

At that time it was Shri C. Subramaniam who was piloting the Bill. As you know, many of them who were in the Treasury Benches then have been hung by the electorate, though some of them have tried to come back through the backdoor; still, they have been harmed.

It is necessary to control the black market, to control the money bags who try to get through various alleys to get profit to the detriment of the people at large. So, this power should be with the government. Government have sought to take it only for two years in 1964, three years in 1966 and now for another two years. Perhaps, this time the astrologers might have told them that the people of India will give up black-marketing once and for all in two years. Otherwise, how do you explain first two years, then three years and then again two years? The hon. Minister must have been told by some astrologer that the capitalists of India, the corrupt traders of India (not all traders) will give up blackmarketing and hoarding within two years. Otherwise, why don't they make it part of the permanent statute? This power should be with the government because blackmarketing will continue so long as capitalists continue in this country.

It has been argued by Shri Tapuria that if there is more demand, if the demand outstrips supply, then the prices will rise. That is correct. But the purpose of this Bill is to increase supply, to force the hoarder to release the supply. It is they who somehow suppress the supply, hoard it, and that is why the demand rises.

It has been argued rather very vehemently by the spokesmen of the Swatantra Party for the ladder. But we representing the ordinary people are for the queue. We want the queue. We do not want anybody to jump the queue. We do not want to allow anybody to touch the ladder to jump the queue. We want the queue.

It is true that bribery and corruption should be controlled. It is a matter of detailed administration. Shri Randhir Singh and others have referred to defects in administration. Everybody could welcome them. We all condemn defects in administration. But so far as the question of giving power to the Central and State Governments for punishing

the offenders summarily is concerned, I agree that it should be there. I welcome this Bill, though it is belated.

18 hrs.

STATEMENT RE: ATTEMPT ON THE LIFE OF SHRI JYOTI BASU

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI Y. B. CHAVAN): Mr. Chairman, Sir, according to information received from the State Government, there was a deplorable incident at the Patna Railway Station today at about 8.15 A.M. when an unknown assailant fired a shot at Shri Jyoti Basu. Shri Jyoti Basu escaped unhurt, but one Ali Imam who had come to receive him was hit by a bullet and was killed. The assailant made good his escape. Immediate investigation was undertaken and one Surendra Prasad has been arrested by the police on suspicion. Investigation is in progress.

I spoke to the Chief Minister, Bihar, this morning and requested him to make a thorough probe into the matter. The State Government have informed me that necessary security arrangements have been made for Shri Jyoti Basu. Arrangements have also been made to maintain peace in the town. I also spoke to Shri Jyoti Basu and expressed my deep concern. I am sure, the House will join me in unreservedly condemning resort to violence which undermines the very basis of democracy and democratic institutions.

श्री छटल बिहारी वाजपेयी (बलरामपुर):
 सभापति महोदय, क्या आप स्पष्टीकरण की इजाजत देंगे? यह एक हत्या का प्रयत्न स्टेशन पर हुआ था। केवल राज्य सरकार इसकी जांच कर सकेगी ऐसा दिखाई नहीं देता, क्योंकि इसमें रेलवे के अधिकारियों से पूछताछ करनी पड़ेगी, रेलवे स्टेशन पर वह किस तरह से निकल गया इसकी तह में जाना पड़ेगा। तो क्या राज्य सरकार ने केन्द्र की सहायता मांगी है? गृह मंत्री ने कहा कि सब लोग निन्दा करेंगे। इसमें कोई भी राय नहीं हो सकती है। मगर सभापति जी, यह पहला मौका नहीं है। इससे पहले पंडित दीनदयाल उपाध्याय की हत्या हुई। वह भी स्टेशन पर

[श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी]

हुई। उसके बाद डा० राम सुभग सिंह पर कातिलाना हमला करने की कोशिश की गई। और अब यह तीसरा प्रयत्न है। रेलवे स्टेशन जुड़ी हुई है इसलिए केन्द्र तस्वीर में आता है। और मैं जानना चाहूंगा क्या बिहार सरकार ने सहायता मांगी है या उनके बिना सहायता मांगे, क्योंकि इसमें रेलवे स्टेशन यह घटना स्थल है, इसलिए केन्द्र स्वयं होकर सहायता देगा।

SHRI Y. B. CHAVAN: The State Government so far—I myself talked to the Chief Minister—have not formally asked for any assistance. Even if they do not ask for it, we will, certainly, offer help to them and an investigation will have to be on a sort of uniform pattern. The point that the hon. Member has raised is an important one and I can assure him that I shall, certainly, look into it.

SHRI H. N. MUKERJEE (Calcutta North East): Sir, I wish only to say that the abhorrence expressed at this kind of atrocious attack on Mr. Jyoti Basu is shared by everybody in this House and we do expect that the Home Minister will get all his agencies into operation to see to it that punishment is meted out to whoever is responsible. It is an absolutely atrocious method of attacking a political opponent. The whole position smacks of a terrible atmosphere in the country and the Government must take all steps that are necessary in order to eradicate the poison which has come up in this kind of a very undesirable shape. We all share the abhorrence at the dastardly act to which expression was given.

SHRI SURENDRANATH DWIVEDY (Kendrapara): Sir, I join in condemning this dastardly attack on Mr. Jyoti Basu. I would like to know one thing from the Home Minister. It is said that when Mr. Jyoti Basu was passing over the over-bridge.

सभापति महोदय: सवाल मत पूछिए, और दूसरी बातें हैं वह कीजिए।

SHRI SURENDRANATH DWIVEDY: I want to know whether he has enquired about

it. While Mr. Jyoti Basu was passing over the over-bridge, he pointed out to some person in the crowd and that person was not arrested and he escaped. That man escaped and some other man died. That means he had some previous information about the attack on him or some such thing. I want to know specifically while the investigation is going on whether he has enquired about that.

SHRI Y. B. CHAVAN: I have not got all the facts. Whether he pointed out to some person, etc. are matters of very vital importance. But I have not got any facts about it. It is very difficult for me to say anything about it at this stage.

श्री रवि राय (पुरी): स्पष्ट न्यूज में है।

श्री यशवन्तराव चव्हाण: स्पष्ट न्यूज में है। लेकिन मुझे यहां स्टेटमेंट करने से पहले मेरे पास कोई तो इत्तला होनी चाहिए। अभी तो मुझे कोई जानकारी नहीं है।

श्री रणधीर सिंह (रोहतक): हम यह जानना चाहेंगे कि कोई ऐसा प्लान तो नहीं है।

सभापति महोदय: यह तो इन्क्वायरी की बात है। इन्क्वायरी की बात उससे क्या पूछते हैं, उसे वह कैसे बता सकते हैं। जो उन्हें सूचना मिली वह उन्होंने सदन को दे दी।

श्री फ० गो० सेन (पूणिया): जो स्पष्ट न्यूज है वह सही है कि नहीं? ड्राइवर अरेस्ट हुआ।

सभापति महोदय: उन्होंने एक स्टेटमेंट किया। अब पुलिस उसकी इन्क्वायरी कर रही है, गवर्नमेंट उसकी इन्क्वायरी कर रही है, यह भी सारी मदद करने के लिए कह रहे हैं। इसलिए इन सबानों को छोड़ दीजिए क्योंकि यह मामला सब-जुडिस हो गया।

श्री रवि राय: सब-जुडिस क्या ही गया?

SHRI S. K. TAPURIAH (Pali): I join in condemning this dastardly attack on Shri Jyoti Basu. Thank God he has been spared. We wish him a long life. I would only like to know whether any compensation is being given to the family of the person who lost his life.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Investigation is going on. That is all. We now continue with the discussion on the Statutory Resolution and the Bill.

18.08 hrs.

STATUTORY RESOLUTION RE: ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES (AMENDMENT) CONTINUANCE ORDINANCE; AND ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES (AMENDMENT) CONTINUANCE BILL—*contd.*

*SHRI K. RAMANI (Coimbatore): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am not opposing the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Continuance Bill, 1970 which has been brought before the House by the Government. But, at the same time, I have unassailable objections and strong criticisms to make regarding the manner in which the Act had been implemented in the past. I would like to enumerate a few of them.

To give an example, the hon. Minister stated that during the year 1968 out of 17960 cases of summary trials only 6018 cases ended in conviction. I would request the hon. Minister to clarify what happened to the remaining cases specifically in his reply to the debate. Similarly, the hon. Minister pointed out that in 1969 there were 8422 cases of summary trials and out of which 4330 were cases ending in conviction. In 1968 summary trials were instituted against about 18,000 persons and only about 6,000 were convicted. I would like the hon. Minister to inform the House whether all those who were convicted were common people, petty traders and small industrialists or they were big black-marketeers, hoarders and profiteers. In 1969 the summary trial cases were about 8,500 and only in 4,300 cases punishment was awarded. I want to know what happened to the remaining 4,200 cases. The Minister should

also clarify as to the category of persons who were punished.

I make this charge that in the name of this Act only common people are punished; justice is not being done properly. Many times criticisms have been made here that in the name of summary trial procedure justice is not being meted out to the common people. I would request the hon. Minister to look into this.

The objective of this Act should not merely be to award punishments. On the contrary this Act should be an instrument in bringing to book the black-marketeers, hoarders and profiteers and also in making available to the common people the essential commodities by ensuring proper and equitable distribution. If this is not done, the hon. Minister must understand the however good the intentions of a law may be, if it is enforced tardily, then the people would neither welcome such a piece of legislation nor would extend their support to it because no beneficial results flow from such a law.

The Government, after assuming the powers to regulate distribution of scarce essential commodities, to check the rise in prices and also to root out lock, stock and barrel the black-marketing and hoarding by unscrupulous people, had genuinely tried to implement this Act. If that is true, what happened to Vanaspati? The price of Vanaspati has shot up and it has gone underground. When there is acute scarcity of essential commodities like various kinds of oils, foodstuffs, cloth, yarn, paper, medicines, sugar, etc., it is the prime duty of the Government to regulate the production and distribution of these commodities by forcefully exercising the powers granted to them under this Act. My feeling is that the Government have failed completely in their effort to arrange proper distribution of essential commodities. I request the Government to examine this issue more carefully.

In my constituency, Coimbatore, a tin of groundnut oil was selling at Rs. 42; but now it has gone up to Rs. 64. A tin of gingily oil was being sold at Rs. 72 and now it is sold at Rs. 77. A kilo of coconut oil costs

*The original speech was delivered in Tamil.