

MR. SPEAKER: You come to me. We will see. Now Calling Attention.

(Interruptions).

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (Basirhat): Where is the Minister?

(Interruptions).

MR. SPEAKER: There must be somebody.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE (New Delhi): Where is the Minister for Civil Supplies? Is the Minister of Civil Supplies or Minister of Short Supplies?

MR. SPEAKER: Civil Supplies or Short Supplies! Who is to reply?

(Interruptions).

अध्यक्ष महोदय : आप इतना उत्तेजित क्यों होते हैं ?

Let us see who is to reply.

(Interruptions)

श्री मनीराम बागड़ी (हिसार) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, यह दूसरा समय है जब कि मंत्री यहां नहीं हैं। (व्यवधान)।

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES (Muzaffarpur): There is casualness about it.

MR. SPEAKER: Who is going to reply to this? Are you, Mr. Shukla?

(Interruptions)

अध्यक्ष महोदय : मैं ने सुन ली आप की बात।

SHRI HARIKESH BAHADUR (Gorakhpur): After initiating the dialogue on Presidential form of government, they are not taking this Parliament seriously.

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA): I apologise. My room is located quite far away...

MR. SPEAKER: You should have started earlier. You should have been

here in time. As they say, ignorance of law is not an excuse. So, your room being located far away cannot be an excuse.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: If his room is situated far away, he should learn to start from there in time.

MR. SPEAKER: That is what I have said. O.K., dittoed.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: He is young man after all.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes. Looks like very energetic too.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Moreover, he is incharge of the Asian Sports.

14.15 hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

RISE IN PRICE OF ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (Basirhat): I call the attention of the Minister of Civil Supplies to the following matter of urgent public importance and I request that he may make a statement thereon:

'Steep rise in prices of essential commodities'.

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA): Sir, Government shares the concern of the House about the rise in the prices of some essential commodities though during the past few months there has been some moderation in the rate of inflation.

This Government inherited a difficult economic situation in January, 1980 which was characterised by high rates of inflation, shortage of some essential commodities, declining industrial production and widespread infrastructural constraints. The country had also to face the after effects of the unprecedented drought of 1979. The prices of petro-products had to be raised on

more than one occasion. High rate of inflation in many other countries is also having effect on our domestic price situation.

In January, 1981, the all-commodities wholesale price index was 15.0 per cent higher over the year, while in January, 1980, the index was 22.7 per cent higher over the year. There has been generally speaking, moderation in the rate of inflation since August, 1980. During the period April—July, 1980, the average monthly increase in the wholesale price index was 2.6 per cent. However, during the subsequent months of August, 1980 to January, 1981, the average increase was to the extent of only 0.21 per cent per month. There has been an increase of 1.7 per cent in January, 1981 which has been mainly due to increase in the prices of petro-products. This increase was preceded by a fall in the index to the extent of 2.4 per cent and 0.6 per cent in November and December, 1980 respectively. The overall availability of most of the essential commodities is reported to be fairly satisfactory except some localised shortages.

Hon'ble Members will appreciate that there is some improvement in the economy which is showing signs of revival and growth. The major thrust of the Government policy is to increase production, particularly of commodities in short supply. The public distribution system is being strengthened and expanded. The number of fair price shops has gone up from 2.35 lakhs in January, 1980 to 2.75 lakhs in December, 1980. The concerned Ministries have taken a number of steps to augment and streamline the supply of cereals, sugar, kerosene and other essential commodities. There has been substantial increase in the lifting of imported edible oils by the States for supply through the public distribution system which has gone up from 93,000 tonnes in 1978-79 oil year to 3.55 lakh tonnes in the 1979-80 oil year. Upto the third week of January, 1981 the sugar production amounted to 22.61 lakh tonnes as against the production of 17.40 lakh tonnes during the corresponding period in 1979-80.

### essential commodities (CA)

With a view to curbing the activities of hoarders, speculators and other anti-social elements, the Union Government has been stressing with the State Governments to vigorously implement various provisions of the Essential Commodities Act and the orders issued under it as well as the Prevention of Blackmarketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980.

Government is keeping continuous watch on the prices and availability of essential commodities in close consultation with the State Governments and will take appropriate remedial measures to deal with the situation.

SHRI R. K. MHALGI (Thane): This is practically the same reply given during the last session.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Sir, I have with me copies of the record of what the Minister had said in November last when this matter was raised in this House. He had laid a statement in reply to a Starred Question and then he had replied to supplementaries. I find that what he has said now is in no way different from what he had said then. Then also he had said, "We will do certain things, we are thinking of doing certain things, taking certain measures." The same thing is repeated now again.

I thought he would quote some price index figures because the Government is very foud of trying to show that there is some slight stabilisation or even slight fall in the wholesale price index. From week to week, they are announcing that in the newspapers. But I am concerned here with the price of essential commodities which an ordinary man has to pay in the retail shop, in the fair price shop, where he buys. The figures of 0.06 per cent, 0.04 per cent, etc. which he has quoted here may be all right in theory, in abstract terms. But it does not have the slightest impact on the actual retail prices which an ordinary man has to pay every day.

I can give you one simple proof of that which the Finance Minister, Mr. R. Venkataraman, knows.

[Shri Indrajit Gupta]

I would like to ask him, if the prices were really stabilising or coming down, how many times they had to increase the dearness allowance of the Central Government employees in the recent period. Why have they increased it if the price index figure with which the dearness allowance of the Central Government employees is linked has stabilised or come down? It has to go up by eight points in twelve months and then only they are eligible to get an extra instalment of dearness allowance. They have had to pay two instalments of dearness allowance in the recent period.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE (New Delhi): Two more instalments are due.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: And they have not yet been paid. This is enough to prove how the actual consumer cost of living index is moving.

Recently, I read that Mr. Shukla has made an appeal to private citizens of this country to organise cooperatives for doing distribution of essential commodities. That means, the Government is actually admitting in a round about way the failure of its public distribution net work and the failure or inadequacy of these fair price shops. Otherwise, there is no point in appealing to private citizens to supplement the distribution network by organising their own private cooperatives. The prospect which was held out before us earlier, the promise which was made to us earlier, was that the public distribution system would be made much more widespread, comprehensive, and that a network would be created throughout the country. Instead of moving in that direction—he has not said anything about it here—he is making an appeal to private citizens to organise their own cooperatives. Well, if private citizens take an initiative to organise their own cooperatives, it is a good thing, it is a prise-worthy thing. But the way he has said it means that they are no longer having confidence in their own public distribution system. This is not surprising. He has even

said that if more fair price shops are opened, then more staff has to be recruited to man those shops and, apparently, that will mean a big increase in wages and salaries which the Government cannot afford. That is what has come out in the press. He had better contradict it.

I think, the hon. Members of this House, many of them will admit, if not all of them, that even in the fair price shops from where Members of Parliament draw their ration in the localities where MPs quarters are situated, every now and then some of the statutorily rationed commodities, particularly cereals are not available. So many Members of Parliament have complained about it. They send their man to the shop with the card and he is told, "There is no supply this week. You come next week.." Sometimes it is sugar sometimes it is *atta* and, sometimes it is wheat. If this is the condition in the fair price shops which are supposed to cater to MPs and their families, one can well imagine what the situation is where the ordinary people down below are concerned, particularly, in the rural and semi-urban areas. I personally would say that the whole system is actually stagnating, and if it stagnates, then it will break down gradually. The real reason for it is that they are refusing to take over complete State responsibility for the distribution of these essential commodities. Mr. Shukla seems to think that proliferation of more agencies of different kinds—cooperatives, this and that—is going to be the answer. But proliferation of the agencies is not the reply, because you are dealing with a situation where the private trade and profiteers are controlling the actual stocks of the commodities which, you would say, you want to distribute. The stocks are with them, the stocks are not with you. And if your system is to work effectively, you have to ensure physical control over the stocks, and to ensure physical control over the stocks, you will have to come to grips with the big traders, hoarders, stockists and wholesale-traders who, of course, are your best friends and whom you do not want

to antagonise. I think, he has said somewhere—I read in the press—that 80,000 cases under the Essential Commodities Act are pending in various courts of law. That is all that will happen, no action will be taken. On all these things like sugar, cloth, coal, edible oil, drugs, kerosene, cooking gas, paper, soap or cement, I thought he would say something. This is what is meant by essential commodities. I know that the Ministry of Civil Supplies is not responsible for all the different economic forces which are working, I am quite aware of that. But, nevertheless, he has got to answer as to how his Ministry is trying to ensure physical stocks of essential commodities without which it is useless to talk about an effective public distribution system. I would like to ask him one or two questions.

I find that the Indian Sugar Mill-owners' Association is demanding from the Government that the quota of free sale sugar should be increased and the quota of levy sugar should be reduced. Mr. D. D. Puri, who is the Chairman of that Association and who was once a Member of this House, has gone on record making this demand that either you decontrol sugar completely as the Janata Government had done at one time or you reduce the levy quota of sugar from 50 per cent to 40 per cent or something and correspondingly increase the free sale quota of sugar. I want a clear and categorical answer here from the Government as to what they propose to do about this, whether they are going to make any concession on this to the sugar millowners and the sugar trade owner whether they have got the courage to say that on the contrary they propose to increase the levy quota of sugar and reduce the free sale quota. Already, in December last, this Government itself increased the issue price of levy sugar by 65 Paise per kilo, in one jump, which is causing immense hardship to the poor people. One should know that. But now I am apprehensive that,

under the pressure of sugar mill-owners, they are likely to make some further concessions to them.

Regarding cloth, of course, the standard cloth has now become the poor man's—I do not know—a sort of mirage. Where is that standard cloth? Who has got the responsibility for making it now except the mills of the N.T.C.? Perhaps he could tell us what is the performance of the NTC mills, who have been saddled with the entire burden of manufacturing standard cloth, in this respect in the last few months, how much standard cloth is being produced, whether the production is going up and how it is being distributed, because the entire private sector in the textile industry, thanks to your generosity, has been totally absolved of the responsibility of making any standard cloth; they complained that they did not make profits, and you said, "Allright; you need not make any standard cloth". Now, the public sector mills are saddled with that responsibility. Does not matter; that is your policy. But now we want to know what your production is and what you are doing for stepping up the output of standard cloth and distributing it effectively through the public distribution system. A couple of days ago I found that the textile millowners have said that because of the hike in the price of coal which you have announced, and they apprehend a further rise in case railway freights are increased, they are already saying, 'We will have to raise the general all-round prices.'

Cloth and standard cloth—they are not referring to the standard cloth. They are not bothered about it.

Then in coal, you have increased the prices, of course and you will say, 'We will have to do it in order to cut the losses of Coal India Ltd'. But Coal India Ltd. price at pithead

(Shri Indrajit Gupta.)

has been increased by Rs. 26.84 per tonne.

**SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU:** Plus Rs. 100 as bribe.

**SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA:** But what is the price you have to pay for buying coal outside? I am not talking about coking coal for steel plants and all that, I am talking about domestic coal, that is, non-coking coal. That is selling anywhere between Rs. 100—150 per tonne. You cannot get it anywhere except in the black market by paying this price. Is this not a fact?

As for edible oils, I just quote a few lines from an editorial which had been written on the 9th of this month and published in the *Economic Times*—about the edible oil supply.

“There is an apprehension in the country that what happened last year (1980) with regard to sugar is likely to happen in 1981 in the case of edible oils....

We all know what happened to sugar. You must tell us something about this now. The *Economic Times* says:

“The edible oil situation in the whole country has gone out of gear. The consumer pays through his nose not only for groundnut oil but for several other edible oils. The most unwarranted restriction imposed by the Gujarat government on the movement of oil outside the State has added to the confusion. The Centre has not approved of this State measure but it has done nothing to make the State realise its obligations to neighbouring deficit States. The consumer has reason to be frustrated by the strange attitude of the Central Civil Supplies Ministry. . .

That means the Ministry over which Mr. Shukla presides, I quote:

“Nowhere is the charge of non-

performance of the government so irrefutable as in the Ministry of Civil Supplies. During the last few weeks there has been a contra-seasonal (not seasonal but contra-seasonal) upsurge in the prices of several mass consumer items. But the Ministry's attitude has been that of a passive spectator.’

I do not wish to quote any more such things which are now forcing their way to the forefront of national publicity. We are afraid that edible oil is going to go completely out of the reach of the common people this year just like sugar went last year.

You have imported large quantities of edible oils which are finding its way to the black market through the various retail outlets. Therefore, the prices of edible oils outside are anywhere between Rs. 18, 19 and 20 a kilo. Anybody who is buying edible oil outside knows it....

Only a few weeks ago there was an announcement that the prices of 60 drugs have been raised. I do not know which are those drugs. They have not enumerated them in the press communique except to mention that almost all the vitamins that people consume Vitamins A, B, C, D, etc. are all included in these 60 drugs whose prices the Government has decided to raise. I want to know whether Vitamins are an essential commodity or not. What is your criterion?

Then Sir, there is the Bureau of Industrial Costs and Prices which every now and then makes recommendations to the Government and they invariably recommend increasing the prices on the plea that the manufacturers are not able to cover the cost of their production and get an adequate return. I want to know whether it is a fact that all these big drug manufacturers, foreign firms and their subsidiaries in this country are reaping huge profits and paying

fat dividends. If every few months the prices of these drugs manufactured by them are increased, it will become impossible for the common man to buy any of these medicines and drugs. These standard drugs—are they now to be brought within the system of controlled prices and distribution? I do not know. You should tell us what your perspective is. I have spoken last time.—I do not want to repeat all that—about paper, cement, soap and all that, but the same situation is prevailing and it is going to be so all the time. I would just say that you would also take some lessons from the Kerala Government. I think your predecessor has been honest enough to admit on the floor of this House that the best and most efficient public distribution system at present in this country is the one run by the Kerala Government. You should at least try to find out how they run it. It is not a magic wand that they are distributing these commodities. These are being handled by their public distribution system. The State Government have published their official booklet. I can give it to you if you like to read it.

**SHRI XAVIER ARAKAL** (Ernakulam): This has been going on for many years.

**SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA**: We know that for many years there had been non-Communist Governments. Just look at the State Corporation there. In Kerala there is an Essential Commodities Corporation which is handling rice, wheat, wheat products, pulses, green gram, Bengal gram, black gram, spices, chillies coriander, vegetable, sugar, tea, coffee, cement, petroleum products; and other commodities. They are procuring 18 items through their own Civil Supplies Department from various States; they are building up stocks for three months and distributing these 18 commodities. The State Government is saying that because of the inability of other State Governments to take on the distribution of free-sale sugar

through the public distribution machinery the sugar price went as high as Rs. 12 to 18 a kilo whereas in Kerala, at no time, the free-sale sugar price was as high as Rs. 8 a kilo even in the private shops.

So, all I wish to say in that it is not that these things cannot be done. The whole question is whether there is a will to do it or not; whether there is a political will or whether economically and financially, you have the courage to do it. Whether you are prepared to come to grips with the people who do not want to have an effective public distribution system, that is, the traders, the profiteers and the hoarders and soon. If they want to collect money from these people for rallies like the one we had yesterday, they can not do that. If they are not taking any firm measures, there is no hope of the public distribution system working at all and, therefore, we are facing a very difficult and critical situation. I would like you to spell out something concretely as to what you are doing or what you are going to do. If you are not able to do anything tell us that also. We do not want this kind of a hopelessly vague statement which he has laid on the Table of the House.

**SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA**: My statement is not vague. It has touched upon the basic questions which Shri Gupta and other colleagues have raised here. The purview of this ministry is only concerning essential commodities some of which are distributed through the public distribution system.

**SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA**: I addressed the notice to the Finance Minister. But, they have, in their own wisdom, transferred it to Mr. Shukla. I did not address it to him. I have addressed it to the Finance Minister.

**SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA**: If it were a normal question on price rise, the Finance Minister would have handled it. You have mentioned about the essential commodities. This is

[Shri Vidya Charan Shukla]

a matter which comes to me. I am going to answer it.

MR. SPEAKER: Next time he will be careful.

SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA: I am going to answer, Mr. Gupta mentioned about the essential commodities like drugs etc. which are distributed through the public distribution system. Drugs do not come within my purview. They are not distributed through the public distribution system. One of the basic misunderstanding has been caused to Mr. Gupta by the paper which he read. I would like to clarify the press report.

Coming to the specific question which Mr. Gupta raised, I say that this is not a question of failure of the public distribution system. We want the cooperatives to come in. That is precisely to fight the elements which Mr. Gupta has indicated. We want to fight the profiteers, we want to fight the people who do the hoarding and do all kinds of anti-social things. It is for this reason that we have now instituted a policy in consultation with the State Chief Ministers and we have indicated to them that the first element of profit should be taken out from the public distribution system completely so that in the wholesale side, whereas the wholesalers can distribute or sell their products through the private traders, shops, the public distribution system shall not depend on the private traders for their outlets. The State whole-sale trade for the public distribution system only will be handled by the civil supplies corporations that have been set up in twelve States; other States are setting them up. The State level marketing cooperatives that have been set up practically in all States are also lending a helping hand.

14.36 hrs..

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER in the Chair]

At the whole-sale level the commodities are increasingly being handled

by State civil supplies corporations and these commodities will be supplied by the State civil supplies corporations as well as by the cooperative marketing federations etc. to their district units and to their retail outlets at a price which will be minimum and which will not put them in loss but also will not give such profits that normally the private trade looks for. So, this is on the whole-sale level. Let me also clarify that it does not mean that we are taking over the whole-sale trade in essential commodities. The whole-sale trade in essential commodities for the private traders will go on as it is going on but from public distribution system the element of private trade is going to be taken away eventually in this manner.

Similarly, when I speak about the cooperatives doing more of the retail sale instead of the individuals it does not mean that there is any failure but it does mean if a private individual is given a ration shop to run then he has to make a livelihood out of it and if he cannot make a livelihood out of the meagre profit that is allowed under the law then he sometimes gets into such a world that he starts making money out of unethical mean. To avoid this we have said let the cooperative societies take over the retail sale so that they can function on a 'no profit, no loss' basis. Sir in the report which Mr. Indrajit Gupta was talking about, probably it was not properly reported. I myself did not see any report to that effect in the newspapers. What I had said was that in order to remain on the basis of 'no profit and no loss' if they so like the marketing federation of the particular trade concerned could provide them with staff so that those people don't have to spend money on staff, they can spend money on godowns and shops and the people in the community who want to serve the consumers can form a cooperative society and can run a unit—that we fixed for ourselves—of two thousand persons for each fair price shop. In a community of two thousand we hope there will be seven

to eight persons who can come out and form a cooperative society not for making any profit; they will have their own sources of livelihood and they can distribute these commodities through their shops and still not charge any profit for their own livelihood. This is what I meant by introducing cooperative societies in the public distribution system. It is going to improve the existing system and not stagnate or make it any worse than what it is.

**SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA:** How can you prevent private traders controlling those cooperatives?

**SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA:** That is what we intend to do. In our discussions we have told the people that as far as possible it should be people who are not in this trade. If private traders have their own shop and keep running a cooperative shop then it will create problems. This is what we have discussed with them and I am sure that care will be taken to see that private shop keepers do not enter the cooperative field to do black-marketing by the back door.

Now coming to specific points, I am sure. Sir, I do not have to keep on denying in a ritual fashion whatever Mr. Indrajit Gupta said about realising money from the people for holding a rally. It is all political talk in which I do not want to indulge. I want to keep myself confined to the merits and to the points raised. I would say that Mr. Indrajit Gupta should not have mentioned these things because it takes away the seriousness of the whole thing that he has raised by levelling such unfounded unrealistic and wrong charges.

Now, having disposed of all those charges by my denial, let me come to the four points that he has raised. The first was about the sugar mills association asking for increase in their demand for free market sugar quota. Sir, we do not intend to change the present system. This is all that I now wish to say. If details are wanted, probably the Agriculture Minister who handles the

subject will be able to give such details to the House. There is no intention on the part of the Government to change the present system, as I have stated earlier.

As far as standard cloth is concerned, as Mr. Gupta pointed out, it is mostly the NTC—National Textile Corporation—who are making this. References were made to private sector mills now honouring the contract. I can say this that the Government has taken this up very seriously; already the Commerce and Industries Ministries have taken up the matter with them. As has already been decided/ the production has to be shared proportionately between the mills which are run by the NTC and by the private sector. As far as the quantum of production is concerned, I wish to point out that the present quantum of production is 400 million square metres per year; we want to take immediate steps to raise this by 200 million metres straightway, ultimately taking it upto 1,000 million metres, so that the demand of standard cloth which is increasing day by day can be met in a proper way.

Regarding coking coal, the position is this. The honourable House knows that Government are taking various steps to deal with this matter in a proper way. There are, however, certain transport bottlenecks which are being faced which we are trying to sort out.

Regarding edible oil, I could find that this matter exercised the minds of hon. Members, most particularly, the hon. Members from Gujarat. Apart from Gujarat, there are some other sources for groundnut production like Rayalaseema and Telengana. They are also badly affected due to drought. So, the production of groundnut, which is the major or the most important component of edible oil used in the country, has gone down substantially. The Gujarat Government has not put any ban on inter-State trade; they cannot put any ban

[Shri Vidya Charan Shukla]

without the previous consent of the Central Government.

*(Interruptions)*

**SHRI ABDUL SAMAD (Vellore):** The House wants to know when Mr. Jyotirmoy Bosu joined the Cabinet.

**MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER:** I think very recently!

**SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU:** My friend is changing the hat so often; so, why cannot he change the bench at least once?

**SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA:** Because of this shortage or failure of groundnut, we are faced with a peculiar situation. The Gujarat Government had to take certain steps. They have put some kind of constraints on the movement of edible oil. We are seriously considering questions like arranging import of edible oil in such a manner that the country's requirement would be met properly and no crisis of any sort is allowed to be created.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** What about prices?

**SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA:** Price is connected with availability. It is not independent of availability. Groundnut price went up because of this problem which we faced; the price of other oilseeds were also affected in a similar way. These are the four points which I wanted to mention for the information of the House.

**SHRI ANANDA PATHAK (Darjeeling):** I have read the statement made by the hon. Minister. He has given his reply to the questions raised by the previous speakers. I am sorry to say that he has failed to give a satisfactory answer to the House. In spite of the tall promises made by Congress (I) in their election manifesto, we find that the prices of essential commodities are rising by leaps and bounds day by day.

I want to know that the basic problem is. The hon. Minister has not stated the real cause for this state of affairs. The statement tries to throw the blame on the shoulders of the previous Government and the previous Government also used to blame the 30 years of Congress rule. But neither Government had suggested the remedy to get over this problem. Both the Governments have failed to hold the price line and check the spiralling prices of essential commodities. I am sure the problem can be solved if the Government have political will. Is it not a fact that the bankrupt economic policy pursued by the ruling class for the last three decades is solely responsible for such a steep rise in prices of essential commodities? Is it not a fact that the crisis ridden capitalist path of development adopted by the ruling class ever since independence is responsible for this situation today? In reality, the bankrupt economic policy and the capitalist path of development pursued by the bourgeois landlord government in the interest of big capitalists and landlords is responsible for this sorry state of affairs.

Is it not a fact that the Government have totally failed to bring about economic equality so far, as a consequence of which the country has been landed into a serious economic crisis and dependence? Is it not a fact that the Government have failed to effect basic land reforms and ensure remunerative prices for the products produced by the poor and marginal farmers? Is it not a fact that the Government have given a blank cheque to the private traders, hoarders, speculators, black-marketeers, landlords and money lenders to plunder our rural population and the working people who constitute more than 90 per cent of the population of the country? The Government claim that production is increasing every year, but we find that as production increases, the prices are also increasing and artificial shortage is always created. Why? Is it not a

fact that the taxation policy and deficit budget which cause inflation are also responsible for rising prices of essential commodities?

Is it not a fact that repeated increase in the prices of petrol and petroleum products are responsible for rising prices of essential commodities? Is it not a fact that in spite of the enactment of a series of legislations, the Government have totally failed to curb the tentacles of manipulators, profiteers, hoarders, speculators and blackmarketeers? In spite of all these, if the Government feel any responsibility towards the people and if they have got political will, they can render some relief to the people and save them from the clutches of spiralling prices. If they are serious enough, I want to know whether the Government are prepared to consider the concrete proposals put forward by the Government of West Bengal in the interest of the whole country. If so, will the Government state whether they are prepared to take over the wholesale trade of all the essential commodities like wheat, rice, pulses, edible oil kerosene, sugar, coarse cloth, coal, gas etc. and distribute them throughout the country through the public distribution system at the same time? I want to know whether the Government are prepared to set apart a special fund of Rs. 500 crores for ensuring effective procurement and distribution of essential commodities to the people of all the States. Are the Government also prepared to set apart foreign exchange worth Rs. 1000 crores for importing essential commodities and ensuring uninterrupted supply and distribution of essential commodities. Lastly, are the Government prepared to abolish all taxation on essential commodities as also life saving drugs?

**SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA:** The hon. Member has asked what the basic problem is and why the prices of the essential commodities are rising. As is well known to hon. Member, one of the problems is shortages. As long

as shortages remain, we have to control and combat the prices, among other things, through the public distribution system, and to the extent that we can make the public distribution system effective, we would be able to combat the price rise. This is the basic problem that we are trying to tackle. The hon. Member also asked me a series of question and he has mentioned the bankrupt economic policies, serious economic crisis, black marketing, profiteering etc. I have already touched these when I was replying to Shri Indrajit Gupta.

The country is emerging out of a serious economic crisis. Of course, the effects of it are still there and we have to tighten up our belts to fight this out completely. As far as the black marketing, hoarding and other things are concerned, we have tightened up the law and the machinery so that these people can be tackled in as effective manner as possible.

About the takeover of the whole-sale trade, as suggested by the hon. Member, and the West Bengal Government has also been saying something about it, we have no intention of taking over the whole-sale trade in any commodity, which is in the hands of private people. Whatever whole-sale trade relates to the public distribution system, that I have indicated already, will be taken over eventually by the States Civil Supplies Corporations and other bodies concerned with this.

**SHRI SATYASADHAN CHAKRABORTY (Calcutta South):** I was just listening to the answers given by the hon. Minister of Civil Supplies. It is really amusing that he has been repeating all the words which his predecessors in this House spoke times without number, that they were trying to hold the price line, they were seriously concerned about the matter, and also they had been taking active steps for this. I remember when I first entered the House there was table thumping by the members

[Shri Satyasadhan Chakraborty]

of the ruling party and they said that since Shrimati Indira Gandhi was there, everything would change for the better including the economy. They promised that they would change even the economic laws. It seemed, they were telling nursery tales, and I do not know whether it was for their internal consumption. They said, that there was a time when there was a good queen ruling the country, then a demon came and captured the power and everything went wrong. Now, the queen has come again and everything would be all right. This is what they said. As we know, one year has already elapsed and they have not been able to do anything. There has been galloping inflation. The rise in wholesale price index, in the year 1979, was 22.7 per cent or 23 per cent. (Interruptions).

The pet theory of the Government, as the hon. Minister was just now saying, is that there is shortage of things and therefore, prices are rising. I emphatically challenge this theory. In the 70s, there were some agricultural failures, but only yesterday Shrimati Indira Gandhi told the kisans that it was because of their efforts that agricultural produce in our country had gone up.

She has pointed out that India is the only country which has made a remarkable progress (Interruptions) It is a fact that our agricultural production has gone up. When the production has gone up, why are the prices rising? How do you explain this? You said that the production of sugar last year was 38 lakh tonnes. The production of sugar this year would go upto 55 lakh tonnes. Now the crushing season has begun. Why is it that in the Bombay market the wholesale price of sugar per quintal has gone up by Rs. 20 to Rs. 25 when the production has gone up? What is their answer? What about edible oil? The production of edible oil may go down upto 5 per cent. There has been no appreciable influence on Supply due to this. Why are

essential commodities (CA)

the prices of edible oil going up? The answer is that the Government has been allowing the speculators to hoard. You are not seriously forbidding future trading. You are making money available to the blackmarketeers. Is it not a fact that you are increasing the prices deliberately by administered prices. You talk of OPEC countries and say that they have increased the price of oil. How is it that you have increased the price of oil of our internal production? What is the reason behind it? That does not justify everything.

You talk of cost push effect. Is it not a fact that the total money supply has increased, and since the total money supply is out-pacing the production, the prices are rising? Is it not a deliberate policy of your budget which is responsible for the rise in prices? You have been hoodwinking the people by telling them that you will have some sort of fair price shops. If you do not take over the wholesale trade, how can you contain prices? If you do not give subsidy for essential commodities and make them available to the poor people how can you check prices and how can you make things available to the people at a fair price? You are not going to do this. You are going to give subsidy to the exporters, but you are not trying to feed the people. You are not responding to the demand of the West Bengal and Kerala Government. It is the duty of the Central Government to earmark at least Rs. 500 crores to subsidise essential commodities so that 70 per cent of the people who are living below the poverty line get at least essential commodities at a reasonable price. You are not doing that. You are deliberately increasing the prices.

You have raised the price of coal. The explanation given by the hon. Minister is not only unsatisfactory but also misleading. You are not managing the coal industry properly after its take over by the Government because of the misuse of the whole thing. Now, you are answerable to the people and to this House. You are saying that you are trying to open fair price shops. Please do. But if you do not control the

wholesale trade, if you do not manage the economy in such a way that there is no additional money supply, how can you control prices? You blame the Janata rule. But is it not a fact that the prices in India have been increasing since the Congress Government came to power? Is it not true that it has been increasing since the Congress came into power at the Centre? It is because of the economic policies of giving concession to multi-nationals, monopolists, traders, landlords and black-marketeers.

(Interruptions)

15 hrs.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

SHRI SATYASADHAN CHAKRABORTY: It is the hard truth. It is very difficult to consume it, I know, but have a powerful stomach to consume the hard truth. There are the realities and how you are trying to appease the black-marketeers has to be seen in the recent Ordinance. All the black-marketeers have been rewarded. You will make the black money white. What an example of the Government that works for black-marketeers. It is not a Government working for the people. Have you seen the Kisans you have brought in Delhi? Have you seen their dress and food? It is a mockery that you have done to the people keeping them in poverty and bringing them to Delhi to see the pomp and splendour here. It is a shame. I want the Minister not to tell us the old hackneyed stories. He should tell us what positive steps they are going to take.

(Interruptions)

SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA: The hon. Member, Mr. Chakraborty has given his hectic old lecture that he has been flinging for the last ten years. He did not like my flinging the old story. Anyway, I will spare the House of the torture that he has given to the House. I will not go into all these things which he had mentioned. I will limit myself to the points in the Calling Attention Notice. Whatever questions

I could pick out of his oration. I will give that information to the House.

I must read for the benefit of hon. Members what I have given in my statement. I think in his excitement he does not remember what I mentioned in my statement about rise in price index and fall in it. With your permission, I will read it out. I have said that

there has been generally speaking, moderation in the rate of inflation since August 1980. During the period April to July 1980 the average monthly increase of the wholesale price index was 2.6 per cent. However, during the subsequent months, August 1980 to January 1981 the average increase was to the extent of only .21 per cent. There has been an increase of 1.7 per cent in January 1981 which has been mainly due to increase in the prices of petrol products. Before this I had said a basic thing—that in January 1981, all commodities wholesale price increase was 15 per cent over the year, that is, over the last year. In January 1980, that is during the previous Government's rule, the rise was 22.7 per cent. This is the difference between the previous Rule and the present rule. We have been able to slow down the increase in prices from 22.7 per cent, to 15 per cent. This has been a good achievement so far.

Now, the hon. member mentioned about agricultural self-sufficiency. There has certainly been a great achievement by the Congress Government that the country, from a deficit country has become a surplus country in foodgrains. That does not mean that we don't have droughts. We do have droughts. We had very very serious droughts in 1979 and we are just coming out of the effects of that drought. Because of that we have some difficulties in wheat, although with our efforts without importing any wheat we are trying to overcome the shortage of wheat and we are sure that by the time the new wheat arrives in the market, we will be able to manage, through the public distribution system of this essential commodity in a proper manner.

[Shri Vidya Charan Shukla]

In oilseeds, there has been certain shortfall in the sense that the increase in the production of oilseeds has not been as fast as in the case of cereals. Because of this, we are facing serious difficulties. The oilseed production has gone up but not as substantially as in the case of cereals. Therefore, now, we are taking steps in consultation with the Planning Commission as well as the Ministry of Agriculture to see that the oilseed production in the country goes up by the end of the Sixth Five Year Plan in a manner that we do not need to import any edible oil and we become self-sufficient.

About hoarders and speculators what the Member has said, that certainly his own Party line. His Government is not at all interested to take action against hoarders and speculators. When we asked them to take action against hoarders and speculators under the National Security Act, they refused to do so. This creates problems for us.

As far as crude and petroleum oil is concerned, the hon. Member was questioning, 'if the OPEC increase the price of the crude oil, why do we increase the price of the crude oil produced in the country itself?' I thought that the hon. Member knew that we had an equalisation formula on oil prices. Even after doing equalisation we have to give subsidy to keep the oil price low. If we do not give any financial subsidy. Even after giving subsidy sel or kerosene, the price would be much higher. To keep the price down we always give very large amount of subsidy. Every after giving subsidy this is the kind of price that we have been able to maintain. This is not of our doing. Since this is coming up with the international oil situation, this is having a serious affect on the price situation.

SHRI SATYASADHAN CHAKRABORTY: I do not know whether I am correct or not. But I have gathered from the Reserve Bank bulletin that the peak period of inflation was October. Then in November and December

it came down. But from the last week of December it started picking up. This year the inflation is estimated to be of the order of 20 per cent. Am I correct or not?

You have been telling that you have been able to control it. That was true for two months i.e. November and December. But right from the end of December upto this period what is the increase in prices? Is it not a fact that the economists have estimated—and your Government is also thinking on this line—that there will be a rise of 20 per cent inflation in our country?

SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA: I do not think this is a fact. But if he wants to really find an answer about inflation, he will have to address his question to the Finance Minister.

श्री रामावतार शास्त्री (पटना) :  
उपाध्यक्ष जी, मैं ने मंत्री जी के वक्तव्य को बहुत ही ध्यान से पढ़ा और सुना भी . . .

श्री विद्याचरण शुक्ल : आप ने सुना नहीं ।

श्री रामावतार शास्त्री : इस वक्तव्य में केवल आंकड़ों का जाल बिछाने की कोशिश की गई है। वास्तविकता से इन आंकड़ों का कोई वास्ता नहीं है। मैं इस का उदाहरण हमारे संसदीय सौध में जो सुपर बाजार है, वहां पर जो चीजें जिस भाव पर बिक रही हैं, उन्हीं से दूंगा, जिस से आप स्वयं समझ जायेंगे कि आप का यह कहना कि कीमतें कम हो रहीं हैं, वास्तविकता से कितना दूर है, कितना गलत है। आप ने इन आंकड़ों के जरिये हिन्दुस्तान की जनता को गुमराह करने की कोशिश की है, लेकिन जिन को आप ने कल बुलाया था, वे भी अब इन से गुमराह होने वाले नहीं हैं।

मैं आंकड़े पढ़ कर बनाना चाहता हूँ। मूल्य वृद्धि के जो आंकड़े हैं, वह मैं बताना चाहता हूँ। मैं पहले साबुन वगैरह से शुरू करता हूँ। मई, 1980 में आप ही की दुकान

में रिन साबुन 2 रुपये 10 पैसे में एक टिकिया बिकती थी और आज उस की कीमत 2 रुपये 25 पैसे है। यह बढ़ती है या घटती? लाइफवाय, रेक्सोना, हुमाम, लक्स ये साबुन मई, 1980 में 1 रुपये 65 पैसे में बिकते थे और अब बिक रहे हैं 1 रुपये 80 पैसे में। अशोक ब्लेड 1 रुपये 60 पैसे में एक पैकेट बिकता था मई, 1980 में और अब उस का दाम 1 रुपये 85 पैसे है। रानीपाल, जिस से कपड़े सफेद किए जाते हैं, 2 रुपये 20 पैसे मई, 1980 में आप की सरकार बन चुकी थी बहुत पहले—बिकता था और अब उसकी कीमत 2 रुपये 40 पैसे है। पावरोटी, जो आम जनता खाती है, 1 रुपये के बदले 1 रुपये 10 पैसे में मिल रही है।

अब आ जाइये जून, 1980 में। दाल मसूर 4 रुपये 50 पैसे प्रति किलो जून 80 में बिक रही थी और अभी कल जो मैं ने उस को खरीदा है, तो 6 रुपये 25 पैसे में आप की दुकान से यानी सुपर बाजार से खरीदा है।

पूर्ति और पुनर्बास मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री भागवत झा आज़ाद): आप मसूर की दाल पसन्द करते हैं?

श्री रामावतार शास्त्री : मैं हवा में बातें नहीं कर रहा हूँ। यदि आप चाहते हैं तो मैं मंत्री जी को निमंत्रित करता हूँ। एक बार मैं ने वित्त मंत्री जी को भी निमंत्रित किया था कि बगल में सुपर बाजार है, चल कर देखिये। उन्होंने ने कहा था कि और कहीं जा सकता हूँ लेकिन सुपर बाजार नहीं जा सकता। मुझे विश्वास है कि यह मंत्री जी वैसा नहीं कहेंगे।

श्री भागवत झा आज़ाद : भोजन के लिये इन्हें बुलाइये।

श्री रामावतार शास्त्री : मैं स्वयं बना कर खिलाऊंगा क्योंकि अकेला हूँ। मैं खिचड़ी बना कर खिला सकता हूँ।

15.12 hrs.

[SHRI GULSHER AHMED in the Chair]

तो मैं यह कह रहा था कि मसूर की दाल; जो 6, 7 महीने पहले 4 रुपये 50 पैसे प्रति किलो थी, अब 6 रुपये 25 पैसे प्रति किलो आप की दुकान में बिक रही है और ओपन मार्केट में तो वह 7 रुपये प्रति किलो है। फिर दाल अरहर जून 1980 में 4 रुपये 25 पैसे प्रति किलो थी जो अब 4 रुपये 90 पैसे प्रति किलो है। चना, जिस को काला चना कहा जाता है, वह जुलाई, 1980 में 3 रुपये 60 पैसे प्रति किलो था जो अब 4 रुपये 70 पैसे आप की दुकान में है और बाजार में वह 5 रुपये 20 पैसे है। तेल, जिस को कडुवा तेल कहते हैं यानी सरसों का तेल, वह नवम्बर, 1980 में 10 रुपये प्रति किलो था और अब वह 16 रुपये से ले कर 18 रुपये प्रति किलो बिक रहा है। तो यह बढ़ती है या घटती? यह मैं आप से पूछना चाहता हूँ और हिन्दुस्तान की जनता पर फसला छोड़ना चाहता हूँ कि सरकार वास्तविकता से कितनी दूर है। ये आंखों में कैसे धूल झोंकते हैं।

अब मैं आता हूँ मकान बनाने की सामग्री पर। मकान बनाने के लिए क्या चाहिए? लोहा चाहिए, सीमेंट चाहिए, ईट चाहिए, बालू चाहिए और लकड़ी चाहिए। इन के दाम दो गुने, तीन गुने और चार गुने बढ़े हैं। इस पर ये दावा करते हैं कि चीजों की कीमतें नहीं बढ़ी हैं। गरीब को राशन, तेल आदि चाहिए लेकिन उस के दाम भी इन्होंने बढ़ा दिए हैं। और यह कहता कि चीजों के दाम नहीं बढ़े हैं यह सचमुच में पाखण्ड के सिवा और कुछ नहीं हो सकता। एक माननीय सदस्य ने ठीक ही कहा था कि जब उत्पादन बढ़ रहा है, तो चीजों की कीमतें कम होनी चाहिए लेकिन आप की मिलीभगत है चोर-बाजारियों के साथ, गल्ला-चोरी करने वालों के साथ। इसलिए उन के खिलाफ आप कुछ कार्यवाही नहीं करना चाहते हैं। अगर आप कार्यवाही करेंगे, तो जरूर चीजों के दाम

[श्री रामाबाजार शास्त्री]

नीचे आएंगे। आप का जो राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा कानून है, उस के तहत रेल मंत्री, पांडे जी, ने लोको कर्मचारियों और उन के नेताओं को जेल में डाल दिया, सरकार ने कई राजनैतिक नेताओं को और ट्रेड यूनियन नेताओं को जेल में डाल दिया। लेकिन मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि इस कानून के तहत क्या चोरबाजारियों के खिलाफ कोई कार्यवाही की गई है? आप ने बहुत सारे कानूनों का जिक्र किया है, आवश्यक वस्तु अधिनियम, चोरबाजारी नियंत्रण अधिनियम वगैरह वगैरह। आप ने इन कानूनों के तहत क्या कार्यवाही की है? क्या आप ने इन कानूनों को केवल पत्रों की शोभा बढ़ाने के लिये बनाया है, क्या आप ने इन्हें क्रियान्वित किया है?

यहां ठीक ही कहा गया कि जब केरल सरकार 18 आइटम्स पब्लिक डिस्ट्रिब्यूशन सिस्टम में ला सकती है तो क्या कारण है आप नहीं ला सकते हैं? एक राज्य सरकार यह कर सकती है जो कि उसी संविधान के तहत काम करती है जिस संविधान के तहत हम और आप काम कर रहे हैं तो आप इसे क्यों नहीं कर सकते हैं, इस का मुझे जवाब दीजिए।

दवा के बारे में आप ने कह दिया। हम नहीं जानते कि आप प्राइवेट सैक्टर को दवा बनाने की जिम्मेदारी देना चाहते हैं या नहीं। लेकिन सरकार ने सचेरे कहा था 'नाट आनली प्राइवेट कम्पनीज' तो इसका मतलब है कि उन को भी सरकार इस काम को देगी और वे दवाओं के दाम भी बढ़ायेंगे। लाइफ सेविंग ड्रग्स बनाने की जवाबदेही अगर आप इन चोरबाजारियों के कंधों पर डालेंगे तो उन के दाम भी बढ़ेंगे।

गेहूँ की बात मैं आप को बताता हूँ। पिछले साल आप ने इस की सपोर्ट प्राइस 105 रुपये क्विंटल तय की थी लेकिन बिका

*essential commodities (CA)*

यह सौ रुपये क्विंटल में। आप पटना मार्केट में चले जाइये, वहां आज यह 220 रुपये क्विंटल में बेचा जा रहा है। मैं ने यहां का दाम पता नहीं लगाया है, अगर आप कहेंगे तो वह भी पता लगा कर आप को बता दूंगा। यह जो 220 रुपये क्विंटल में गेहूँ बेचा जा रहा है और चोरबाजारियों के द्वारा बेचा जा रहा है, क्या आप अपने कानून के तहत इन चोरबाजारियों को जेल की हवा खिलायेंगे जिस की हवा हम बहुत खा चुके हैं?

चावल का उत्पादन बढ़ रहा है लेकिन उस की भी कीमत कम नहीं हो रही है। यह जो कहा जाता है कि उत्पादन बढ़ रहा है और कीमतें कम हो रही हैं यह बिल्कुल लफफाजी है, पाखण्ड है। सरकार को पाखण्डी नहीं बनना चाहिए।

मैं अब सवाल करना चाहता हूँ कि जब आप ने पब्लिक डिस्ट्रिब्यूशन सिस्टम को बढ़ाया है तो क्या यह सच बात है कि बिहार के मेरे निर्वाचन क्षेत्र पटना लोक सभा क्षेत्र के पटना पूर्वी विधान सभा क्षेत्र के जल्ला इलाके में जहां आप राशन देते हैं वहां तमाम लोगों को राशन कार्ड नहीं दिये गये हैं? यदि इसमें सच्चाई है तो क्या आप सभी राज्य सरकारों को यह आदेश देंगे कि वे सभी को राशन कार्ड दें और किसी को भी बिना राशन कार्ड के राशन न दिया जाए? राशन की दुकान वाले राशन, चीनी, गेहूँ, चावल ब्लेक मार्केट में बेच देते हैं। क्या आप सभी को राशन कार्ड दिलवा कर उन्हें राशन दिलवाने की व्यवस्था करेंगे?

आखिरी सवाल मैं यह करना चाहता हूँ कि पब्लिक डिस्ट्रिब्यूशन सिस्टम में फेब्रुअर प्राइस शाप्स पटना के लिए पिछले तीन महीनों, नवम्बर, दिसम्बर, और जनवी में कितनी कितनी चीजों की मांगकी गई और उन्हें कितनी चीजें सप्लाई की गयीं और राज्य सरकारों से आप को कितनी-कितनी मांग आयी और आप ने कितनी सप्लाई की?

इससे ही पता चल जाएगा कि आप सचमुच में डिस्ट्रिब्यूशन सिस्टम को ठीक से नहीं चला रहे हैं। कभी दुकानों पर चावल नहीं है, कभी गेहूं नहीं है, तो कभी चीनी नहीं है। मैं तो मुक्तभोगी हूँ। पिछले साल जून में मुझे राशन की दुकान से एक दाना चीनी का नहीं मिला। प्रेजीडेंट इस्टेट में दुकान है। तो मैं यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि राज्य सरकारों ने आपसे कितनी-कितनी मांग की और आपने कितनी-कितनी वस्तुएं उन्हें सप्लाई कीं? इसमें अन्दाजा लग जाएगा कि अगेंशल कमोडिटीज में पब्लिक डिस्ट्रिब्यूशन सिस्टम को कायम रखने के लिए आप चिंतित हैं या नहीं।

**सभापति महोदय :** श्रीमती सुशीला गोपालन ।

**श्री रामावतर शास्त्री :** पहले मेरी बातों का तो उन्हें जवाब देने दीजिए ।

**श्री विद्याचरण शुक्ल :** सभापति जी ने सोचा कि यहां तो भाषण चल रहा है। सभापति जी, शास्त्री जी ने तो अपना भाषण दे दिया। उस में जो प्रश्न निकल सके हैं उनके उत्तर देने का मैं प्रयास करता हूँ। उन्होंने कुछ ऐसी वस्तुओं के नाम लिए जिनकी कीमतें बढ़ी हैं, लेकिन कुछ वस्तुएं ऐसी भी हैं जिनकी कीमतें घटी हैं, जिनका विवरण मैं शास्त्री जी को दूंगा। इसके साथ-साथ मैं यह भी उन्हें बताना चाहता हूँ कि इसमें मिलीभगत का कोई सवाल नहीं है यह तो पेट अवरेशन सरीखा है कि जब भी व्यापारियों की बात होती है तब आप ऐसी बातें करते हैं। आज केरल और बंगाल में जो ब्लैक मार्केटिंग करते हैं, होर्डिंग करते हैं उनके खिलाफ सबसे कम कार्यवाही की जाती है, जहां पर आप की सरकारें काम कर रही हैं। इन सब बातों को ध्यान में रखा जाए तो अति उत्तम होगा। जहां तक ड्रस का सवाल है तो मैंने यह नहीं कहा कि ड्रस जीवन के लिए उपयोगी वस्तु नहीं है बल्कि मैंने

तो केवल इतना ही कहा कि ये दवाइयां सार्वजनिक वितरण व्यवस्था के अन्तर्गत नहीं बांटी जातीं, नहीं बेची जातीं, इसलिए इस बारे में संबंधित मंत्रालय से प्रश्न पूछना पड़ेगा।

एक बात मैं और शास्त्री जी से कहना चाहता हूँ कि चोर-बाजार में वे न जाया करें। (व्यवधान)

**श्री रामावतर शास्त्री :** अगर सुपर बाजार चोर बाजार है तो मुझे कुछ नहीं कहना है।

**श्री विद्याचरण शुक्ल :** आप पूरी बात सुन लीजिए। आप ने कहा कि पटना में चोर बाजार में यह कीमत है गेहूं की, दिल्ली की भी पता कर के बता दूंगा। इसलिए मैं यह कह रहा हूँ कि चोर बाजार में आपको नहीं जाना चाहिए।

**श्री रामावतर शास्त्री :** आप ने सबको चोर-बाजार में डाल दिया है, जाएं तो कहाँ जाएं, भूखे मरें ?

**श्री विद्याचरण शुक्ल :** आप ने जिस तरह का प्रश्न किया, उसी तरह का जवाब दे रहा हूँ।

जहां तक सार्वजनिक वितरण व्यवस्था का प्रश्न है गेहूं बांटने में हमें थोड़ी कठिनाई अवश्य हो रही है, गेहूं की कमी के कारण इसलिए हो सकता है कि खुले बाजार में जहां कोई नियंत्रण नहीं है वहां गेहूं की कीमत बढ़ गई हो। (व्यवधान)

**श्री मनीराम बागड़ी (हिसार) :** यह मजाक का सवाल नहीं है। गेहूं 200 रुपये क्विंटल मार्केट में मिल रहा है और आप इसको मजाक में टाल रहे हैं। आप कहते हैं कि चोर-बाजार में मत जाइए। आपको शर्म आनी चाहिए।

सभापति महोदय : शास्त्री जी हंस रहे हैं तो वे भी हंस रहे हैं ।

श्री मंत्री राम बागड़ी : लोग भूखों मर रहे हैं । ये हंस रहे हैं, इनको शर्म आनी चाहिए ।

श्री जगपाल सिंह (हरिद्वार) : जिस मजदूर को 6 रुपया रोज मजदूरी मिलती है वह 200 रुपए क्विंटल गेहूं कैसे खरीद सकता [है ?

श्री विद्याचरण शुक्ल : मजाक तो आप बना रहे हैं इस तरह से चिल्ला कर । (व्यवधान) इस बात को गंभीरता से सोचा जाए तो जो तकलीफ आज पैदा हुई है यह आप लोगों की करतूतों से पैदा हुई है । इस तरह से चिल्ला-चिल्ला कर आप अपनी करतूतों को छिपाना चाहते हैं । खुले बाजार की कीमतें अस्थायी हैं । गेहूं की नई फसल आ रही है और हमें उम्मीद है कि गेहूं की कीमत में स्थायी रूप से सुधार होगा । इस तरह से शीघ्र ही कठिनाई दूर होगी ।

जहां तक बिहार के बारे में बात कही गई है ... ।

श्री रामावतार शास्त्री : मैं ने क्षेत्र विशेष के बारे में कहा है ।

श्री विद्याचरण शुक्ल : बिहार के बारे में बिहार सरकार से पूछना पड़ेगा, क्योंकि वहां पर उसी का नियंत्रण है । यहां से तो सिर्फ निर्देश भेजे जाते हैं । हम बिहार सरकार से पता लगायेंगे कि ऐसा क्यों हो रहा है । अगर हो रहा है तो इसको वह ठीक करे । इस बात के लिए उनसे जरूर कहेंगे ।

जहां तक मांगे का सवाल है कि पिछले तीन महीने में किस-किस चीज की कितनी मांग की है यह तो घटती बढ़ती रहती है । मंथली मांग अक्सर नहीं होती है । लेकिन उनकी मांग को हम शक्ति भर पूरा करने का प्रयास करते हैं ।

श्री रामावतार शास्त्री । मैंने पूछा है कि कितनी मांग थी और कितना दिया है इसको जवाब नहीं दे रहे हैं यह तो कह दिया है कि कोशिश करते हैं उसको पूरी करने की लेकिन आंकड़े नहीं दिए हैं ।

सभापति महोदय : अब साहब उसका जवाब देंगे ।

श्री रामावतार शास्त्री : जब सवाल उठ गया है तो उसका जवाब भी आना चाहिये । यह कह सकते हैं कि वाद में भेजे देंगे । लेकिन जवाब तो पूरा देना चाहिए ।

श्री विद्याचरण शुक्ल : माहवारी मांग नहीं होती है, लम्बी मांग होती है तीन महीने की फिगर अलग से निकालनी पड़ेगी । सिक्स मंथली डिमांड होती है । एनुअल डिमांड होती है । सभापति महोदय आपने उचित कहा है कि अलग-अलग मंत्रालयों से अलग-अलग मांग होती है । केरोसीन की मांग पेट्रोलियम मंत्रालय से होती है, शुगर गेहूं चावल की कृषि मंत्रालय से की जाती है । सिमेंट, कंट्रोल्ड क्लाय की मांग दूसरे मंत्रालयों के पास जाती है । मांग का ब्यौरा निकालने के लिए तो संबंधित मंत्रालयों से बात करनी पड़ेगी ।

SHRIMATI SUSEELA GOPALAN (Alleppey): Mr. Chairman, Sir, the hon. Minister is trying to give us a rosy picture of the future. But his explanation, his statement as well as the reply that he has given does not tally with our experience.

Even in the city of Delhi, the women have complained about the availability of wheat, rice, sugar and other essential articles and have gone to the Commissioner. She said, "We are giving". But the women are saying, "We are not getting". And he said, "We will go and verify". Even MPs know that they are not getting the things. The public distribution system does not provide the essential commodities to the general

public. This is the reality of the situation.

For example, as you know, Kerala is a deficit State. We are producing mostly cash crops. We have to get rice from other States. Recently—the Tamil Nadu Government has intensified the procurement and, as a result of that, the supply of rice to Kerala has worsened and even with the best public distribution system in Kerala, we could not prevent rise in the price of rice in the open market. It went up from Rs. 250 to Rs. 390. The Government of Kerala came forward to supply additional 5 kg. of rice to every card-holder besides the existing ration. The pertinent question that we are asking the Central Government is: whether they are prepared to procure these things through the civil supply depots and supply to the deficit States so that they can distribute these things there? For this specific purpose, the Kerala Government has requested the Central Government to provide Rs. 10 crores so that at least  $\frac{1}{4}$ th of the trade they can handle. At present, the Kerala Government has calculated that in all the essential commodities, Rs. 160 crores worth of transactions are taking place.  $\frac{1}{4}$ th of that, that is, upto Rs. 40 crores of this can manage through the public distribution system.

They can reduce the prices. That we know by experience. During the last Onam festival, we have supplied all the essential commodities, including vegetables, and the prices have come down. During this time bonus and other things were paid to the workers and unemployment benefit to the unemployed youth and pension to agricultural workers. In spite of all these things, when naturally prices will go up in the market, Government came forward in time to supply essential commodities to the people. They could control the prices. That is why the Kerala Government have specifically come forward with a scheme before the Central Government to give them Rs. 10 crores as loan at reduced rate of interest—the same rate which they are giving to the Civil Supplies Corporation. If the Kerala Government gets

timely help they can reduce the prices at least by 20 per cent. That is the minimum calculation. Therefore, I would like to know what the Government proposes to do in this matter.

The second point is regarding the essential articles. We are getting almost all the items from outside. In our State, the crops mostly grow are the cash crops. We want all these commodities to be purchased by Civil Supplies Depots in other States and we can take it over. In this respect also, Centre's help is required. Otherwise, we cannot do it because of the non-availability of the articles. The price of rice has gone up by 30 per cent. The State Government came forward and gives 5 kilos of rice per ration card. Still, we are unable to contain the price of rice. Your help in this regard is required and I want to know what is your answer in this matter. You can adopt this scheme on All India level. If this is proved, successful you can ask other States also to adopt this method for containing the prices. If you implement this scheme there is no need for black laws and can prevent black-marketing. You are saying that only Kerala, Bengal and Tripura have not implemented these black laws. We are not implementing these laws. But, you had implemented. Are there instances in other States where you have contained the prices by arresting these people. Simultaneous distribution of things is the most important thing. I want to know what concrete measures you have taken in this respect. Kerala Government has put before you a proposal. What is the reaction of the Government to it?

**SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA:**  
The procurement of cereals and sugar is done by the Food Corporation of India. They supply according to quotas fixed by Department of food to various States. If Kerala State has any difficulty regarding rice as the Hon. Lady Member indicate, I think it should be taken up by the Kerala Government with the Ministry of Agriculture. I am sure they will try and set it right.

[Shri Vidhya Charan Shukla]

As far as the question of Rs. 10 crores scheme is concerned, as far as my Ministry is concerned, I have not seen any such proposal or any demand from the Kerala Government. They may have given it to some other Department but when it comes to my Ministry, I will certainly look into it tively.

On 11th February, 1981 at about 02.52 as far as public distribution system is concerned and, therefore, we have no hesitation in helping them as far as possible in this matter.

About implementation of laws, the Hon. Lady Member conceded that their Government are not implementing these laws. But she asked whether in other States where the laws are being implemented, results are produced. The answer is yes. If we had not implemented these laws in other States, the conditions would have been worse.

AN HON. MEMBER: Public distribution system should be strengthened.

15.32 hrs.

STATEMENT RE TRAINS ACCIDENTS  
BETWEEN KATTANDA PATTI AND  
VANIYAMBADI STATIONS AND  
BETWEEN DURAUNDHA AND CHAI-  
NWA STATIONS

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी (नई दिल्ली):  
सभापति जी, रेल मंत्री वक्तव्य  
देने जा रहे है दुर्घटनाओं के बारे में। क्या  
उन्होंने यह पता लगा लिया है कि वक्तव्य  
तैयार करने के बाद तो कोई और दुर्घटना  
नहीं हुई है? . . . (व्यवधान)

रेल मंत्री (श्री केंदार पांडे) जिसकी  
आप चर्चा करते हैं उसकी भी चर्चा इसमें  
है (व्यवधान) . . .

सभापति महोदय : सुन तो लीजिए फिर  
कहलायेगा ।

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS  
(SHRI KEDAR PANDEY): Sir, With  
deep anguish, I apprise the House of  
two unfortunate train accidents which  
took place on the Southern and North  
Eastern Railways on 11th February,  
1981 and 15th February, 1981, respec-  
tively.

On 11th February, 1981 at about 02.52  
hours, 20 Up Trivandrum-Madras Mail  
collided with the rear of Jolarpettai—  
Tondiarpet Up empty oil tank special  
between Kettandapatti and Vaniyam-  
badi stations on the Jolarpettai-Madras  
double line broad gauge section, about  
200 kilometres from Madras. As a  
result, the engine of 20 Up Mail and 7  
coaches next to it derailed of which 5  
capsized, fouling the Down line. In  
the meantime, 69 Down Madras-Erode  
Yercaud Express came from the oppo-  
site direction and collided with the de-  
railed coaches of 20 Up Mail. Conse-  
quently, the engine and 3 coaches of  
69 Down also derailed of which 2 cap-  
sized.

I regret to say that 24 persons were  
killed and another 52 injured of whom  
14 sustained grievous injuries and 38  
simple injuries. Included among the  
23 dead bodies so far identified, were  
those of the Driver, Assistant Driver  
and Under Guard of the ill fated 20  
Up Mail, the Guard of the tank special  
and the Under Guard of 69 Down Ex-  
press. They had many years of service  
ahead of them.

On receipt of information about the  
accident, Medical Vans from Jolarpet-  
tai, Arakkonam and Madras were  
rushed to the site. Railway doctors  
from Katpadi, Jolarpettai, Peralabur,  
Bangalore and Madras also proceeded  
to the site immediately. The services  
of Civil doctors from Vaniyambadi,  
Vellors and Madras were also availed  
of. The General Manager, Southern  
Railway, accompanied by Heads of  
Departments rushed to the site to  
supervise relief and rescue operations.  
Minister of State for Railway accom-  
panied by Chairman, Railway Board  
and Member (Mechanical), also pro-  
ceeded to the site of accident.