सभापति महोदय : आप कल बोलियेगा अब हम हाफ-एन-आवर डिस्कशन शुरू करेंगे।

17.30 hrs.

HALF AN HOUR DISCUSSION

CLOSURE OF RICE MILLS IN KALAHANDI, ORISSA

SHRI P. K. DEO (Kalahandi): It is the compulsion of my conscience and the determination of the Janata Government to root out corruption by accepting the principle of my non-official Lokpal Bill and the assurance given to this House by the hon. Home Minister that the Government Lok-pal Bill will find its place in the statute Book of the country, has emboldened me to bring to the notice of the House and focus to the world a stinking skeleton in the cupboard in my District, the nefarious activities of some rice mill owners, stockists and purchasing agents who have been playing with the life of the people.

Kalahandi District is the second surplus District in the State of Orissa so far as the procurement of rice is concerned. This district witnessed two worst famines of the century—one in 1965 and another in 1974. No doubt, there was drought, but the intensity of the situation was aggravated by the faulty procurement policy and the activities of the unscrupulous sick mill owners. So, I would call it a man-made famine. They owe to the tune of Rs. 2.41 crores—Rs. 1.69 crores to the Orissa Government and Rs. 71 lakhs to the Food Corporation of India in which Sr. Iqbal Singh was the Chairman. He has been sacked, we all know about it. There was discussion in the House. Some of the defaulters are—

		To the State Govt.	F.C.I.
1.	Shri Ramavtar Agrawala Walcot of Junagarh	Rs. 35,64,000 & odd	Rs. 3 lakh & odd
2.	Shri Krisanlal Agarwala Walcot of Kesinga	Rs. 16,21,000 & odd	
3.	Seri Kibsan Raj	Rs. 30,75,000 & odd	
4.	Shri Kishore Bhanu	Rs. 9,00,000	
5.	Shri Ram Bhagat Agarwala	Rs. 34,71,000	
6.	Shri Prahalad Rai Agarwala	Rs. 21,82,000	

In all there are 32 sharks who have been caught in the net. They are the established adulterators, hoarders, black marketeers, smugglers and social offenders. They have been smuggling rice from the surplus Kalahandi to the Raipur District where there is a big industrial complex at Bhilai. This is at the border of the Western Food Zone and Kalahandi is in the Eastern Food Zone. By smuggling, they have been minting money all these years. All along they have remained the blue-eyed boys of the government whichever party came to power. They were in the undivided Congress, then by the Swatantra Party and when the Supply portfolio was taken by the Janata—Congress they became members of the Janata—Congress, then, Utkal Congress, then Indira Congress and now, they are the members of the Janata Party. They have not only corrupted the government from top to bottom, but even officials of the Supply Department of the Government of Orissa are in their payrolls. Even a petty civil supplies officer or inspectors' marriage functions are attended by them with costly presents. There is one infamous "MAMU" or mama whose

name I don't know. He is very well known in Bhubaneswar and he is a go-between between them and the big shots.

Even during the President's rule they had free access to Raj Bhavan. Even when Shri B. D. Jatti, then Governor of Orissa, visited Kalahandi district, he went out of his scheduled programme to have tea in Kisanlal of Kesinga's house and had a closed-door meeting.

Sir, even emergency could not touch them. Mr. K. B. Verma, IAS, Collector of Kalahandi, arrested Ramawatar Agrawala under MISA. But he managed to come out of jail. At the intervention of Jagannath Patnaik, Congress Deputy Minister, this Mr. K. B. Verma was transferred and Ramawatar Agrawala, the MISA detenue, was made 'A' class PWD contractor and he was given as a reward the contract of a minor irrigation project of Rs. 30 lakhs. In the execution of this project there is too much of hanky-panky.

Sir, Shri Kisanlal of Kesinga has taken a house and opened an office in Bhubaneswar and he has started intensive lobbying, entertaining big shots with three 'Ws'.

Sir, during the emergency these Rama and Krishna lead the procession organised by the congress government with the banner—Emergency Zindabad and Indira Gandhi Zindabad.

Now they are close to the Janata party and they have started tom-tomming that Ranjit Mahanty, Barrister and Kamini Patnaik, Advocate, holding their brief, looking after their cases and working as retainers, will be employed as Tribunal and they are going to give an award where not only Rs. 2½ crores will be written off but they will get a compensation of another Rs. 2½ crores from the Government. From these premises you may draw your own conclusions.

Sir, when there was famine in Kalahandi, when the stocks were verified, in the stocks only bags of paddy husks could be found in place of rice. There was acute distress sale. People started selling utensils and other things. These people purchased gold from the poor people at Rs. 50 per tola of gold and they used to weigh it by hand, saying 'this is one tola' 'this is half tola' and all that. They were all along playing with the lives of the poor people of the district.

As the mills are closed now the purchasing and milling licence is given to only 5 or 6 mills and they can hardly cope with the magnitude of the procurement in the district. This is the 2nd largest district so far as procurement of rice is concerned.

Sir, in the last harvest the poor cultivators had to part with their stocks at much lower price than the Government's procurement rate. They did not have any holding capacity. They did not have any bargaining power. Now, when there is a lean season, the price of rice has been rising at a fantastic rate. It is beyond the purchasing power of the poor people because of this faulty procurement policy. These have to be changed. In the case of dues to be realised from poor cultivators, if Rs. 100 or Rs. 200 has been pending with any cultivator, as loan from the Government or from the Cooperatives, this is what happened. I have seen it with my own eyes as to how certificate case proceedings were initiated and how the poor cultivator's utensils, cattle and plough were being auctioned at fantastically low rates but these sharks used to go scot-free.

The Chief Minister of Orissa, for whose administrative experience I have the highest regard, had the Supply Department as his favourite department. All along he kept the Supply Department under him. I hope that he will take very stern action in this regard.

I have no faith in the officials of the Civil Supplies Department of Orissa. So, the C.B.I., at the Centre, should take up the investigation and realise Rs. 2.5 crores and that should

[Shri P. K. Deo]

be spent on some irrigation projects in Kalahandi which is chronically drought-affected district.

I suggest that Indra Stage II Project in Khariar a chronically drought-affected area which has been held up for clearance from the C.W.P.C. because there is no provision for water reservoir which is estimated to cost 2 crores more, for that, this Rs. 2 crores and odd should be earmarked. I hope that this will serve the purpose.

In this crusade against corruption, this is an acid test of the Janata Government and I hope that the Government will not hesitate to wield their sword but root out the corruption as has been well-stated in their manifesto. Rajaji often quoted that the mosquito problem cannot be tackled only by killing one or two mosquitos. This can be tackled at the breeding source where the mosquito breeds. If you put phenyle or some DDT, you can stop the mosquito problem. The corruption has completely corroded the moral fibre of this country and, if that has to be tackled, then the licence quota permit raj and monopoly procurement policy adopted in Orissa has to be stopped.

I believe that the Minister will give a serious thought to it. I have done my duty. I have yet to see the results.

With these remarks, I conclude.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Will you reply to him? Or shall I call Shri Lakkappa? He is not here. Mr. Pradhan.

SHRI PABITRA MOHAN PRADHAN (Deogarh): Sir, the Central Government and the State Government dues amount to Rs. 2,41,32,668.18 paise. Government should be extremely cautious enough. Not only, that. I want to know whether Government will direct the C.B.I. to probe into the matter or not. This is my first question.

My second question is: If the Government have not yet asked the C.B.I. to probe into it, when are they thinking to direct the C.B.I. to probe into it?

Besides, I know when I was the Deputy Chief Minister I was very strict about it and I have, on my own, made an inquiry into that. It is true as was stated by the hon. Member from that district that these people who were defaulters are now hobnobbing with this party or that party whoever comes to power in that State. Whosoever comes to power, they try to hobnob with that party and the caucus of the party and they are also in touch with the Central Government administration to whichever party that administration may belong.

Under the circumstances, it is hoped that the Minister will take immediate steps by asking the C.B.I., if they have not done it already, to probe into the matter and bring the wrongdoer to book and inflict a severe punishment on them. Why have the Government not yet taken steps to black-list the wrong doers and defaulters? Let the Government do so now.

SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO: (Koraput): Mr. Chairman, Sir, this is a very important question. There are other districts also which are surplus in production. When crores of rupees are involved in the matter. The agents to purchase the paddy are defaulters, and they did not care repay the money or the paddy to the FCI or the State Government. I think it would be very difficult not only for the Kalahandi district but also to the whole of the Orissa State. Sir, in this question not only money is involved but also a number of other factors are involved. They are the agents to purchase the paddy but when party is changing they are also changing with them and it seems, as if, they are purchasing the parties and not the paddy. They are cunning fellows, and serious action should be taken against them by this Government—FCI is a Government of India concern—and the State Government

should take firm action not only in this district but also in other districts. The action should be taken not only against these offenders but also against other offenders related to this matter.

श्री उग्रसेन (देवरिया) : सभापति जी, मैं बोलना चाहता हूं ।

सभापति महोदय : इसमें तो तीन ही लोगों ने अपने नाम दिए हैं, और आपका नाम नहीं है ।

श्री उग्रसेन : नाम देने वाले अगर सदन में न रहें तो जो खड़ा हो उसको बोलने का आपको मौका देना चाहिए ।

सभापति महोदय : आफ ऐन आवर डिस्कशन में जो लोग नाम देते हैं सिर्फ उन्हीं को बुलाया जाता है ।

श्री गणनाथ प्रधान (सम्बलपुर) : सभापति जी, जो अभी माननीय पी० के० देव और माननीय पवित्र मोहन प्रधान बोल रहे थे, उन्होंने अपने सुझाव दिए । अब कितना रुपया इन बड़े बड़े लोगों के ऊपर बाकी है वह तो मैं नहीं कहूंगा, लेकिन उड़ीसा में जो प्रोक्योरमेंट होता है उस में किसानों की कैसे लूट की जाती है यह बताना चाहता हूं । बीच में जो लोग, एजेन्ट्स लोग और एफ० सी० आई० के जरिए से प्रोक्योरमेंट करते हैं तो किसान से बहुत सस्ते में खरीद लेते हैं और दूसरा जो स्टाक लेना है, एडवांस लेना है तो सरकार को रिपोर्ट में दिखा देते हैं कि हमने इतना प्रोक्योर कर लिया है और उसके आधार पर लाखों रुपया ले जाते हैं । कालाहांडी जिले में ही प्रोक्योरमेंट एजेन्ट्स पर 2 करोड़ से ज्यादा रुपया बकाया है । इससे अन्दाज लगाया जा सकता है सारी स्टेट में कितना रुपया बकाया होगा । अगर किसान सरकार का पैसा न दे तो उस पर जुल्म होता है, उनको परेशान किया जाता है, लेकिन उस तरह की कार्यवाही इन लोगों के खिलाफ नहीं की जाती है ।

अभी माननीय पवित्र मोहन प्रधान ने बताया कि इन लोगों ने पोलिटीशियन्स को करप्ट कर दिया है । मुझे नहीं मालूम कि वह लोग उनके पास पहुंचे कि नहीं, लेकिन इतना जरूर है कि जो भी सरकार होती है उससे वह लोग मिल जाते हैं और गरीब किसान लोग जो कुछ नहीं जानते है उनको ऐक्सप्लायट करते हैं । अभी जो किसानों का शोषण हो रहा है अगर उसको नहीं रोका गया तो किसान सरकार के ड्यूज कैसे दे पायेंगे ? जब तक सरकार प्रोक्योरमेंट सिस्टम और पालिसी में सुधार नहीं करेगी, तब तक वह किसानों की कोई सहायता नहीं कर पायेगी । किसान लोग जो कुछ पैदा करते हैं, उस का रेट इंडस्ट्रियल गुड्ज की कीमतों को ध्यान में रख कर फिक्स करना चाहिए । इस समय किसानों को कुछ नहीं मिलता है । मेरी अर्नेस्ट रिक्वेस्ट है कि सरकार को अपनी प्रोक्योरमेंट पालिसी को ठीक करना चाहिए, ताकि किसानों को ठीक रेट मिलें ।

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION (SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA): I am thankful to Mr. P. K. Deo for raising this half-an-hour discussion on this issue and enabled the House to go into the procurement policy adopted in Orissa. While deciding the price and procurement policy for each marketing season, the Government of India has been leaving it to the State Governments to adopt the procurement system best suited to them. In Orissa, the system adopted by the Orissa Government has been the system of monopoly procurement. According to the monopoly procurement

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system, private traders are not allowed to enter into the market. Only purchase-cum-milling agents are allowed to procure the paddy on behalf of the procuring agents. In Orissa, mainly, the procuring agency has been the State Government and for some time the FCI also was the procuring agent. But the FCI has gone out of the picture. They had stopped working there after 1974-75. The system which was followed according to the FCI was not very efficient. The Government had been writing to the Orissa Government that this system should be changed and miller's levy should be imposed. As has been the practice in some States, millers levy and also producers' levy have been the best system which has been adopted. This has been working successfully also there. What has been done in Orissa? These persons, as stated by Mr. Deo, are probably influential and they had been influential even in their own days and now it is alleged that they are now doing it with the knowledge of the party. I do not know whether this is a fact. But it appears that they had indulged in this during the previous regime, particularly in that area, in Orissa. I am just now hearing from Mr. Deo that one person Mr. Ram Avtar Agarwal was being arrested under MISA and subsequently some influential person interfered in this affair and he could not be arrested under MISA. A person who misappropriated more than Rs. 30.0 lakhs could not be arrested. He evaded arrest in those days.

Now, these purchase-cum-milling agents have purchased the entire paddy which arrived in the market. They get about 70 to 90 p.c. advance from the procuring agency against that paddy. They have to give the rice to these procuring agency after milling, at the price fixed by the procuring agency. They have been operating in two directions. Some of them have not been giving the rice which they have to give to the procuring agents. They have been selling that rice in the market or, as was suggested by the hon. Member, probably they are taking the rice to the border districts for smuggling the same to the other States. So they were not giving the whole quantity of rice to the procuring agency. Sometimes they have not returned the amount that was advanced to them against the rice. That is why there are huge outstandings against these 32 parties. I have given the list which my friend has just now referred. According to the list, 32 parties in that area are in arrears.

SHRI UGRASEN: What is the total arrears?

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA: Rs.1.69 crores due to the State Government and Rs. 71.71 lakhs due to the FCI. This is over a period of many years. FCI has started proceedings against them according to the agreements. 24 parties are in arrears so far as the FCI is concerned and they have initiated proceedings against them according to the conditions of the agreements. Arbitration proceedings have been started against 15 parties: 8 civil suits have been instituted and nine criminal cases have been registered against defaulting parties. We have tried to elicit information from the State Government as to the action they are taking and we have not received full information. We have been informed that action is being taken for realising the amounts.

A greater part of the arrears is due to the State Government of Orissa and they are within their rights to deal with them in any manner they like. They could get prosecutions or decrees because those persons might have been contravening the food laws and so they could do all that. As I mentioned, the FCI have launch-

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ed arbitration and other proceedings and they are trying to realise the amounts. This amount includes actual amount due plus penalty and interest on that; approximately the actual amount is 50 per cent and the penalty and interest are about 50 per cent.

SHRI PADMACHARAN SAMANTSINHAR (Puri): Why has not the Central Government directed the State Government to collect the arrears from the defaulting parties?

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BRRNALA: It is the function of the State Government and they can deal with the defaulters.

SHRI P. K. DEO: Full amount should be realised and the monopoly procurement should be put an end to.

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA: We have advised them.

SHRI PABITRA MOHAN PRADHAN: The amount outstanding is large: Rs. 2,41,32,731 and 18 paise. It is all public money. Why not the Central Government take interest in that? Why should the Central Government depend upon the State Government?

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA: If we just have a look at the total transactions of procurement, they run for hundreds of crores; that is the total procurement being made in the State. Out of hundreds of crores of rupees transactions, this amount is due today. I had answered giving all the facts to the question of Shri P. K. Deo.

श्री उग्रसेन : जिनके नाम में बकाया है क्या उनकी जायदाद कुर्क हुई है ?

श्री सुरजीत सिंह बरनाला : वह तो स्टेट को करना है ।

18.00 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Wednesday, August 3, 1977/Sravana 12, 1899 (Saka).

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