

*Demands for Grants for the year 1985-86 in respect of the Ministry of Industry
and Company Affairs voted by Lok Sabha*

No. of Demand	Name of Demand	Amount of Demand for Grant on account voted by the House on 25th March, 1985		Amount of Demand for Grant voted by the House	
		Rs. Revenue	Capital Rs.	Revenue Rs.	Capital Rs.
1	2	3		4	
57.	Ministry of Industry and Company Affairs	1,85,91,000	16,000	9,29,60,000	84,000
58.	Industries	17,92,08,000	51,14,00,000	89,60,39,000	2,55,70,00,000
59.	Village and Small Industries	34,10,25,000	25,50,67,000	1,70,71,25,000	1,27,78,35,000

(ii) Ministry of Food and Civil Supplies

MR. CHAIRMAN : The House will now take up discussion and voting on Demand Nos. 41 and 42 relating to the Ministry of Food and Civil Supplies for which 6 hours have been allotted.

Hon. Members present in the House whose cut motions to the Demands for Grants have been circulated may, if they desire to move their cut motions, send slips to the Table within 15 minutes indicating the serial numbers of the cut motions they would like to move. Those cut motions only will be treated as moved.

A list showing the serial numbers of cut motions treated as moved will be put up on the Notice Board shortly. In case

any member finds any discrepancy in the list he may kindly bring it to the notice of the Officer at the Table without delay.

Motion moved :

“That the respective sums not exceeding the amount on Revenue Account and Capital Account shown in the Fourth Column of the Order Paper be granted to the President out of the Consolidated Fund of India to complete the sums necessary to defray the charges that will come in course of payment during the year ending 31st day of March, 1986 in respect of the heads of Demands entered in the second column thereof against Demand Nos. 41 and 42 relating to the Ministry of Food & Civil Supplies.”

Demands for Grants for the year 1985-86 in respect of the Ministry of Food and Civil Supplies submitted to vote of the Lok Sabha

No. of Demand	Name of Demand	Amount of Demand for Grant on account voted by the House on 25th March, 1985		Amount of Demand for Grant submitted to the Vote of the House	
		Revenue Rs.	Capital Rs.	Revenue Rs.	Capital Rs.
1	2	3		4	
Ministry of Food and Civil Supplies					
41.	Department of Food	2,08,46,30,000	19,11,49,000	10,42,31,52,000	95,57,49,000
42.	Department of Civil Supplies	91,73,000	1,33,84,000	5,58,66,000	7,24,22,000

SHRI H. A. DORA (Srikakulam) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I rise to oppose the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Food and Civil Supplies for more than one reason. For one thing, there is no justification for divorcing the Department of Food from the Ministry of Agriculture as it used to be earlier. If food is the outcome of agriculture, it is the by-product of the marital romance of the Agricultural Ministry whereas Civil Supplies is the by-product of the extra marital romance of the Agricultural Ministry. The Department of Food is a natural ally of the Ministry of Agriculture as it has greater relevance to the large Ministry of Agriculture.

Another important point to be noted is that the allocation of the amounts between the Department of Food and the Department of Civil Supplies is totally uneven and lopsided. The figures speak for themselves. I must at once bring to the notice of the august House about the enormity of the disparity. While the Department of Food was allocated about Rs. 1365 crores, the Department of Civil Supplies is allocated a paltry sum of about Rs. 19 crores. This unholy alliance between unequal partners is difficult to comprehend for us and it is beyond the comprehension of this august House.

Coming to the Department of Food, the largest consumer of the Grants is the Food Corporation of India, with Rs. 1100 crores for subsidy on foodgrain transactions ; Rs. 68 crores for storage construction programmes ; and Rs. 15 crores towards reimbursement of interest charges on handling of levy sugar stocks. The lion's share of the Food Corporation of India is manifest from the fact that out of Rs. 1365 crores allotted to the entire Department of Food, the FCI alone accounts for Rs. 1183 crores.

In contrast, the Central Warehousing Corporation was allocated a meagre amount of Rs. 3.52 crores only. I may bring to the kind attention of the hon. Members that the Central Warehousing Corporation is credited with a tall mandate to construct and acquire godowns and warehouses for storage of agricultural products and implements. What is more, this Corporation is also entrusted with the obligation to provide matching contributions in the

share capital of various States Warehousing Corporations. It is indeed a common knowledge of every hon. Member that many precious and valuable foodgrains are exposed to the elements of nature for want of adequate warehousing facilities. Specially, the matching contribution to the State Warehousing Corporation needs to be strengthened and augmented manifold.

Coming to the Department of Civil Supplies, I must express my agony that the so-called Department of Civil Supplies is more concerned with establishment of Directorates Commissions, Institutions rather than Civil Supplies as such. Take, for instance, the Directorate of Weights and Measures. It is supposed to guide and coordinate the work relating to Weights and Measures at the Centre and State levels and to enforce standards laid down in the Weight and Measures Act, 1976. Is it necessary that a Central Institution is to be entrusted to enforce the standards prescribed in the Act? Are not the State Agencies adequate enough to enforce the standards?

I wish to bring to the notice of hon'ble Members that this is a clear invasion on the autonomy of States. What is worse is that the change was deliberately engineered and brought about by the Central Government. As the Constitution originally stood, Entry 29 of the State List granted legislative powers to the States on Weights and Measures except establishment of standards. For inexplicable reasons, this entry was omitted from the State List by the Constitution 42nd Amendment Act of 1976 and the same Amendment transformed the subject into the Concurrent List through Entry 33A. This is one of the many instances how the powers of the States are being surreptitiously taken away.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is yet another point in connection with the Department of Civil Supplies. As I have already mentioned earlier, this Department is largely composed of Institutions like Forward Markets Commission, Directorate of Weights and Measures, Directorate of Vanaspati, Vegetable Oils and Fats, Indian Standards Institutions, National Cooperative Consumers Federation, Consumers

[Shri H.A. Dora]

Cooperatives, Super Bazar in Delhi, etc. A notable feature about all these Institutions is that they do not in any way involve themselves with the Public Distribution of essential commodities. With this woeful indifference to the essential commodities, it is beyond comprehension as to what for this Department of Civil Supplies is created. This takes me to reflect on the very important subject of essential commodities. Please permit me, Mr. Chairman, Sir, to reflect briefly on the Constitutional concerns relating to this subject. This has a vital bearing on the Centre-State relations in this vital area. At the outset let me invite your attention to Article 369 of the Constitution. I quote—

“Notwithstanding anything in this Constitution, Parliament shall, during a period of five years from the commencement of this Constitution, have power to make laws with respect to the following matters as if they were enumerated in the Concurrent List, namely :—”

SHRI RAM PYARE PANIKA : Sir, are we dealing with the Centre-State relations here ?

SHRI H. A. DORA : Sir, I will read out only the relevant portion. ‘...foodstuffs including edible oils and seeds’. But any law made by Parliament, which Parliament would not but for the provisions of this Article have been competent to make, shall, to the extent of the incompetency, cease to have effect on the expiration of the said period, except as respects things done or omitted to be done before the expiration thereof. I would like to bring to the notice of this august House that Article 369 of the Constitution prohibits the Parliament from making any law in respect of foodstuffs including edible oils after five years. It is vested with the Parliament only for a period of five years from the commencement of the Constitution. Therefore, this particular provision clearly prohibits the Parliament to enact any law after 26th January, 1955. In spite of the provision made by the Constitution in respect of foodstuffs, the Parliament is encroaching upon the rights of the State Governments which alone are vested with the power under Article 369 of the Constitution to enact laws in respect of foodstuffs.

Now, I think, it is clear to the hon. Member as to why I am submitting this particular point.

The States are now deprived of this particular power vested in them. The Constitution intended that at the earliest point of time the power to enact laws in respect of foodgrains including edible oils is to be given only to the States, not to the Central Government, or the Parliament. That power is now usurped by the Parliament. That is what I wanted to submit to the House.

From this, the following points may be noted. Commerce within a State and production, supply and distribution of the essential commodities is temporarily given to Parliament to regulate as if they are in the Concurrent List.

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH : Are we discussing the Demands of Ministry of Food and Civil Supplies or Centre-State relations ? The hon. Member is challenging the constitutionality of the Acts of Parliament already passed and in force. Is it allowed ? He is challenging the very Acts of Parliament...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI AMAL DATTA : It is very relevant. In view of what the hon. Member has stated, your Acts are unconstitutional...*(Interruptions)*.

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH : We are not passing any Act...*(Interruptions)*.

SHRI AMAL DATTA : He wants to point out that Grants to your Ministry are unconstitutional. *(Interruptions)*.

SHRI H.A. DORA : As I said it is for the State legislatures to regulate foodstuff after five years of the commencement of the Constitution. According to me, the power is given to Parliament in respect of foodstuffs only for a period of five and it is to be automatically vacated after five years after the commencement of the Constitution.

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH : These objections must have been considered when all the Acts were passed.

SHRI H. A. DORA : Even prior to independence, there was an Act known as the Essential Supplies Temporary Powers Act, of 1946. That was in force prior to independence...*(Interruptions)*.

15.00 hrs.

It was in operation when the Constitution was framed. This 1946 Act also contains some of the items mentioned in Article 369 of the Constitution. But so far as the items mentioned in Article 369 are concerned, Parliament ceases to have any power to enact on them after five years of the commencement of the Constitution. This cut-off period would come to an end after 26 January 1955. It was on that very date, i.e. on 26 January 1955 an ordinance was promulgated by the President which ultimately came into being as the Essential Commodities Act of 1955. Through this Act, Parliament usurped the power which are otherwise prohibited under Article 369 of the Constitution. How was it achieved? In 1954, Parliament enacted the Constitution (Third Amendment) Act, whereby many items of essential commodities were incorporated in entry 33 of the Concurrent List.

I emphasise the fact that while Article 369 of the Constitution limited the legislative powers of the Parliament on certain items for a period of 5 years, the Third Constitution Amendment of 1954 included those very items in the Concurrent List, entry 33. In other words, what is prohibited directly and explicitly by a substantive provision was sought to be stealthily taken away by amending an entry. If it is not a fraud on the Constitution, what else is it?

Sir, I spoke on this topic at length not in the interest of academic exercise but because of its practical implications.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Can you question that now ?

SHRI H. A. DORA : Yes. It is a substantive law. Only the entry was amended. Can the power vested on the substantive law be taken away by an amendment of the entry in the Seventh Schedule ?

MR. CHAIRMAN : It could only be discussed at the time of that amendment and not now.

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (RAO BIRENDRA SINGH) : You can bring a non-official Bill for Constitution Amendment now.

SHRI H. A. DORA : I would like to cite one example which is dear to my State and the Government of Andhra Pradesh. The hon. members are quite aware of the fact that the Government in Andhra Pradesh under the leadership of Shri N. T. Rama Rao and under the banner of Telugu Desam Party, successfully launched Rs. 2/- per kil gram rice scheme. We require large quantities of rice now for the above scheme. Besides we have to meet the rice requirements for our social welfare hostels, mid-day meals and other minimum requirements. Our Chief Minister, Shri N. T. Rama Rao, personally met the Prime Minister and handed over a memorandum as well to impress on him to increase the allotment of rice from the Food Corporation of India.

SHRI RAO BIRENDRA SINGH : Under what law do you want this allotment ?

SHRI C. MADHAV REDDY : Under the lawless law.

SHRI H. A. DORA : Under the law passed by the Constitution.

SHRI C. MADHAV REDDY : The same law under which the Minister entitled to put the question. Centre-State Relations law.

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH : When you do not accept our laws, why do you expect rice ?

SHRI H. A. DORA : The response of the Government of India is still not known. I expect a proper reply would be given at the time of the reply of the hon. Minister. Sir, many arguments were advanced by the Central Government. But I would not like to tax your patience with all the arguments and counter-arguments. What I wish to impress is that there is something radically wrong in the very scheme of things. It is rather odd for a national agency to procure foodgrains from the State, and then re-allot them to the respective States. In the very nature of things, it is constitutionally and administratively effective and efficient, if this process is reversed, and the work is entrusted to the State Governments.

According to me, it will be ideal if the States are allowed to procure foodgrains

[Shri H.A. Dora]

to meet the welfare measures, and a quota may be fixed from that State, for the requirements of the Central Pool. After all, the States have the immediate nexus to the requirements of the respective people, and for a vast country like ours, to entrust this herculean task to a Central agency is bound to be defective and also ineffective.

That apart, I would like to submit that the State Government's requirement of rice under the Rs. 2 per Kg. scheme, including the requirements of Social Welfare Hostels, Mid-Day Meal Scheme etc. is about 22 lakh tonnes per annum, i.e. as far as Andhra Pradesh is concerned. As against this, a quantity of 10 lakh tonnes is being released by the Government of India from the Central Pool, 7-1/2 lakh tonnes of rice are being purchased from private trade at negotiated prices, while the balance of 4-1/2 lakh tonnes are to be purchased from the open market.

At present, the release of 10 lakh tonnes of rice from the Central Pool to the State is conditional upon the rice procurement of 15 lakh tonnes by the State through the sole agency of the FCI. The State Government had earlier proposed to Government of India that it be permitted to procure about 27 lakh tonnes of rice by suitably enhancing the mill levy from the present 50% to 75%. This proposal has already been sent to the Government of India, and the Andhra Pradesh Government is awaiting a reply on this particular aspect.

In addition, I may be permitted to submit that the State Government may be permitted to enhance the mill levy percentage during the ensuing kharif rice marketing season (i.e. October 1985) to 75%, and that the A.P. State Civil Supplies Corporation could also be notified as a public agency to procure rice in Andhra Pradesh, besides Food Corporation of India.

I thank you for giving me this opportunity.

SHRI K. RAMACHANDRA REDDY :
I beg to move :

“That the Demand under the Head Department of Food be reduced by Rs. 100.”

/Need to check the enormous losses to the Food Corporation of India due to decay of foodgrains stocked in the open./ (2)

“That the Demand under the Head Department of Food be reduced by Rs.100.”

/Need to discontinue the import of foodgrains from other countries./ (3)

“That the Demand under the Head Department of Civil Supplies be reduced by Rs. 100.”

/Need to supply rice at a subsidised rate of Rs. 2 per Kg. to people in all the States./ (5)

“That the Demand under the Head Department of Civil Supplies be reduced by Rs. 100.”

/Need to supply rice needed for public distribution in Andhra Pradesh. / (6)

“That the Demand under the Head Department of Civil Supplies be reduced by Rs. 100.”

/Need to allow Government of Andhra Pradesh to procure rice needed for public distribution from other States./ (7)

“That the Demand under the Head Department of Civil Supplies be reduced by Rs. 100.”

/Need to permit free movement of foodgrains throughout India by making India a single zone./ (8)

SHRI PIYUS TIRAKY : I beg to move :

“That the Demand under the Head Department of Food be reduced by Rs. 100.”

/Need for opening of fruits and vegetable processing units at Buxirhat and Mathoban ga, in Cooch Behar district in North Bengal./ (11)

“That the Demand under the Head Department of Food be reduced by Rs. 100.”

/Need for opening of fruits and vegetable processing units at Kumargramduari-Buxaduar, Chamerehi and Nagrakata n Jalpaiguri, in North Bengal./ (12)

"That the Demand under the Head Department of Food be reduced by Rs. 100."

/Need to provide storage and warehousing godowns for agricultural produce in every block in North Bengal districts./ (13)

"That the Demand under the Head Department of Food be reduced by Rs. 100."

/Need to set up an agro-industrial complex in Doars and Tarai in North Bengal./ (14)

"That the Demand under the Head Department of Food be reduced by Rs. 100."

/Need to set up community canning and fruit preservations centres at Cooch-Bihar, Alipurduar, Tufanganj of Madarihat in Jalpaiguri district in North Bengal./ (15)

"That the Demand under the Head Department of Food be reduced by Rs. 100."

/Need to set up food processing and nutrition centres at Birpara and Nathua Hat in Jalpaiguri district in North Bengal./ (16)

"That the Demand under the Head Department of Food be reduced by Rs. 100."

/Need to provide mobile food and nutrition extension service to all the tea gardens of Doars and Tarai in North Bengal./ (17)

"That the Demand under the Head Department of Civil Supplies be reduced by Rs. 100."

/Need to give financial assistance for setting up a super bazar at Alipurduar in Jalpaiguri district in North Bengal./ (18)

"That the Demand under the Head Department of Civil Supplies be reduced by Rs. 100."

/Need to set up a training centre under the scheme relating to intelligence enforcement and manpower training for public distribution system at Kalchini in Jalpaiguri district in North Bengal./ (19)

[Translation]

SHRI RAM PYARE PANIKA (Roberts-ganj): Mr. Chairman, Sir. I rise to support the demands for grants of the Ministry of Food and Civil Supplies, which are being discussed by the House. It is a fact that the role of our Food Department is very difficult and complex, which includes procurement of foodgrains, their supply in scarcity areas, storage in a scientific manner and distribution thereof. All these functions are very important functions which our Food Department is discharging. We have seen that after 1980, this Ministry has done a commendable job. I remember how the country was affected by serious floods, drought, hail-storm, cyclone etc. in 1982-83, and the promptness with which this Ministry provided relief to nearly 31 crores of people deserves applause. We feel proud that despite all these problems, not a single person died of starvation in any part of the country due to food shortage. Sir, not only this, the functions of this Department have grown continuously. I would, therefore, like to express my thanks to the hon Minister and the concerned Department of his Ministry.

Just now our friends from the opposition benches were speaking and they raised constitutional points which it was not necessary to raise. But I agree with them that the allocation of funds to this Ministry must be increased. When this Ministry is discharging such a onerous responsibility, allocation to this Ministry should definitely be increased.

In my view your Department at present caters to the needs of 12 or 13 per cent of the total population of the country, but this Ministry has to discharge its functions in very difficult circumstances.

With regard to procurement of foodgrains, I would like to say that government have formulated a policy of support price for the benefit of farmers, but the foodgrains of farmers are not procured at support price throughout the country as procurement centres are not opened throughout the country. The farmers do not have storage facility and do not get money in time.

The farmers are facing a very difficult situation with regard to the praddy crop

[Shri Ram Pyare Panika]

of the Rabi season in U.P. Many friends have just now said that in other States also, the foodgrains from the farmers are not being procured at the support price.

The Central Government fix the support price and the State Government are expected to implement this decision. I would like to suggest that there should be a monitoring cell at the central level which should persuade the State Government to implement the decision of the Central Government in this regard. One of my friends was speaking about it. I would like to ask him if his State works according to the guidelines of the Central Government.

I am not talking about Andhra Pradesh only. Our late Prime Minister, Shrimati Indira Gandhi had formulated a 12-Point Programme about the distribution system. The Centre had directed that one fair price shop should be opened for every 200 units in scarcity areas and in problem areas; but you would be surprised to know that fair price shops have not been opened in any of the States as per your guidelines. I do not want to blame you. Because of your monitoring the number of shops has increased to more than 3 lakhs, as against about 2 lakhs in 1979-80. But the increase is not according to the guidelines.

In the hilly areas, flood-affected areas, coastal areas and desert areas, the people have to travel miles to purchase their ration. The fair price shops are being opened on the basis of units whereas it is necessary to prescribe the distance also.

Last year you had spoken about the provision of mobile shops, but the State Governments have provided mobile shops at very few places. The Central Government had given the suggestion, but mobile shops are on paper only.

You had also promised that special shops would be opened for workers and contract labour in the industrial belts, but I know that in my constituency—Mushram Sahab is very much sitting here and would complain that no mention has been made of Madhya Pradesh,—shops have not been opened in the tribal and labour areas. As a result, the businessmen with vested interest are taking advantage of this situation

and the people are getting essential items at high prices.

The F.C.I. has been criticised in this House and outside in other places, but keeping in view the extensive responsibilities of this organisation, I would like to say that the persons engaged in this organisation also belong to our Indian society. They also belong to the same society to which officials of other departments belong, but they will have to improve their working. The people have a complaint that the expenditure they show is excessive. It will be better if some saving is effected.

Sir, our warehousing facilities are inadequate. Although there has been an increase in the storage capacity during the last few years, yet everybody wants that there should be definite improvement in it and at the same time, you will have to adopt a stern attitude against corruption in this sphere. There is no coordination between the agencies engaged in the purchases and those who assist in these purchases, as a result of which, a number of difficulties are experienced. Therefore, you will have to improve them all.

15.16 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Sir, while you improve the working of F.C.I., you should also improve the working of warehousing.

You have laid down a 12-Point guideline with regard to your distribution system. At State level there are a number of difficulties. The people are not getting ration cards. In Uttar Pradesh, this is being run by the Cooperative Societies. These Cooperative Societies have indulged in serious bungling at many places. The people do get wheat and rice which you provide, but the entire quota of sugar and kerosene is sold in the blackmarket. The same shopkeepers, retailers continue to indulge in bungling since 1980. The people belonging to the Janata Party and R.S.S. with their vested interests have infiltrated into it and all of them indulge in black-marketing. Stringent measures should be adopted against those indulging in profiteering, blackmarketing and smuggling, and if need be, MISA should be used

against them, because there has been no improvement in spite of all our efforts.

Certainly, Government want that the blackmarketeers in the country should be dealt with severely, but, they have not been completely successful in this endeavour. Therefore, strict rules should be framed in this regard. This is a major source of corruption and the State and Central employees indulge in a lot of bawling. It will be better if you frame rules in this regard. The rules will have to be observed very seriously, otherwise, the officers indulging in corruption will further strengthen their stranglehold.

The new budget has apparently led to increase in prices of some commodities, but the increase in respect of some of the commodities has been 15 to 20 per cent. Today, we should bring a budget in consonance with the expectations of the people. We have formulated job oriented schemes to remove unemployment. But it has greatly affected the salaried class, the workers and the poor. They are passing through a difficult time. The prices of diesel, petrol, kerosene, etc. have increased, but the increase registered in these items have offered the big traders an opportunity to increase the prices manifold.

I had been to Mirzapur where the taxi fares have been raised manifold. Similarly, there are other items, which have registered a sharp increase in prices. Last time you issued a statement that you would adopt stern measures. If need be, stern action against such traders, as have raised the prices of consumer goods, should be taken under the Essential Commodities Act.

There is no scarcity of kerosene in the country, because there has been a lot of progress in this field since 1980, but its distribution is not proper. The people engaged in distribution of kerosene, adulterate it and sell it in blackmarket. Kerosene is not available even for lighting a lamp in remote villages and tribal areas. Therefore, it is necessary that you should convene a meeting of the Central Government, the State Governments and the Food and Civil Supplies Departments and observe the guidelines issued by the late Prime Minister, Shrimati Indira Gandhi and implement the distribution scheme having

special arrangement for the poor belonging to the backward areas. Only then the families covered under the scheme will be benefited.

DR. CHANDRA SHEKHAR TRI:
PATHI (Khalilabad) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I rise to support the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Food and Civil Supplies. In the present perspective, Civil Supplies have a great importance in the country and it is next to law and order. This Ministry has to look after the public distribution system, consumer protection and Consumer Cooperative Societies, Vanaspati, management relating to prices and distribution of oilseeds and the matters concerning the Indian Standards Institution which have a direct bearing on the daily lives of the people in the entire country.

Sir, there has been a definite increase in the production of foodgrains and it is a matter of pride that our country which used to depend upon imports of foodgrains 10 years back is now not only self-sufficient in this respect but is in surplus. The production of rice has increased beyond expectations. There has been a tremendous increase in the production of wheat and sugarcane also. But the Central Government have noted that the production of oilseeds has been static for the last 2 to 3 years and despite the many steps taken in this regard, its production has not increased. An import of 11.5 lakh tonnes was made during 1982-83 which went up to 16.34 lakh tonnes in 1983-84. The steps taken for increasing production did not succeed because first, the programmes were not passed on to the farmers in time and secondly, a restriction was imposed on small farmers in this respect. Certain difficulties were experienced, one of them being the restriction that a farmer having one acre of land could not sow gram, mustard or peas in the entire area. He look out his mini kit, consumed the gram and peas and did not sow them in the field. Therefore, the policy needs to be liberalized. These kits should be supplied to big farmers owning 8 to 10 acres of land in which he can sow urad, sunflower, gram, etc. because it is a matter of concern that we have not been able to reduce the quantum of our imports as compared to previous years in spite of so many incentives having been provided to the farmers.

[Dr. Chandra Shekhar Tripathi]

Similar is the problem with regard to sugar. There has been a considerable fall in sugarcane production this year as compared to last year. I would like to submit that there is a sugar mill in my constituency Kalilabad in district Basti of the Jaipuria Establishment in respect of which I want to raise a very serious matter before the hon. Minister. I have received information to the effect that the proprietors of the Jaipuria Establishment want to remove the machines from the mill clandestinely and they want to close down the factory. Arrears to the tune of crores of rupees are due to the farmers there. Government should ensure that the money due to the poor farmers does not become a bad debt. Recently, I had spoken in detail about the fact that the slips issued to the cultivators were being purchased there in blackmarket and even the payment was not being made in time, but that is a different matter. The matter that I have raised before you now is very serious and due attention needs to be given to it.

So far as distribution by the cooperative societies is concerned, I would like to submit that there may be hardly a single society in Uttar Pradesh whose secretary and supervisor have not embezzled lakhs of rupees. My request is that the societies should not be disbanded but at the same time, a parallel arrangement should be made. Allotment of shops should be made at the Gram Panchayat level also and at the same time the distribution work should also be done through the Cooperative Societies. Besides, the rules should be observed strictly. Those over-charging and creating artificial scarcity of goods are exploiting the poor. Such people should be severely punished.

Apart from this, there is a report about the dairies that blindness is increasing due to the deficiency of vitamin A and it is in this light that prevention of blindness has been included in the National Health Programme. I am glad to know that the Ministry has made arrangement to increase vitamin A in the milk from the two dairies, but I want that similar arrangement should be made in all dairies in the country and the content of vitamin A should be increased in the milk supplied. At present, the fat content is extracted from

the milk supplied leading to increase in incidence of blindness.

Arrangement has been made to supply general consumer items to the people through fair price shops under the 20-Point Programme, but there are complaints that the wheat supplied from these shops is of inferior quality and is rotten. I do not have any complaint with me at the moment with regard to sugar, but when I was not a Member of this House, I was shown some samples of sugar in which sand was mixed and which was not fit for human consumption. Sometimes, even wet sugar is supplied which emits foul smell. I would like to request that they should not play with the health of the people. Whatever commodities are supplied through those shops should be of good quality as also nutritious.

The provision of opening shops in remote areas is commendable, but I am sorry to say that not a single mobile shop has been opened there till this date. I hope, the hon. Minister will take special interest in it and make arrangements in this regard.

The consumers in the country have to suffer a lot on account of under-weighing. It should be ensured that there is no foul play in weighing and measuring.

I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister particularly to cement. Cement is packed in gunny bags. Even if nobody indulges in dishonesty, 10 kg. cement is lost in loading and unloading. I suggest that cement should be packed in polythene bags and then put in gunny bags, so that the consumer could get full 50 kilos of cement. Today, the consumers have to suffer a loss to the tune of crores of rupees.

Sir, I would like to touch one point more. There are malpractices in the purchase of wheat. The wheat that is brought to the purchase centre by the farmer is rejected and it is later on purchased through the middlemen. I would request that improvements should be made in the public distribution system in consonance with the spirit with which it was introduced under the 20-point programme, so that essential commodities could be made available to the people.

With these words I once again support the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Food and Civil Supplies.

[English]

RESOLUTION RE : DESERT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME—(Contd.)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Now we take up Private Members' Business. Further discussion of the following Resolution moved by Shri Virdhi Chander Jain on the 25th January, 1985:—

“This House is of opinion that there should be parity between the Desert Development Programme and the Hill Areas Development Programme in the matter of provision of funds, facilities and concessions in the Seventh Five-Year Plan.”

Since only 25 minutes are left for this Item, I would request hon. Members to take only 5-6 minutes each. Shri Balkavi Bairagi.

[Translation]

SHRI BALKAVI BAIRAGI (Mandsaur) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I feel obliged to you for giving me an opportunity to speak on the Resolution moved by Shri Virdhi Chander Jain.

This is an important resolution. When we see the spirit behind the Resolution, it becomes all the more necessary on the part of Government to pay attention to it. Shri Jain spoke at length about this Resolution and almost all the Members supported it. When Shri S.B. Chavan was looking after the affairs of the Planning Ministry in 1983 he had assured Shri Jain, the mover of this Resolution, that these demands had been made in the middle of the Sixth Five Year Plan and they would be definitely considered when the draft for the Seventh Plan was drawn. He has categorically said this in the House. He also wrote to Shri Jain to this effect. I would, therefore, request the hon. Minister to consider his assurance at the beginning of the Seventh Five Year Plan. At present the ratio of development as between the hill areas and the desert areas stands at 1 : 9. The Government should remove

this anomaly. Government provide Rs. 100 crores for desert development while they allocate Rs. 900 crores for the development of hill areas. In this context I would like to say that Government have brought 21 districts under the Desert Development Programme. Here, I would like to say a word of caution that by the turn of this century or say after fifteen or twenty years, the Member who will be elected from Mandsaur, will definitely demand that this district may also be included as the 22nd district under that Programme. The reason is not far to seek. If the spread of the desert is not checked, it would advance right upto Malwa. Water is not available even at a depth of two hundred feet. Even today you can see sand particles in our rooms, on the beds in the kitchen and even in our food. The whole scene is changing in district Mandsaur. All of us are aware of how the forests are being denuded ruthlessly. Not only this, their concept of cattle-rearing is also changing. You find more sheep, goats and camels in those places where till some time back only cows and bulls used to be reared. The most important thing that Government should bear in mind and decide with regard to desert is whether you want to give priority to its development or to checking its spread. The desert is marching ahead and is extending to Malwa and if you waited for another 15 to 20 years, the population of the desert area, which according to you is 1.83 crores at present may increase by another one crore as the population of Malwa too shall have to be added because by then the desert would have engulfed this district too. On the one hand it is spreading to Gujarat and on the other side to Rajasthan and from both the sides it is engulfing us. Jhabua, Ratlam and Mandsaur are all affected by the advancing desert. Our food habits are changing, our approach to livestock is changing and the cultivation pattern is also undergoing a change. The acute shortage of drinking water is felt more in our district than in Rajasthan. If you do not treat Mandsaur on similar lines as Rajasthan then a day will come when we shall have to open branches of the Authority there also.

Being a humble Member of the House, I am saying this by way of caution. If