

will be decided only after discussions with the parties etc., are over.

Industrial Peace in Public Sector Undertakings

9394. SHRI HIMATSINGKA : Will the Minister of LABOUR AND REHABILITATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether he called a meeting of the Heads of Public Sector Undertakings on the 19th April, 1968 in New Delhi to consider the question of industrial peace particularly the inter-union rivalry which has been the cause of frequent suspension of work in the different public sector undertakings ; and

(b) the proposals discussed at the meeting ; and the result thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND REHABILITATION (SHRI HATHI) : (a) and (b) . Yes, Sir. Matters regarding inter and intra-union rivalry were discussed at the meeting. But no conclusions were reached.

12 18 hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Reported scarcity conditions in Mangaldai sub-division in Assam

SHRI R. BARUA (Jorhat) : Sir, I beg to call the attention of the Minister of Food, Agriculture, Community Development and Cooperation to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may kindly make a statement thereon :

"Reported scarcity conditions prevailing in the Mangaldai sub-division in Assam affecting about one million people in the area where five starvation deaths have also taken place."

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (SHRI JAGJIWAN RAM) : Early in April 1968 the Government of Assam had reported that prices of rice had hardened in the State and that the impact had been felt acutely in Mangaldai Sub-Division, which is normally a

surplus area. The State Government had also stated that they had not received any official report of famine conditions from the district officers.

Whenever conditions of distress develop in any area within the State, it is for the State Government to take suitable steps to meet the situation. When the scarcity is so acute that the expenditure on scarcity relief is likely to go above the limit prescribed by the Fourth Finance Commission, giving of financial assistance from the Centre would arise. This will be considered on a report being received from the State Government giving details of the extent of scarcity and the expenditure which is considered necessary for undertaking the necessary relief operations. No such detailed report has yet been received from the State Government. Further action which may be necessary from the Centre will be considered on receipt of such a report.

In order to acquire sufficient grains to meet the demands in areas affected by distress, the State Government have taken steps to intensify their procurement operations by permitting their procuring agents to procure rice also and not paddy only. The State Government have also decided to take up de-hoarding operations in surplus areas in order to bring out the hoarded stocks. Government of India have also increased the allocations of wheat to Assam from 12,000 tonnes in April to 20,000 tonnes in May, 1968. One thousand tonnes of this have already been released from the Assam depots and instructions have also been issued to the officers concerned to move the balance of the allotment as quickly as possible. It is expected that with this additional allocation, Assam Government should be able to meet the situation.

In reply to a previous reference, the State Government had reported on 5th of April, 1968 that there were no cases of starvation deaths as alleged in Mangaldai Sub-Division. However a specific report has again been called for from the State Government on the report that has appeared recently of five starvation deaths in the area. The reply from the State Government is awaited.

SHRI R. BARUA : While the Calling Attention Notice is in respect of the recent

(Shri R. Barua)

state of affairs in Assam, we are treated with a report of the Government of Assam dated the 5th of April, which is very much out of date. May I know whether the famine conditions which are gripping the Mangaldai sub-division have spread over to the district of Goalpara and Garo hills, where a large number of plain's tribals also live and whether the Government of Assam has made any report to that effect? Further, may I also know whether this Government will depute some of its officers if possible a Minister of state, to look into the question in spite of the nature of the report that may be received from the State Government at that end? Then, is it not a fact that the quantity of wheat which is meant for Assam is regularly cut? For instance, while for the month of March the quantity of wheat allotted was 12,000 tons, only three days back I have received a telegram that the quota had been cut. In view of that, may I know whether the supply of wheat from the Centre is going to be regularised?

SHRI JAGJIWAN RAM: I do not propose to send any officer from here. There is a responsible government in Assam.

SHRI NATH PAI (Rajapur): In spite of what happened on the 26th of January?

SHRI JAGJIWAN RAM: I would plead with the hon. Members not to exaggerate the situation. I know there is some difficulty there. I have information that that district and that sub-division is surplus and even this year the paddy production is larger than that of last year. Perhaps the psychology there is that there has been large-scale hoarding by the big cultivators and the Assam Government has started operations against them. I would plead with the hon. Members to co-operate with the State Government in de-hoarding operations.

SHRI NATH PAI: Then, what is the insinuation of it? Has he anything to do with hoarding?

SHRI JAGJIWAN RAM: It does not mean that. So far as the supply of

wheat is concerned, I may inform the hon. Member that during these four months we have on an average supplied 13,000 tons every month and in May we have increased the quota. If the Assam Government requires and if there is acceptability by the people, I am prepared to supply more quantity of maize for the area.

SHRI D. N. PATODIA (Galore): I am in complete disagreement with the hon. Minister when he says that there is a responsible government in Assam. The affairs in Assam are so deplorable and the local government has been so ineffective to control any situation in the past that it can be termed only as a government run by the useless men of the country. Whether it is the agitation of the non-Assamese, whether it is the communal trouble, whether it is the border security or Pakistani infiltration, in respect of each and every matter the local government has proved to be absolutely ineffective.

Now, coming to the point, on top of all that, we are facing a very peculiar situation, a situation of famine and scarcity of food and as many as about half a million people are affected in an area which the hon. Minister has himself described as a surplus area. Now, we have been listening to the statement that Assam is never a deficit area, that it had a good crop this year and there was a regular flow of wheat from the Centre to the State. In spite of all that, why does this happen? Apart from the famine conditions in Mangaldai sub-division, there was a report of similar conditions in Goalpara also. What I want to point out is that Assam is a border State and a vulnerable State, and the mind of the people of that State are already agitated, and if this situation is permitted to continue and grow, it will further agitate the people which will be a danger to that border State. Therefore, it is not enough to say that we are depending upon the Assam Government to report what is happening or what is not happening, because the Assam Government has consistently remained ineffective, so far as tackling any pressing problem is concerned. I have here a press report which says:

"Shri Nakul Das, MLA, Secretary of the Congress Parliamentary Party,

who toured the area extensively said here today that the people in the area were spending days together without a morsel of food and harrowing tales of peoples' distress are pouring in daily from interior areas."

This comes from the Secretary of the Congress Parliamentary Party in Assam, whatever be the report of the State Government. Therefore, it is a clear case where we have to see that the border area is not agitated further and that there is peaceful condition there for which an immediate inquiry is necessary. So, a team should be sent by the Central Government to enquire what is the real position, what are the causes or reasons for the famine conditions in spite of the area being surplus, in spite of there being no basic shortage of food.

SHRI JAGJIWAN RAM : While I appreciate the sense of responsibility of the hon. Member, the Centre in a federal set up, he has to bear in mind and respect the responsibility of the State Government. We have received this Call-attention notice only yesterday and we have called for a report. From Assam it is very difficult to get telephonic communication for information. As soon as the report is received, whatever action is necessary will be taken by the Assam Government and the Central Government.

श्री श्री० प्र० त्यागी (मुरादाबाद) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, असम के पर्वतीय क्षेत्रों की प्रपेक्षा यहां की गवर्नमेंट करनी रही है और उसका परिणाम यह हुआ है कि वहां स्वतन्त्र नागालैंड, मिजो-लैंड की हवा चारों तरफ फैल रही है। आज असम की वर्तमान अवस्था बहुत ही भयावह है। वहां के विद्रोही लोग इस बात का प्रयत्न कर रहे हैं कि यह हवा भारत के दूसरे पहाड़ी क्षेत्रों में भी फैले। ग्वालपाड़ा एरिया ऐसे स्थान पर है जहां पाकिस्तानी एजेंट्स इस प्रकार की परिस्थिति का अनुचित लाभ उठा सकते हैं। क्या सरकार इस प्रकार की सिडुएशन को ध्यान में रखते हुए, असम की सरकार पर निर्भर न रहते हुए अपनी धोर से कोई जांच कमीशन भेजेगी, जिससे वहां की सही स्थिति की जानकारी प्राप्त हो सके? यदि वहां पर ऐसी

स्थिति है, तो क्या सरकार वहां पर—जैसे आपने उड़ीसा में रिलीफ सेंटर्स स्थापित किये हैं रिलीफ सेंटर्स भेजेगी, जिससे वहां के लोगों को कार्य मिल सके क्या इस प्रकार की व्यवस्था वहां पर करने के बारे में सरकार सोचेगी?

श्री जगजीवन राम : जांच कमीशन की कोई आवश्यकता नहीं है। अगर सदस्य महोदय ने मेरा पूर्व का उत्तर सुना होगा—जिसमें मैंने बताया है कि कल उनसे पूछा है, उनका उत्तर आने के बाद मालूम होगा कि वहां क्या स्थिति है। जांच कमीशन हर मामले में एक बहुत ही आसान सुझाव है, लेकिन जांच कमीशन की क्या आवश्यकता है। देखने की आवश्यकता है कि उन को क्या रिलीफ पहुँचाई जा सकती है और जैसा मैंने कहा जो कुछ भी सम्भव होगा, सब कुछ किया जायेगा।

श्री श्री० प्र० त्यागी : सेंटर का आदमी जांच के लिए क्यों नहीं भेजा?

श्री जगजीवन राम : इसलिए नहीं भेज रहे हैं कि वहां स्टेट गवर्नमेंट है।

श्री श्री० प्र० त्यागी : स्टेट गवर्नमेंट है, तो भी आपको जांच करनी चाहिए।

SHRI HEM BARUA (Mangaldai) : The famine gripping the Mangaldai sub-division of Assam and the distress of the people is too deep for tears and I do not want to describe it because it beggars description. I have already written a letter to the Minister. People are dying of starvation, whatever the State Government might say. Whatever steps the State Government have taken are too inadequate and the State Government is a government of little men. This is evident from the statement made by the hon. Minister that the State Government has so far not succeed in giving a detailed account of the extent of scarcity prevailing in the Mangaldai sub-division to the Central Government which shows callousness on the part of the State Government. In the context of that, may I know whether,

[Shri Hem Barua]

instead of shifting the responsibility of removing the distress and starvation of the people to the State Government, this Government is going to take measures on a war footing in order to bring relief to the starving people and (b) whether the Government are going to open community kitchens in the area for these people as a temporary or as an interim measure ?

SHRI JAGJIWAN RAM : What is (c) ?

SHRI HEM BARUA : There is no (c).

SHRI JAGJIWAN RAM : I am afraid, my hon. friend has proceeded on many presumptions. On the basis of the production figures, that district continues to be a surplus district.

SHRI HEM BARUA : But there is drought there.

SHRI JAGJIWAN RAM : The hon. Member should understand that this year the production of rice in Derang district has been higher than that of last year.

SHRI HEM BARUA : If there is hoarding, why can't you stop hoarding ?

SHRI JAGJIWAN RAM : I am saying that the State Government is taking anti-hoarding operations.

SHRI HEM BARUA : Don't have any faith in the State Government. The State Government might be a Congress Party Government in Assam, but I would request the hon. Minister, who is a very reasonable man, not to have faith in his own government there.

SHRI NATH PAI : By and large, he is a reasonable man.

SHRI S. KUNDU (Balasore) : Sir, on a point of clarification.

MR. SPEAKER : On a Calling Attention I cannot allow it. If everybody goes on asking clarifications, I will be helpless.

SHRI S. KUNDU : It is not a ques-

tion of record procurement, it is a question of giving employment.

MR. SPEAKER : I will not allow you. Shri Hem Barua is sitting by your side. You can just whisper to him what you want to ask and he will do so. But by this you want to break the procedure which we are following. Kindly help me. The moment I allow you. I will be helpless; otherwise, I do not mind.

SHRI HEM BARUA : I generally do not go by whisperings. I have my own time for whispering.

MR. SPEAKER : But why does he not give you the information and you can ask that ? I have no objection to that.

SHRI JAGJIWAN RAM : As I have said, the State Government wanted that the wheat quota for May should be increased. I have readily increased that. Not only that, I have issued instructions that this quantity should be supplied quickly. As I have further said, if there is distress condition and some cheaper foodgrains are required and if there is acceptability by the people... (Interruption).

SHRI HEM BARUA : Take measures on a war footing.

SHRI JAGJIWAN RAM : Everything is on war footing.

I am prepared to supply some quantity of maize even for free distribution in that area. We have asked the State Government. I am prepared to take all possible measures that are necessary in this connection.

12.32 hrs.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

Madhya Pradesh Control of Distribution of Food grains Amendment Order

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION (SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY) : I beg to lay on the Table