

[Sh. Balasaheb Vikhe Patil]

as early as possible and a Bill should be brought before the House, which may organise the unorganised labourers. Though the Government is taking keen interest in it, yet it needs to step up its efforts.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, with these words, I request you to allow me to withdraw the Bill.

[English]

I beg to move for leave to withdraw the Bill to provide for setting up a fund for the welfare of unorganised labour.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Question is:

"That leave be granted to withdraw the Bill to provide for setting up a fund for the welfare of unorganised labour."

The Motion was adopted

SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL: I withdraw the Bill.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now, we will take up the next Bill. Shri G.S. Basavaraju.

16.37 hrs.

FAIR PRICE SHOPS (REGULATION)
BILL

[Translation]

*SHRI G. S. BASAVARAJU (Tumkur): Mr. Deputy Speaker Sir, I am glad to move that the Bill to regulate the functioning of fair price shop and for matters connected therewith, be taken into consideration. While speaking on the Bill, let me first of all deal with the functioning of the Fair Price shops in the country.

Our country's population is more than 80 crores and majority of them depend upon the Fair Price Shops for their essential commodities. But our main objective should be to cater to the needs of those 50 crores of people, majority of whom are below the poverty line. At present more than four lakhs of Fair Price Shops are functioning in the country which are spread from cities like Delhi upto the remote villages. Fair price shop facility is available in the nook and corner of the country. But unfortunately the functioning of these Fair Price Shops is not at all satisfactory. Misbehaviour of officials and the manipulations of vested interests have made working of these shops a failure and the automatic sufferers are the common people of the country. Hence I say that the Government has failed in making Fair Price Shops to work satisfactorily.

The concept of Public Distribution System is not new in our country. First it was introduced in the year 1939 by the British Regime. There was a severe famine in Bombay and Public Distribution System started functioning there to provide ration to the people. There was a more serious famine in Calcutta and other parts of West Bengal in the year 1943. Since then Public Distribution System began to function in West Bengal.

The Centre has provided 2000 crores of rupees in the form of subsidy to the Public Distribution System. The share of this subsidy is not reaching the common man. The intervention of politicians has vitiated the working of the system. The middle men and other vested interest are taking the undue advantage of this subsidy. The aim of our Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Gandhi is to see that the poorest people get the essential commodities at cheaper rates. The main intention is to help the people belonging to remote villages, hilly areas and the poorest section of the society. But our Government has not succeeded so far to see that the essential commodities reach poor people of this country directly.

*Translation of the speech Originally delivered in Kannada.

Food Corporation of India has taken up some responsibility to procure and distribute the main essential commodities. About 60% of the commodity procured by Food Corporation of India is being distributed by the Public Distribution System.

The essential commodities that are distributed through Fair Price Shops are sugar, wheat, rice, palmoleine oil, cement, cloth, coal, kerosene oil. In the year 1961 there were 47,000 Fair Price Shops in the country. This number of Fair Price Shops increased to 1,22,000 in the year 1971 and it went upto 2,08,000 in the year 1981. Today we have more than four lakhs of Fair Price Shops spread all over the country. During the Seventh Plan an amount of 2000 crore rupees has been given as subsidy for the Public Distribution System. The quantity of commodities distributed through Fair Price Shops has also increased tremendously. In the year 1971 about 7.8 lakh tonnes of commodities were distributed and the figure was 18.4 lakh tonnes during the year 1987.

The objective of the Government is to supply commodities at protective prices to the weaker sections of the society. But what is really happening in the Fair Price Shops? In villages the functioning of these shops is miserable. I have good experience in observing the functioning of these shops, especially, in villages. I too hail from a village and I know the working conditions of these shops very well. The centre supplies the foodgrains, sugar etc. to the States. About 60 to 70% of the rural population do not know this system. We cannot blame the Minister at the Centre because there are lacunae in the system itself. About 13 to 15% of cereals like Jowar, Ragi, etc. are distributed through Fair Price Shops and about 9 to 15% of oil and other items are also distributed through this system. Foodgrain distribution per person was about 9 Kg. during 1961 and in 1987-88 it went up to 26 Kg. per year.

The subsidy to each customer of Fair Price Shops was 69.7 rupees in 1961 and in 1987-88 it is about 73 to 76 rupees, for Ragi, rice and other cereals the subsidy per per-

son was Rs. 9 to 11 during 1977-78.

Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Kerala, Karnataka are the States where rice is produced abundantly. Even then, the poor people are not getting the same directly. The merchants stock the commodities and when there is shortage they sell them at exorbitant rates. The Government has not succeeded in checking black-marketing. Public Distribution System has thoroughly failed in its effective functioning. This is the reason why I have brought this Bill before this august House.

The important objective of my Bill is to set up a Board and it may be called as Central Board for fair price shops. The Board should be there at State level and at the Union Territory level. This Board can look after functioning of the fair price shops. Then only we can ascertain that the subsidy given by the Centre reaches the Common man. The flow of commodities also becomes easy. The wheat produced in Punjab can go to Kerala and the coconut grown in Kerala can come to Delhi.

I would like to ask the hon'ble Minister whether the palmolin oil that the centre gives reaches the common man. This oil is priced at Rs. 11/- in the Fair Price Shops but the same is sold at Rs. 30/- in the black market. These commodities released by the Centre go to the States. From there they go to the district Collectors, Tehsildars, Revenue Inspectors, and village accountants. At all these levels manipulations are going on and the common man is exploited. Hence monitoring of public distribution system by the centre is very essential.

In my district a senior I.A.S. Officer who is the Chief Secretary has amassed wealth of about 75 lakhs of rupees by selling palm oil alone in the black-market. He has sold it in the cities at the rate of the Rs. 27 per kg. Myself and some other persons have caught this culprit and further action has been taken.

You are providing wheat to the poor people under the Scheme 'food for works. It

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is also being distributed through public distribution system. It goes to the District Collector. Village farmer is not able to get 2 1/2 Kg. of wheat. Agents and contractors sell the wheat available in fair price shops to a mill owner. Each bag of wheat will fetch them about 20 to 50 rupees. They manipulate the accounts. This malpractice has not been stopped so far.

There are two prices for the sale of sugar. One ranges from 450 to 500 rupees per quintal while the other is from 700 to 800 rupees. The poor farmer who works hard from morning till evening not in a position to buy one Kg. of sugar. In the name of farmers and poor people the middle men are making money in towns and cities. Sugar does not reach the villages. It is true that we have essential commodities Act, but this does not serve the purpose to help the poor people.

Agencies are needed for the distribution of commodities like cloth, sugar, rice and others. Is this distribution work carried on satisfactorily?

In my Districts the persons belonging to Fair Price Department carry their pads, seals, bags, books etc. with them always. They obtain the Demand Draft and contact the collectors, tahsildars and major chunk of the commodities is disposed of then and there itself. Only 25% of the commodities reach the Fair Price Shop for the actual distribution. This system is going on through out the country and hence the subsidy amount of 2000 crores of rupees has reached the middle men. It is not reaching the coolies, labourers, poor people and the middle class people. Therefore setting up of a Central Board is very essential. At Taluk level we have Taluk agricultural produce marketing societies. But the State officials and other vested interests are misusing the subsidy.

Kerosene distribution is done mainly through hawkers. These hawkers will give

only 3/4 quantity of oil and 1/4 of it will not be supplied to the consumer. Therefore, distribution of kerosene oil should be rectified. Palmolein oil is adulterated.

Food Corporation of India procures rice. The market rate of that rice may be 400/- per quintal. There are some officers in Food Corporation of India who would give half of the actual rate. They also send the rotten rice for the purpose of distribution. Stern action has to be taken against such officers.

The setting up of a Central Board will help the public distribution system in many ways. The food grains, sugar etc. will be in sealed bags and the board will supervise this. This will stop adulteration. 10 lakh tonnes of wheat arrived from outside at Mangalore Port sometime ago. From this Grival Central Government gave wheat to Karnataka also. This wheat was not fit for human consumption. There were worms in the wheat and it was rotten.

Food Corporation of India procures the food grains but its distribution system is not satisfactory. Monitoring of the distribution system is essential for the proper functioning. Hence there should be Corporation to look into all these matters. Monitoring system should be there at National/State, Union Territory, District, Taluk and block levels. Then only your help would reach the poor masses of this country. With this intention I am introducing this Bill. At the outset you may not appreciate the Bill but it has laudable objectives and I am sure that it would bring desirable changes in the functioning of the fair price shops.

Fair price shops are meant for all sections of society. A labourer, a member of Parliament, an I.A.S. Officer all can go to the fair price shops. Why should I go to the fair price shop to buy the essential commodities? Why should an officer drawing a salary of 6000 rupees or 8000 rupees go to fair price shop to buy the commodities? These shops should cater to the needs of poor people. People below the poverty-line should get the benefit of subsidy.

Keeping all the above facts in mind I have brought this Bill before this House to streamline the functioning of the fair price shops. I do not want to take more time of the House as many of my hon'ble colleagues are eagerly waiting to take part in this discussion. I hope the hon'ble Minister will accept the Bill and it will be passed by the House

Sir, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak on my Bill and with these words I conclude my speech

[*English*]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Motion moved:

"That the Bill to regulate the functioning of fair price shops and for matters connected there is to be taken into consideration"

Dr. Phurlenu Guha.

[*Translation*]

*DR. PHULRENU GUHA (Contai): Mr. Deputy Speaker Sir, at the very outset I would like to thank our colleague Dr. Basavaraju for bringing forth this Bill in this House and thereby providing us with an opportunity to discuss this important subject. This discussion will be very helpful and I hope that the Central Government and the State Governments will together evolve some effective system through which the rural people will get full benefit from the fair price shops.

Sir, the fair price shops first started functioning in 1969 in Bombay. After that such shops were opened in Calcutta in 1944. Sir, shudder to think of the circumstances under which fair price shops were first opened in Calcutta. Tears come to my eyes to recall the atrocities committed by the British Government at that time in West Bengal which was then known as 'Bengladesh'. People were destroyed and killed like animals by them. Bengal used to produce rice in abundance in those days.

The British Government destroyed all the rice stock for fear of the Japanese. I remember those dreadful days when we went round the villages, went to the farmers' houses and urged upon them not to give their rice stock to the Police. The police destroyed their rice, threw them in the rivers and in the Bay of Bengal. Sir, these may sound like fairy tales to many who have not witnessed those days. But we belong to that age and have seen such inhuman things with our own eyes. Even after such a long interval of time, I shudder to recall those days when the people of Calcutta died on the streets like rats. I have seen small children sucking milk from the breast of their dead mothers. If I start narrating these things, so many dreadful memories come alive. So many things are to be said. I will not therefore go into them further. I will only say that immediately after that the reasoning system was first introduced in Calcutta. After that gradually the rationing system spread to other places also. Everybody knows about it and I will not take more time in narrating the same.

Sir, in our country the majority of the people are poor and millions of people live below the poverty line. For them fair price shops are very necessary everywhere, all over the country. The Government of India has taken various measures to lift them above the poverty line so that they may also live with dignity. I will request the Government to see that fair price shops are opened for them all over India. In this context I will say one thing, which I know will displease many of my friends and colleagues. Sir, we know that the Government gives subsidy for the commodities sold through fair price shops. Now my point is, why should the rich people, the upper middle class those who are well to do, get benefit of this Government subsidy? Why should there be fair price shops for them? I will request the Government to ponder over this. Why should there be subsidy from the State Exchequer for the affluent classes? I will point out to the Hon. Minister that only programmes and schemes of economic upliftment for those living below the poverty line is not enough. We shall have to make arrangements to supply their daily

*Translation of the speech Originally delivered in Kannada.

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requirements of wheat, rice and other essential commodities at cheaps and subsidised rates. More and more fair price shops should be opened for these poor people who really need them. It is not enough if only rice, wheat and oil is supplied through fair price shops. I am living in Calcutta for a long time and make my purchases from Fair Price shops. I find that the supplies to the Fair Price Shops are erratic and irregular. Recently I went to Calcutta during the recess of parliament. The person who draws my ration on my behalf told me that in the ration shop sugar-cubes were not available for the last four weeks. What to do? I told him 'what is to be done' Get sugar if available or else we have to do without it. Therefore I say that all other essential commodities of daily use like pulses, salt, soap, match boxes, kerosene etc. should be supplied through Fair Price Shops regularly. Regular supply must be ensured. Specially kerosene must be supplied, because for want of kerosene many poor children cannot study. Sir, we, the residents of Calcutta face load-shedding and power failure off and on. We have to carry on with kerosene lanterns as I used to do as a small girl in my village. But since kerosene is not always available, I have to use wax-candles. Now, candles are costly. The poor people cannot afford candles. Therefore kerosene supply must be ensured for the poor people through the Fair Price Shops.

I reiterate what I said earlier that it is very necessary to open Fair Price Shops in every village. It is a matter of great sorrow and shame that those people who produce food for us, themselves starve. We have not been able to make available the essential commodities of daily use at a cheap rate to all those who produce for us and feed the whole nation. We must provide items like wheat, rice, pulses, edible oils, salt, kerosene, match-boxes etc. to them at a cheap price. We have failed to do that, till now. Only opening of Fair Price Shops in every village is not enough. Every State Government must undertake the responsibility of ensur-

ing that these shops are able to supply the essential items to the villagers regularly. Otherwise the purpose will be defeated.

Here I will suggest that those items that are not produced in a particular State, should be supplied by the Central Government. But the responsibility of supplying those items to the Fair Price Shops which are produced in that State, should rest with the concerned State Government. This matter must be discussed thoroughly and a decision taken thereon. I know that as soon as the Central Government starts talking about opening more Fair Price Shops, the State Governments will start demanding that the Central Government should take the responsibility of supplying all the items to them. Whenever there will be any deficiency in supplying the items, the State Governments will start blaming the Central Government for that. Therefore, I say that before embarking on the project of opening of more Fair Price Shops, these points must be discussed thoroughly with all the State Governments. The various State Governments must be responsible for supplying those items to the Fair Price Shops which are produced in the State.

Sir, I have a long experience about the functioning of Fair Price Shops, which started in Calcutta. Here I will say one thing. When Fair Price Shops were first started in Calcutta and food offices were opened in 1946, it was started that some women workers would have to be recruited therein. In those days it was very difficult to get women workers to work in the offices. I distinctly remember that at 8.30 in the morning one gentleman from the Food office came to me and said " Madam decision has been taken to recruit women workers in the office. Where can we get women workers within two days; You kindly help us. I very well remember that I went round the city of Calcutta and somehow was able to send 4 or 5 women workers to their office. Now of course there is no difficulty in getting women workers. I will like to request the State Governments and the Central Government to keep an eye on the various malpractices and

black marketing etc. which takes place in the Fair Price Shop. You may have noticed that small eating establishments or "Dhabas" spring up near the ration shops. We know why it is so. They get supplies of foodgrains from the ration shops. This has to be checked. I know that this is a Private Members' Bill and the Government will request the mover to withdraw it in the end. Our friend will ultimately withdraw it on the request of the Government. But the matters should not end there. The Government should discuss the matter with various State Governments and pursue it. The Government must take the responsibility of supplying the essential commodities at a cheap price to all those who produce food for us. The framing of schemes for the upliftment of those living below the poverty line is not enough, we must provide wheat, rice etc. to them at a cheap rate. With that Sir, I once again thank our friend, Dr. Basavaraju for bringing forth this Bill and I conclude my speech.

[English]

SHRI N. TOMBI SINGH (Inner Manipur): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I rise to participate in this debate on the Fair Price Shops (Regulation) Bill moved by Shri G.S. Basavaraju. Sir, I am not in support of the entire Bill but some of the provisions are very good and brilliant and these are for consideration which are in the hands of the Government. This Bill, in any case, has given us a very good chance to discuss some of the very important points. As my predecessor, Dr. Phulrenu Guha, has just now mentioned, the story of fair price shops in this country has got a very long chequered history. Even now we have yet to drive home a point its effectiveness and the consumers' consciousness this yet to be awakened. I am in full agreement with the Statement of the Objects and Reasons although the object of the Bill is not to be accepted in toto. I do not support some of the provisions of the Bill which I have already mentioned.

Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister, Sir, Sukh Ram, to the fact that last year, in January, under his signature

from the Ministry of Programme Implementation, he had issued 20-Point Programme 1986—its Perspective and Strategy and there the 18th item is of great concern to the consumers. This, I think, is much more than the present Bill as suggested now. If the Government is keen to drive home this matter, the document itself has suggested very good points. Brilliant strategies have been formulated. Objectives have been spelt out and the programme is very nice. The monitoring of the strategies also has been spelt out.

Sir, we have no reason to suspect that the Government is half-hearted about the implementation of the programme. The Prime Minister means all business. Since the inception of the 20-Point from the time of late Shrimati Indiraji, our late Prime Minister, and now the new 20-Point Programme is being implemented under the present leadership of Shri Rajiv Gandhi, the concern for consumers has been mentioned very clearly in the 18th item of the 20-Point Programme which requires review. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he has taken steps on the basis of this item. Sir, with due respect to Shri Basavaraju, I would like to say once again that the document that you have circulated is much more than what has been said in this Bill. Now, if you are serious on the implementation of this programme, I would like to draw your attention to certain suggestions which I would like to make. Sir, a mention has been made of the consumer protection movement and making its presence felt among the masses particular in the rural areas. Sir, I represent a very backward area. There are very small villages in the hill areas. The distance between one village to another is some miles and sometimes the village is so small that its needs are for 10 families. So, the people in such small villages are finding it very difficult to get essential commodities as and when they require them.

Same is the position in the villages of Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Mizoram because hill areas are more or less like this. Similar might be the position in

[Sh. N. Tombi Singh]

your own State. I have not much of direct experience in Himachal State. But then we have to think of the remote hill areas and the people in the interior areas who have no access to any shop, maybe a fair price shop or even the Government shop because they have to depend on a certain system of shopping, a certain system of weekly or monthly type of shopping. For these areas we have to provide the mobile shops. You have said in your document 'static or mobile fair price shops.' Sir, static shops will be impracticable for the small and remote villages. What is practicable will be mobile shops. These mobile shops can be introduced. If I am allowed to speak from my experience I would say that experiments have been conducted and trials have been made here and there. So far there has been not much of success and this has been due to the lack of consciousness firstly among the consumers and secondly among those who handle this consumer protection movement because they themselves are not very expert commercial people or business people. Naturally after a run of a few months or after a run of a few years somehow the business has crashed down. So, on the basis of the experience, you have also emphasised in your document on consumer education on the basis of the consumers themselves and for the benefit of the consumers as well as those who will run this consumer service trade. We have to see how best we can make an improvement on this. Sir, we have cooperative societies. Everywhere in the country cooperative societies, particularly consumer cooperative societies, have not had the amount of success that we had expected. Where is the success that you have made on this front? As Madam Guhaji has just now mentioned that unless we reach food to those who have produced food—this is a very important point that has been made, I would like to emphasise that unless we reach food to those who produce food in the villages, the purpose will not be served. The only way to provide food to them is through mobile shops. Wherever the static shops are not a practicable solution, then we have to

depend on these mobile shops and for these mobile shops either the Government runs them just like the super bazar system—in Delhi and other metropolitan cities people are educated, intellectuals are in abundance and people have a certain tolerable and understandable behavior whereas in the rural areas for everything, when you ask them to prepare certain things, one has to train them from the beginning. So, this way we like that this problem has to be tackled in the interest of the villagers. Opening of super bazaars in the towns is necessary. We find super bazaars everywhere more or less in the towns in various States. But then the solution is not in super bazaars in the cities or small towns, but the solution lies in opening its branches, its mobile units, to reach the villages. Towards that end, Sir, I would like to suggest rather on the same line that has been suggested—some Central control. In this connection I would like to observe that it should not be centralised in every respect although Shri Basavaraju's Bill says that there should be a Central Board. The distribution system through fair price shops is more or less handy with the State and if the State says, 'yes', you have to see how that can be improved with certain Central assistance wherever it is possible. As I have suggested, Sir, in order to reach the interior villages and the rural backward areas, the only means is to open mobile super bazaars for backward areas and villages. It may be costlier in the beginning, but it will be a vast and comprehensive programme. But to the best of our information this has not been taken up. This programme has not been taken up and we have Super Bazaars in the cities and towns. We should see Super Bazaars in the rural areas and villages; whatever name we may give it, it should be working. Now, in this context, when the Minister replies, the House should be benefited by getting the action taken so far on their own programme, on the Prime Minister's programme because the programme have been spelt out and the implementation has been given to a Ministry lead by the Hon. Minister. Where is the achievement? A study should be made as to where you have failed, where are the loopholes, where you have

made certain improvement and modifications wherever necessary. We would like to have detailed information from the Government as to what is the Government statistics of achievements and failures in this field. Then perhaps we will certainly have reason to believe in the 20-Point Programme which is so sincerely projected by the Prime Minister and which all of us have taken as our *Gita*, as our Bible. We have said many times in different forums that it should not remain a theoretical or academic exercise or jugglery of literary words, beautiful expressions, essay writings and all that. It should go a little beyond to reach the common people through these Cooperative Societies, Super Bazars and similar organisations .

Now, in this regard, the Food Processing Ministry, I think, has a role to play because the Food Processing Ministry help in utilisation of fruits and other commodities that are available in different areas; when they are distributed, they are controlled in respect of prices, in respect of qualities and in respect of their weight and quantity. So, while distributing their products they should distribute with a policy to divert these products to the organisation that will be coming up, if it is not already there, to reach the common people—not necessarily as my predecessor has suggested, to the affluent people who can afford to purchase costly things, costly commodities, but to those who cannot afford to purchase and who should be given this facility. All the products of the Government agencies, Government undertakings, the cooperative industries and other industries under the control of the Government should be processed, so far as the priorities of the general commodities, the essential commodities are concerned, only through these organisations.

Sir, although such a Bill is likely to be withdrawn, we should not take it so lightly because the spirit that is contained in this Bill has to be taken and the Government has to give certain assurances, effective and practical assurances, to the House: "yes, this Bill may not be acceptable to the Government, but the spirit that has been incorporated in

this Bill is well taken and the Government implementation agencies will take care of certain basic things in this Bill". Then, Sir, we shall be satisfied. We are grateful also to my Hon. friend, Shri Basavaraju, for raising this discussion and for bringing forward this Bill.

With these few words, I would like to conclude my observations on this Bill.

[*Translation*]

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL VYAS (Bhilwara): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I appreciate the feelings behind the Fair Price Shop Regulation Bill 1989 introduced by Shri Basvaraju. But there are certain shortcomings in the Bill. The Government, therefore, should introduce a comprehensive Bill in order to make arrangements for the Fair Price Shops and to put a proper control over them. This needs to be considered. In clause 4 he says that State Boards should be set up. But, the items to be supplied and the quantity thereof should also be decided. Presently wheat, rice, cloth, sugar and some other items are being supplied through fair price shops. These items are made available by the Government especially for the urban areas. However, for rural areas very few items are made available by the Government. The hon. Minister pays more attention to the people living in urban areas because they make a lot of hue and cry. But, the voice of the people living in rural areas is not so actively heard of, I would, therefore, like to submit that special arrangements should be made for proper distribution of these items in the villages. The Government supplies only 5-6 items whereas there are certain other items also which are very essential. These items are supplied by the Government to the people living in urban areas through the Super Bazars. If the Government makes these items available at fair price to the wholesale markets and the super bazars in other places too, then the people living in rural areas may also get all these facilities. The Government should invariably make these arrangements. Hon. Member from the South has stated that 14 items have been decided for supply and the state of

[Sh. Girdhari Lal Vyas]

Kerala regularly supplies these items to the people. Similarly all those items should be made available in the other states also so that people may get this facility. At present the Government does supply pulses and cloth but the essential items, like kerosene oil, are not made available to the people in the villages. Very high prices are charged for these items. The Government should make such arrangements so that the items may be available at a reasonable price. Now the question arises as to how much of the population should be covered under a fair price shop. A fair price shop has been set up in my village. Some times the Government sets up a fair price shop to cover two panchayats with a population of 8 to 10 thousand while some times a fair price shop is set up to cover a population of four to five thousand only. In cities the Government has set up a fair price shop for a ward with a population of 2 thousand only. My suggestion is that population should be adopted a basis to set up a fair price shop. Unless such arrangements are made, this programme is not going to be successful. Similarly there is some bungling in the goods which are made available to the Fair Price Shops. If the owners of the Fair Price Shops themselves will lift the supply of goods, they will certainly not be able to carry them, properly and will have to face difficulties. The Government, therefore, should set up state wise authorities for the supply of essential items. Authorities should be set up at district level, subdivision level and tehsil level. The society should be the authority for marketing at tehsil level. Further if the whole sale stockists at the district level and the cooperative organisation at state level are made responsible for the regular supply, then this programme will surely benefit the people living in rural areas and we will be able to make these items available in time. Apart from these arrangements, the quality as well as the quantity of sugar, wheat, oil, cloth, kerosene oil and other items should also be ensured to all the people. If the population is more and the supply is short then distribution will be disturbed and it will depend on the organiser as to whom to give

and to whom not to give. In a way it will be a preferential treatment. The Government should take into consideration this aspect also.

I would like to draw your attention to another point. The States where the co-operative sector is functioning will should be encouraged and such states where the co-operatives have not been developed, steps should be taken to develop cooperatives. The Government should make arrangements for the supply of the essential items to the people in villages and towns by establishing Fair Price Shops in cooperative sector. If these shops are given to private dealers then there is a possibility of bungling, adulteration and black marketing. Therefore, the private dealers should be removed and Fair Price Shops should be given to the co-operative sector which will ensure regular supply of the goods to the people. These arrangements are very essential.

Besides, I would like to draw your attention, particularly to my own state. Rajasthan is a very backward State and there the production of foodgrains is not adequate to meet the demand. Therefore, the Central Government has to make good the deficit. Rajasthan has been affected by drought during the last 4-5 years and the people there did not get even essential items from the Fair Price Shops during the famine period. Thanks to Shri Rajiv Gandhi that village labourers could get foodgrains with the help of N.R.E.P. and other programmes. Due to this there was Fair Price Shops would not have been adequate. Therefore, an arrangement should be made that adequate supply of wheat and rice could be made to the wheat and rice consuming areas, where there is a shortage of these commodities. If such an arrangement is made, then neither the prices will increase nor there will be any difficulty in the distribution of these items.

I want to submit something particularly regarding oil. Its distribution is improper and when the oil reaches at district level, district supply officers and other dealers indulge in its black marketing. I want to submit, particu-

larly about my own district. When complaints regarding black marketing of oil were made, the dealers were apprehended and action was taken against them because these people used to sell oil in black marketing by adulterating it with substandard oil. Thus the low priced oil which the Government wants to supply them through Fair Price Shops never used to reach them. This needs to be ensured that these items are made available through Fair Price Shops at a price at which Government wants it to be supplied to the people. This way the Government will be successful in policy of raising the people below poverty line and for which the Government is paying crores of rupees as subsidy. Therefore, such arrangements are needed to be effectively implemented.

Again the cloth manufactured by National Textiles and Government owned mills is not made available to the people properly. Gents' *dhotis*, ladies sarees and other such items should also be made available to people at a low price.

However, the items that reach the district level do not reach the block and the panchayat level. therefore, These items are not distributed properly there. It should be ensured that the items which are made available at district level will also be made available in the entire district with the help of the District Civil Supply Officers. If such an arrangement is made, then these items will be available to all the shops in the districts. The low priced cloth besides other items will also be available to the poor people there. It is, therefore, necessary to make such arrangement, otherwise the poor people in rural areas will face a great problem.

My submission is that the Fair Price Shops' system should be strengthened. You have said about setting up of Boards and other such things. The Government is to decide as to what should be the nature of these Boards. It has also to be decided whether the present system is to continue or some such Board is to be set up in the States as well.

If Boards are set up, the people from different fields should be included as the members. Public representatives, producers, consumers, officials should be included to enable people from all shades to be represented therein. This will help in making the items required in the Fair Price Shops available there.

Another point is that the work undertaken by the Government involves comparatively more expenditure in its completion. The F.C.I. procures foodgrains at a price of Rs. 183 and an expenditure of Rs. 50 per quintal is made on selling it. If a trader does undertakes this job he can do it at an expenditure of only Rs. 10-15 and at the same time can earn profit as well. The Governments therefore, should make such arrangements, which are economic and not expensive .

The Government pays thousand crores to the F.C.I. as subsidy but the farmers do not get even the remunerative prices for their produce. It is definitely our weakness if the distribution system is so much expensive . Our arrangement should be smooth after incurring so much on it. If this has proved successful and commonman people are benefitted by it, then it may be called praise worthy. But, it is really a matter of regret that our arrangement is not good even after incurring so much on it.

During my tenure as a member of the Public Accounts Committee, I had conducted a study. The Work charge employees get less pay than those working in the F.C.I. The expenditure is less where work charge employees have been engaged.

Where the work is entrusted to contractors, a lot of theft takes place. They take resort for unfair means and adulteration is done on a large scale. You should think of this system seriously. Are you going to undertake the work through Government officials and F.C.I. or get the work done by contractors? Where contractors are engaged, there is much scope of suspicion and bungling. You should, therefore, evolve a system which could be relied upon and

[Sh. Girdhari Lal Vyas]

where everything may run smoothly. I feel that in order to run the system properly, more fair price shops should be opened on cooperative basis. A system should be evolved all over the country so that essential commodities could be made available to all at reasonable rates. It will be a service to the nation. You are rendering your good service to the nation and I hope that you will continue to do so by ensuring further improvements in the system. This will help crores of people in the country benefit from this system and strengthen their economic conditions. I hope that you will definitely evolve a system like this.

With these words I conclude.

[English]

17.46 hrs.

CONTEMPT OF THE HOUSE

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: As the House is aware, at about 14.40 hours today, a visitor calling himself Deve Singh Rawat, son of Shri Vijay Singh Rawat, shouted slogan from the Visitor's Gallery. The Director, Security, took him into custody immediately and interrogated him. The visitor has made a statement but has not expressed regret for his action.

I bring it to the notice of the House for such action as the House may deem fit.

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT AND DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. NAMGYAL): I beg to move:

"This House resolves that the person calling himself Dev Singh Rawat, son of Shri Vijay Singh Rawat, who shouted

slogan from the Visitors' Gallery at about 14.40 hours today and whom the Director, Security, took into custody immediately has committed a grave offence and is guilty of the contempt of this House.

This House further resolves that he be kept in the custody of the Director, Security, till the rising of the House today and thereafter released with a stern warning."

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is:

"This House resolves that the person calling himself Dev Singh Rawat, son of Shri Vijay Singh Rawat, who shouted slogan from the Visitors' Gallery at about 14.40 hours today and whom the Director, Security, took into custody immediately has committed a grave offence and is guilty of the contempt of this House.

This House further resolves that he be kept in the custody of the director, Security, till the rising of the House today and thereafter released with a stern warning."

The motion was adopted

17.48 hrs.

EXTENSION OF TIME OF THE SITTING

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: What about extending the time of the House?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT AND DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. NAMGYAL): We may extend the time of the House beyond 6.00 P.M.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Before taking up this Private Members Bill, I informed