

- (i) Penalties for ticketless travel were enhanced with effect from 10th June, 1969.
- (ii) In addition to regular and surprise checks, massive checks by mobilising a large force of ticket checking staff, Railway Protection Force and Government Railway Magistrates are conducted on vulnerable sections.
- (iii) Joint drives with the co-operation of State Governments are carried out.
- (iv) A system of punishment for erring employees and reward for those rendering exemplary service is followed to ensure effective staff participation.

In addition to the above, after the receipt of the complaint, a secret watch is being kept by the Anti Fraud and the Vigilance Branches on the activities of staff who are suspected to be indulging in such mal-practices on this section.

Formulation of a New Political Party

9655. SHRI SHIV KUMAR SHASTRI : Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Shri Balraj Madhok, ex-member of Parliament has formed a new political party;

(b) whether Government would provide all facilities to this newly formed party like other political parties;

(c) who or her this newly formed party has sent to the Government its programme and asked for facilities and if so, the broad outlines thereof; and

(d) the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS HRI NITI RAJ S NGH CHAU DHARY : (a) Apart from certain reports that appeared in the Press, Government has no information in the matter.

(b) to (d). Do not arise

Income Tax Assessment of Thina Thanthi Trust

9656. SHRI S. A. MURUGANANTHAM: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE

AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the judgement against S.P. Aditian of Thina Thanthi Trust in connection with income tax assessment has been reserved for more than normal period by the High Court of Madras during the month of November, 1972; and

(b) if so, the facts thereof and the special reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI H.R. GOKHALE) : (a) and (b) . The facts are being ascertained and will be laid on the Table of the House.

2 00 hrs

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

REPORTED PRESENCE OF IRON PARTICLES IN RICE SUPPLIED TO MAHARASHTRA¹

SHRI KARTIK ORAON (Lohardaga) : I call the attention of the Minister of Agriculture to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon :

"The reported presence of iron particles in the rice supplied to the State Government of Maharashtra by the Food Corporation of India".

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI F.A. AHMED) : The presence of some iron filings in long bold rice recently supplied through the Fair Price Shops in Bombay came to the notice of the Maharashtra Government on May 3, 1973. Immediately, a joint inquiry by the staff of the Food Corporation of India and the State Government was made. The inquiry revealed that some traces of iron filings were present namely 2 to 4 filings per kg. of rice. Instructions have since been issued by the Maharashtra Government to stop further sale of such rice and the Fair Price Shops have been asked to examine the rice supplied to them and get it replaced from Government godowns. Action is in hand to get the filings removed from the affected stock. Government is also investigating the probable causes and would take necessary action and preventive steps in the light of the investigation.

SHRI KARTIK ORAON : I would like to bring to the notice of Government the report which appeared in the *Indian Express* on May 5, 1973, under the caption 'Iron Filings in rationed rice' which read as follows :

"Bombay, May 4 : Nearly 400 tonnes of rice has been withdrawn from the fair price shops in Greater Bombay as it contains iron filings. The Minister of State for civil Supplies and Home Mr Sharad Pawar, giving the information to the newsmen today at the sachivalaya said the presence of the iron filings in rice was brought to his notice by Opposition Members, traders and Congressmen. Mr. Pawar said, it was possible that some of the consumers might have purchased the rice which was released to the traders from Tuesday last. He urged the consumers to clean the rice thoroughly, with a magnet if possible to remove iron filings. The food corporation of India has allotted 1200 tonnes of rice to Maharashtra for distribution in Bombay. This quota is understood to have been imported from Punjab and transported in wagons in bulk."

This adulteration or admixture of foodstuffs has been assuming alarming proportions, and that is evident from a very big file of paper-cuttings on adulteration, including adulteration of foodstuffs like oilseeds, wheat and even milk.

Only recently there was a report of another case of admixture. The *STATESMAN* carried a news item under the caption 'MP Wheat Purchase Order amended' from Bhopal, dated May 3. It said :

"The Madhya Pradesh Government has amended the MP wheat Procurement (Levy) Order, 1973 fixing the purchases price of wheat containing admixtures of barley and of inferior qualities of wheat, reports PTI.

"Under the amendment, wheat containing admixtures of barley upto 30 per cent and otherwise conforming to at least three grades below the fair average quality would be bought at a uniform rate of Rs 68 per quintal. If the admixture is more than

30 per cent, it would not be treated as wheat. However, admixture of sound and wholesome grain may not be treated as a refraction under other grain".

In the first place people do not get food-stuffs. If they get it at all, they get it with all sorts of admixtures. This matter should have agitated the mind of Government they should by now have known that there is a mounting tendency towards food adulteration. It is not a question of how this happened, but it is a question of why these things should have happened.

The hon. Minister has replied that there were two to four filings per kg. This reply is not enough. I would like to know what is the weight of these three or four filings per kgs and what is the percentage by weight of these filings to the weight of rice. This is very important.

When I go through all these I am reminded of a crime which is called white collar crime which escapes all sorts of punishment. Some of them are in the sense of breach of established criminal law. But still the criminals go scot-free because they are rich and powerful; they can bribe the police, or even sometimes the judges or sometimes they bring political pressure to bear to secure their immunity. These things are going on very fast. Government by now should have taken some action to put a stop these things.

I would like to know from Government what definite steps they have taken to curb this tendency to food adulteration. If they at all went to stop this process of adulteration, they must inflict deterrent punishment on the offenders.

I understand the Government of India are trying to set up a Central Food Research and Standardisation laboratory at Ghaziabad. I would like to know what is the position of this laboratory, what is the stage at which it stands at present and whether there would be any co-ordination with State Government and what are the concrete steps Government would like to take put a stop to food adulteration.

SHRI F. A. AHMED : As I have already pointed out as soon as it was brought to our notice that there was some foreign

material in the rice supplied from a few fair price shops in Bombay, an investigation was made and it was found that about 2-4 filings per kg. were there in the rice which was distributed. As soon as this was found, we stopped the supply of that rice and the dealers have been asked to send it back to the Government godown.

And after it is cleaned, it will be supplied again. So far as the question as to how these filings or small particles were found to be present in the rice is concerned, that matter is under investigation and after the investigation is completed, it will be possible for us to know and how these things can be avoided.

SHRI H. M. PATEL (Dhandhuka) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has disposed of this matter by saying that it is going to be investigated and so on. But there are certain serious aspects to this question. The Minister in Maharashtra said that these were possibly due to the fact that rice came in open wagons and that these wagons might have had steel filings in them and they might have got mixed up with the rice. The question is, if the rice came in open wagons, it means that it was in bulk and not in bags? Is it the normal practice to transport rice in bulk in this manner? Then, you are asking for trouble; all manner of rubbish would get into it. That is the first question I would like to get clarification upon.

Next, the statement says that 1,200 tonnes had been obtained from the Food Corporation of India, and of this, 400 tonnes were given to fair price shops, and these filings were found in them. Let us assume that the filings were in the rice supplied by the Food Corporation. Do the fair price shops have any responsibility at all or not be fore handing out the rice to the customers? Is it none of their business to see that the foodgrains which they supply are fairly clear of any foreign material? Was it not their responsibility?

What happens? You have taken over the responsibility of wholesale trade; the responsibility for distribution is taken over by you, whether through the retail trade or from the fair price shops. It was always the responsibility of the wholesale trade to see that before any foodgrains were handed

over to the retail trade for supply, they should be free from any foreign material. So, if the wholesale trade had failed to do so, the retail trade should also ensure that no foodgrains shall be sold unless they were free from foreign material. This is my second question.

The Food Corporation seems to be behaving in a totally irresponsible manner. I say this because this is not an isolated case. I see in today's paper, a reference to Orissa. The date-line is 6th May, from Bhuvaneswar, it says that the "Orissa Government today said that steps had been taken to eliminate ergot-affected kernels from wheat consignments before their conversion into wheat products for supply to consumers. Of the 3,000 tonnes of wheat of this type received by the Food Corporation of India" and so on.

It is difficult to understand what degree of responsibility the Food Corporation thinks it ought to discharge. Is it merely that it buys and it just passes it on to whomsoever it has to be passed on, and when it buys it is not its responsibility to see that whatever it buys is free from any unhealthy material? Or does this adulteration place after that? What steps are taken by the Food Corporation of India to see that (a) whatever it buys is free of all this material; (b) when it despatches it to the State Governments, then also it is free of all this foreign material; and (c) if it receives imported material, then also it assumes responsibility for seeing that whatever it sends for consumption is free of any objectionable material? Does it discharge this duty or not? Or, is it not its duty? I would like the Minister to clarify these things.

SHRI F. A. AHMED: So far as imported foodgrains are concerned, we have a system of having it examined by our quality control. It is the duty of the quality control to know whether the material which has been imported is free from foreign matter. Similarly when the Food Corporation of India purchases rice or wheat in the market they examine it to see whether the wheat or rice is free from foreign material. Therefore, I said that we did not know where and how the iron filings got mixed up with rice. That matter is under investigation and when we know the full facts, necessary action will be taken in the matter.

SHRI P. M. SAYEED (Laccadive, Minicoy and Amindive Islands) : It is evident from the Minister's reply that food adulteration is a constant thing. If one wanted to put end to one's life even that will be difficult because even poison is adulterated. The other day we heard about the *datura* seeds found in milo imported from the United States. It appears that responsibility is shared by the Food Corporation of India. My hon. friend just now asked : was any responsibility fixed at the receiving end? Was any responsibility fixed on the officials who distribute grains to fair price shops? He says Yes. I hope I have understood him correctly. Has an enquiry been instituted jointly by the Food Corporation of India and the Maharashtra Government? Have you suspended the officials concerned from the receiving end and also at the distribution end? He says that the responsibility is fixed.

An hon. Member from this House, Mrs. Godfrey, was telling me in the Central Hall that iron filings in the food she was taking got off the enamel of her teeth. So this is not only in Maharashtra ; it is in other places also. It is a deliberate attempt, a conspiracy by some agencies. What is the mechanism that has been evolved by the Food corporation of India to check whether foreign matter is there, at the receiving end as well as at the distribution end? It takes a long time whenever an enquiry is ordered. By what time is this enquiry going to be completed and the report made available?

SHRI F. A. AHMED. My hon. and young friend has raised the question whether action has been taken to suspend some officers who were responsible for this. First of all we have to know who is responsible for this.

Unless and until that matter is known, how can the question of suspending any officer arise?

So far as the second matter is concerned, I have already explained that at the time of purchases, necessary precaution is taken to see that good quality of foodgrains are purchased. But at the various headquarters in various godowns, the foreign material gets mixed up. That is the matter which has to be inquired into. After the results are known, it would be possible for us to fix responsibility and take necessary action.

श्री जानेश्वर शत्रुघ्न यादव (कटिहार) : अचलक महोदय, कृषि मंडी ने अपने बजारमा में यह स्वीकार किया है कि इस प्रकार की घटनायें महाराष्ट्र में घटी हैं। महाराष्ट्र के सिविल सल्वाइंस मिनिस्टर, श्री शश पवार, ने भी अपने स्टेटमेंट में कहा है कि 400 टन चावल में लोहे के कण पाये गये और इस कारण उन्होंने उम चावल का बटवारा रोक दिया है।

मैं निवेदन करता चाहता हूँ कि पूछ एडल्ट्रेशन कोई नई घटना नहीं है। बिहार में गेहूँ में लोहे के कण मिले हुए पाये गये और उस गेहूँ की बिहार की विधान सभा तथा विधान परिषद में दिखाया गया। बिहार सरकार ने फेयरप्राइस शाप्ट में उस गेहूँ की सलाई बन्द कर दी, यह तो ठीक है। लेकिन प्रबन्ध यह है कि वह कौन सी संस्था या गिरोह है, जो इस तरह जन-जीवन के साथ खिलाड़ कर रहा है। हम देखते हैं कि हैल्थ विभाग के अफसर और सुरक्षाइबरी स्टाफ के सदस्य बाजार में चैकिंग के लिए जाते हैं और दुकानदारों को डरा-धमका कर उन से कुछ पैसा ले लेते हैं। लेकिन खाद्य नियम जिस अनाज की आपूर्ति करता है, उस की स्थिति क्या है? महाराष्ट्र में 400 टन चावल में लोहे के कण पाये गये, बिहार में गेहूँ में लोहे के कण पाये गये और हाल ही में माहलो में धूतरे के बीज मिले हुए पाये गये, जिस में फिलने ही लोगों को मृत्यु हो गई। मैं यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि एक सौ आई के जो अधिकारी, या जो अन्य सरकारी अधिकारी, जहाँ पर से अनाज के अनलोडिंग और फिर देन पर उसके लदान की देख-भाल करते हैं, क्या सरकार उन के बिना कोई कार्यवाही करने का विचार रखती है, क्योंकि उन्होंने अपना काम सुचारा रूप से नहीं किया। अबबारों में यह बात भी आई है कि जिस देन पर पहले अपरन और लादा गया था, उस पर बिना बोरों के, खुला, चावल लाद दिया गया।

मैं समझता हूँ कि जहाँसे से अनाज उतारने और दुन पर लदान की देखभाल करने वाले अधिकारियों की मिली-भगत है, जिस के कारण हमारा जन जीवन बस्त हो गया है। फूड एडल्ट्रेशन में बहुत मुकदमा बढ़ि हो रही है और लोगों का जीवन तथा स्वास्थ्य खतरे में पड़ गया है।

हैस्प विभाग के अधिकारी बाजार के छोटे-बड़े व्यापारियों को फूड एडल्ट्रेशन के आरोप मे पकड़ते हैं और उन पर मुकदमा चलाते हैं। मैं इस का विरोधी नहीं हूँ। उन पर ज़खर मुकदमा चलाना चाहिए। अगर जन-जीवन के साथ खिलाफ़ करने वाले छोटे या बड़े व्यापारियों के खिलाफ़ कोई कार्यवाही की जाती है, तो मैं उस का स्वाक्षर करता हूँ। मैं यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या सरकार एफ० सी० आई० मे बड़े-बड़े पदों पर बढ़े हुए मैनेजरों और डिप्टी मैनेजरों पर भी फूड एडल्ट्रेशन एक के अधीन मुकदमा चलाने और अन्य कार्यवाही करने का विचार रखती है।

मैं यह भी जानना चाहता हूँ कि भविष्य में खाद्यान्मों मे इस प्रकार की मिलावट की घटनाओं की पुनरावृत्ति न हो, इस के लिए सरकार क्या कदम उठाने का विचार रखती है। सरकार ने गेहूँ का थोक व्यापार अपने हाथ मे ले लिया है और वह सितम्बर मे जावन का थोक व्यापार अपने हाथ मे लेने जा रही है। मैं यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि इस बात को ध्यान में रखते हुए सरकार एफ० सी० आई० की मशीनरी को सक्षम बनाने की दिशा में क्या कदम उठाने का इरादा रखती है और यदि उसके द्वारा सालाई किये गये अनाज में लोहे के कण, पत्थर या धूरे के बीज पाये गये, तो उस के खिलाफ़ क्या कार्यवाही की जायेगी।

श्री झज्जरहीन अली खाहमः : जनाद, अनरेल बेम्बर इस गलत हमी में है कि फूड कार्पोरेशन के अफसर अपना फर्ज या अपनी दृष्टी अदा नहीं कर रहे हैं। मैं बताना चाहता हूँ कि हमारे क्वालिटी कंट्रोल के अफसरों

ही इंस्पेक्शन के बाद यह मालूम किया कि जो माइलो बाहर से आया था, उस में धूरा था। यह बात किसी और नहीं बताई। उसके बाद हमने बाकायदा स्टेप्स लिये कि उस माइलो को साफ़ किया जाये और उस के बाद उस को सब जगह तकसीम किया जाये।

(अवधान) अनरेल मेम्बर को बाकायदा की खबर नहीं है। वह ख्याह-म-ख्याह दखल अन्दाजी करते हैं। जब हमारे क्वालिटी कंट्रोल आफिसर्स को मालूम हुआ कि माइलो में धूरा है, तो हम ने कहा कि उस माइलो को साफ़ किया जायेगा और उस के बाद उस को तकसीम किया जायेगा। उस को साफ़ किया जा रहा है और उस के बाद वह तकसीम हो रहा है।

अनरेल मेम्बर ने कहा कि फूड कार्पोरेशन के अफसर अनाज में दूसरी चीजें मिलाते हैं। हमारे पास इस किस्म का कोई सुबूत नहीं आया है और इस किस्म की एनीग्रेशन करना गैर मुनासिब है। उस से हमारे काम मे रक्कावट पड़ती है। मैं उम्मीद करता हूँ कि अनरेल मेम्बर ऐसी बाते नहीं कहेगे। जब हम ने यह जिम्मेदारी ली है, तो हम उस को पुरा करेंगे, ताकि हम लोगों को अच्छे से अच्छा अनाज पहुँचा सकें।

12.25 hrs.

Re. QUESTION & PRIVILEGE

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU (Diamond Harbour) : Sir, under rule 222 and 223 I hereby seek consent of your goodness to raise a question involving serious breach of privilege of our august House. The facts of the case are as follows :

In *Juganter*, one of the leading Bengali language dailies of West Bengal, of which Shri Tushar Kanti Ghosh is the Managing Editor and also an owner in a feature article, they have written the following :

“Dellite parilamente Russiar Probab
Ktucht Hrush Peyeche”

which means in English,

“In our Parliament at Delhi, Russian influence has decreased to a very little extent”.