February. All we are discussing today is their treatment while in detention; and therefore everything that I have to say proceeds on the assumption that they have to be detained and deals with the manner in which they are looked after while they are detained.

The next point is with regard to the general treatment of these men. I have explained this to the House. Technically these men are recovered prisoners of war,—I mean they are men of the Indian Army who are recovered prisoners of war; and there are certain charges against them which are being investigated. While those charges are being investigated, they are kept in detention in exactly the same way as any other member of the Indian Army against whom there is a charge. There is no difference between them and between the man of the ordinary Indian Army who is supposed to have committed some minor offence and who is being kept in detention until his court of enquiry or his court martial. That means that in matters of food, accommodation, clothing and in fact, as I said before, all the minor necessities of life, except liberty of movement, they are treated in the same way as their corresponding ranks of the Indian Army. I am sure that no one would suggest that when men are being kept in detention they should be given better food, or better clothing, or better housing than the men who are guarding them. That would be a suggestion too farcical to put forward.

An Honourable Member: What about Italian prisoners of war?

Mr. P. Mason: I do not think that is relevant.

An Honourable Member: It is.

Mr. P. Mason: No, Sir. I have got a tremendous lot of points to make.

Mr. President: Order, order.

Mr. P. Mason: I went myself to the Red Fort and I had a look at the officers and men who were there. They had just completed their interrogation. In the officers enclosure I found officers lying about on *charpoy*s reading newspapers and books with the wireless playing and in their near neighbourhood arrangements for volley-ball and other kinds of exercises. I asked them if they had any complaints about the newspapers and books they were getting. They said they got books from the camp library which was arranged for the guards as well as themselves and they said that with regard to newspapers they had a complaint. That I think might be of interest to the House: They complained that they had not been given *The Onlooker*, a paper which, I understand, is mainly concerned with pictures of fashionable weddings. That was all the complaint they had to make about the newspapers.

With regard to food, Sir, the officers are given the alternative of the food given to British Other Ranks or Indian Other Ranks and they did complain that those of them who chose the food given to British Other Ranks found the quantity insufficient. Well, Sir, personally I have lived on the rations given to British Other Ranks and seldom been able to finish them, and I think that if that was the extent of their complaint, they had not got much to complain about.

Sardar Mangal Singh: When was the enquiry made?

Mr. P. Mason: About five months ago.

I would like to go on and deal with not only the points mentioned by my Honourable friend, Mr. Chaman Lall, but others which I have seen mentioned in the Press or on the platform at one time or another. There have been several mentions of an I.N.A. camp at Jubbulpore. Nothing specific has been said about it, but I would like to mention, if there was only one thing, Sir, about which I could lay my hand on my heart and stand before the House with a clear conscience—but there are many things—it would be the I.N.A. camp at

Jubbulpore, because my information—I know that my information is some times doubted—but my information is that there is no camp at Jubbulpore. If there is one, I do not know who is paying for it; I do not know where the staff comes from; I do not know where the prisoners come from.

An Honourable Member: Make fresh enquiries.

Mr. P. Mason: If my Honourable friend would like to go to Jubbulpore, I would be delighted to take him in a Government aeroplane and bring him back also, and if he finds that there is a camp there, I will pay all his expenses on the way from my own pocket.

An Honourable Member: You may have given another name to it.

Mr. P. Mason: There has also been mention at one time or another of an I.N.A. camp at Ferozepore. There is no camp at Ferozepore, either.

Diwan Ohaman Lal: Were there any I.N.A. personnel detained?

Mr. P. Mason: No, Sir. There are two Regimental Training Centres there to which we send men before they go back to their villages—those men who have been classified 'misled' but who are getting six weeks leave in their villages. They go to Ferozepore for their accounts and their pay to be settled up and they are generally kept there for five to ten days during which time they are in detention. But that is the end of that particular story.

My Honourable friend would probably like to know where the I.N.A. camps actually are. There are five camps or groups of camps. There is one at Multan; there is one at Jhikergacha in Bengal with two subsidiary camps at Barasat and Nilganj; there is a very small one in Bhopal—Bairagarh—which is for officers only; there is one at Bahadurgarh; and in Delhi we have some in Cantonment and some in the Red Fort.

Now I turn to incidents. Jubbulpore again is the scene of an incident which is entirely fictitious. My Honourable friend, Secretary—I am not sure whether it was of the Congress Party or the I.N.A. Defence League—wrote to me the other day and he wrote me a very polite letter giving a very full account of his reasons for believing that three I.N.A. men had been shot at Jubbulpore. I explained to him after a full enquiry that no men had, in fact, been shot at Jubbulpore and that we had not any I.N.A. men there. I gave him reasons why the story had arisen. I am not going to trouble the House by repeating the whole of it—it has appeared in the press already—but the whole story arose from a remark overheard in a mess by a mess servant, who misunderstood it, repeated it outside to somebody who clearly fancied himself as an amateur detective and started a few enquiries which led him to a wrong conclusion. The Montgomery incident is another of the same kind to which I have already referred. I believe there was an incident in the Jail at Montgomery, but it is not, as I have already explained, in any way concerned with the I.N.A. or the Central Government. That concludes my list of entirely fictitious incidents.

I come on now to the things that really have happened. My Honourable friend, Sardar Mangal Singh, referred to the case of Lieut. Ajmer Singh and Lieut. Maghar Singh. That, as he says took place on the 5th of November 1944. The incident has been completely described in the papers and took place exactly as has been described. I have the letter referred to. I could lay extracts from that letter on the table of the House, but I do not want to publish the whole letter because it does contain some remarks about other people in the I.N.A. which would cause pain. (Interruptions).

An Honourable Member: Send it to some Handwriting Expert.

Mr. P. Mason: I do not think I need go into that matter in any detail, as I have not got much time at my disposal; I have yet to talk about Bahadurgarh. But I can assure my Honourable friend that these two officers were cremated according to the Sikh rites by one Risaldar Balwant Singh. I do not think there is anything discreditable to Government in the whole episode. The letter describes their attitude and it explains that they were not whole-hearted in their

[Mr. P. Mason.]

attempts to help the I.N.A. It stated that they had been trying to convince their interrogators of this fact but despaired of doing so and that we assume, though it is not quite clear, was the cause why they committed suicide.

(At this stage, Sardar Mangal Singh interrupted.)

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

Sardar Mangal Singh: I had a right to interrupt.

Mr. President: Let the Honourable Member proceed.

Mr. P. Mason: This brings me on to the whole question of the method of interrogation in the Red Fort. There have been some highly fanciful stories in the press. We are supposed to have subjected men to electrical tortures of some curious nature. We are supposed to have put them in a bath and covered them with ice. Well, I am able to assure the House quite definitely and finally that in the whole course of this interrogation force is not used. All that does happen is that the man is under some degree of pressure

Prof. N. G. Ranga: Hear, hear! Some degree! Beautiful!

Mr. President: Order, order.

Mr. P. Mason: . . . in so far that while he is under interrogation he is kept from talking to other people and naturally the sooner he talks the sooner he gets into the enclosure with other men. The methods of interrogation are very simple indeed. They consist of revealing a little of our knowledge. If a prisoner is obstinate and he continues to be silent, he is given another day to think it over and next day perhaps he is told more. He soon realises that his interrogators know more than he actually does and it occurs to him that it would be as well to put before them his own version. (Interruptions.) Another incident is that of Dharam Singh. I have explained that already in the House.

There are two more incidents, and like a child with sweets on its plate, I have left till the end what I like least. And I admit at once that I do not like the two incidents that remain. They are Neelgunj and Bahadurgarh. As regards Neelgunj, it would be improper to say very much because there is a Court Martial upon these officers. With regard to Bahadurgarh, I am afraid that my honourable friend's statements were highly fanciful as he said. His date was wrong. It was not on the 7th January but on the 1st October. The name of the Commandant was wrong. The name he has given is that of the present Commandant. There was another one in those days. Everything else he said was equally incorrect. What actually happened was that there was a case of refusal to obey orders. A guard was sent in to fetch out the men and take them to the orderly room to be dealt with in the usual way. The guard was hustled and pushed by the men in the camp. The guard did not attempt to use force but came out and reported to the Commanding Officer. He, as a result of that act of insubordination of pushing and hustling a guard, ordered 'three days' punishment, consisting of reduced rations and of a daily parade of two hours from 8 to 10. The parade consisted of doubling and marching and doing P. T. while on the march. I have done this myself, and I do not think there is anything very brutal about it although it is strenuous. When the day came for the first of these parades to be carried out, I am sorry to say that the men adopted an attitude which was mutinous and insubordinate and they refused to drill or to run. The Officer Commanding the Guard ordered his men to use force, if it should be necessary. He warned the party that force would be used if they refused to obey orders. He warned the individuals of the Guard that each individual was to be warned before force was used and he said that in every case the force used was to be the minimum. The men refused to drill or to march or to double and the butt of the rifle was used to compel them to do so. Their attitude continued to be insubordinate. Some attempted to escape through the ranks of the Guard and one of them tried to seize the rifle from one of the men of the Guard.

Mr. President: The Honourable Member has only a minute.

Mr. P. Mason: The order was then given that in extreme cases the tip of the bayonet was to be used, again after warning and again only the minimum force had to be used. After the parade it was found that 42 men had bruises and nine men had small punctured wounds in the buttocks. The Medical Officer found that there was no serious wound whatever. No one died in hospital as my honourable friend said, and the court of enquiry which went into the matter very carefully—I have read their report—came to the conclusion that the Guard behaved with exemplary precaution and care, and I think they must have done because had they been at all excited the use of the bayonet might have been very serious.

I do, as I say, regret this incident. I regret very much that the prisoners should have adopted an attitude which made it necessary for the guard to use force. I hope, Sir, that such an incident will not occur. But should prisoners again refuse to obey orders, such a thing might happen. But I hope, Sir, that it will not.

Seth Govind Das (Central Provinces Hindi Divisions: Non-Muhammadan): Because I belong to Jubbulpore, I wish to ask a question. Is it not a fact that the I.N.A. prisoners were released from Jubbulpore jail?

Mr. P. Mason: There may have been some cases of civilian I.N.A. prisoners after

Prof. N. G. Ranga: Ah! ah!

— **Mr. President:** Order, order.

Mr. P. Mason: they were returned to the province of origin before release, because before we release them we send them to the province of origin.

(Interruptions.)

Mr. President: Order, order.

Mr. P. Mason: They might in that case be released from Jubbulpore or from anywhere else but not by me.

Mr. M. Asaf Ali: I was not willing to intervene in this debate because it has been my misfortune, Sir, to have been associated with the I. N. A. trials from the very beginning and I seem to know a great deal too much about many things which I would not like to repeat here on the floor of the House, partly because some of these cases are still *sub-judice* and I am not free to indulge in glancing blows which might for some odd reason or other be considered unwarranted on account of these cases being *sub-judice*. However, as the Honourable the War Secretary has said, we have to separate three different sets of facts although he only referred to two. We are not discussing the history of the I. N. A. here today. We shall have ample time for doing so when the resolution comes up and we certainly are not considering the cases which are *sub-judice*. But we are concerned here with certain incidents which have taken place in various concentration camps. My honourable friend, Diwan Chaman Lal appears to have collected a large number of facts, some of which were not within my knowledge. I heard them here for the first time and there are many more facts, Sir, which have poured into the I. N. A. enquiry office from time to time. I have tried my level best to make the necessary enquiries in connection with these reports and I am quite prepared to say that in some cases I found the reports to be exaggerated and therefore I am not prepared to pass my condemnation of the Government on these exaggerated stories. But even if I eliminated all the stories, exaggerated or otherwise, there are certain positive facts which you cannot deny. You have admitted today, and I am putting my case on the lowest basis possible. I am not getting into hysterics over murders which have been committed here and there and over people having been bayoneted, and so on and so forth (I may have to say something about it later on) but I base

[Mr. M. Asaf Ali.]

my case on the minimum facts which you have been admitted, *viz.*, the question of pressure which is being brought to bear on people who are under interrogation. Is it or is it not brutal that people who had served in Malaya, Burma and elsewhere for some time and who were compelled to surrender for reasons, which I need not repeat here—because I have not got enough time—were taken prisoner at sometime or other. Was it necessary for you to keep them in these camps indefinitely under repeated interrogations? Was not one interrogation enough? Why were they not allowed to get into touch with their relations? Until a man's interrogation is completed he is not allowed even to write a letter to his relatives to say where he is and he cannot possibly get into touch with his people. Is not that brutal, I ask? I am not talking about beating or bayoneting. This by itself is, to my mind, a third degree method. The moment a man comes into your custody it is your duty to inform his people that he is alive, that he is not missing, that he is somewhere to be found, and that somebody can get into touch with him. Families after families, hundreds and thousands of families in India today are passing their time from day to day in a terrible state of mind not knowing where their relations are, or whether they are alive or dead. Probably they are being interrogated somewhere but nobody knows anything about it. I have been receiving at times as many as one hundred letters a day making enquiries about these people and I cannot get any information from any department which I might transmit to these people. This is a sorry state of affairs which you cannot deny.

Something has been said about interviews. Now, as regards facilities for interviews, the difficulty even after these people can get into touch with their relations is that the conditions under which they are allowed interviews are so strict that it becomes almost impossible for certain persons to interview them. I know the Government's difficulties too, because I have worked in the Red Fort and I have worked in the other place. I am not suggesting for a single second that they have no difficulties but they can easily get over their difficulties, because they have got armies at their disposal. But what about these poor people? They have to come from long distances and they have to go from post to pillar to find out whether and where they can interview their relatives, how they can interview them, how long can they interview them and so on.

Something has been said about rations. Now I admit that the case which the Honourable the War Secretary has put forward about the rations that are allowed to these prisoners from his point of view is correct. He would not like the prisoners to have better rations than is allowed to those who are guarding these prisoners. That is their argument. May I ask why they should not be allowed to supplement their food at their own cost? There are people who are prepared to supplement their food but you will not allow them to do it. The prisoners should be allowed to supplement their food not at the cost of the Government but at the cost of those who admire them, rightly or wrongly. Another argument is that you may feel that they are being lionised for no rhyme or reason. But what can you do about public imagination. They have captured the public imagination, and what am I to do? I may feel that perhaps some day I have got to deal with an army of my own. I certainly would not want my army to be politically minded. I should like my army to be patriotic but not politically minded, or to be torn by party politics. But the difficulty is this. Today the army in India is neither patriotic nor politically minded one way or the other.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: Or even Indian.

Mr. M. Asaf Ali: You have to give an army some cause to fight for. The only lesson that I have drawn from the I. N. A. either in Europe, in Malaya or Burma is that this army had no cause to fight for. It was only their professional duty. They failed in the professional duty, they did not want to carry on their professional duty, because they had no cause to fight for. When they

went to Germany if somebody told them that they would get better terms from the Germans they might have said "All right we shall join them". Some of them might have been patriotic, and others might have been romantics or adventurers. I do admit all these things are possible but the fact remains that unless an army knows, that it is going to defend its own country and its people's freedom, its allegiance is not worth a cent. That is the lesson which I have drawn from the I. N. A.

Now knowing this fact, what attitude are you going to adopt towards them? I welcome your attitude in so far as you released certain prisoners who had been brought to trial. It has created a better atmosphere. If I were you, I should not detain these people, I would allow them to go home. Whether they are black, grey or white they must all go home straightaway. You have already created a big problem for us. We have got to deal with them. You will only deal with the demobbed. We have got to deal with these people as they are going out into the country. We have got to deal with the problems of their relief which arise from day to day.

Now, Sir, I regret I am straying from the point, though I wanted to keep to it. I do not wish to use strong language. I do not wish to raise questions which might affect the morale of the army in future, because we are going to control the army of the future and we have got to think of the army in terms which we ought to think should be correct in the interests of India. But in so far as the treatment in these various camps is concerned, I am perfectly certain that the incident in the Neelgunj camp is a most disgraceful one. I do not wish to go into the facts, because, as the War Secretary put it, the case is *sub-judice*. But I hope I shall not be trenching upon the rules of debate and that it will not be out of place for me to say that some person—I will not mention anyone in particular—was responsible for daring some other to go and call up the prisoner at midnight. Some officer in the camp, I do not mention his name, told another brother officer "Oh, are they under your control? I dare you to go and have a roll call". The other fellow went and called out these people while they were sleeping: they came out angry, and naturally

5 P.M. a scuffle ensued and in that scuffle who suffered but the prisoners? Some were shot down. That is a disgraceful episode, a perfectly disgraceful episode, and the sooner you take notice of it the better, because somebody is on trial—I do not know whether somebody may not be a mere scapegoat. Be careful about it. Somebody might have been made a scapegoat: somebody else may be responsible for what actually happened.

As regards the Bahadurgarh camp, incidents have happened; you yourself have admitted it; it is time that you looked into these incidents a little more carefully. I am not suggesting for a moment that you are dictating the policy from above; but there are others down below who are misbehaving themselves and you have got to see to it that those who misbehave get the sack.

There is only just one other point to which I should like to invite the attention of the House and I have done. Something has been said about these fictitious camps. Jubbulpore camp is supposed to be a fictitious camp. I dare say it was a fictitious camp. But whose fault is it that these fictions are going about? It is your duty to tell the public everything that is within your knowledge. Why do you keep everything secret? Why do you treat the whole thing as something which nobody should look into? It is your duty to tell the whole country, "We have so many camps and so many prisoners; this is what is being done etc., etc." and then you will not come in for all this trouble. But you are treating the whole thing as a close preserve into which nobody should look, and the result is that you are being condemned from day to day.

Shri Sri Prakasa (Benares and Gorakhpur Divisions: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Mr. President, one good thing that this debate this afternoon has done is to draw out from the War Secretary a list of these camps. We have been trying hard, month after month, by every means that we could adopt to find out

Mr. P. Mason: Except asking me.

Shri Sri Praxasa: . . . to find out where these prisoners were; and it was by the sheerest accident that we could find out where they were. If stories have been afloat, the Honourable Member and his Government must hold themselves responsible. The Honourable Member says we never asked him. I am sorry I was unaware of his existence; and I found out only after I arrived in this House that he was he; and since then as he himself knows, I have been in very close touch with him; and perhaps he would have given me much more information in reply to my letters if this debate was not coming on. I am glad that he has said that despite this debate he would give me all the information that there may be still left to give.

The fact is that apart from these camps, the I.N.A. men have been spread over in many jails. It is indeed good of the Honourable Member to offer to take us at his expense and the expense of his Government by air to fictitious camps; but I should beg him to allow us to go now, at our expense, if necessary, to the camps that are actually in existence. He need not be worried about the expense—we shall meet it. But we want to see these camps ourselves; we do not want them to be in purdah; and we want to examine the situation as it actually is at the present moment. Apart from the camps, I do not think that the Honourable Member can deny the fact that there are many men of the I. N. A. in various jails. For instance there are two men, or there have been two men, in the Benares Central Prison; and not knowing that I had to go to the War Secretary, I wrote to the Home Member, thinking in my ignorance and my innocence, that he was in charge of such things, about these two men. I got the information about these men from political prisoners, my own colleagues in the Congress, who have been recently released from the Benares prison; and they told me that these two men—details about whom I have given to the Home Member—were kept in solitary confinement with fetters on all the 24 hours; that these fetters had cut into their flesh; that they were in great agony. They were moreover kept in C class—I do not know, Sir, in which class you have always been—but I myself know the C class. It is a class in prison where it is difficult to live for very long.

My honourable friend has said that we cannot expect prisoners to get better food than their guards. May I ask him in all simplicity, in all humility, in all seriousness, whether the men who guard this Council hall, the chaprassis, whether the men who guard his house, are better fed than himself? It is not always that guards needs must get better food than those who are guarded. At least my honourable friend and his Government do not follow that principle, though I should very much like that they did, because the chaprassis here are not at all happy at the salaries they receive and they are very anxious that we should some day ventilate their grievances on the floor of the House, as we do of the I. N. A. men.

I should like to say that on principle this Government has no right, moral or even legal over these I. N. A. men. Who are these I. N. A. men? These are the men who were actually abandoned in a foreign land by the very Government that took them there. Is it or is it not a fact that European officers, including even the Commander-in-Chief, flew back when Burma and contiguous countries fell into Japanese hands? Is it or is it not a fact that they handed our men over to the Japanese themselves and told these men that they were thereafter to obey the Japanese? All this has come out in the trial that has recently taken place in the Red Fort at Delhi; and the Government's own witnesses have admitted these facts. When the Government of India had abandoned its own men in a foreign land and its officers had run away from that country, what were these men to do? They found themselves between the devil and the deep sea . . . (An Honourable Member: "Who is the devil?") and if they did what they did, all honour to them. It is, I think, a matter of pride that they did not go against their country as they could easily have gone in the circumstances in which they found themselves; and despite the definite instruction

of their British officers that they should obey the Japanese, they even refused to obey the Japanese. They refused to be cajoled or bullied by the Japanese; and they stood out for their country from first to last. A Government worth its salt would have honoured such men. Instead of that, in a spirit of vindictiveness, they get hold of them, they molest them, interrogate them ill-treat them and try to take out all the spirit that is in them. That they have not succeeded is a matter of gratification for all of us. I do not think that these men are in any sense recovered prisoners of war as my honourable friend the Army Secretary has described them. They are men who have been abandoned by them and who had become an independent army fighting for their country. They are now of the status of their prisoners of war and should be treated like that and not as criminals.

It is not for me here to discuss the merits of what they did; but there is no doubt that their motives were of the purest; and today, Sir, we, their countrymen, desire to pay a tribute of respect and of admiration to their courage, their heroism in very difficult circumstances; and at the same time we pledge ourselves that we should do our best to protect them from the hands of those who first abandoned them to the enemy and now want to take vengeance upon them for their own follies. Sir, I hope that the House will not be misled by any considerations that are beside the point that have been put before the House by the Army Secretary. The Army Secretary who loves his own freedom and the freedom of his own country should realise that we also love our country and want to be free; and it is strange that while he and his countrymen praise persons in France, Holland and other countries for their patriotic actions against their invaders, here they deny us the right to do likewise; and while there they want to hang traitors here they want to hang patriots. In their dictionary, a traitor means something different in France to what he means in India. Here traitors are patriots and patriots are traitors. This game cannot be played for very long and I hope that the House by its vote today, will declare to the whole world and to the Government that Government cannot fool us like his for ever.

Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan (Meerut Division: Muhammadan Rural): Mr. President, the motion which is before the House was to deal with the brutal treatment meted out to I. N. A. personnel detained in the Bahadurgarh camp. I am afraid the discussion that has taken place on this motion has strayed into many channels.

Mr. President: The Honourable Member does not know that it was by agreement of parties that the discussion was general on this question.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall (Leader of the House): If I may say so, the discussion was to be confined to the treatment of I.N.A. prisoners and not to the extraneous subjects introduced by some Members opposite.

Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan: As the motion stated, it was to deal with the subject of the treatment of I. N. A. men. As regards the treatment of persons in prison or under detention, if that treatment was inhuman or brutal, every one would condemn it. There cannot be two opinions with regard to the feelings of every Member of this House where the brutality of the treatment may be concerned. We have before us an exaggerated picture, if I may say so, of the treatment which was meted out as given by the Mover of this motion. (*An Honourable Member:* "Question"). I hear my Honourable friend the Deputy Leader of the Congress Party Questioning this statement of mine. (*An Honourable Member:* "'It is not he. Somebody else said 'question'"). Anyhow, I arrived at this conclusion after listening to the very sober speech of the Deputy Leader of the party to which the Honourable Member who has questioned me belongs. He has not used the same language regarding the treatment of these people as the Honourable the Mover of the motion has done. I can quite understand the reason for employing exaggerated language because from the time that this unfortunate trial of the I.N.A. men began, the Congress have been

[Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan.]

using it as a great lever for their propaganda purposes. (An Honourable Member: "You can also do it.") And therefore I can forgive my Honourable friend if he has used the language which probably the incidents given did not merit. These I.N.A. men who were under detention or under trial are to my mind very unfortunate and as far as the Muslim League is concerned it has expressed its sympathy with them. It has also impressed upon the Government that they should be treated with leniency and mercy. The Honourable the Mover of this motion and some other Members have described them as patriots. Mr. President, some of them, I do not think anybody would deny that, joined this army because they felt that they would have better treatment. The others joined because they felt that under the leadership of Mr. Bose they would be able to establish the raj of their community, I mean of the community of Mr. Bose, in this country. The others joined, as we have on the statement of Captain Abdur Rashid who is under trial at this moment, because they felt that if the Muslims did not join this army, then, when this army came to India, it may mean the freedom of one community and the subjection of the other. Therefore, from this point of view everyone of them is a patriot and I can quite appreciate the general feeling of sympathy which is abroad in their favour in this country. To my mind, the Government should have never started the cases against the I.N.A. men because there were very few of them who had joined this army out of free will. I believe that a number of them joined because they were coerced into joining this army.

I can well appreciate the resentment of my honourable friend, the Mover of this motion, and the members of his party when an insult, according to him, was offered to what he described in an exaggerated language as the "national tri-colour flag". I can appreciate their resentment that the flag of their party was insulted, if the incident is true. I would feel the same if anyone offered any insult to the flag of the Muslim League. In the same way, I can appreciate their elation over the cry of Jai Hind. It is but natural; it is the policy of their party. I would feel the same if and when I hear the cry of Pakistan Zindabad. But in examining this proposition we should not allow ourselves to be carried away by sentiments.

The Honourable the Mover of this motion has given a number of instances of brutality. If they are true, they are really such actions of the Government as should be condemned in the strongest language. On the other side, we have the statement of the War Secretary denying all these allegations.

Diwan Chaman Lal: Not all of them.

Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan: When I said "all allegations", I meant as described by the Mover. It is admitted that some of the men rebelled against the order that was passed and, according to the War Secretary, the minimum force was used by the authorities concerned. So, we have before us these two statements. We are really not in a position either to condemn the action of the authorities or condone their action because there is not sufficient evidence before us to justify either of these two courses. It is, indeed, unfortunate that we should be carried away by sentiment and not examine the facts as they are. The Honourable the War Secretary has told us that the information on which people level serious charges against the Government with regard to I.N.A. men is derived from the servants of the messes. I do not know what is the source of information of the Honourable the Mover of this motion. But if he is in a position to tell this House in his reply as to what are his sources of information, the House may be in a better position to judge. Here we have a statement from one Honourable Member and, on the other side, we have a statement of another Honourable Member. It is, indeed, very difficult for those Members of the House who are not prejudiced either way to come to any decision. I would support the Honourable the Deputy Leader of the Congress Party in his demand that it would be better for the Government if they gave the fullest information to the people at large with regard to I.N.A. men. The lack of information

and the suppression of facts are bound to create all kinds of stories in the country. I would suggest to the War Secretary that he should not follow the policy of "the less said the better", but he should follow the policy of "say as much as you can" with regard to this matter. There is no doubt that a large number of people in the country are very much interested in the fate of these men for the simple reason that there are thousands of them and they have thousands of their relations and friends. For that reason alone if for no other reason, it is desirable that the Government should give the utmost of information with regard to the fate of these men.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Sir, like my friend the Honourable Deputy Leader of the Congress Party, I was not expecting to speak this afternoon because ample opportunity was given to Members to speak before my friend the Joint Secretary of the War Department spoke. I naturally thought that anyone who wished to make points bearing on the adjournment motion which is before the House would have been expected to make those points and get the answers from the Department concerned. And so, I think on the whole it has turned round, for whereas the first speaker referred to the subject matter of the adjournment motion, the subsequent speakers digressed into various matters connected with the I.N.A. which had no particular bearing on the question of treatment in the camps.

Shri Sri Prakasa: Are you summing up our speeches?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: That being so, I propose, in saying the few words which I am going to say, to confine myself strictly to the cases referred to and also to one or two other points bearing on the treatment of these men which have been touched upon by various speakers. Now, Sir, in the case of Nilgarh camp, the Deputy Leader of the Congress Party made various insinuations

Mr. M. Asaf Ali: I do not believe in insinuations. They are statements of facts and I stand by them.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: My honourable friend suggested that in the case of court martial that is taking place there, it is quite possible that the War Department can make mistakes and put up the wrong man for trial and so on. I think, Sir, I had better say nothing more on that case because it is *sub-judice* and I think it is improper that I should do more than draw your attention to the weakness of my Honourable friend's case.

Now, Sir, when we come to the Mover of this adjournment motion, Diwan Chaman Lall, he made various statements which were completely demolished by my honourable friend.

Diwan Chaman Lall: Were they?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: On each occasion when my honourable friend's colleagues shouted 'shame', I turned to my honourable friend here and said 'Is there any truth in that point?' and in each occasion, he gave the answer 'no'.

Diwan Chaman Lall: Is there any truth in Nilgarh or Bahadurgarh incidents?

Mr. President: Order, order.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: I am not giving way, Sir. I am talking about the Bahadurgarh case. I would like to mention one additional incorrect statement which was made by my honourable friend opposite. He said that some cavalry regiment had refused to take action when called upon. That is an absolutely incorrect statement like many other statements which were made by my Honourable friend.

Diwan Chaman Lall: Is there any truth in the Nilgarh camp incident?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: I do not give way.

Diwan Chaman Lall: It is very unfair for my honourable friend not to give way.

Mr. President: Order, order. Let him proceed.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Evidently my honourable friend does not like being told these facts. Having buttressed up his case with a good deal of distortion, I expected that some other speaker on the other side would have come forward in support of these facts. But we have listened, and not a single speaker has queried in any way the statements made by my honourable friend, (Mr. Mason).

Prof. N. G. Ranga: You do not give us any information even now.

Mr. President: Order, order.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: The reason why my honourable friend's statements have not been queried was because they are true and incontrovertible.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: What happened at Jubbulpore?

Mr. President: Order, order.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: I think, Sir, that places the whole debate in its true perspective. I should like to make two other statements. In the first place, one honourable Member said that I.N.A. men were not allowed to make communications outside. I should just like to make it clear that that also is incorrect. The I.N.A. men are allowed to write immediately they return to the country and they are allowed to write periodically subsequently.

Finally, Sir, I should like to deal with the point raised by the last speaker. He suggested that in future the Government should see that the fullest information is given out about these men. I entirely agree with that. I think if possible it would have been better in the past if information had been put out earlier, but full accounts have been published of these various events, and when the honourable Member spoke this morning about admitting the adjournment motion, he welcomed the debate. The Government are only too anxious that full facts should be given to the public and I think the House can rely, now that its wishes are known, on full and prompter information being put out to the public as soon as the facts are received.

Diwan Chaman Lall: My Honourable friend lays down the law regarding certain facts and at the end of his speech he says that if full facts are received, they will be published. It is quite obvious that my honourable friend has been very badly briefed.

Mr. President: Order, order.

Some Honourable Members: The question be now put.

Some other Honourable Members: No, no.

Shri Mohan Lal Saksena (Lucknow Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural). Are there any other speakers. No member has stood up to speak.

Some Honourable Members: The question be now put.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That the question be now put."

The Assembly divided:

AYES—50

Abdul Ghani Khan, Khan.
Adityan, Sri S. T.
Asaf Ali, Mr. M.
Ayyangar, Sri M. Ananthasayanam.
Bose, Shri Sarat Chandra.
Chaman Lall, Diwan.
Chettiar, Sri T. A. Ramalingam.
Daga, Seth Sheodasa.
Damodar Swroop, Sjt. Seth.
Dani, Mr. G. B.
Gadgil, Sjt. N. V.
Gangaraju Sri V.
Gauri Shankar Saran Singh, Mr.
Gole, Mr. P. B.
Gounder, Sri V. C. Vellingiri.
Govind Das, Seth.
Hans Raj, Raizada.
Hiray, Sjt. B. S.
Jagannathdas, Sri.
Jhunjhunwala, Mr. B. P.
Jinachandran, Sri M. K.
Karmarkar, Shri D. P.
Khan, Mr. Debendra Lal.
Mahapatra, Sri Bhagirathi.
Malaviya, Pandit Govind.

Mangal Singh, Sardar.
Manu Subedar, Mr.
Masani, Mr. M. R.
Menon, Sri A. Karunakara.
Mukut Bihari Lal Bhargava, Pandit.
Narayanamurthi, Sri N.
Neogy, Mr. K. C.
Paliwal, Pandit Sri Krishna Dutt.
Ram Narayan Singh, Babu.
Ramayan Prasad, Mr.
Ranga, Prof. N. G.
Reddiar, Sri R. Venkatasubba.
Salve, Mr. P. K.
Sanyal, Mr. Sasanka Sekhar.
Satakopachari, Sri T. V.
Sharma, Mr. Kriahna Chandra.
Sharma, Pandit Balkrishna.
Sinha, Shri Satya Narayan.
Sri Prakasa, Shri.
Sukhdev Udhowdas, Mr.
Swaminadhan, Shrimati Ammu.
Thakur Das Bhargava, Pundit.
Vadilal Lallubhai, Mr.
Varma, Mr. B. B.
Vijaya Ananda, Maharajkumar Dr. Sir.

NOES—54

Abid Hussain, Choudhury Md.
Ambedkar, The Honourable Dr. B. R.
Azizul Huque, The Honourable Dr. Sir. M.
Banerjee, Mr. R. N.
Benthall, The Honourable Sir Edward.
Bewoor, Sir Gurunath.
Bhattacharyya, Rai Bahadur Devendra
Mohan.
Chapman-Mortimer, Mr. T.
Chatterjee, Lt.-Col. Dr. J. C.
Ebrahim Haroon Jaffer, Mr. Ahmed.
Griffiths, Mr. P. J.
Habibur Rahman, Khan Bahadur.
Harendra Singh, Sardar Bahadur Captain
Sardar.
Hirtzel, Mr. M. A. F.
Hydari, The Honourable Sir Akbar.
Ishaq Seth, Haji Abdus Sattar Haji.
Jeelani, Khan Bahadur Makhdum Al-Haj
Syed Sher Shah.
Jehangir, Sir Cowasjee.
Joshi, Mr. S. C.
Kharegat, Sir Pheroze.
Killedar, Mr. Mohammad M.
Lawson, Mr. C. P.
Liaquat Ali Khan, Nawabzada.
Madan, Dr. B. K.
Mason, Mr. P.
Mitchell, Sir Kenneth.

Morris, Mr. R. C.
Nairang, Syed Ghulam Bhik.
Naqvi, Mr. A. T.
Nauman, Mr. Muhammad.
Oulnam, Mr. S. H. Y.
Rahmat-ullah, Mr. Muhammad.
Raja Bahadur of Khallikote.
Roy, The Honourable Sir Asoka.
Rowlands, The Honourable Sir Archibald.
Sarjent, Dr. John.
Sen, Mr. B. R.
Sharbat Khan, Khan Bahadur.]
Siddique Ali Khan, Nawab.
Siddiquee, Shaikh Rafiuddin Ahmad.
Siddiqi, Mr. Abdur Rahman.
Spence, Sir George.
Stokes, Mr. H. G.
Tamizuddin Khan, Mr.
Thorne, The Honourable Sir John.
Turner, Mr. A. C.
Tyson, Mr. Geoffrey W.
Vaidyanathan, Mr. L. S.
Waugh, The Honourable Mr. A. A.
Weightman, Mr. H.
Yamin Khan, Sir Muhammad.
Yusuf Abdoola Haroon, Seth.
Zafar Ali Khan, Maulana.
Zia Uddin Ahmad, Dr. Sir.

The motion was negatived.

Diwan Chaman Lall: Sir, may I reply now?

Mr. President: As the House has given its decision that the debate should continue it will not be proper for me to call upon the Mover to reply and close the debate. It will be against the wishes of the House.

Lt.-Col. Dr. J. C. Chatterjee (Nominated Non-Official): Sir, I think when the Honourable Mover of this motion spoke he made certain very grievous charges. In fact if what he has said is true I would certainly have joined with him in censuring Government for having carried out what he described as most brutal treatment in the Bahadurgarh and other camps. In fact the treatment which he described was so brutal that it almost compares with the atrocities

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

which are alleged to have been committed by the Germans and Japanese in other theatres of war which all the world has so strongly condemned. Now, Sir, my Honourable friend Diwan Chaman Lall is an honourable man; I have no reason to doubt any statement which he makes. On the other hand those very statements which he made were challenged and contradicted by my honourable friend the War Secretary. He too is an honourable man and nothing has come to my knowledge which would make me doubt his honour, just as nothing is known to me which would make me doubt the veracity of my honourable friend the Mover of this motion.

An Honourable Member: A Daniel come to judgment!

Lt.-Col. Dr. J. C. Chatterjee: It is not a question of Daniel, it is a question of sifting facts. The question is merely this; I notice a very important difference between the statements that have been made by the Mover of the motion and the statements which were made by the War Secretary. My honourable friend, Diwan Chaman Lall, read, as far as I could see, from a number of papers and newspaper cuttings, but did not mention what those documents were. He did not state, as far as I can see, what were the sources of his information; who communicated these matters to him and who had made these statements to him. Now, Sir, it is very difficult, therefore, to quite understand what is the particular authenticity of these statements. I do not for a moment question the authenticity of my honourable friend, but, Sir, it is possible that he may have been misled by exaggerated reports or been carried away by emotion—I hope he is not very emotional—but all the same I think it is possible at this time of stress and storm—it is possible to be very seriously affected by matters which are emotional.

Diwan Chaman Lall: May I interrupt my honourable friend for a minute? Is my honourable friend aware that the charges made by me regarding Bahadurgarh are substantiated by my honourable friend, the War Secretary? He did not deny for a single moment that a cross had been used; he did not even refer to it. He did not deny that punctured wounds were caused although he said that butt ends were used—an extraordinary position. He did not deny the deaths and wounds caused in Nilganj. What is the fuss about?

Lt.-Col. Dr. J. C. Chatterjee: As far as I heard my honourable friend, the War Secretary, I did not hear him say that a cross had been used or that he admitted any of the atrocities which my honourable friend opposite alleged had been committed. (Interruptions.)

Mr. President: Order, order. Let him proceed now.

Lt.-Col. Dr. J. C. Chatterjee: What my honourable friend said was that he admitted, unless my memory has failed me, that there had been an incident in the Bahadurgarh camp and that certain prisoners there had refused to obey orders. I understand, that those men were under military discipline and therefore his officers had to use force necessary to quell that disturbance and he said very definitely that the force used was the minimum force necessary on that occasion. That was one statement. I feel, Sir, that my honourable friend here also is an honourable gentleman and I cannot suspect him of making a statement knowingly and willingly of something which is not true. That is what I say, just as I admit that on the other side my honourable friend the Mover also is not capable of saying or making a statement which he really knows to be untrue.

Now, Sir, the next point is that Sardar Mangal Singh also made certain statements of what happened in the Red Fort here. Those again were statements which he made; he read from a newspaper and said that the father of the deceased gentleman had come to him and made certain statements. Again, as far as I can see the Member in charge of the Department pointed out that the facts were as he related, namely, that a letter had been left by these gentlemen.

which conclusively proved that they had committed suicide and that he was prepared to lay certain extracts from that letter on the table of the House to show that the incident as described by my honourable friend, Sardar Mangal Singh, was not quite correct.

Shri Sri Prakasa: Whose letter was it?

Lt.-Col. Dr. J. O. Chatterjee: That is not my affair. I am only repeating the statement which my Honourable friend here made and I can not say who wrote that letter and what was the information contained in it. All I can say is that after all the Member in charge has access to the documents and he says he has visited the Red Fort and the Bahadurgarh Camp and he says that there is no such thing as an I.N.A. camp in Jubbulpore.

Now, Sir, what is the reason that we should refuse to believe the statements made which I believe have been made in good faith by the War Secretary, and therefore censure him over something which has not been proved. It seems to me that in the course of the debate various matters were brought in, which were not relevant to the discussion. The whole question of whether the I.N.A. trials should or should not have been held was brought up. I for one would frankly say to my honourable friend opposite that I very much regret that such trials were ever started. It has done nobody any good. I wish they had not been started, but that today is not relevant to the motion which only refers to the treatment of I.N.A. prisoners in certain camps. Sir, it seems to me that the right note was struck by my honourable friend, the Deputy Leader of the Muslim League Party. He pointed out that this was a case on which statements have been made on both sides. He took exactly the line which I have been trying to take, namely, that till the facts of a case like this are made certain, till there is full evidence that the atrocities, which my honourable friend alleged, had been committed, and had been proved one way or the other, it was not fair to give judgment on a matter like this. I feel, Sir, that that was really the right attitude and it seems to me that on a future occasion—and I believe that such an occasion is coming before the House—when the whole question will be discussed by this House, we shall be in a better position to give our verdict. Therefore, I would appeal to my honourable friend not to press the motion to a vote.

Some Honourable Members: Question may be put.

Mr. President: The time is up. It is now Six of the Clock and no further question can be put. The House now stands adjourned.

The Assembly then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Thursday the 31st January, 1946.

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