

[Shri Shyam Lal Yadav]

weaving also and in that family children also work. The family takes the wool yarn and other raw materials from the traders and dealers, exporters. They weave the carpet in their houses and then give it back to those traders and dealers and exporters. They sell it out. The Senat Mehta Committee went into this question. They visited Varanasi and Mirzapur. These districts are the headquarters and mostly in these districts the carpet weaving industry is prospering. It was represented to them. I think the hon. Minister may be aware and it is submitted that this carpet weaving industry is not a hazardous occupation. There is a zero rate of accident in the industry. There is no chance of accident and this carpet weaving, I think the Government will agree cannot be bracketed with industry like match, fire-works, glass and bangles, cement, tobacco, etc. The quality of inputs used in the carpet weaving is mostly mill spun woollen yarn *i.e.* about 95% mill spun woollen yarn which is used in carpet weaving. This is free from dust. There is no short wool fibre also which can go in the lungs of the children and the general health of the children I think we have seen is in no way inferior.

SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN (Kishanganj) : What about the eyes and the back ? I have seen children working in this carpet weaving factory not only in Mirzapur but also in Kashmir. I know the children lose their eyes within a few years.

SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV : In our parts it is not like that.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Is it different in Mirzapur ?

SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV : In Kashmir they are weaving finer quality. (*Interruptions*) This can be regulated. I think employment of children in this carpet industry should be regulated. If it is there, so I would like to make some suggestions whenever they are allowed to work on looms they should be allowed for five or six hours and they should be given recess in between. And they should be

16.00 hrs.

provided with nutritious food, lunch etc. They should be paid proper wages. and they should not be allowed to work in the night or more than 5-6 hours at a stretch, and they should be provided with free medical facilities and free medical help also, and they should be given proper education also. This is the situation. It is easy to...

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Yadav, you will continue tomorrow. Now, the Finance Minister may move his motion.

16.01 hrs.

MOTION RE : GENERAL ECONOMIC SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY

[*English*]

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH) : Sir, I beg to move :

"That this House do consider the general economic situation in the country."

I welcome this occasion to have a discussion in the House on the general economic situation in the country. I would like to take this opportunity to share with the House my perception of our economic achievements as well as the problems we face and the solutions that we must jointly endeavour to find.

16.02 hrs.

[SHRI VAKKOM PURUSHOTHAMAN
in the Chair]

The present economic situation is characterised by several favourable factors. As the House is aware, the momentum of economic growth is being maintained. It is a matter of particular satisfaction that in the first two years of the Seventh Plan we have been able to finance over 40 per cent of the Central Plan target in real terms at 1984-85 prices. This is unprecedented. We have substantially stepped up programmes for the poor and taken new initiatives for the benefit of the workers. The infrastructure sectors of the economy are performing very well. The price situation is under control. New issues in the

capital market have reached record levels. Tax revenues, particularly personal income tax revenues, continue to display remarkable buoyancy and our foreign exchange reserves are at a comfortable level.

At the same time it is important to anticipate the problems ahead so that we can find appropriate solutions well in time without jeopardising our economic development. There are two major areas of economic concern, namely, the balance of payments and the rapid growth of Government expenditure, mainly on account of implementation of Pay Commission recommendations, increase in subsidies, and outlays on account of natural calamities, etc. In these areas of concern, we must act decisively, and I would like to take a few minutes to elaborate these point.

It is important to appreciate that the Indian economy today is on a new growth path. The economy grew at over 5 per cent a year during the Sixth five year Plan and the current estimate of growth in 1985-86 is also about 5 per cent. That means that over the past 6 years the economy has grown at 5% or higher, in sharp contrast to the preceding long term trend growth rate of 3.5 per cent. The monsoon this year has been far from satisfactory. Nevertheless, because of investments made in irrigation, fertilizers and propagation of high-yielding varieties of seeds, agricultural production is likely to show some increase this year and it is expected that national income will also show a healthy growth. As I mentioned earlier, despite other pressures on the budget, we have been able to maintain the tempo of plan investment and in the first two years of the Plan, over 40 per cent of the Central Plan target would have been met in real terms. Alleviation of poverty is the central goal of all our planning. I am glad to inform the House that anti-poverty programmes, particularly NREP and IRDP and the programme for distribution of food in tribal areas, are progressing well, and outlays in the current year on these programmes will reach record levels. This year the Government has also launched a new scheme for the urban poor, which will promote self employment opportunities for the poor living in our urban areas.

In the past, infrastructural bottlenecks have often plagued the Indian economy. The

performance this year has been very good; in some cases a higher growth in the first few months of this year has followed a good performance last year. This is a fitting testimony to the vital contribution of the public sector to our economy. Electricity generation in April-September, 1986 is nearly 10% higher than the corresponding period of 1985. This year's plant load factor (PLF) in thermal power plants at 51.5% is the highest in 7 years. The 9.2% increase in the volume of revenue earning railway freight recorded in 1985-86 has been followed by another impressive 7% growth in April-September, 1986 over April-September, 1985. The production of crude petroleum in April-August, 1986 has increased by 8% over the corresponding period of 1985, as compared to a growth of 4.1% in 1985-86. Coal production in April-August, 1986 is up by 7.2% and is also substantially higher than the increase of 4.7% recorded in 1985-86.

We should also take particular pride in the fact that our economic growth in recent years has been achieved in the context of relative price stability. In the past 5 years, inflation, as measured by the Wholesale Price Index (WPI), has averaged about 6% a year. This compares well with the average inflation in all developing economies of over 30% a year over the same period. The increase in the wholesale price index during this financial year upto the week ended 1st November, 1986 was 6.4%. A part of this increase represents the seasonal increase in the prices of several commodities and is likely to reverse itself during the post-harvest period. In line with the downwards seasonal trend, the wholesale price index has declined by 0.5% in the two weeks prior to 1st November.

It is also important to appreciate that a substantial part of the increase in the wholesale prices in the current financial year is attributable to oil seeds and edible oils. This increase in the price of oilseeds and edible oils is a part of our deliberate strategy of increasing price incentives to indigenous producers and thus reducing our dependence on edible oils imports. The strategy for self-sufficiency appears to be working as imports of edible oils this year are likely to be lower by over 50% in value terms as compared to 1984-85. In order to ensure remunerative prices to our farmers, the Government is following a contracyclical

[Shri Vishwanath Pratap Singh]

policy of low releases of edible oils during the harvest period so that domestic oils are purchased in greater quantities, and higher releases during the lean period.

PROF. N.G. RANGA (guntur) :
Through State effort or what ?

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH : Yes, this is through State effort. The farmer has been the hub of our economy and of our strategy of self-reliance. The food stocks at 28 million tonnes on 1st July, 1986 also testify to the productivity of our farmers and the wisdom of our agricultural strategy. They also constitute invaluable insurance against bad weather and poor harvests.

Sugar is another crop in which our farmers have clearly demonstrated that when they are offered remunerative prices and a stable environment, they will respond magnificently. You will recall that last year following a marked shortfall in sugar production and resulting dependence on imports, we announced a 2-year sugar policy. We have followed this up by recently announcing a further increase Rs. 18 per quintal of the Statutory Minimum price of sugarcane well in advance for the sowing of the next crop. As a result of these measures, our need for sugar imports is estimated to have been brought down by about 75% this year as compared to 1984-85. Therefore, given the right support we can rely upon our farmers for our deliverance from imports of edible oil which is a heavy drain on our scarce foreign exchange resources.

As the House is aware, more than half the weight in the wholesale price index and even more in the consumer price index is that of agricultural and agro-based commodities. This reflects the prime place of agriculture in our economy and the important contribution of our farmers to the national product. Not surprisingly, therefore, overall price behaviour is dependent on proper management of demand and supply of agricultural commodities, production incentives and relative prices in the agricultural sector. The Government has recently come forward with an important paper providing a long-term perspective on agricultural prices which seeks to provide an assurance to farmers of remunerative prices

in an environment of stability. The Government is sure that the farmers will respond positively as they have always done in the past to ensure self-sufficiency in the agricultural sector.

This House will recall that the Government undertook a number of initiatives in industrial policy last year to accelerate growth of output and employment in industry. The sharp increase in capital issues approved in 1985-86 to a record level of Rs. 3,695 crores as compared to Rs. 2,000 crores in 1984-85 testifies to industry's response to these initiatives. By October, 1986 nearly Rs. 3,400 crores of capital issues have been approved in the present financial year suggesting that the total for the full financial year is likely to exceed last year's record amount by a very substantial margin.

On the fiscal front, the continued buoyancy of tax revenues testifies to the soundness of the far-reaching Tax policy reforms that we have undertaken in the course of last 20 months. The principal objective of these reforms has been to simplify the tax structure, move to a regime of reasonable tax rates combined with better administration and enforcement to improve compliance and raise revenues, foster a stable and predictable tax policy environment and make the tax structure more conducive to growth and equity. After recording an unprecedented increase of 45% in 1985-86, personal income tax collection in April-September, 1986 rose by another 26% over the same period of 1985. Total Central Government tax revenues, which had increased by 24% in 1985-86 have risen by 19% in the first 6 months of this financial year as compared with the first 6 months of the previous year. This increase has taken place despite a significant fall in the oil sector's contribution to corporate tax receipts.

Thus far I have dwelt on the quantifiable accomplishments of our economic performance. I will make bold to say that a more qualitative but important characteristic of our economic performance has been our ability to *anticipate* emerging economic problems and take corrective actions well in time. Looking ahead, I believe that there are two areas in which we must persevere with bold and difficult measures in order to

check emerging problems. These relate to the balance of payments and the rapid growth of Government expenditures. As is well-known to the House, the trade deficit was high in 1985-86. In the course of the past year or so, the Government has undertaken a series of measures to boost import substitution and accelerate the growth of exports. I have already alluded to the successful steps taken to increase indigenous production of sugar and edible oils. A large increase in fertiliser production is also anticipated. On the export front we have put in place a new and more liberal Cash Compensatory Scheme (CCS) effective 1st July, 1986. The Duty Drawback Scheme for exports has also been revamped. Interest rates on pre and post-shipment credit for exports were substantially reduced in August this year. The income-tax concession to exporters was greatly enhanced by an amendment passed in the last session of Parliament. The International Price Reimbursement Scheme for steel used in export is being extended to cover all types of steel and a similar scheme has been worked out for aluminium.

These are some of the important measures that have already been taken to contain the trade deficit. These measures have begun to yield results and trade deficit in the first six months of the current year is estimated to be substantially lower than last year. Exports are also showing a faster increase. I can assure the House that the Government will take all necessary measures to ensure that our self-reliance is not compromised by excessive dependence on foreign borrowings of the kind resorted to by some other countries.

Despite our enviable record in collecting more revenues, the Central Government Budget continues to be under heavy pressure because of rapid growth of expenditures, especially on non-Plan account. I need not elaborate on the compulsions of the geopolitical situation which has made the increase in defence expenditure inescapable. Nevertheless, we are to ensure that the Seventh Plan is to be funded in a non-inflationary manner, it is essential to curb the growth of overall non-Plan expenditures. At the same time, to maintain the momentum of investment and growth and ensure adequate plan allocations for social

and anti-poverty programmes, it is absolutely necessary to increase the efficiency of and surplus generation by public sector enterprises, in which the nation has invested thousands of crores of scarce savings. The Government is undertaking a thorough review of expenditure of the Centre with a view to pruning non-essential and low-priority expenditure, and has already taken a number of decisions in this direction. These include: a thorough review of subsidies to reduce overheads and confine the benefits to really needs groups of society; containing establishment expenditure at 1986-87 levels, making allowance for the impact of decisions of the Pay Commission's recommendations; reducing non-essential and low priority expenditure; increasing revenues through greater efficiency, productivity and reduction of costs; and setting specific targets for generation of internal resources of public sector enterprises and reduction of their unit costs of production.

I am sure, the Government has the full support and cooperation of all sections of this House in meeting the challenges that lie ahead.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Motion moved :

"That this House do consider the general economic situation in the country."

Shri Madhav Reddi.

SHRI C. MADHAV REDDI (Adilabad) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am really surprised to see some of the figures given by the Finance Minister and really we are at a loss to understand because of throwing figures at us and non-supplying the supporting data. When a Budget is presented, a lot of information is given to us. Now, we have some sort of mid-year budget projections which are before us and the Finance Minister gave a very long statement. I do not know on what basis these projections had been made. I do not know on what basis the hon. Finance Minister had made the statement with regard to several matters such as the national income, its growth and so on and so forth. Usually, when a budget is presented, the economic survey report is given to us and that gives us the basic data based on which we make our own sugges-

[Shri C. Madhav Reddi]

tions. But, we have not been given atleast a mid-year economic survey to study and know as to what is the actual health of the economy today.

What we have got with us is only information published here and there. Of course, basically we have the report of the Reserve Bank of India. I do not know whether the Reserve Bank of India's report is not considered authentic or not by the Government. The Reserve Bank of India's report published recently—it is an annual report—says that the estimated growth rate in real income during 1985-86 is around 4 per cent and others estimated only 3.9 per cent which means that for the second year in succession—i.e. this year—of the Seventh Five Year Plan, the rate is well below 5 per cent. This is the Reserve Bank of India's Report. When he says that we have had a growth rate of five per cent during the last two years, I am really surprised because we never achieved any quantum jump from 3.5 to 5 per cent. For a long time it was 3.5 per cent, and that is the reason why economists call it a 'Hindu growth rate'. I need not repeat that. The phrase was coined by Prof. Raj Krishna who is no longer there. In the growth rate, we achieved a certain breakthrough. But what is the growth? It is only half a per cent and that remains so. This is the information which is available. The Centre for monitoring of Indian economy had given a lot of information on this. The Reserve Bank of India Report is there and many other Reports are there on this aspect. Our growth rate is around four per cent; to be exact, it is 3.9 per cent.

In the projections given by the hon. Finance Minister, there are two disturbing factors which I would like to mention. One is the deficit finance to the tune of Rs. 5,000 crores as against Rs. 3,650 crores estimated last year. Of course, it will go up by the time the financial year is going to close. Also, we do not know what is the net RBI credit to the Government. That is more important. What is the RBI credit to Government as on date? That is the real deficit. I am sure, this is certainly going to push up the prices further. The other factor which is disturbing is the expansion in the non-Plan expenditure, government expenditure,

which has been projected. The non-Plan expenditure has been projected as Rs. 38,450 crores as against Rs. 31,767 crores for 1986-87. And this amount of Rs. 31,767 crores is going to be increased. That is well known to us because we have already passed two batches of Supplementary Demands for Grants in which we had already sanctioned the expenditure on account of the recommendations of the Pay Commission, etc. We have also to accept the recommendations of the Pay Commission with regard to pensionary benefits. That has not yet been done, but the commitment is already there. In other words, the non-Plan expenditure this year would be around Rs. 36,000 crores. This will be the level of non-Plan expenditure. The Finance Minister has said that it is a very alarming feature, that it should be reduced and that certain steps are being taken by the Government. I am very happy about it. But what are the steps? All the steps enumerated are not going to cut the non-Plan expenditure. I was told that you have proposed a cut of five per cent in expenditure in all Departments. I do not know whether the other Ministries have accepted this. I hope they have accepted this, and if so, I want to know what type of cut is going to be there. Unless you give the guidelines that this is the type of expenditure which is to be cut, what will happen is this. Under non-Plan expenditure, also there is certain productive expenditure. What is going to happen when you say five per cent cut, is, that the productive expenditure in the non-Plan is going to be cut first, and the *Apna Utsav* type of expenditure will go up. That is what is going to happen. So, when the Finance Minister is going to suggest a cut in the expenditure, he has to specify that this is the type of expenditure which is to be cut. Not only that, every department and every ministry must prepare a report and submit to the Finance Ministry that this is our proposal for cutting the expenditure. Unless you take such proposals, from the Ministries, I am sure that 5% cut is not going to be of any use as far as the overall development is concerned.

I really appreciate and I record my high regard and appreciation for the efforts the Finance Minister had been making for the last two-three years to increase the

revenue collections. The tempo of increase in the revenue collection is being maintained, I am very happy about it. Notwithstanding the fact that sometimes we feel that along with the *Danda* you are also using the carrot. I like your *danda*, but not your carrot.

AN HON. MEMBER : Why are you used to *danda* ? Either you like both or don't like any.

SHRI C. MADHAV REDDI : If you use your *danda* and the carrot, what happens is that before the *danda* is used, the carrot will be eaten and the *danda* will not be there. The point is that, the Amnesty Scheme and several other schemes ultimately are going to result into some sort of a collusion between the departments, between the officers of the departments and the dishonest businessmen. Many things will not come to the notice of the Finance Minister at his level. What goes on, you will never be knowing.

Recently there were raids after a very long interval of about two-three months, after Mr. Thapar was arrested. Only a few days ago there were raids in Bombay. About 24 premises of the Formica India Limited, etc. had been raided. It is very good. The reports go to say that they found incriminating evidence and it was possible for them to proceed further and then take very strong action. But suddenly there is a stoppage. I don't know, it is a rumour.

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH : Which raid are you mentioning ?

SHRI C. MADHAV REDDI : Formica India Limited.

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH : No, no. There is no stoppage.

DR. CHINTA MOHAN : One officer from Andhra Pradesh raided one industrial house in Bombay. That officer was immediately transferred.

SHRI C. MADHAV REDDI : It is OK. What I mean to say is that these things may not come to your notice even.

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH : I will certainly look into it. If at some level something had happened, please bring to my notice and I will look into it.

SHRI C. MADHAV REDDI : Coming to the growth rate, again I don't agree with the Finance Minister that the health of the economy is very good and the tempo of development is being maintained. I feel that the tempo is being slowed down because of certain factors.

The warning signals are there, the Finance Minister himself has said, in two or three sectors there are reasons for concern. But there are many more sectors in which there are warning signals. What are these ? On export front certainly we have to do a lot of efforts. On other fronts such as the agricultural front, the industrial front, what is our growth rate ? In spite of liberalisation I find the industrial sector is failing this country. That is my very honest opinion. But the Prime Minister had been telling against the big business whenever he goes out to a foreign country from the foreign soil also, he had been decrying the big business. The niceties of it, I leave. When the Prime Minister said it, is OK, that was a fact and it had to be accepted. He said this on foreign soil and it makes little difference. There is a case for taking very strong action. The point is in spite of giving several liberal concessions what is the growth rate in this particular sector. What is the rate which was targeted for the Seventh Five Year Plan ? It was 8 per cent. What is the rate today ? We started with 2 per cent minus in the first year of the Seventh Plan. During April-September the growth rate was only 5.8 per cent as against 6.2 per cent in 1985-86. The Seventh Plan target is about 8 per cent. The manufacturing sector has so far recorded only 6.1 per cent. Of course, there is growth in certain sectors. In the case of items of elitist consumption there is certainly more growth rate than what we had planned in the Seventh Plan, that is, electronics, TV sets, etc.

AN HON. MEMBER : Will that not generate employment ?

SHRI C. MADHAV REDDI : True but that is not a priority sector. What I said was that in the case of items of elitist consumption there is certainly growth but in the vast industrial sector for items of mass consumption there is stagnation. The hon. Minister was pointing out that there is actually an improvement in the generation of electricity. The figures show that the main shortfall is only in this sector. The growth rate is less. In coal sector the growth rate is much less than targeted.

As regards the agricultural sector the hon. Minister started on an optimistic note that inspite of floods and drought we are going to have a very good crop this year. That is not my information and that is not in the reports being published. In the agricultural sector the agricultural production has actually reached the peak in 1983-84. Thereafter there is no growth. All calculations show that after 1983-84 there had been a minus growth rate. In 1984-85 it is minus 0.9 per cent. Again there is minus growth in 1985-86, that is, 1 per cent less.

The production of 148 million tonnes will not be achieved again. This year the agriculture is very bad. We never had such a bad drought. The spectre of drought is haunting this country. There were serious floods particularly in States like Andhra. The State Governments had been trying hard to see that this is made up by increasing the second crop, namely, rabi crop. The arrivals of kharif crop clearly indicate that there is going to be a shortfall in the production of kharif crop. We are also not very much hopeful about rabi because of the drought conditions. That being so how can we say there is going to be any growth in the agricultural sector when it is already stagnating.

Since agriculture is the major item which contributes to the national income, how are you going to maintain this 4 per cent growth rate of the economy? I am really unable to understand this.

Now I come to the most important sector where the Finance Minister has also agreed that it is causing concern. That is the non-Plan expenditure. I had already

mentioned about it, but the non-Plan expenditure had been alarmingly increasing year after year so much so that today we have almost 60 per cent of our income spent on non productive purpose neutralized in some way or the other.

Now, I come to the prices. That is another sector where the Finance Minister said that the position is very stable and we are able to maintain the price level.

The wholesale prices in October 1986, according to my calculations, have increased by 6.6 per cent as against 5 per cent during the last year for the same period and you have also agreed. In the wholesale price there is already an increase of 1 per cent. During the first six months in 1986-87 it increased by 6.8 per cent as against 4.1 per cent in 1985-86.

About the vegetable oils, the Finance Minister, said that deliberately Government wanted the oil prices to go up because we wanted that the people should purchase indigenous oil. I am not talking of the hydrogenated or the refined oil, whose prices had gone up terribly not only because of the price rise but because of the excise duty, but the ordinary oil, like groundnut oil is selling today at Rs. 30 per kg. The price rise in the oils and in the pulses is phenomenal. It is more than 45 per cent when compared to last year.

The items which are having a 52% weightage in the price index such as food items, vegetable oils and so many other items. All these items have risen at a very high rate. The rise is too sharp in consumer prices.

The all India consumer price index for industrial workers rose for the half year upto August 1986 by 8.7 per cent as against 5.5 per cent last year for the corresponding period. The RBI report expressed concern about it, but our Finance Minister has not expressed any concern. He said that it was under control. Fruits and vegetables in the consumer market went up by 21.8 per cent, sugar by 23 per cent and coal by 13.8 per cent. And these are likely to increase further after the increase of the non-Plan expenditure due to the revision of salaries

of the Government employees as a result of the Fourth Pay Commission.

Why is it that our economy is not growing and why is it stagnant? What is wrong with us? The main reason is high cost economy that we have built in this country over the years. What is the extent of this high cost economy? During the last fifteen years, if you take from 1971, the coal prices have increased eight times, petroleum products seven times, and electricity charges six times. The power tariff in this country is the highest in the whole world. All other inputs—raw material, labour, energy, transport—every thing is going up. All your products manufactured in this country are not acceptable to the foreign market. What is acceptable to them is only your raw material or your processed foods such as mangos, which they do not have. They will accept such things, whatever be the price. But your other products are highly non-competitive. You cannot sell your products in foreign markets.

AN HON. MEMBER : They are sub-standard !

SHRI C. MADHAV REDDY : Their being sub-standard is altogether a different thing. Here I am talking about the cost only. You have established foreign market for yourselves for certain products. But now all those markets are lost. You have lost the foreign market for tyres and tubes for steel tubes, for project experts. We used to export a lot of things. But we do not do so any longer. We have lost the market for several items of engineering goods. What is the use of decrying that big business or any business is failing us or they have failed us and so on? The whole economy has failed us.

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH : The whole country can fail but they have to survive! Is that the idea?

SHRI C. MADHAV REDDI : No. I do not mean that. Whether big or small all failed.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please conclude. You have already taken a lot of time.

SHRI C. MADHAV REDDI : I propose one thing. We are now going to take up half an hour discussion. So can we, not postpone the discussion for tomorrow.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : We have to complete it today.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY (Katwa) : Our economy has a future Sir! Let us do it tomorrow also.

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH : Now there is so much of non-plan expenditure as regards time, on that side!

MR. CHAIRMAN : Yes Mr. Reddi. You please conclude.

SHRI C. MADHAV REDDI : Speaking about non-plan expenditure. You promised a White Paper on the Non-Plan expenditure. You have said that during this session you are going to give it. But we are yet to receive it.

Sir, coming to resources for the Seventh Plan, the projected statement regarding resources for the next Annual Plan reads like this. Projected figures in the Central Budget for plan for 1987-88 is Rs. 21,700 crores, as against the estimated figure of Rs. 21,095 crores for this financial year. Assistance to States—is Rs. 7900 crores. For natural calamities you have provided Rs. 500 crores, in the plan expenditure. I am really surprised to see this. Because earlier the allotment with regard to natural calamities was not a part of the Plan and now you have brought that also into the Plan. Then there is Central Plan the size of which is Rs. 13,300 crores. Funds to be raised additionally by the public sector Rs. 10,700 crores. I do not know, I am really not aware how they can raise these funds. Of course, they are floating the public sector bonds and they might have already raised a thousands crores of rupees. You are willing to give them permission. As a matter of fact, you are very liberal to give permission and I am very happy about it. But you must also know as to where the money is going. Suppose the money is not going to be spent

[Shri C. Madhav Reddi]

for productive purposes, or even after raising Rs. 10,700 crores, public sector is not going to give any profits to the nation, then this would be a waste. It would ultimately end in a sort of debt-trap in which we will be caught and it will be very difficult for us to come out of it.

SHRI Y.S. MAHAJAN (Jalgaon) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I share the optimism of the Finance Minister that our economy is in a new growth path. The Sixth Plan could achieve the target of 5 per cent rate of growth and the first two years of the Seventh Plan are likely to achieve the expected growth rate of 5 per cent.

The accent of the plan is on the abolition or alleviation of poverty *i.e.* by raising the standard of living of millions of small farmers, workers and people living in hill areas and city slums with meagre resources. Through various schemes, such as IRDP, NREP, Hill Area Development Programme, Special Component Plans for Scheduled Castes and Special Sub-Plans for the Scheduled Tribes, a vast machinery has been created to achieve the main and ultimate objective of the Plan.

Latest investigations have, however shown that benefit received by the target groups is much less than what is indicated by the Government expenditure. Leakages developed by the system must be plugged forthwith, otherwise the result will be failure, disappointment and bitterness.

Sir, the Seventh Plan has been framed on sound lines and its objectives and priorities are in keeping with the requirements of our economic development. The immediate objectives, *viz.* (1) increase in foodgrains production, (2) enlarging opportunities of gainful employment and (3) productivity. I think these objectives cannot be faulted, though I think it would have been in the fitness of things to accord the same priority. It should have been regarded as the fourth immediate objective of the Seventh Plan.

In view of the appalling conditions of housing and the dirt, disease, squalor in the slum areas, I think housing should have been given the same priority as food and

employment opportunities. Apart from increasing housing facilities, it would have enlarged the employment potential of the Seventh Plan, promoted efficiency of labour and decent and civilised conditions of living for multitudes of our people.

At present, we rely on cooperative societies as an instrument for development of housing facilities. This is an extremely dilatory, time consuming and inefficient method of development. I have known cases, where acquisition of land has taken 10 to 12 years, where the promoter has committed fraud and indulged in black-marketing. I suggest therefore that we should set up housing agencies in all the States whose function will be to acquire land, build dwellings to suit different income groups and sell them to people who later on can form cooperative societies for further maintenance of common facilities. This will not only meet the immediate and urgent need of the people expeditiously but also economise the use of scarce resources.

The Government has set the goal of providing shelter for all by 2000 A.D. This goal will remain a distant dream if highest priority is not accorded to housing and urban developments. The Planning Commission itself has warned that 105 million dwelling units would have to be added to wipe out the current backlog of 25 million houses to meet the future requirements by the turn of the century.

Sir, in spite of inadequate rainfall or drought conditions in some States the prospects of agricultural production are good.

Foodgrains production which was 146.2 million tonnes in 1984-85, increased to about 149 million tonnes in 1985-86, and is estimated at 150 million tonnes in 1986-87.

In the agricultural sector, the strategy adopted in the past few years has yielded major gains such as self-sufficiency in foodgrains, reflected in sizeable stocks with the public distribution system. This growth in total output is however characterized by regional and crop imbalances. Attempts have been made to correct these imbalances through special concessions or giving

remunerative prices to growers of some products. Our concentration on irrigation of land, supply of high-yielding varieties of seeds, Pesticides etc. has resulted in lack of sufficient attention to dry-land farming. Seventy per cent of farmers depend on dry land *i.e.* rain-fed areas. They constitute 72% of the arable land. Even after utilizing all possible facilities of irrigation, 52% of our land would still remain dependent on the monsoons. Today, the dry lands contribute about 40% of foodgrains to the national food basket, and about 75% of pulses and oilseeds.

Efforts have been made by Government to improve dry-land farming, by helping the small and marginal farmers, and through attempts to save as much rain water as possible for purposes of cultivation and by liberalised credit facilities to the farmers. But greater efforts are necessary to make possible the adoption of better methods of cultivation, and improve the lot of the overwhelming majority of farmers.

In this connection, I would like to say that the system of crop insurance adopted by us should be widened in scope, and changed so as to make it a genuine form of insurance against bad weather and poor harvests.

The 7th Plan projects a growth rate of our population at 1.8%. The 6th Plan also had also estimated the population growth at this rate, per annum. In fact, the growth rate was 2.2% during the 6th Plan. The rate of growth has fallen slightly in recent times, and this tendency is likely to continue in future. But by the time the population growth rate comes down to 1%, or the two-child norm becomes universally accepted, the situation would have become explosive. Turmoil and breach of law would be common, and administration would become impossible. What matters is not so much the falling rate of growth, as the absolute growth in the numbers which takes place every year, which is about 15 million.

What we have to do is not merely to integrate family planning with health, nutrition etc. but also see that our policy combines a proper mix of strong incentives and disincentives. It is essential to introduce such economic sanctions as would deter

people from having more than two children. Nobody can claim a natural or constitutional right to reproduce to an unlimited extent at the risk of society, or of smooth economic progress.

There is another matter of fundamental importance which is a long-term parameter of economic growth, to which I would like to refer, *viz.* our ecological balance. Our Government has been very conscious of it. We have started a Ministry for it. They have taken a number of measures to protect our environment, *i.e.* our natural resources such as air, water, land and forests. It is upon the exploitation of these resources that economic development depends.

"The State of India's Environment, 1984" published recently by the Centre for Science and Environment, has a crucial message for our countrymen, *viz.* that...

The Report says as follows :

"India is becoming a vast waste land with an environmental crisis engulfing it. The rapid destruction of forests poses the most serious and imminent threat. It has reduced the rain fall in most areas and is likely to ruin our agriculture in the near future.

Immediate steps should be taken to provide alternative employment to people in the hilly areas whose living depends on the destruction of forest wealth. To depend on laws to protect the forests is not enough, since they cannot effectively be enforced. Even if they could be enforced properly they would have to be supplemented with vigorous and positive effort to increase the area under forests. The position is so serious that these remedial measures brook no delay."

The hon. members on the other side said that our industry is not contributing sufficiently to the national growth. It is admitted that during the last seven months industrial growth has been about 6 per cent whereas we projected, according to the 8th Plan, it should be 8 per cent per annum. We have undertaken a number of measures of liberalization and to be effective: they will require at least about two years. Therefore, I believe that once they are effective, the

[Shri Y.S. Mahajan]

industry will expand and will react to the measures we adopted and the growth rate will increase.

SHRI BHOLA NATH SEN (Calcutta South) : Actually, there are only few points which I would like to make. There is no Economic Review here. So, it is difficult to make any accurate submission with regard to economic problems. But certain problems have been raised in this regard. With regard to two economic factors, namely, (1) Pay Commission Report which is being implemented and the other to my mind is the rapid growth of expenditure on account of increase in subsidy. So far as the Pay Commission Report is concerned, it is being implemented, but, at the same time, it occurs to me that before the Pay Commission what is presented is the pay scale and the system that we are following in this country, namely, the more senior you become automatically you get a promotion. This is a thing which I cannot agree myself personally because if a man becomes older, he does not become automatically entitled to a promotion. Nobody has a right to a promotion; promotion will depend on his ability, his efficiency and all that.

Now, if this is not insisted upon, the 'work culture' will not be there; and if the word 'culture' is not there, we would not get an increase in production. Productivity will never increase unless and until the workers, apart from capital and land aspect, find it worthwhile to work. Whether they grew old; whether they grow infirm; whether they do work or not they will get higher pay automatically. If they get any in an assured manner promotion to the next post, then, I think, we shall never be able to have the 'work culture' in our country.

The other thing is about the increasing subsidy. We find subsidy here, subsidy there, but it really falls not only on the exchequer but on the people in the country. Subsidy in one sector if it relates to consumer goods; it is bound to affect all the people of the country. Therefore, the

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subsidy has to be greatly curtailed. The other day, I was hearing the subsidy in the

agriculture sector is going up. You have given them power, water, fertilizer and all kinds of things. Now, in spite of that, the support prices are also given—all kinds of things you have given. Who pays for it ?

PROF. N.G. RANGA : All the salaried and working people.

SHRI BHOLANATH SEN : Everybody Pays, the clerks have to pay though the Pay Commission has not increased their salary to that extent.

Now, the other aspect of the matter is, I feel it, the railway fare and freights have been increased and it is mentioned. I have nothing to say, the fare has been mentioned.

Now, coming to the question of power, 51.57 is the plant load factor in some States. Thermal power is a source of energy and power in India. We must not forget it. Why should it be 51.57 only ? Why should plant load factor be only 51.57 only when in the Central Government plants it is 70 per cent and in some States it is only 51.57 while in some others it is much less. Why ? This is the capital of the country. Without power you cannot make any progress. Just as in monsoons many people are affected, and the flood damages crops, similarly the load shedding can damage the industry. This is the first item on which we should make a regular research and see that the power generation comes up much more than it is being now generated in some States.

I was very surprised yesterday, to hear something about the public sector, which is coming up, and almost to a position of commanding height. These public sector units, what are they doing ? Why ? Why can they not get their balance sheets passed at the appropriate time ? Why not ? The public sector some times shows utter inefficiency. This public sector, on that we depend, we depend on the production of the public sector. We depend on Heavy Engineering, Heavy Electricals—all these public sector units are there. Everything, big and not so big jobs are done by the public sector. Why can they not produce things in time ? Why can they not supply things to the other manufacturers to help

production ? Why does it take seven years to start a power plant ? Is it because they cannot supply in time ? This gestation period is a great waste of money and is costing the exchequer. This waste must be stopped, at any rate and if necessary there can be more small power plants, instead of the large ones. Why not have four smaller power plants, instead of one big one ? If the large power plant goes out of order a whole State is plunged into darkness. But instead of one big plant if six small power plants are there even if one goes out of order suddenly, the remaining small plants, five of them can continue to work. This idea of having very very big power plants, I think, has to be reconsidered once again in the context of our country's progress. We are still a nascent nation and we have got many many hurdles to cross.

What about aluminium ? It requires power as raw material.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE
(Bolpur) : Lot of raw material.

SHRI BHOLANATH SEN : Yes. Now, I find that in the Indian Aluminium Corporation they have floated shares or bonds, worth crores and crores of rupees. They want to export. How are you going to export unless you produce more ? I do not understand this. Anyway, we are spending tons of money. We are also giving to the States. This money is for putting up one after another power plant, and so on. How many industries will produce the aluminium products ? How many years are they going to take ?

How many years are people going to wait ? Production of power has to be given a high priority. It has to be seen that the machines do the work in our plant, they should make the machines work. Make the machines supply power; make the machines do their job and make the men do their job. Then only the country will progress and not otherwise.

The other aspect of the matter is that we are thinking of agricultural produce. We are probably one of the few countries whose application of fertilisers is much less than the quantum that is used per acre in other countries. There are a number of countries which use more fertiliser than we do and it

has been proved that by application of more fertiliser you can get more production. It is a sad story that two fertiliser concerns, one in Sindri and the other in Haldia, are closed. About Haldia, newspapers reported that this factory has stopped production after spending Rs. 600 crores and only payment of salary is being made. What a tremendous waste ? This amount of Rs. 600 crores has been spent over so many years. And throughout the time, the value of the money is eroding. Now this Rs. 600 crores in the proper sense would be Rs. 1200 crores now. Why nothing should be done to run these factories ? Remove the present set up if necessary and start afresh.

I know that contracts have to be given. Contracts are issued and work is started. Take for example Hoogly Bridge. It was started in 1972. It is still not complete. Escalation goes on. Who pays the escalation ? But nothing has been taken into account in cost structure except absorbing a few years of escalation in the figuring. Delay in passing, delay in approving, administrative delays, these are the causes which increase the cost of the project. Take underground railway. It was to be completed about seven years back. But because of certain things it could not. Why do you not foresee things before you give the contract ? Kindly foresee things so that this waste of time now can be avoided.

I have said all these things not to oppose the Finance Minister. In fact, I wish to say that take these facts into account. I have no doubt in my mind that if you do so, the growth rate will be much more.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE
(Bolpur) : Our elegant Finance Minister pleases in working with aplomb and finesse. He has come before this House with this resolution on economic situation so that he will get from his party very laudatory references, eulogies and of course, full throated support from the lips—whether from head or heart I do not know.

We periodically discuss the economic situation in the country either on our efforts or on the invitation of the Finance Minister. But we do not know what effect all these discussions have on the Government because we find that it revels in making believe situations than looking at the hard

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reality of the present position. We find that this Government is overtaken by innuities and shibboleths. And they talk of eradication of poverty, but because of their policy, today the stranglehold of monopolists and big capitalists is entrenched. They talk of technology and productivity but they wish to achieve them at the expenses of the indigenous industry. Sir, the concepts of self-reliance and the public sector occupying the commanding heights of our economy—I am quoting Jawaharlal Nehru—seem to have become taboos in this country, if not an anathema. We find that our Finance Minister believes in an open system. He wants very wide participation of the people, of the Members of Parliament, even in the exercise of budget-making or budgetary process. We have been supplied with his long-term fiscal policy, administered price policy, the agricultural price policy, and direct taxation policy. He has been kind enough to try to involve the people in these matters and he has invited suggestions. What he wants is 'an open debate on Government's fiscal policies relating to raising of resources as well as their allocation of various expenditure'.

As I said, he works with finesse. He has to innovate. Without innovation one cannot act in the manner he wishes to do. But, Sir, his innovation must be tuned to an orchestra and that orchestra we know is the orchestra to suit the whims and fancies of a very powerful individual in this country. Therefore, we hear of modernisation, we hear of privatisation, we hear of quality, we hear of productivity and what not. But what you are achieving in absolute terms, that remains, as Mr. Madhav Reddy has correctly said, submerged in the jugglery of figures. They are not being experienced by the people of this country. His open system of budgetary exercise has really opened our whole economic system to the vagaries of steep inflation, huge trade deficit, galloping budget deficits, and as a result, we find that the whole economic system of our country is on the verge of collapse. And who are the victims? As usual, the victims are the common and the poor people of this country.

I have some statistical figures but

because of time limit I do not wish to go into that to demonstrate the frightful dimensions of our economic malady. But one thing is clear that the people of this country are not accepting your projections, Mr. Finance Minister. What is the good in saying that inflation is within control or you are going to reduce your budgetary trade deficit, or the balance of payments position will improve? What is the effect of all these in real terms so far as the people of this country are concerned? Unemployment is rising—galloping unemployment in this country, with greater and greater addition to the unemployed force. Because of your decisions, over 92,000 factories in this country are sick, in the process of closure, and this vast army of the people of this country who have jobs, will become jobless. Now what about the prospect of jobs in this country? Where would you provide these people with the jobs? We do not hear anything about this. You say that you will not open hospitals for sick industry. Well, as phrases they have come into quotes of the newspapers. This is all right. But what about a person who loses his job and what about the person who loses all prospects of getting a job and what about the price line? What about the house wife? What about the middle class people? I have got a host of figures. I do not wish to read them. It is known to everybody. It is their experience in every day life. It is very good to say—Shri Shiv Shankar said it was Rs. 8616 crores deficit last year. It will be reduced by at least Rs. 1500 crores. How? Nobody knows. And he said that during the first quarter there was a supposedly rise of 26.4%. Even then, I am very sorry to say, it is not correct. He compared the figures on the basis of unrevised estimate. On the revised estimate it is 2.4% increase. How are you proposing to close this? Why is this massive trade deficit? (*Interruptions*) You go on fighting amongst yourselves, Shri Deora is a nice man. I like him so much I have got his letter in my pocket. Therefore, what is very important? (*Interruptions*) The position is this—how are you going to change the present morass in which we find ourselves in. How do you expect our Indian industry to have increased production—with a shrinking domestic market and more and more difficulties in exporting our goods

and products, reasons I have no time to go into? How do you expect that there will be greater industrial production within this country whereby you can have import substitution as you say. You will allow imports of machines and goods in this country which we do not need at the moment except for your craze for modernisation and at the same time you want this industrial production in this country to develop and increase. These are contradictions in terms you opened the door. Import liberalisation is at whose cost? I would like to know this. The country should know.

The Commerce Minister Shri Shiv Shanker, well, I do not say happily, at least he is now saved of the trouble of External Affairs and his forays to foreign countries. With his fullest concentration in Commerce Department, will he be able to find out how the exports will increase and how can he stop imports when he says in the same breath that we must have capital goods importation for our manufacturing industry. To-day Mr. Finance Minister, you are aware...

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH : Somehow hon. Shri Somnath Chatterjee in this House and Shri K.K. Birla in that House are making same points in identical language.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : That shows that even your closest friends are deserting you because they have to face the realities of the situation. The proposition is that I am not advocating Birlas cause. I am advocating the cause of self reliance which you have given up. I am advocating the cause of the public sector which you have given up and you are very glibly talking about that. (Interruptions)

Sir, he has talked of resource mobilisation. Resource mobilisation from which sector? You have reduced the direct taxes. You have gone on putting a greater and greater burden on the common people by raising the indirect taxes.

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH : Direct taxes also.

(Interruptions)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : I will come to it. Please persuade the Chairman to give me a little more time.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please conclude.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Sir, to conclude, we are only...

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : No, no. I have given you more than ten minutes. Please conclude.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Sir, about resource mobilisation, I am happy, as Mr. Reddi correctly said that he is conducting these raids raising more money. But I had asked last time also : Is it a one-time tempo or will it continue? But with reduced raids how can you go on maintaining this rate of recovery except for the carrot of amnesty? Now, at the same time how can you take credit for greater recovery by exonerating them from all their sins and offences that they have committed? Sir, today violation of revenue laws has lost all significance. One will not be faced with any prosecution or with penalty. Sir, I think any Government which submits to such tactics, nothing but admits its clear failure. How much money was realised by the bearer bonds scheme, Mr. Finance Minister? We are having almost perennially this voluntary disclosures scheme. How much money is being realised?

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH : For these bearer bonds, you have to pay back the money with interest. We cannot pocket it and put it in the Treasury.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : The point is not that. The point is that you are giving them lollipops for the purpose of bringing out the black money. Even where you have to pay back, there you have not got their reaction, favourable response, where they will get back their black money which you have whitened, and you think that because you are pocketing it, they will come out with their money voluntarily. (Interruption)

Sir, kindly consider the question of public sector contributing to our plan

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funding. With the reduced importance of the public sector, with the public sector being put under greater and greater constraints and they have to complete according to your own notion of public sector and sathe a variety of socialism, Sir, then it will be more and more difficult for them to mobilise resources for the purpose of contributing to the plan funding.

Sir, about Rs. 40,000 crores you have calculated as public sector contribution for the purpose of Seventh Five Year Plan. How much would you expect from the public sector with a calculated attempts to 'calumnise' if I may use such an expression, the public sector? Sir, the State Governments have to contribute. Now is there any magic wand? Yesterday the hon. Speaker was saying, there is no magic wand. Is there any magic wand for the State Government, all State Governments in this country, that by using it they can raise resources? The Chief Ministers agreed for the imposition of consignment tax. The Constitution was amended for that purpose. When the Chief Ministers have agreed now, you do not wish to bring about a legislation, follow up legislation, and you are saying there are supposedly differences between the State Governments. (*Interruptions*). The State Governments are facing financial constraints because those States which are now faced with natural calamities, crores and crores of rupees had to be spent. How much are you really, sincerely—will you tell us, Mr. Finance Minister—reimbursing the State Governments? Therefore, merely saying, merely making projections which you cannot achieve, will not solve the economic problems. The Finance Minister can put himself on his back. He will get voluminous vocal support of his fellow-Members here. But if you think that by such laudatory references, you can solve the economic problems of this country, you are only misdirecting yourself and the people of this country.

Sir, I think, the deficit financing has become perpetuated in this country and that has also affected you and you are cutting my time.

[*Translation*]

SHRI VIRDHI CHANDER JAIN

(Barmer): Mr. Chairman, Sir, the most important thing in the Economic survey and statement of the hon. Finance Minister on the economy of the country is that growth rate has been 5 per cent during 1985-86 but as per the report of the Reserve Bank of India, the growth rate has been 3.5 per cent. So, the hon. Finance Minister should clarify if the report of the Reserve Bank of India is correct or not. If he asserts that growth rate has been 5 per cent, then he must clarify it.

The second thing is that our economy is dependent on agriculture and in the present conditions in the country, our agriculture produce is dependent on the monsoon. Other sources of irrigation in our country have not been properly tapped. Only 20 per cent area has been covered under irrigation till now. We must pay special attention.

At present I want to draw your attention towards the Indira Gandhi Canal. Had the construction of this canal been completed earlier the desert would have turned fertile and produced enough foodgrains to meet the requirement of the whole country. Just as Punjab is providing foodgrains to other states, Ganganagar is also producing so much wheat that it is supplying wheat not only to Rajasthan but also to the entire country. The Government of Rajasthan is not in a position to complete the construction work of this canal with its own resources. Its plan envisages an expenditure of Rs. 3000 crores and the maximum outlay of Rs. 200 crores has been provided in the Seventh Five Year Plan. The present situation is that the recently approved lift canal and flow canal involve an expenditure of Rs. 1100 crores. Even if we spend this amount of Rs. 200 crores, we shall not be able to complete its construction even within 40 years due to the escalation of construction cost. This is the fate of the canal for which the then Home Minister Pt. Govind Vallab Pant laid the foundation stone in 1956. The Government of Rajasthan is not capable of completing this work with its own resources. Earlier also the Central Government had extended special help. I would, therefore, like to know if the Centre would provide help in the construction of this canal by providing special aid so that it could be completed during the Eighth Five Year Plan.

Another point is that in your note, which you had presented earlier, it has been mentioned that a provision of Rs. 500 crores is being made to meet the natural calamities. Our state is facing severe famine. There is no food and water; and the situation is so acute that even cattle are perishing. It is the most severe famine of this century. You are thinking of reducing the amount being spent on natural calamities so that the deficit in the Budget could be brought down. But if the Central Government does not help the Rajasthan Government in the situation I have described, then livestock would perish in large number. At present about 3.5 crores of cattle in Rajasthan are facing famine problems and if you do not provide help to save them, not more than 1/4th of them would be able to survive. During the famine in 1967-68 in Rajasthan, only one tenth of the livestock had survived. I think that the same situation is likely to be repeated now. So the most important thing is that though you have to balance the budget, yet you will have to think of some alternative to solve the problem in Rajasthan. During the previous famine, you had started the scheme of giving wheat as wages. We want that the same scheme of providing wheat as wages be started once again as it will provide a great relief to us. That scheme had kept the prices of foodgrains in check at that time. We want that you should assure us that you will provide the entire help in the form of wheat and only then we would be able to meet the situation.

The second thing I want to emphasize is that there is great need to change the Gadgil formula. In that formula 60 per cent of the assistance is based on population. But the backward areas like Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and U.P. which are very large..... (Interruptions) Maharashtra and West Bengal do not come in this category. So long as the Gadgil formula is not changed for these backward areas and area is also not considered as a basis, we cannot get the help which we need. In the present situation, under the Gadgil formula, developed states get more help and underdeveloped states get less help. Hence, there is great need to change this formula.

The third thing I want to say is that yesterday the hon. Prime Minister gave you special instructions to make changes in the

Gadgil formula. You will have to take some strong measures to bring about the change. You have undertaken the rural development programmes and poverty eradication programmes. Under I.R.D.P. which is meant for poverty eradication, the percentage of subsidy should be reduced, from 50 per cent as it is grossly misused. I suggest that the amount of subsidy be reduced from 50 per cent to 25 per cent and instead, the Government may provide other benefits. You can grant benefits in the shape of interest-free loans. In this way you should try to strengthen the economy. This is my only suggestion, as it is grossly misused.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I wanted to say something more, but you are ringing the bell.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : I have given you more than 10 minutes. So, the time is over. I have given you sufficient time.

(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE (Panskura) : I would like to know from you whether the discussion on the general economic situation is going to continue tomorrow.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Yes, the discussion will continue tomorrow.

17.36 hrs.

HALF-AN-HOUR DISCUSSION

[English]

Closure of Government of India Presses at Calcutta

MR. CHAIRMAN : Kumari Mamta Banerjee to initiate the discussion.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE (Jadavpur) : Before starting the discussion, I think our Minister Shri Dalbir Singh is also very much concerned about the closing down of the Government of India Presses at Calcutta and Simla. He is very sympathetic to review the whole situation and consider the issue. I know that our hon. Minister will