

15.52 hrs.

WIDOWS' WELFARE BILL

[English]

SHRIMATIBASAVARAJESWARI (Belary): I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill to provide for payment of pension and provision of other facilities to widows.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill to provide for payment of pension and provision of other facilities to widows.

The motion was adopted.

SHRIMATI BASAVARAJESHWARI: I introduce the Bill.

15.54 hrs.

FAIR PRICE SHOPS (REGULATION)
BILL

[English]

MR DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The House will now take up further consideration of the following motion moved by the Shri G S Basavaraju on the 21st April, 1989, namely:

"That the Bill to regulate the functioning of fair price shops and for matters connected therewith, be taken into consideration."

Before, further discussion on this Bill is resumed, I would like to mention that three hours and fifty-five minutes have already been taken out of the four hours allotted by the House for this Bill. Now, the time has to be extended for further discussion. Is it the pleasure of the House that time for this Bill be extended by one hour.

MANY HON. MEMBERS: Yes, Sir.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The time is extended by one hour for this Bill.

[Translation]

SHRISHANKARLAL (Pali): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I rise to support the Fair Price Shops (Regulation) Bill introduced by Shri G.S. Basavaraju in the House. In the rural areas of our country, it is really difficult to get essential commodities like edible oils, sugar, kerosene, foodgrains. It is the responsibility of not only State Governments but also the Central Government to make essential commodities available to the people. I think, the hon. Member who has introduced this Bill in the House, deserves to be congratulated. Similarly, our worthy leader Shri Rajiv Gandhi has also launched effective schemes to provide employment to the people in rural areas and, thus, created public awareness for *panchayati raj*. The provision in the Bill would enable the Government to remove difficulties of the people in the remote rural areas which they have to face in getting essential commodities like foodgrains, cloth, edible oils and other commodities. This Bill would prove to be effective to remove these difficulties.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, it has been provided in the Bill that besides setting up a Central Board, State level Boards would also be set up and coordination between them would be ensured. I would suggest that apart from Boards at the State level, committees should be set up at district level also. As responsibility is being delegated to the districts under the proposed decentralisation of power, it is necessary that Boards at state level should have proper coordination with the communities at district level and the Boards at State level should have coordination with the Central Board. Sir, the allocation of essential commodities whether it is wheat, rice or sugar.

[English]

SHRI HET RAM (Sirsā): There is no Quorum in the House.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let the Quorum bell be rung...Now, there is Quorum. Shri Shankarlal.

[Translation]

16.00 hrs.

SHRI SHANKARLAL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, my submission is that decentralisation is necessary to provide essential commodities through fair-price shops easily and at cheaper rates. Hence, the formation of Central Board, State Boards and committees at district level is essential and the committees should decide the number of shops to be opened and their location. If it is not possible to open one fair price shop for every village the same should be provided at least in every Gram Panchayat so that common man has not to cover a distance of more than 2 kms. At present there are many areas where people have to cover a distance of 5-7 kms. to get the essential commodities. The commodities with higher consumption should be supplied in larger quantity. For instance the areas, where consumption of rice is more, should be supplied with more quantities of rice. Something is applicable in case of wheat and wheat product. So far as cloth is concerned, it is also a necessity of life.

These commodities are supplied by the Central Government to the State Governments which further supply these items to the district collectors or the district administration. But when the fair price shops are allotted, the middlemen and businessmen manage to get those shops allotted in their own names. They do not distribute those commodities through the fair price shops and instead divert them to the black market. In order to check the practice of black-marketing and profiteering indulged in by the middlemen and also to ensure timely supply of commodities to the consumers, I think, Central Board, State Boards and Committees at district level can play quite effective role.

The Bill provides for methods to be

adopted for the proper distribution of commodities through fair price shops, the number of customers to be registered with each fair price shop and the means of transportation to be used for the movement of commodities. In urban areas, we see that mobile vans carry these commodities and move from one locality to the other to distribute them to the people. But the same is not the case in the rural areas. A separate Bill should be introduced to remove the difficulties in rural areas where people are generally illiterate and unaware of this system of distribution. These are the areas where even electricity is not available and people have to cover long distance to get these commodities. Therefore, a Bill to provide for constitution of a Central and State Boards, should be brought forward.

The Bill provides that the Chairman of the Board would be appointed by the Central Government and one Member each would represent each State and the Union Territory. In this regard, I would like to submit that the Chairman of the Zila Parishad or his representative must be there on the State Boards which have been set up recently to ensure supply of essential commodities to the villages. If representatives from urban areas manage to capture these boards, they would desire the entire benefit. As a result, people in the rural areas would not be able to get essential commodities to meet their requirements. Therefore, my submission is that the representative from Zila Parishad must be on the State Boards.

A mention has been made about vigilance also in the Bill. I may submit that the Government should allot the fair-price shops to cooperative societies instead of allotting them to the individuals. Our Late Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had said that three institutions are the pre-requisites for the progress of the country viz. at least one school in every village, a cooperative society and a Gram Panchayat. We have strengthened the infra-structure of Gram Panchayats and have made significant achievement in the field of education. But my submission is that fair price shops should be allotted to the

[Sh. Shankarlal]

people belonging to rural areas only. What I mean to say is that if essential commodities are distributed in the rural areas through the cooperative societies, the purpose of setting up the Boards would be achieved. A provision should be made in the Bill to give preference to co-operative societies over individuals.

With these words, I support the Bill moved by the hon. Member.

[English]

SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI (Deo-
grah): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir: I thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak on this Bill. In fact, for the last three days, unfortunately there has been no substantial business transacted in the House. Probably, this Bill is the first Bill, though it is a private member's Bill, that we are going to discuss.

In this connection, I also say this with a very heavy heart: Parliament's time is valuable, and people also have great expectations from Members of Parliament. But what has been the performance in this House for the last three days because of the unruly conduct and unparliamentary behaviour of the Opposition? This situation was brought a slur on the name of democracy here. (*Interruptions*)

I also thank the hon. Member who has moved this Bill. I am well aware that this Bill will ultimately be withdraw. But till then, it gives us an opportunity to discuss several aspects of the public distribution system that is functioning in our country. The Bill aims at strengthening or streamlining the public distribution system in the country. I also give my support to the spirit of the Bill. I do not say that the Bill, as it is, may be accepted or should be accepted; but this provides us an opportunity to discuss the subject. I would also request the hon. Minister to take serious note of all the suggestions that are coming forth in course of the discussion.

The Government should also try to improve PDS in the light of the discussion, in the light of suggestions given by the hon. members. This year may be called a Golden Jubilee Year of the Public Distribution System in our country. Fifty years ago, in 1939, for the first time, to start with in Maharashtra, certain essential commodities were distributed through Government Fair Price Shops. There was almost a starvation situation, near famine situation. The Government, prior to Independence, in 1939, had to resort to such a system. Then it was followed in 1943 by West Bengal where also there was a similar situation, this starvation situation, near famine condition prevailed over there.

During war time, we know the pressure on the economy and how the prices were also shot up to a very high limit. Then also certain commodities were supplied to the consumer through Government Shops. Since Independence, of course, it has been the endeavour of the popular Government to supply essential commodities more and more through this Public Distribution System in various parts of the country. It would be evident from this simple fact, how it had taken a quantum jump; the Public Distribution System had taken root, and also a very quantum jump in the matter of opening up of Fair Price Shops and also the quantity of commodities supplied. In 1962, there were 47,000 shops that were functioning in the country; now this figure is somewhere near four lakhs also. We have now a network of four lakh Fair Price Shops in the Public Distribution System in our country. We have about 7 lakh villages in our country. I do not know whether the figure of four lakhs is correct. I have my doubt, but, still, I think it is very much satisfactory. There should be at least one FPS in every Gram Panchayat; and in the hilly area, in the inaccessible area, in one Gram Panchayat one FPS would not suffice; it would require more. But, at the same time, I would like to say, what is the very purpose of the Public Distribution System particularly in a situation like that of ours? We have about 80 crore population. The entire requirement with regard to essential commodities, say, food supply, food stock,

cloth, kerosene, matches, salt other things, in entirety, the country under the existing circumstances, under the existing economy, under the existing socio-economic system, under the existing or present socio-economic situation, it is just not possible to cater to the entire requirement of the entire population. And then we have a mixed economy and also we have a free market; and at the same time, we have a controlled market and a controlled system. Naturally all this suggests that the Government has an obligation, has a commitment to the poorer sections, has a responsibility to meet their requirements, not of the entire population. Because when any cultivator can sell his produce anywhere to anybody, it does mean that he has to sell it to the Government alone not only. So, we cannot expect the entire requirement of the entire population to be met through the public distribution system and that too by the Government directly. Naturally, the poor people, the down-trodden people, those people below the poverty line they cannot go to the free market where the ruling prices are much higher, particularly in the scarcity months, as for instance, the monsoons. Then the prices of the foodgrains rise very high. And when they are available in plenty during the harvesting period in many places, the dealers of fair price shops do not lift the foodgrains. This has been my experience. I had the fortune of handling the Food and Civil Supplies Department of Orissa for a certain time, about two years. That was also a very difficult period. There was near famine situation then, during 1974-75. Procurement had to be carried on at gun point. It was a very difficult period in Orissa then. At the instance of the Centre, that is, the Central Government we had to resort to such unpleasant tasks. And naturally during the harvesting period there was no demand for rice, but when summer approaches, followed by the lean months or the monsoon the pressure goes up. So, the Central Government procures through the Food Corporation of India and stores wheat, rice etc., and again makes allotments depending on the situation prevailing in different parts of the country. They decide according to their own judgement and then allot them. So, we have to make a

clear distinction between the haves and the have not, between the affluent people and the poor people.

Now, there is an increasing tendency for all sorts of people to depend on the public distribution system, for every thing. This should not be allowed. We just cannot allow it to happen. On the other hand, I would suggest that the entire requirement of the poor people should be met through the public distribution system. There should also be an endeavour to increase the quantity to ensure that all the items required are supplied through the public distribution system, to the weaker people, to the poor people, the economically weaker people. At the same time, we have to create a situation so that the rich people, the affluent people, the higher middle class people are eliminated.

So far as rice and wheat are concerned they may be available in plenty in the free market, may be at certain higher rates. What I mean to say is that with regard to the beneficiaries of the public distribution system the Government should revise its stand.

With regard to sugar there is also a conduction. The poor people get very little of it and the rich people, living in towns get more on their cards. There is also a feeling that there is some discrimination between the people living in the villages and the town-dwellers. The villagers feel that they are discriminated against and that they are treated as second class citizens. Why? Those who are well to do go to the free market and the poor people cannot do that. The poor people should be given more sugar against their cards. Also, in rural areas there is no card system. There also the card system should be introduced. There should also be some more commodities, just not rice, sugar and wheat only, but kerosene etc. That is not supplied regularly. For example, palmolin oil is also not supplied and there is lot of black-marketing in this distribution, and it should be supplied properly.

There is a lot of difference between the price of certain commodities in the open

[Sh. Sriballav Panigrahi]

market and the prices of the commodities supplied through public distribution system. We should keep vigilance on their distribution, etc.

Secondly, when there is a difference in the price, there is a natural tendency on the part of the fair price dealers to sell it at higher prices in black market. We thank our Prime Minister. We are going to strengthen the Panchayati Raj system, revolutionise the Panchayati Raj system. And naturally when the Panchayati Raj system is strengthened, it would mean greater involvement of the public. We can also entrust the public distribution system to the Panchayati Raj, Zilla Parishad, etc. Of course, cooperatives will have a far better role to play in this regard. The Panchayats involvement in PDS was experimented in Orissa during early 1970s and it worked very smoothly. Of course, we have to make financial provision for the Panchayats. And the permission has to be given to them so that they can carry on this business. If the Panchayat is entrusted with this work and there is a close watch, then the black marketing possibility will be either completely eliminated or minimised. In many places we find weekly markets, where people gather. If there are *hatt* sale of different commodities in weekly markets then it would work very satisfactorily. That is our experience. At the time of drought, when the people do not find time and do not know where it is available, some people play mischief. If it is sold in the weekly markets, then the poor people will get the benefits.

As regards the transportation charges also, we have to adopt a realistic approach. I have spoken to some of the retailers, who indulge in black marketing. They told me that even if a sanyasi comes and takes up his business with missionary zeal, he cannot run it even on no profit no loan basis with the present transportation charges. Unless there is a revision, it is not just realistic, according to them. And nobody is going to spend their money from their pocket to serve the people. It has to be realistic. I do not know whether

transportation charges are revised or not. Many people in the godowns also said that when weighment is there, there is pilferage. Hardly a bag which is supposed to contain 100 Kg. weighs 100 Kg. Deliberately and knowingly with the connivance of many people, black market in regard to certain commodities, for instance sugar, goes on. When we want to be very strict, we have also to be realistic towards the legitimate expenditure incurred in the process like transportation charges, the commission that we have to pay to such people. Why I say this is, when the Gram Panchayats and the Cooperatives were involved in this system, they brought forward this discrepancy and we also conceded that even if you charge five paise per kg. over and above the prescribed rate, nobody will look into it. The Government of India did not concede to the demand of revising these rates. What I say is that we have to learn from our experience. We have to be realistic. Then any kind of black-marketing should be penalised. What is happening in China and elsewhere? Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, our first Prime Minister, whose birth centenary we are celebrating this year, had said that the black-marketeers should be tied to the lamp posts. But these words remained only on paper. Our system is so liberal that even lawyers and some persons who represent people in Parliament, go outside Indian and talk things against the country. That way, the system is so liberal that even the worst black-marketeers engage reputed lawyers and they go scotfree. The laws and regulations need to be stiffened. We have strict laws like NSA, MISA and sometimes we apply them also. But regardless of party affiliation, some thinking should be there in this direction. But in spite of all this, Government is doing a commendable job. During the Seventh Plan, a subsidy of Rs. 2000 crores has been given by the Government to run the Public Distribution System i.e. procuring things at a higher price and distributing them at a lower price. We have also one across instances—yesterday, the hon. Minister was replying to a question—where some State Governments are charging Rs. 2/- per kg. for rice from the tribal people, poor people but they are get-

ting it from the Government of India at Rs. 1.85 per kg. We have to see that middlemen and vested interests are eliminated as far as possible. How can it be done. This could be monitored properly if panchayats and cooperatives are associated with this work. It is quite feasible and it can work satisfactorily because this was tried in Orissa. This system was adjudged the best in the whole country.

There should be a popular committee attached to a fair price shop. Let there be a five-member committee out of which one should be a tribal, a Harijan a woman which will scrutinise the stocks. On their recommendation that the allotment was properly distributed, the dealer can get next allotment. If this system is adopted, there will be a lot of improvement in this system.

SHRI V. SOBHANDREESWARA RAO (Vijayawada): First of all, I would like to congratulate Mr. Basavaraju for introducing this Bill and providing an opportunity to this august House to discuss this important item, which is the basic need of human beings irrespective of their political affiliations or other considerations.

I agree with the Statement of Objects and Reasons as well as the provisions in this Bill. Basically there is nothing to differ. In principle we agree with these suggestions. I hope, the hon. Minister will take into consideration the views and suggestions made by hon. Members from both sides of the House and come forward with a Bill incorporating those valuable suggestions from the hon. Members.

Now, one important irony is that though nearly eighty per cent of the Public Distribution Supply retail outlets are located in the rural areas, nearly eighty per cent of the foodgrains that are distributed to the public are going to the urban areas. I wish the hon. Minister will take care of this and will see that the rural people are met with all justice and will take necessary steps to see that adequate foodgrains are supplied to the retail outlets in the rural area.

Though nineteen items are listed, the people in the rural areas are getting rice in our State or wheat in some other State and then kerosene, sugar and palmoline oil only. Other items they are not receiving. But the people in urban areas may be fortunate in getting some other items also that are being distributed through these PDS retail outlets. I request the hon. Minister to look into that aspect also and see that those items are sent to the rural areas also so that the needs of the people are well taken care of.

16.32 hrs.

[SHRI VAKKOM PURUSHOTHAMAN *in the Chair*]

In our State of Andhra Pradesh, as against 30,851 PDS outlets during the period 1978 to 1983, after Shri N.T. Rama Rao's Telugu Desam Government has come to power in our State, now there are 36,045 retail outlets. Our Government is making available through green cards, nearly twenty-five kilograms of rice per month per family of five members to 100 lakh families. Earlier the experience was not quite encouraging. During the earlier regime it so happened that most of these items to be given to the poor people were not reaching the poor people. The fair price shop dealer used to corner a good number of cards from the poor people, keep them with him and corner some stocks and sell them in the black-market. After this Rs. two per kg. scheme was introduced by Shri Rama Rao Garu's Government, the poor people have become more conscious. Every month immediately after knowing that rice has come, all the people will go and will press for their quota and will not allow the fair price shop person to do any mischief. Of course even now there may be some small percentage of such persons in some areas but, by and large, today the poor people are not allowing their rice to be taken away by that shop fellow and sell it outside. Sometimes just because they may not need sugar, they may not press so much for sugar but rice nobody is leaving with the fair price shop person.

[Sh. V. Sobhandreeswara Rao]

My hon. friend Shri Panigrahi, who as just now spoken, has said that in Andhra Pradesh the Government was selling rice at Rs. two a kilo, while the Union Government was supplying it at Rs. 185 per quintal. That was in the early phase and that too always out of the total quantity of rice supplied to the scheduled areas. Very small percentage was from common variety whereas bulk of it was from fine variety and again a small percentage from superfine. The State Government was giving rice at the rate of Rs. 2 per Kg. to one crore families. The Government wanted some uniform policy. The Government of India was supplying rice to the scheduled areas, to the tribal people, to the Girijans and out TDP Government is giving rice at the rate of Rs. 2 per KG not only to Girijans outside the scheduled areas but also the Harijans, the backward classes and the economically weaker sections irrespective of caste or community, whose income is less than Rs. 6000 per annum. So, all those people are eligible to get the rice and our Government is spending several hundred crores of rupees on its part in making available the rice at the rate of Rs. 2 per Kg. to the people. After the revision of the price, our Government is bearing 19 paise in respect of common variety of rice, 75 paise in respect of fine variety of rice and Re. 1 per Kg in respect of superfine variety. So, the criticism that Mr. Rama Rao has no time to smell the inferior quality of rice supplied to the poor people is not at all accepted. The rice is coming from the Food Corporation of India. Mr. Rama Rao is the harbinger of the poor men and that is why he has introduced this scheme of Rs. 2 per Kg. Whatever the burden is falling on the State Government, even now they are going ahead with that scheme because while campaigning for the election purposes he had seen himself the pathetic condition of the poor people. At several places where some rich and middle class people perform the marriages, after the dinner, the leaves on which the food was served, are thrown away. The pathetic scene is noticed when the poor people who suffer from hunger and extreme poverty fight with the dogs to get the left-

overs on the leaves. Mr Rama Rao promised during the election campaign that if his party came to power, his Government would implement the scheme of supplying rice at the rate of Rs. 2 per Kg.

Now, at the latest price, it is costing more than Rs. 300 crores per year for the State Government and our Government is going ahead with the promised scheme just with the sole objective to meet at least a part requirement of the poor people who are living below the poverty line, irrespective of caste and community. According to the report of the Economic Times, they say that from several States—either in Maharashtra or Tamil Nadu or U.P. or Karnataka—the State Governments are requesting the Union Government to make available more quantity of rice and other essential commodities. But, unfortunately, I do not know what the restrictions and limitations are. The Government of India is not supplying the required quantity to the States which in turn is having adverse effect on the price levels in those States and particularly in the cities. Now, we are having adequate stocks of foodgrains. Last year, we had very good monsoon. Added to that we have also imported some foodgrains. I think there is no problem in meeting the requirements of the various States.

Now, the Food Corporation of India is mainly responsible for the huge element of subsidy to be borne by the Government of India. Sir, you are aware, as a person, who have a very good experience in the public affairs, that in several places the Food Corporation of India stores the foodgrains—wheat and rice—in open space. Just a tarpaulin is covered in many places. The tarpaulins are either torn or they are not in proper condition and when the rain falls, the rice or wheat gets spoiled and after some time, they dispose foodgrains as they are not even fit for animal consumption. But if the foodgrains are disposed of before their quality gets deteriorated, at least for animal consumption, the Food Corporation of India could get some price for that. But in most cases because of some administrative

lapses, bureaucratic bungling, etc. even that is not done.

Similarly, in respect of transport, for every quintal of rice nearly Rs. 35 is the transportation cost. My experience was, the sugar from our factory, the KCP Sugar Factory, a very big sugar factory in South India at Vuyyur, was going to Nizamabad district where there is a Nizam sugar factory, Bodhan, and sugar from Bodhan sugar factory was coming to our Vuyyur where we had ample KCP sugar. I don't accuse the Government at the higher level, but the officers at down the level because of some vested interests, may be to benefit some transport contractors, or whatever the reasons may be, they simply favour the transport contract in such a way that unnecessary transportation costs the people have to bear. If proper planning and meticulous thinking has taken place, this unnecessary avoidable transportation charge can be done away with and ultimately the difference in the cost of procurement and the issue price will come down and the Government need not waste so much money.

Similarly in respect of godowns also, Sir, the left hand is not knowing what the right hand is doing. Even though there is a very big storage capacity with, warehousing corporation godowns, there again the Food Corporation of India will try to construct godowns. Why so, Sir? Are not the Central warehousing godowns our godowns? Suppose, in the event when C.W.C. godowns are not there, the State Warehousing godowns may be there. We must make maximum use of them. After all, it is people's money, either of the Central Government or the State Government, and unnecessarily they go on constructing their own godowns and sometimes they take private godowns also on lease and rent. Like this, some of them have to be streamlined and the deficiencies should be rectified which ultimately will help in bringing down the issue prices.

Sir, the suggestion of our hon. Member, Mr. Basavaraju, to set up a Board at the State level is quite good, there is nothing wrong in it. In our experience, we have down

at the Mandal level where there is a Food Advisory Committee Meeting, representatives from weaker sections, women and all political parties and at the District level also the Collector convenes a Meeting with all the political parties, the Presidents or Secretaries of various political parties and people's representatives and there is thorough review going on. But my experience is, in urban areas, in the Municipalities or Municipal Corporations, this type of review is not taking place frequently and adequately. I suggest to the hon. Minister to give suitable guidelines and instructions to all the State Governments so that in urban areas also this review and examination of the supply of essential commodities through the PDS is ensured in all fairness.

Lastly, Sir, I suggest to the hon. Minister one thing. You kindly permit our A.P. State Agency to procure rice as a notified public agency at the procurement price under the Central pool on the condition that the carry over costs will be borne by the State Agency itself and there is no charge on this account to the Government of India. But the only concession the State Agency would want is availability of credit at a concessional rate of interest because in our State of Andhra Pradesh our total requirements is 22 lakh tonnes of rice. You are making available to us 10 lakhs tonnes of rice. The balance the State Government is to procure in the open market at the agreed price with the rice millers which is well over and above this procurement price of the Food Corporation of India.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you not self-sufficient in your State?

SHRIV. SOBHANDREESWARA RAO: Yes, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Previously we used to get rice from your State.

SHRIV. SOBHANDREESWARA RAO: I will tell you, Sir. In our State the Government is making available rice at the rate of Rs. 2/- a K.G. to one crore families through

[Sh. V. Sobhandreeswara Rao]

these PDS shops for those people whose income is less than Rs. 6000/-. For other people, we have to purchase in the open market and we are giving to your Kerala State also. Already the Government is burdened with several hundreds of crores of rupees, So, if you extend this concession this gesture of goodwill to permit our State agency to procure the rice with the credit made available from the financial institutions at concessional rate of interest, it will go a long way in helping to serve the poor people. I hope the hon. Minister will agree to this. With these words, I conclude.

Thank you.

[*Translation*]

SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT (Nagpur): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I rise to support this Bill. Sir, I want to draw your attention towards the need for introducing this Bill. While going through this Bill, the hon. Minister must have observed that the main objective is to ensure availability of food grains the poor at reasonable rates through the public distribution system in our country. At present there are two aspects of this problem. One is non-availability of foodgrains and other essential commodities in adequate quantity at Fair Price Shops when they are required. What is the reasons behind this? One reasons is the shortage of essential commodities in the country. Secondly, the shopkeepers sell these commodities in the black market. I am sure that these shopkeepers indulge in black-marketing of essential commodities. Deterrent action should be taken against them to prevent the recurrence of such acts in future. But the other closely related aspect of this problem is that fair price shopkeepers are allowed very low margin of profit on the goods supplied by the Government. He is the Government's agent who is asked to pick up the goods from the godown. But is the present margin of profit sufficient to provide sustenance to him. If he earns at least Rs. 1,000/-, his family can be taken care of. These days a shopkeeper

must get a minimum of Rs. 1,000/- if he is to support his family. If he is unable to get even this much, he will resort to unfair trade practices. This aspect has come to our a number of times.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, a Fair Price Shop owner has to spend more on transporting the goods from the godowns to his shop than what he gets margin of profit. So how can he provide essential commodities to the poor at the same rates honestly. Therefore, I request the hon. Minister to give serious thought to this matter. Sir, this Bill provides for supply of the full quota of essential commodities and their transportation to the shop. If the goods are carried over 50-100 kilometres the shopkeeper's margin of profit is neutralised in transportation costs. While fixing the number of units for a shopkeeper, it must be kept in mind that he is able to earn at least Rs. 1,000. This will prevent the shopkeeper from being dishonest. Even after this, if some shopkeepers continue to adopt unfair means, they should be given severe punishment. If they are caught, they should be imprisoned for at least six months, so that they dare not indulge in such things in future.

Sir, I would request for an increase in the number of items sold through these outlets. Alongwith essential commodities, cloth and sarees should also be sold to help Fair-Price shopkeepers sustain themselves. Sale of such items can increase his income to some extent. Sir, if essential commodities are not available in adequate quantity, why does the rule stipulate that all people living in cities, be they rich or poor, will be issued ration cards if they apply for the same? I request for modifications in the present system. Fifty per cent of the ration-card holders who really need the rations are not able to get it whereas people with high incomes buy their requirements from elsewhere. Their entire share of the rations is sold by the shopkeepers in the black-market. It is difficult to control black-marketing once the shopkeepers become habitual. The problem is being faced everywhere. Even the Rationing Officers are finding it difficult to

check it. All these aspects have to be looked into.

The biggest problem being faced at present is that of quality so far as wheat is concerned, we conducted checks on the quality of wheat in Nagpur. I want to draw the hon. Minister's attention towards the fact that there are two or three varieties of wheat in the market, inferior as well as superior. Fair-Price shop owners and flour mill owners are supplied goods from the same godown. This leads to a lot of corruption. Actually the ordinary variety of wheat should go to the people who process food and also to the flour mill owners. Instead the flour-mill owners, in order to earn higher profit, manage to get the better variety of wheat leaving the Fair-Price shop owners with the ordinary variety of wheat which is in short supply and also not fit for human consumption. In this way, the public has to do with the poor variety of wheat. This is another aspect which needs the hon. Minister's attention so that such irregularities could be checked. This matter has come to my notice through labourers working in flour mills.

Another form of corruption exists in the storage system too. The Government allows margin for shortages upto a certain percentage for goods stored in the godown and also for goods lost in storage. Actually the Government does not check the stock. If there is rainfall for two months, there is a 4 1/2 per cent increase in weight due to moisture. But people take out commodities from the bags equivalent to this allowed margin and sell them out to make profits. If the allowance is upto 2% and there is a loss of 1% percent, the other 1 percent is removed from the stock and sold. The Government should take steps to curb this practice.

Damage to the foodgrain starts from the very beginning. Adequate storage capacity is not even available in Mandis where it is procured. In the absence of adequate storage space, traders cover the foodgrain with tarpaulin and leave it in the open. Later the foodgrains are carried to the destination through the railways and there too it is un-

loaded and left in the open thereby exposing it to further damage. Later it is declared unfit for human consumption and sold in the market. Corruption is evident here also. What is needed is an efficient machinery to check these irregularities. In order to make it more effective, a few honest social workers, public representatives and officers should function at every level. Committees with adequate powers should be set, at, the 'taluka', 'ward' and district level.

I suggest that priority should be given to the poor and weaker sections if essential commodities are not available in adequate quantity of supply. An assessment should be made of the situation likely to arise in the coming years and ration cards should not be issued to those with a high income. Such people can well afford to buy essential commodities from the open market. If they can spend Rs. 1,000, they can easily spent Rs. 1,100 to buy goods of better quality. But it must be ensured that a poor man is not deprived of his share of ration. Today, poor people have to go to the Fair-Price Shop a number of times as the commodities are not available when they need them. When wheat is available, sugar is not available. There should be a provision under which wheat, rice, sugar and kerosene could be made available at the same time. The consumer feels harassed if he has to make three trips to the shop to buy three commodities. Essential commodities should be supplied to the ration shops in the beginning or the middle of the month. In this way, a worker who gets his wages on the first day of every month, can get all the commodities on that day itself. This will save his time. Today the worker spends the entire month making trips to the ration shop. He and his family members waste their energies in their effort to get oil at one time, sugar at another and wheat and rice next.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Purohit, the fact is that the poor people may not be having the money to purchase the whole ration for a month.

[Translation]

SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT: Certainly, Sir, part of the effort is directed towards increasing that capacity. But these things should be available in villages. It has been our experience, that people have to wait for a long time before they can get the commodities. Different commodities are available on different days of the month. This could be made into a weekly or fortnightly affair. But all essential commodities should be available at the same time.

This is a very good scheme. The Bill introduced by the hon. Member should have been brought forward by the hon. Minister. I request the hon. Minister to accept this Bill.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think, the time allotted for this Bill is almost over. Shall we extend the time for this Bill?

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. First, let us extend the time by one hour. The time for this Bill is extended by one hour.

[Translation]

***SHRIMATI BASAVARAJESWARI (Bellary):** Mr. Chairman, I rise to support the Fair Price Shops (Regulation) Bill moved by Shri Basavaraju.

At the time of independence our country had no sufficient foodgrains. At that time our country had requested United State of America to supply us foodgrains. We have seen in our own eyes people suffering from shortage of foodgrains. Now the situation is different. A couple of years ago there was a severe drought in many parts of the country. Even then there was no problem of foodgrains in the country. We have foodgrains more than

sufficient and hence we are prepared to face any difficult situation, whether it is flood or drought. It is the farmers' hard work which has given us this strength. Therefore the entire credit of self sufficiency in foodgrains should go to the farmers of this country. We have the public distribution system for distributing essential commodities to the people through the fair price shops. The main objective of the Public Distribution System is to cater to the needs of poor masses of the country. But this is not happening. I am sorry to say that this public distribution system has become political distribution system. The local party members indulge in the affairs of Public Distribution system. They get the licences of fair price shops to their own people and collect huge sum of money which will be utilised for their party activities, and elections. The poor people are not getting any benefit from these fair price shops. This matter should be taken very seriously and proper measures have to be taken up to make Public Distribution System function properly and efficiently. In Karnataka the jilla parishads are looking after this system in the cities and in the rural areas, the officials are incharge of this system. This is a dual system in the Public Distribution System of the State. This system should go. There should be only one type of system in the entire country. Those who issue licence should also look after the supervision. The licences of those, who indulge in malpractices should be cancelled immediately. The method of procurement should also be rectified. There should not be any difference in the rates. The quality of the foodgrains should be good. Adulteration of foodgrains and other essential commodities must be stopped once for all. The foodgrain that is procured and the foodgrain that is distributed through Public Distribution System must be one and the same. While weighing also the poor villagers' are cheated. This has to be check immediately. The villagers will not be having money to run the fair price shops. He will contact the merchant and get the required

financial assistance to get the allotment. Therefore he will be under the moral obligation of that merchant always. Hence he sends the ration to the merchant from whom he had sought financial assistance. After that the remaining ration is brought to the fair price shop. The ration which had been allotted to rural areas do not reach those particular fair price shops for 3 to 4 months. The sale will be going on in cities and towns but the ration do not reach the villages. Hence it is very essential to the Government to ensure that the allotted commodities reach the respective fair price shops at the earliest. If some Minister visits rural areas then there will be regular sales in the fair price shops, otherwise the actual sale will be only in the cities. This system should be put to an end. In villages only a section of the society are getting the benefit of these shops. Educated persons and other knowledgeable persons get the benefit of fair price shops. Majority of the rural masses mostly ignorant and innocent are neglected. Once I urge upon the government to conduct a survey to find out such persons. These poor people have to be included in the system and essential commodities should be distributed to them. If the Public Distribution System sells rice at Rs. 2 and the same rice may cost about six rupees in the open market. It is not possible for the poor people to pay that price. Therefore, all rural poor must be included in the system otherwise the Public System Distribution will not achieve any success in its objectives. There is the difference in the whole sale and the retail sale. One quintal of sugar is purchased in whole sale. The same sugar is sold in the retail sale. It is quite natural that there will be shortage while selling it in the retail sale. This problem of shortage should also be looked into by the government and corrective measures have to be taken.

There are sugar factories in each State. But the sugar produced in Karnataka is sent to Maharashtra and vice versa. This incurs a huge amount of loss in the form of transportation charges. Therefore, as far as possible we should see that the commodity produced in a particular area or state is distributed in the same area. This would save the trans-

portation charges.

Mr. Basavaraju has proposed 3 to 4 good suggestions. At the State level and at the district boards have to be set up. These boards should have powers and they should look into the matters like proper distribution, quality control etc.

In Kerala and other southern states most of the people are rice eaters. In northern states wheat is the most commonly used foodgrain. In Maharashtra jowar is the common foodgrain. If there is a shortage of any of the foodgrain then the people should not insist to get the same foodgrain. If they are rigid then it will encourage black market. In this regard the people must be well informed to switch over to different food habits. Some persons use more oil and some others are fond of more sugar. There should be flexibility in our food habits. If there is no flexibility we will lose huge amount of foreign exchange also.

The Boards have to be set up at the district, state and national level. The rates of essential commodities distributed through PDS should be the same throughout the country. At present we see one rate in Karnataka and different rate in Andhra Pradesh. This system has to go and an uniform rate should be fixed for the whole country.

In the beginning of our late Indiraji's regime we had taken food grain from America. Within a short span of time under the leadership of our late Indiraji there was green revolution in the country. She gave the maximum encouragement to the farmers and today we are not only self sufficient in foodgrains but also giving foodgrains to other countries.

Two years ago there was a severe drought in the country. Nine States were affected very badly. Even at that time of crisis there was no shortage of any essential commodity. This was possible because of the good administration at the centre and proper distribution of all essential commodities.

[Smt. Basavarajeswari]

I am sure that the hon'ble Minister will take immediate measures to remove the loopholes that are existing in the PDS. So far he has rendered good service in this area and I hope he would bring necessary reforms in the PDS. This would enable the people, particularly those who are living below the poverty line to lead a better life.

I am thankful to you Chairman, Sir, for giving me this opportunity to speak and with these words I conclude my speech.

SHRI YOGESHWAR PRASAD YOGESH (Chatra): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I thank you for giving me time to express my views. For the last four days the House has been witnessing scenes of rumpus which show that the bitter taste of a pill can be experienced only after it is swallowed. The reaction of the people outside the House with regard to happenings in the House is an indication of the image of the opposition as to how they are trying to destroy the democratic traditions. The dignity of the House has been lowered with the disruption of the proceedings of the House for the last four days and the members of the opposition are responsible for it.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to express my thanks to Mr. Basavaraju for moving this private Bill as he has focussed attention of the House on a problem concerning the common man and drawn the attention of the Government to a major problem and it will provide special benefits to the common man. The menace of black-marketing is often discussed whenever the question of supply and demand is raised. India is the fountain-head of marketing. At the time of first world war, when various countries of the world faced shortage of foodgrains and other essential commodities, the system of rationing was first tried by them and the system proved very successful in those countries but when rationing system was introduced in

India, it led to black-marketing and since then this problem continues. Though we are struggling hard against this malady, unless the distribution system in the country is made effective and practical, the problems of common man cannot be solved. Since the Public Distribution System has an effective role to play in the removal of poverty, it requires to be given a right and concrete shapes. Therefore, attention will have to be paid. Some of the basic reasons responsible for it.

The geographical condition of our country is of a different nature. Climate also varies from place to place and different cereals are produced in different regions but evolving a scientific method for their movement from one place to another and ensuring equal distribution thereof can solve our problem. For example, the production of wheat and other cereals in the States of Punjab, Haryana and some areas of Uttar Pradesh is in abundance as against production of wheat in plateaus, industrial and urban areas. Wheat is a cereal consumed by one and all and it is relatively cheaper also. Therefore movement of wheat and other cereals from one place to other should be allowed without any restriction and permission for movement of foodgrains should be granted. Ban should not be imposed on foodgrains taking outside a State which has surplus production. It is a fact, as has been stated by my other colleagues, that wheat is produced in Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh in abundance and a lot of wheat is stocked there. But the stock of wheat rots in godowns due to failure to transport foodgrains in time while the needy people do not get it. This could also be attributed to faulty distribution system. It is natural that the shortage of commodities causes price spiral. The second thing is the practice of imposing levy. The levy is charged from the shopkeepers in the areas where the production of any cereal is not sufficient, due to which prices soar. As a result thereof there is a wide gap between the market prices and the prices fixed for the Fair Price Shops.

The high margin of profit in selling rationed items in blackmarket is a great allurements for the Fair Price Shopkeepers. It is one of the main reasons for black-marketing. Therefore, there should not be much difference between the market price and the prices of items supplied under the public distribution system. The difference of prices should be very narrow at any cost. I would like to draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister to those urban areas where the density of population is very high and people are living in jhuggi jhonpries, particularly, in Delhi and Bombay. The ration cards of the people are kept by the shopkeepers and the foodgrains are given to them in an arbitrary manner. The quantity and the periodicity of foodgrains to be supplied to the card-holders are arbitrarily decided by the shopkeepers. Sugar and other essential commodities are also not supplied to them regularly. The shopkeepers keep their ration cards with them and refuse to supply the commodities on one pretext or the other such as children are not living with the card holders and thus ration so saved is sold in the black market. There is a need to keep strict watch on this thing. I agree with the suggestions given by Shrimati Basavarajeswari for keeping a strict watch to check it. Vigilance Committees have been constituted at block level and vigilance is also kept. In spite of that, there are some practical difficulties. Just now Shri Purohit stated that Fair Price Shop dealers have to maintain complicated account books and if they do their work honestly, the margin of the profit would be negligible and nobody would like to undertake this work without any return. Such things induce him to indulge in malpractices. He tells others also to follow suit. There is no objection if the public representatives are included in the Vigilance Committees but the committee should consist of members chosen from amongst the consumers, who are ration-card holders and this committee should make enquiry at least once a month by asking the people about the irregularities committed, if any. In the areas where density of population is not much and population is scattered, the people have to cover a distance of two to three miles to go to the Fair Price Shop. Due to this, the whole

day of the poor people, who are mostly daily wage earners, is wasted in bringing foodgrains. It is a major problem for them. In order to solve this problem, mobile Fair Price Shops should visit such places on the days on which market is held there. In such shops, not only rationed items but other essential commodities, such as mustard oil etc., should also be made available to the people because rural people have to pay a very exorbitant rates for such items in the open market. Mobile Fair Price Shops are much needed for the supply of such items. I would like to draw your attention towards it. My second point is that not only foodgrains and sugar but cloth should also be made available through the Public Distribution system as it will help them to a great extent if they get cloth alongwith other essential commodities. He will get all essential commodities at one place and it would be convenient for him.

[English]

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY (Midnapore): Sir, I support this Bill. I would request the hon. Minister to bring forward a comprehensive Bill which will be considered and passed for the benefit of the entire country. I would like to bring to his notice certain features of my State which he knows pretty well. Today, in all the newspapers of West Bengal, a news item with the photograph of Shri Ghani Khan Chowdhary has been published. Shri Ghani Khan Chowdhary has met our Chief Minister in the Secretariate. The Chief Minister had invited him cordially and handed over to him three packets of samples of rice which are being supplied to the fair price shops of West Bengal. You know that my State produces the largest amount of jute in the country. It will be good if the land producing rice is utilised for producing jute. It is a national duty and it should be done. It is a fact which I also accept and which has come in the papers also that although there has been a record production of rice, the procurement has not been upto the mark. (Interruptions) You may quarrel with the State Government of West Bengal. Our Minister for Food, Shri Nirmal Basu had been to some of the FCI godowns to see the

[Sh. Narayan Choubey]

samples. Some Congress (I) people asked him as to why he has come only to their godowns and he should go to the State godowns also and said that there also he could find the same bad type of rice.

Such things can go on. But actually there is no rice, wheat and oil of any sort, not only in the city of Calcutta but in all the sub-urban and rural areas. They get sugar and kerosene only. Regarding other items, Calcutta people get some items but the modified ration areas get only sugar and kerosene. They get rice once in two or three months. Everything is depending upon the open market. This is a very bad situation which has to be amended. How will you do it? Is it by putting the blame on the State Government and the State Government putting the blame on you? Ultimately, the common people are suffering. We must combine our heads and efforts together so that this problem can be solved.

KUMAR MAMATA BANERJEE (Jadavpur): It should be sorted out immediately. The State and the Central Government should sit together and take an immediate decision.....(Interruptions)..... All of us should unite whenever there is any genuine cause.

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY: Another point which I would like to bring to the notice of Sukh Ramji is that a huge amount of rice is going out of West Bengal to Bangladesh by smuggling.

[Translation]

Rice is being smuggled (Interruptions) What the Central Government is doing to stop smuggling (Interruptions)

[English]

We do not control BSF. I am only telling the facts. In Bangladesh, rice is Rs. 20 per kg. and in West Bengal, it is Rs. 4.5 or Rs. 5 per kg. Naturally, smuggling would be en-

couraged. How do we find smuggled goods in Delhi, Bangalore or Madras? Smuggled goods are coming and going. It is not a new phenomenon at all. It is a national problem. There is scarcity of rice in Bangladesh. In fact, many things are in scarcity there. Naturally, many items come and many items go. At least now when we are facing this problem, smuggling of rice should be stopped.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI SUKH RAM): And the State Government has got no responsibility.

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY: You sit with them. You blame the State Government and they blame you, that would not solve the problem. The State Government will help you in all these matters, in stopping smuggling etc.

Then edible oil. I do not know when one fine morning you will find edible oil in the fair price shops. We have forgotten that. This needs to be looked into.

Then, quality. Friends from the other side have mentioned very correctly about quality, how it is manipulated. Quality goods supplied to the fair price shops are taken to private owners of the shops and they replace it with inferior quality goods. That is a correct picture. For that, the suggestion regarding watchdog Committees is a good and sensible suggestion. If it is brought into being, it would be of a great help in order to control this.

About ration cards also, they have very correctly stated. The poor man's ration card is not kept in the house of that poor man, it is kept in the ration shop; the owner keeps that. Some gentlemen are demanding from Nagpur that when a person goes, he should get all the items at one go. But there are other areas, where poor and oppressed people live. They want facility to purchase ration items at least twice a week. When they go, they have money only to buy rice. At that moment, the owner will say that if they take only rice, all other things, sugar etc. will

lapse. In order that this does not happen, you must provide the facility of purchasing the ration to these people twice a week. I know, it is very difficult. The difficulty is that actually the ration shops remain open for two or three days in the whole weeks. They remain open on Saturday and Sunday. On one day, some clerical work is done, then they go to the tehsil or district headquarters, then some challan is given to them and to lift the material, it takes three-four days. Naturally, ration shops remain open for two-three days in the whole weeks in the villages.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is not the case everywhere. In our State it is open for all the six days.

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY: Kerala is an exception. Kerala people have been doing these things quite nicely for several years. But I tell you, in my State in the village side ration shops open only for one or two days. There are places where there are 25,000 people living in that area but the units of ration card are 40,000, i.e. the units are more than the population of a particular area. So, how to check it? That is how the ration shop owner gets the benefit. Ration shop owners are not very rich people but they indulge in all sorts of malpractices. You can very easily calculate the profit. You just take the rent of the shop, commission they get and the transport charges and then calculate the profit. You cannot show a profit of Rs. 300 per month. So, they manage to get the profit by keeping false ration cards.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Most of the things which you are saying are to be presented before the State Government.

SHRI A. CHARLES (Trivandrum): Sir, he does not has any faith in that Government. That is the problem.

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY: Sir, that is not the case. Whether it is a problem of a particular State or a Central problem, it is a

problem of the common people of the country. Since your State is managing the things much better than many other states, don't say that these things do not exist. If you go to Bihar, people there do not know about ration. In my State at least people know that there are ration shops, there are a number of places where people even do not know about them. The shop owners, may be rich or poor, behave like the landlords and they often say that there is no item in the shop. People don't know as to whom to complain. This is a situation not only of a single State; this is the situation obtaining in many parts of the country. Your State. Kerala is an exception. So, you have to see how to tackle this problem.

I would suggest you to kindly bring a Bill in this regard and sort out the problems of my State which I have just now raised. Today, a media war is going on and I would say, you please stop this media war between the State Government and the Central Government, between the FCI and the State Government and between the Governor and the State Government. You please make arrangement for the supply of sufficient food, especially rice and wheat, to the people of West Bengal because rains are coming, Puja holidays are coming. I hope you will consider all these things. I am not saying these things with any animosity, I am saying these things with a sense of responsibility.

[Translation]

*SHRI V. KRISHNA RAO (Chikkabalapura): Mr. Chairman sir, I wholeheartedly welcome the Fair Price Shops (Regulation) Bill moved by my friend Shri G. S. Basavaraju, While supporting the Bill I would like to offer some valid suggestions for the consideration of the noble Minister to make the functioning of public distribution system more effective.

There was a time when the foodgrain was not at all sufficient to the people of the

[Sh. V. Krishna Rao]

country. We used to import the foodgrains. After independence especially under the able administration of our late lamented leader Indiraji the production of foodgrains has reached great heights. We have achieved self sufficiency in foodgrains and we are also sending foodgrains to various foreign countries. In spite of this the distribution of foodgrains particularly to the poor people of the villages is not satisfactory. There are various loopholes in the public distribution system. As some of my friends have already stated selfless persons should take up the responsibility of public distribution system. Unless this is done the various discussions, speeches, slogans etc. will be of no use. Our Government is giving over 2000 crores of rupees to assist the system. But unfortunately this help is not reaching the people of the country who live in the remote corners of the country.

I hail from a village. I have the first hand experience of the village panchayat. These villages are not fortunate to have a good system of public distribution system. Some kind of public distribution is working in the cities and towns. Foodgrains and other essential commodities are being distributed to the people in the cities and towns. In villages the system is there only for the sake of name. People are not at all benefited by these fair price shops. I make this statement with full responsibility, why is this difference in the system between villages and cities.

Our Prime Minister took bold step in introducing the panchayat Bill in the parliament. The main objective of this Bill is to give power to the village panchayats. Committees can be set up in the village panchayats and these Committees should be given the responsibility of proper distribution of all the essential commodities. Only then the public distribution system can function effectively in the rural areas.

In many rural areas the foodgrains do not reach the fair price shops for five or six months. In cities and towns where the De-

posits are located entire are made and receipts are maintained regarding the supply of foodgrains to the fairprice shops of the rural areas. This is how the village people are being cheated and our honourable Minister should come forward to check this malpractice immediately. Boards as suggested in the Bill have to be set up at Taluk, Mandal and State level for the satisfactory functioning of the public distribution system. Vigilance should be strengthened and the persons indulging in malpractices must be punished severely. We have the consumer protection Act. I want to know from the Hon'ble Minister Shri Sukh Ram how many persons in the country have been protected by this consumer protectioned Act. There are so many cooperative Societies in the country. How many are functioning properly? The Government has to ensure that all the commodities reach the fair price shops in rural areas. As soon as the Bill is prepared for foodgrains we should see that they reach their particular shops immediately. I do not know where the palmoline tins go. It is a rare commodity to the village people. Almost the entire quantity that has been allocated to rural fair price shops go to black market. This has to be rectified urgently. While issuing licences we should ensure the capacity of the persons to run the fair price shops according to the expectations of the people.

Adulteration of foodgrains, Sugar, edible Oil etc. is rampant in the country. Even medicines are not spread from adulteration. Such persons must be hanged. The malady of adulteration can be checked only by severe punishments.

People particularly in rural areas stand in very long queues since morning for getting kerosene oil. This is happening because of black market. It is high time for the Government to take stringent measures to stop black marketing completely. A branch of vigilance department should be there in each State. The number of essential commodities should be increased, cloth, soap and other essential commodities must be made available through the fair price shops and the middlemen must be eliminated completely.

There should be committees at the Mandal level, district level etc. to look the working of the fair price shops. Representation must be given to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, weaker sections and women in these Committees.

What is the condition of the godowns which are meant for storing essential commodities. Foodgrain and other commodities are rotting in these godowns. Even pigs and cattle do not eat this foodgrain. These godowns have to be maintained properly.

Now I would like to bring to the notice of the Hon'ble Minister some facts regarding Karnataka State. There are 36 lakh green card-holders. Yellow Card holders are about 26 lakh persons. Centre was supplying 60,000 tonnes of rice to Karnataka till February, 1988. Now, this has been reduced to 40,000 tonnes. Similarly there is a big reduction in the supply of wheat which has been reduced to 15,000 tonnes from 25,000 tonnes. The quantum of edible oil has come down to only 600 tonnes from 13000 tonnes. The quantity of sugar to Karnataka is only 18,000 tonnes. I want to know from the Hon'ble Minister about the reduction in the supply of all these essential commodities to the state of Karnataka. What is the sin committed by the State of Karnataka for which there is a sharp reduction in the supply of essential commodities. I urge upon the hon'ble Minister to increase the supply of sugar to atleast 25,000 tonnes from next month onwards. It is very essential to increase the quantum of kerosene oil to Karnataka. It should be atleast 45,000 Kilo liters. I also urge upon the hon'ble Minister to look into the maintenance of godowns throughout the country.

I congratulate the Hon'ble Member Sh. G.S. Basavaraju for bringing this constructive Bill in this august House and wish him good luck in his political ventures.

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

SHRI LAL VIJAY PRATAP SINGH (Sarguja): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I support the Bill moved by the hon. Member. I personally believe that the success and the failure of a Government can well be assessed by the work done by it. Where the fair price shops are functioning smoothly and effectively, its credit definitely goes to the concerned State Government and the Central Government. Where it is not so, it is the concerned State Government which are to blame for that.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, our is a big country and in this vast country varieties of cereals are produced at different places and the distribution of foodgrains can be done in a proper way through these fair price shops. I would like to congratulate the Government for proper working of the fair price shops wherever these are functioning smoothly, but there are some drawbacks also in this system and I would very humbly like to draw the attention of the Government towards them. As time is very short, I would like to express my views in brief. Sarguja district of Madhya Pradesh is a deficit area where the distribution system is not functioning properly. I, therefore, feel it necessary to bring it to the notice of the House that only 12,000 metric tonnes of foodgrains are allocated to Sarguja as against its demand for 36,000 metric tonnes. But practically, only 4,000 metric tonnes of foodgrains are being made available for distribution to the poor through fair price shops. Mr. Chairman, sir, it is definitely a matter of surprise that only 4,000 metric tonnes of foodgrains are made available for distribution as against the demand for 36,000 metric tonnes. It is, therefore, very necessary to improve the situation.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, through this august House, I would very humbly like to make yet another submission to the hon. Minister. It was only yesterday that a discussion took place in this august House. It was alleged that rice was being sold at Rs. 2 per kilogram in backward and tribal areas while it should have been sold Rs. 1.85 a kilogram. In fact, this matter should be considered seriously. So far as the question of Madhya Pradesh is concerned, rice is definitely distributed at the

[Sh. Lal Vijay Pratap Singh]

rate of Rs. 1.85 a Kg., particularly in areas inhabited by tribals. Though rice is being sold at the rate of Rs. 1.85 a kg., yet one thing I would very humbly like to say that supplying rice at the rate of Rs. 1.85 a kg. at few places only is not proper. As I have already submitted that supply of only 4,000 metric tonnes of foodgrains as against the requirement of 36,000 tonnes is very negligible and it requires reconsideration.

I would like to submit yet another point. there should be a uniform policy for the whole country in this regard. As per the system prevailing in my State, foodgrains are released by the Civil Supplies Corporation to the Government Societies or private dealers for further distribution to the poor at the fag end of the month i.e. on 28th or 29th. You just see when only 2 or 3 days are left for the month to end, the quota is released to them and they face difficulties in its distribution and there is ample scope for malpractices being indulged into and thus the people are deprived of the intended benefit.

Similarly, a number of instances have been quoted from time to time that foodgrains which are rejected and declared unfit for human consumption are being certified to be fit for human consumption after putting them in the sun and recleaning and refining it. I feel that once an item of foodgrains is rejected and declared unfit for human consumption, there is no justification in supplying the same after cleaning and refining it. Such things very often come to our notice. The Government should do (Interruptions) Something in this regard.

[English]

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA (Bankura): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am on a point of order..... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: What is your point of order?

MR. BASUDEB ACHARIA: The House

was to sit upto 6 PM and the time has not been extended.....(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. It has been extended upto 7 PM.

(Interruptions)

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIYA: The division was ordered. But no voting took place and no announcement of the result was made...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: The lobbies were cleared. Some of you came to the Well of the House.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Why do you not permit me to complete it?

(Interruptions)

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIYA: How has the time of the House been extended?...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: I am on my legs. If you want the division to be taken up now, I am repaired to do it.

(Interruptions)

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: Now it is three minutes past six. The time of the House has not been extended (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will continue the proceedings till 7 PM. The Private Members Business was taken up at 15.53 hrs. So, the discussion on the Private Members Bill will continue till 18.23 hours.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: The time allotted for discussion on this Bill is over. Is it the pleasure of the House to extend the time by one hour?

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: For the present, the time is extended by one hour. Shri Lal Vijay Pratap Singh, please continue....(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI LAL VIJAY PRATAP SINGH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, recently I returned from a tour of my constituency during which some incidents came to my notice. I would like to refer to them here in brief. Permits for fair price shops are issued under the seal and signature of the Sarpanch in rural areas. But there are some people who have got fake seals and stamps prepared and are running shops. This should be enquired into. In order to check this malpractice, mere cancellation of their shops will not do. Some punitive measure should be provided for it. Only then things will improve.

I would like to further request the Government to evolve a system through which rationed items are made available in the inaccessible areas throughout the year. The commodities should be stocked there well before the start of monsoon season so as to avoid the shortage of these commodities in case of road blockage.

I would like to place before you another point that there are wide difference between the prices charged by the fair price shops and the market prices. This gives rise to the blackmarketing when the stocks run short of requirement. The Government should ensure that adequate stock is made available so that blackmarketing could be checked.

One more important thing that I would like to tell you that in the case of stock falling short of requirement, priority should be given to the people living below the poverty line in the supply of commodities and other people should be covered only if foodgrains and sugar are surplus after supplying to them. It is a very important matter. It is necessary to pay proper attention to these suggestions. Only then you can set right the public distribution system.

With these words, I support this Bill and express my gratitude to you for giving me time to speak.

[English]

SHRI HET RAM (Sirsa): I am thankful to the Chairperson for giving me the time. I support the Bill. The problem is faced by the poor persons who require this system. At the level of production, in the villages, small farmers, who are producing goods, are selling at lesser rates because they cannot keep the goods in their hands.

But when they have sold out their goods, the prices are rising. There is no such system by which they can get the goods at a reasonable rate for their own requirement when they need them. Actually what has happened in India is that the corruption has totally killed the whole system. Only this distribution system has saved the poor people from starvation deaths during the famine, whereas in Africa when famine was there, surplus goods were also there, but due to lack of distribution system, hunger deaths took place there. Here corruption in so much that when even a small Inspector or a depot holder is asked why he is so corrupt or why he is indulging in adulteration, he says....*

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is irrelevant, it won't form part of the record....

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Why do you make a noise? I told you it is irrelevant and it will not form part of the record. So, why do you worry?....

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have not permitted you to speak. Yes, you continue Mr. Het Ram.

SHRI HET RAM: On the production side, my constituency is producing oilseeds. Oilseeds are there and one party in the

[Sh. Het Ram]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, order.

cooperative sector applied for a licence to set up a vegetable oil industry. He has been trying to get the licence for two years but the Government has given the licence to a firm having political relations, for the production of vegetable oil or *vanaspati*. In my constituency, which is an industrially backward constituency, one entrepreneur has been asking for a licence for the last two years and he has not been awarded the same, whereas the person having political relations has been given the licence in the shortest period. *..(Interruptions)*. I am talking about the Zorawar Vanaspati Ltd. of Jaipur and their political connections are well-known to you and to the hon. Minister also. Actually, my area is producing cotton seeds and *sarson* seeds. The entrepreneur of my constituency has been running from pillar to post to get a licence but the Ministry has verbally told him that "no entrepreneur of Haryana will be given a licence because we are fighting against the Devi Lal Government and no industry is to be established there under his stewardship."*..(Interruptions)*. That is what was reported. Whether it is correct or not, I do not know. But for the last three years he has not got the licence....*(Interruptions)*

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI SUKH RAM): This has been recommended by the Haryana Government. First you find out from the Haryana Government, why did they recommend this case?

SHRI HET RAM: For three years, Congress Government was there. My Party, Government is there only for the last two years.

SHRI SUKH RAM: I rejected that case twice but the Haryana Government persistently demanded that it should be accepted. There was a question in Parliament also on this.

SHRI HET RAM: Whoever may have got the licence but this poor fellow has not got the licence....*((Interruptions))*.

SHRI HET RAM: The small and marginal farmers are not getting remunerative price for their produce. The poor farmers who produce agricultural raw materials do not get remunerative price. Those who wish to produce goods for industrial purposes are not getting licences. In this way, the supply is curtailed and this is the main reason for boosting the prices of goods for common consumption. When there is flood of agricultural produce in the market, the poor farmers sell their goods at throw-away prices. Last year, the price of Gobar, at the time of sowing season, was Rs. 1200 per quintal. But there was no purchaser at the time of harvesting season and the farmers had to sell their produce at Rs. 120 per quintal. Now, tell me how the Government is helping the small and marginal farmers. The same is the position in the case of Gujarat and Haryana in regard to garlic prices. This commodity was selling at Rs. 3000 or even Rs. 4000 per quintal. But there was no purchaser during the harvesting season. They had to sell the goods at Rs. 200 or Rs. 300 per quintal and they were not able even to recover the cost of seed.

Sir, with regard to procurement by Government agencies, I may point out that the Government agencies are adopting corrupt means and malpractices. They hire godowns on the basis of political influence for storing the foodgrains. Adulteration takes place in the foodgrains and edible oils at the level of procurement and at the level of distribution.

Now, Sir, transporting of foodgrains and other essential commodities is another problem. In Haryana, in U.P., in Rajasthan, wheat is produced. First it is transported to a far off place, then it is retransported to the villages and then they distribute the foodgrain to the villagers during the lean period. This is another way of charging the poor. The poor villagers have to bear the extra-cost of re-transporting of the grains to the villages from the far off places, directly or indirectly. *(Interruptions)*

Then, sir, regarding distribution, I would like to mention how the poor people are affected. In this connection, I would like to refer to Munshi Prem Chand's story of 'Coffin' where the father and his son are enjoying the potato vegetable they procured while the father's daughter-in-law inside the hut is about to die. They get money for meeting the cost of coffin for the daughter-in-law but with that money they bought food and enjoyed. This is how they cared for their near and dear ones. They did not value for their own kith and kin because they were in starvation. So, Sir, unless corruption and malpractices are done away with, the Government cannot do anything for the poor people. There should be fair distribution of essential commodities and foodgrains and there should not be any middlemen who always exploit the poor and weaker sections. The persons in high positions earn money by exporting high quality of foodgrains. They earn more and more even by adopting unfair means. But the poor persons are getting sub-standard commodities which are not even fit for the consumption of animals.

Sir, I support this Bill which has been brought forward in this House as a Private Member Bill. I request that this Bill may be considered and passed by this House.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM BHAGAT PASWAN (Rosa): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I support the private Member's Bill moved by Shri Basavaraju. Shri Jawaharlal Nehru had once said that gold and silver were not our property but our property was foodgrains which provided food to the maximum number of people. Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri had given the slogan of "Jai Jawan Jai Kisan". Our former Prime Minister, Shrimati Indira Gandhi had ushered in green revolution in this country. Treading on the same path, our present Prime Minister is taking the country ahead on the path of development. It is the result of his efficiency that to-day we have become fully self-sufficient in foodgrains. Though the country experienced floods and droughts for the past few years, the Government always main-

tained a buffer stock of 15 lakh tonnes of foodgrains in its godowns. The country is forging ahead in every field under the able leadership of the Prime Minister. Mr. Chairman, Sir, in the Indian Republic we are distressed to find that despite all these achievements and progress all around, our colleagues from Opposition see darkness all around and they do not see rays of light anywhere. From the happenings in this House during the last 3 to 4 days, it seems that they have set aside all decorum, rules and norms of disciplines. Whatever they are doing is very distressful and shameful. They are also the elected representatives of the people and they should also think about the country's interest. Always thinking of the darkness is not at all in the interest of the country. To-day, they should think about the direction towards which the country is moving. As compared to the present day, the population of the country was just one third at the time of independence—and we had to depend on others for foodgrains. But to-day we are self-reliant. I feel that the public distribution system is functioning smoothly all over the country. Earlier, there was black-marketing and hoarding, but to-day nothing of the sort is there. But I would like to say through you that the public distribution system is not functioning satisfactorily in some far flung areas of the country. Foodgrains are not reaching these areas properly. No Government godowns have been constructed there. I want that some improvement should be made in the system so that every poor person, every villager living in far flung areas gets foodgrains in time. There are certain areas in the country which lack the means of communication. I want that the Government should pay attention to it. Whenever some areas suffer from floods or drought communication system is totally disrupted and prices of essential commodities soar. Prices of kerosene, wheat, rice and other foodgrains rise sharply. Prices of other commodities also go up. I want the government to take some effective steps to control prices. The hon. Minister should pay attention to areas where communication is disrupted. The Government should pay special attention to far flung areas.

[English]

(Interruptions).

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Paswan, You can continue next time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I say, I am free to hear any person before giving the Ruling. Please keep quite.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, we will take up Government business.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: What is your Ruling?

(Interruptions)

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA (Bankura): I have a point of order, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ruling Will be given only after hearing others also as I made it plain already.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What is your point of order?

(Interruptions)

(Interruptions)

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: My point of order is that it is now twenty-three minutes past Six. As the Private members Business was started late, we allowed it to continue up to 6.23 p.m.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You do not know the procedure. You sit down....

(Interruptions)

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will give the Ruling. Why do you waste your energy? I will give the Ruling. You please keep quite.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will give the ruling on your point of order. But I will give the ruling after hearing the Parliamentary Affairs Minister. That is perfectly in order. You sit down....

(Interruptions)

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Pandey, you please resume your seat

THE MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI-MATI SHEILA DIKSHIT): Sir, if the hon. Member believes that the voice vote in this House is no more a vote—would also like to discuss the C&AG report, because even the discussion on the C&AG report which has been postponed to Monday was taken only by a voice vote, after a division had been called—then, I would submit that either you give us a ruling saying that 'Ayes' and 'Noes' are not considered as legitimate voting in this House; otherwise, we would like to go by this logic saying that you do not want to discuss...(Interruptions) You can take another voting right now by division... .. (Interruptions)

(Interruptions)

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: Sir, the time of the sitting of the House has not been extended. The division was called, but voting had not taken place. The result of the division was not announced. The process was not completed. So, as the time of the House has not been extended, the house should be adjourned immediately. This should not be continued further.. (Interruptions).

What is you Ruling?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do you want to say anything on this point?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will give my Ruling.

SHRIMATI SHEILA DIKSHIT: Sir, I want to finish....*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you raising any fresh point of order or have you got anything to say on this point of order?

(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI SHEILA DIKSHIT: Sir, for the past three days, what the Opposition has been doing is to stall the proceedings and run away from the discussion....*(Interruptions)* They have no logic, they have no reasoning behind them...*(Interruptions)* The Government wants to take up important Bills for the welfare of the people of this country, but these people do not want to participate in that.

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY (Midnapore): Sir, the extension of the House beyond 6 O' clock has not been properly done.

SHRIMATI SHEILA DIKSHIT: Sir, it has been properly done.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please leave it to the Chair.

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY: Sir, the Private Members' Business was supposed to start at 3.30 p.m. and whatever the parliamentary Affairs Minister did*(Interruptions)* This extension is illegal and cannot be allowed. *(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will not hear more than one person from each Party.

(Interruptions)

SHRI C. MADHAV REDDI (Adilabad): I had already raised an objection.

MR. CHAIRMAN (SHRI VAKKOM PURUSHOTHAMAN): I know the rule. There is some practice and procedure.

SHRI C. MADHAV REDDI: The process has not been completed. The extension of time was proposed. Then the vote was to

be taken. In the meantime, the Deputy Speaker adjourned the House without taking the vote. No extension was given. There is no justification for continuing the House.

SHRI V.S. KRISHNA IYER (Bangalore South): I stand to state the truth. I never utter untruth. I was present throughout. The Deputy Speaker did call for a division. The division bell was rung and he also said that the lobbies had been cleared. But, afterwards the process was not completed. He did not take voice vote of the House. *(Interruptions)*.

SHRI PIYUS TIRAKY (Alipurduars): I am on a point of order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No point of order is allowed.

SHRI A. CHARLES (Trivandrum): There can be a point of order if there is something new.

MR CHAIRMAN: I do not permit any new point of order. I have only permitted each Member from every Party to talk on this point of order. That is all. *(Interruptions)*.

SHRI PIYUS TIRAKY: I am on a point of order on humanitarian grounds. My wife is alone at home and the law and order in Delhi is very bad. I do not like to leave my wife alone in the late hour at home. So, the House must be adjourned immediately because it is already 6.30 PM and the parliamentary Affairs Minister being a lady, she should consider the case of a lady who is sitting at home working for her husband. *(Interruptions)*.

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY (SHRI VASANT SATHE): If the Opposition hon. Members feel that the time was not extended validly by a proper vote and all that, then I would submit that let us have a fresh vote. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: How can you?

SHRI VASANT SATHE: I know. The Parliamentary Affairs Minister or any Mem-

[Sh. Vasant Sathe]

ber can move that the House be extended by three hours up to 9.30 PM to discuss the CAG report. (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have heard both sides. When the motion for extension was taken up, the lobbies were cleared. But the Opposition Members came to the well of the House. So, the division could not take place. So, the motion was carried by voice vote. That decision is corroborated by subsequent conduct of the House. Even if the Private Members' Bills started at 3.30 or 4.00 or 5.30, the time of the House is only up to 6.00. For the conduct of the House, we followed the earlier procedure and continued the discussion on Private Members' Business till 6.23 PM. The decision is already carried out. Now there is no fresh point before this House.

18.35 hrs.

DELHI MOTOR VEHICLES TAXATION
(AMENDMENT) BILL - *Contd.*

[*English*]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The House shall now take up further consideration of the Delhi Motor Vehicles Taxation (Amendment) Bill.

Shri Rajesh Pilot.

"(At this stage, Shri Satyagopal Misra and some other hon. Members came and stood near the Table)"

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): Sir, the Delhi Motor Vehicles Taxation Act, 1962 is the principal instrument through which taxes are imposed on motor vehicles in the union Territory of Delhi. Under the provisions of this Act, Delhi Administration levy and collect taxes on quarterly, half-yearly and yearly basis. During the past few years, there has been spectacular growth in vehicles population. The

vehicles registered in Delhi have increased from 5.36 lakhs in March 1981 to 14.65 lakhs in March, 1989. For collection of taxes with frequent periodicity for such a large number of vehicles, Delhi Administration has been making elaborate arrangements each year through banks, post-offices and its own counters to effect realisation of road tax. The arrangements made year after year have been found to be not fully adequate. Thus, tax payers are put to inconvenience. (*Interruptions*)

Transport Development Council, which is an apex advisory body on Roads and Road Transport, in its meeting held in 1986 and in subsequent meetings repeatedly recommended for adoption of a system of one time lump-sum tax in respect of personalised vehicles to mitigate the difficulties of tax payers and also ensure cent per cent tax realisation.... (*Interruptions*)

A system of levying and collecting one-time tax in respect of personalised vehicles like scooters, cars etc. has already been operative in the States of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Union Territories of Chandigarh, Punjab, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Goa and Pondicherry. Other States are also processing the matter for amending their respective Motor Vehicles Taxation Acts to introduce lump-sum one-time tax on personalised vehicles.. (*Interruptions*)

Delhi Administration, with the recommendation of the Metropolitan Council, has accordingly proposed to amend the Delhi Motor Vehicles Taxation Act, 1962 and the present Bill namely, Delhi Motor Vehicles Taxation (Amendment) Bill, 1989 is aimed to introduce a system of one-time tax in respect of non-transport vehicles in Delhi. The basic principle adopted in this Bill for computing the lump-sum tax is the charging of one-time tax equivalent to annual tax for 10 years to be paid at the time of registration of vehicles itself. The care has also been taken that (a) the owner of a vehicle already registered would require to pay the tax in lump-sum only on proportionate basis, (b) that there is