

day of the current session. I want to say this with your permission. There has been intense speculation in the Press and elsewhere about a snap poll for the Lok Sabha. We are not mentioning these matters from any point of view of nervousness or fear. After all we come here as representatives of the people and whenever we are asked to go back to the people we should welcome it. In this session there was not much time for discussion of certain important matters relating to the conduct of free and fair elections. We have been demanding that the Election Commission should be expanded by at least increasing the member from 1 to 3 Members and that the electoral process must be cleansed so that many Members can think it proper and convenient to get elected on the basis of their record and not on the basis of money. I happen to be a Member of the electoral reforms committee appointed by Shri J. P. Narayan and that Committee has submitted an interim Report. The Congress Parliamentary party has also appointed a committee on electoral reforms. The Law Minister has gone on record that he wants to convene a meeting of some opposition leaders and independents to go into this matter. I hope that if at all a snap poll is coming Government will see that they convene a meeting on these lines so that elections may be fair and free, so that elections will have significance and proper meaning in our democracy.

SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN (Badagara): The Session is ending today and I should like to raise a question which is of perennial importance. It is of utmost importance and urgency to my State: the question of rice supply which has come down from 85,000 tonnes per month to 18,000 tonnes per month for Kerala. It has forced the State Government to reduce the quantity of rice and also the total quantum of ration. Even the quota of wheat is not given. So I earnestly urge the Government of India to restore this quantum immediately.

16.06 hrs.

STATEMENT RE. REPORTED SABOTAGE OF TWO SPEED BOATS

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yesterday Shri Madhu Limaye raised a point in the form of an adjournment motion and the Speaker had asked the Minister to make statement. It is an lawfully long statement and I will ask him to lay it on the Table of the House.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE
MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI
PRANAB KUMAR MUKHERJEE): I
lay it on the Table of the House.

Statement

The recent change in the trend of smuggling which showed that contraband in bulk is being smuggled through launches and boats from the neighbouring areas led the Government to consider the question of acquiring fast sea-going launches. The Government have placed on order for purchase of 20 fast moving sea crafts with a Norwegian firm against which two sea crafts were received towards the end of October, 1974. These two boats, namely, Durga and Kali were commissioned on 27-10-1974. Taking both the boats together they have been operational for nearly 70 per cent of the days since they were commissioned. One or other of the boats has been operational on all days except on two days.

The reports that there has been a sabotage of the boats which rendered them non-operational have been looked into and found to be incorrect. As one of the press reports stated that sugar had been put into the fuel tank, samples of fuel were taken and tested by the Naval Chemical and Metallurgical Laboratory, Bombay, but no trace of sugar was found therein. The boats have been fitted with highly

[Shri Pranab Kumar Mukherjee]

sophisticated machinery and equipment and expertise in maintenance and handling of the same is being built up.

Meanwhile, as was stated in the Rajya Sabha in reply to supplementary to Starred Question No. 411 on 3-12-1974, there have been teething troubles and the repairs have been attended to in the Maragon Docks. The position was also explained in the Finance Ministry's Consultative Committee of Parliament on 18-12-74.

Both the boats have been taking part in various anti-smuggling operations in and around Bombay area. The fact that there have been no catches by these boats recently could also be ascribed to the possibility that the Arab dhows may not be coming near this area. The intelligence reports also indicate that smuggling activities have been considerably restrained.

The Government have so far obtained only two boats, another 4 boats are expected by the end of this month. The remaining boats are expected to come in batches of 4, and all to reach before the end of March, 1975. It will be appreciated that only when we have a very much larger number of boats, we can make our coast-line impregnable. I may also mention here that the Customs Department in Bombay also has some launches confiscated from the smugglers and which are used for anti-smuggling work.

The boats establishment has been placed under a senior officer on deputation from the Navy and I may assure the House that all possible precautions are being taken to guard the boats carefully from any attempt at sabotage.

16.07 hrs.

SUPPLEMENTARY DEMANDS* FOR GRANTS (GUJARAT), 1974-75

MR. CHAIRMAN: We shall now take up Supplementary Demands for Grants (Gujrat)

DEMAND NO. 14—ECONOMIC ADVICE AND STATISTICS

MR CHAIRMAN Motion moved:

"That a Supplementary sum not exceeding Rs. 38,000 on Revenue Account be granted to the President out of the Consolidated Fund of the State of Gujarat to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1975 in respect of 'Economic Advice' and Statistics."

DEMAND NO 15—LOANS AND ADVANCES TO GOVERNMENT SERVANTS IN GENERAL ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

MR CHAIRMAN: Motion moved

"That a Supplementary sum not exceeding Rs 3,33,00 on Capital Account be granted to the President out of the Consolidated Fund of the State of Gujarat to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1975 in respect of 'Loans and Advances to Government Servants' in General Administration Department."

DEMAND NO 31—LOANS AND ADVANCES TO GOVERNMENT SERVANTS IN FINANCE DEPARTMENT

MR CHAIRMAN: Motion moved

"That a Supplementary sum not exceeding Rs. 2,295,000 on Capital Account be granted to the President out of the Consolidated Fund of the State of Gujarat to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1975 in respect of 'Loans and Advances to Government Servants in Finance Department.'"

*Moved with the recommendation of the President.