

15.30 hrs.

MOTION RE: WORKING OF FOOD CORPORATION OF INDIA

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now, we take up the motion to consider the working of the Food Corporation of India.

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी : उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं प्रस्ताव करता हूँ कि यह सभा भारतीय खाद्य निगम के कार्यकरण पर विचार करती है।

खाद्य निगम का निर्माण 1 जनवरी, 1965 को हुआ था। जब निगम बना तो उस के ऊपर कुछ गम्भीर दायित्व सौंपे गए थे। इस सम्बन्ध में पारित कानून में कहा गया था कि निगम अनाज की खरीद करेगा, उस का भंडार बनाएगा, उस के लाने, ले जाने का प्रबन्ध करेगा, उस के वितरण के लिए उत्तरदायी होगा और साथ ही साथ अनाज उत्पादन के प्रयत्नों को भी प्रोत्साहन देगा।

यह भी कहा गया था कि खाद्य निगम चावल की मिलें या तो अपनाएगा या बनाने में सहायता प्रदान करेगा और ऐसे कदम उठायेगा जिस से खाद्यान्न का ठीक तरह से वितरण हो सके।

ये उद्देश्य अपने में अच्छे हैं और इन उद्देश्यों में किसी का मतभेद नहीं हो सकता। अपने देश में हम ऐसी अर्थ-व्यवस्था विकसित नहीं कर सकते जिस में उत्पादक और उपभोक्ता दोनों के हितों का संस्करण न हो। यदि किसान अधिक अनाज पैदा करता है और अधिक पैदावार के कारण दाम गिरते हैं, किसान घाटे में रहता है तो कारपोरेशन के लिए आवश्यक है कि वह अनाज खरीदे, उस का ठीक तरह से भंडार बनाए और उसे बाजार में लाए जिस से मूल्य स्थिर हो सके और जनता को, विशेषकर गरीब वर्गों को, उचित कीमत पर पर्याप्त मात्रा में अनाज मिल सके।

लेकिन कठिनाई यह है कि हम ने खाद्य निगम के हाथ में असाधारण अधिकार तथा दायित्व रख दिए। गेहूँ के थोक व्यापार का सरकारीकरण स्वयं में एक सही निर्णय नहीं था। लेकिन खाद्य निगम के द्वारा अब उसे कार्यान्वित किया गया तो वह सर्वथा विफल हो गया। आज खाद्य निगम में व्याप्त भ्रष्टाचार, अदक्षता, सार्वजनिक धन का अप्रव्यय, अफसरों की मनमानी, किसान और उपभोक्ता दोनों के साथ होने वाला अन्याय सार्वजनिक चर्चा का विषय बना हुआ है। यहाँ तक कि हमारे केन्द्रीय मन्त्री भी खाद्य निगम में व्याप्त भ्रष्टाचार के विरुद्ध अपना मुँह खोलने के लिये विवश हो गए। सदन को ज्ञात है कि कुछ दिन पूर्व स्वयं श्री शिन्दे ने समाचार-पत्रों को एक भेट में कहा था, मैं उनके शब्दों को उद्धृत कर रहा हूँ :

“Corruption in the Food Corporation of India knows no bounds...”

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE): I would like to say that I did make a statement on some of the malpractices in the Food Corporation of India, but the words which have been put in the press are not exactly an honest reproduction of my views. I did refer to the malpractices. I did refer to corruption in the Food Corporation. But the words which the hon. member is reading now, I must say in fairness to the House and to the hon. Member, are not exactly the words I have used; they have been put in my mouth.

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी : उपाध्यक्ष जी, अब मैं कठिनाई में पड़ गया हूँ। मंत्री महोदय ने अखबारों में जो कुछ छपा था, उस का खण्डन नहीं किया। वह यह भी बताने के लिये तैयार नहीं है कि सचमुच में उन्होंने क्या कहा था? अगर वह बताये तो मैं बैठने के लिये तैयार हूँ।

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: I did refer to some cases of medical bills which were deliberately inflated by submitting false bills and more money was extracted from the Food Corporation. I also referred to the fact that in some areas the workers are resorting to illegal gratification.

SHRI JAGANNATHRAO JOSHI (Shajapur): The tip of the iceberg.

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी : उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, महाराष्ट्र की सरकार को बम्बई में बन्दरगाह पर प्रति ट्रक

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: I did refer to the statement of the Chief Minister.

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी : उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, शिंदे साहब ने रिश्वतखोरी को पुष्टि कर दी है। जो कुछ समाचार पत्रों में छपा है, उस में एक-दो शब्दों का हेरफेर हो सकता है। उन्होंने महाराष्ट्र के मुख्य मंत्री का हवाला दिया है—जब महाराष्ट्र के ट्रक बम्बई के बन्दरगाह से विदेशों से आया हुआ अनाज ले कर निकलने हैं तो प्रति ट्रक 35 रुपये रिश्वत देनी पड़ती है। मैंने पढ़ा है कि महाराष्ट्र के मुख्य मंत्री ने पूछा है कि रिश्वत तो हम दे रहे हैं, लेकिन यह किस एकाउन्ट में लिखा जायगा, कृपा कर यह भी हम को बता दें।

शिंदे साहब ने यह भी पुष्टि की है कि मैडिकल बिल बहुत बढ़ गये हैं। कलकत्ता के यूनिट का मैडिकल बिल 22 लाख रुपये से बढ़ कर 82 लाख रुपये हो गया है। उन्होंने यह भी कहा है कि यह मामला सी०बी०आई० को सौंप दिया गया है और इन्कम टैक्स डिपार्टमेंट भी इस की छानबीन कर रहा है।

उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, केवल कलकत्ता के मैडिकल बिलों का ही मामला सी०बी०आई० को नहीं सौंपा गया है, फूड कारपोरेशन के जो पुराने चेयरमैन थे, जो कभी इस सदन के सदस्य थे, बाद में मंत्री बने, बाद में चुनाव हार गये, बाद में फूड कारपोरेशन के चेयरमैन बने और जिन के ऊपर भ्रष्टाचार के गम्भीर आरोप लगे, अब कुछ आरोपों की जांच—मैंने पढ़ा है—सी०बी०आई० कर रही है। मैं मंत्री महोदय से जानना चाहता हूँ कि वे आरोप क्या हैं? सी०बी०आई० की जांच की परिधि क्या है? मैं यह भी जानना चाहता हूँ कि सी०बी०आई० की जांच कब समाप्त होगी?

अभी तक सी०बी०आई० की जांच की कालावधि के बारे में सन्तोषजनक स्थिति नहीं है। एक मामला मेरे सामने है जिसे मैंने सी०बी०आई० ने जांच करने में 7 साल लगाये। अगर भ्रष्टाचार के आरोपों की जांच करने में इतना समय लगेगा तो फिर भ्रष्टाचार की जांच करने का उद्देश्य ही विफल हो जायगा।

उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, कई तरह की शिकायत खाद्य निगम के विरुद्ध आ रही हैं। इस प्रकार की शिकायतें हैं कि खाद्य निगम ने सरकार द्वारा स्थान-स्थान पर 76 रुपये क्विंटल निर्धारित गेहूँ का दाम किसानों को नहीं दिया, यह कह कर कि वह गेहूँ टिया है, वापस कर दिया गया और बाद में व्यापारियों से वही गेहूँ ऊँचे दामों पर खरीद लिया गया। अगर मंत्री महोदय चाहे तो मैं स्थानों के नाम ले सकता हूँ।

दूसरी शिकायत इस तरह की आई है कि फूड कारपोरेशन के हेडक्वार्टर चांजिज निरन्तर बढ़ते जा रहे हैं। पहले यह कहा गया था कि प्रति क्विंटल गेहूँ के रख-रखाव पर

22 रुपये से लेकर 32 रुपये टैण्डलिंग चार्जज होते हैं। लेकिन मैंने इस आशय की प्रेस-रिपोर्ट्स देखी हैं कि यह खर्चा बढ़ कर अब 56 रुपये तक पहुंच गया है। मैं चाहूंगा मंत्री महोदय इस पर प्रकाश डालें।

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE:
Rs. 56—which cost is he referring to?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE:
Overhead charges per quintal for handling wheat.

श्री शंकर बयाल सिंह (चतरा) : पर क्विंटल ?

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी : जी हां।

अध्यक्ष महोदय, यह भी गम्भीर आरोप लगाया गया है कि निगम प्रति वर्ष करोड़ों रुपये का घाटा उठा रही है क्योंकि वह उकेदारों को अनुगृहीत करना चाहता है, उन को लाभ पहुंचाना चाहता है। 10 मई, 1973 को खाद्य निगम के कर्मचारियों ने कलकत्ता में एक प्रेस-कान्फ्रेंस की, जिस में उन्होंने कहा कि—

“Pilferage and corruption was rampant in the FCI. The detention of wagons at railway sidings had gone up whereby the FCI has been sustaining a huge loss due to demurrage on wagons and pilferage of foodgrains to the tune of 40 per cent.”

यह बात भी सर्वविदित है कि फूड कारपोरेशन के पास अपने गोदाम खाली पड़े रहते हैं और प्राइवेट गोदामों को किराये पर लिया जाता है। यह इस लिये किया जाता है कि प्राइवेट गोदामों के मालिकों को फायदा पहुंचे और उस फायदे में निगम के अधिकारी स्वयं हिस्सा बटा सकें।

उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, मेरे ध्यान में कई मामले इस तरह के आये हैं—जैसे हायरस में फूड कारपोरेशन का अपना गोदाम खाली पड़ा है और चीनी रखने के लिये प्राइवेट गोदाम किराये पर लिया गया है। इस का क्या औचित्य है, यह समझने में मैं असमर्थ हूँ। हापुड़, अलीगढ़ में जिस जमीन का किराया 5 हजार रुपये हो सकता है, उस के लिये फूड कारपोरेशन 15 हजार रुपये महीना किराया दे रहा है।

उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, पहले भी इस सदन में चर्चा हो चुकी है, खाद्य निगम आटे की मिलों को बोरियों में भर कर अनाज देता है। उन बोरियों की कीमत मिल-मालिकों से वसूल नहीं की जाती। मिलों को सस्ती दर पर आटा बनाने के लिये अनाज देने का प्रयत्न होता है। बोरियों की कुल कीमत प्रतिवर्ष 20-22 करोड़ रुपये होती है। खाद्य निगम बोरियों की कीमत आटा मिल मालिकों से वसूल कर सकता है। पब्लिक ग्रण्डर-टैकिंग कमेटी ने इस सम्बन्ध में कुछ सिफारिशें भी की थीं, लेकिन जहां तक मेरी जानकारी है—मैं चाहूंगा अगर मैं गलत हूँ तो मंत्री महोदय मुझे सही करे—बोरियों की कीमत वसूल नहीं की जा रही है और फूड कारपोरेशन अपना घाटा सह कर आटे से मिल मालिकों का फानदा कर रहा है। 1972 के आंकड़े मेरे पास हैं—फूड कारपोरेशन ने प्रति क्विंटल 24 रुपये का घाटा उठाया। मैं जाना चाहूंगा—1973 में यह घाटे की रकम क्या है ?

उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, अनाज के लाने ले जाने में बड़ा घुटाला होता है। इस सम्बन्ध में पब्लिक ग्रण्डर टैकिंग कमेटी के कुछ आंकड़े दिये हैं। 1969-70 में 8.83 करोड़ रुपये का घाटा हुआ। 1970-71 में 8.40 करोड़ रुपये का घाटा हुआ।

[श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी]

इस साल के आंकड़े हमारे पास नहीं हैं, क्योंकि पब्लिक अन्डर टैकिंग कमेटी की रिपोर्ट अभी नहीं आई है, लेकिन एक मामला अभी मेरे ध्यान में लाया गया है— वाराणसी में गेहूँ के 8 डिब्बे आये, वे बिहार से आये और वाराणसी डिपो के मैनेजर ने फर्जी रसीद बनाकर माल उतार दिया, माल बेच दिया और वह माल गोडाउन में गया ही नहीं। रेलवे स्टेशन से ही उस माल का वितरण हो गया। (व्यवधान)।

लुधियाना में खन्ना डिपो से 1600 टोरे गायब पाये गये। इस तरह की और भी शिकायतें प्राप्त हुई हैं। ऐसा लगता है कि खाद्य निगम, जनता के धन का एक एक पैसा, गाड़ी कमाई का पैसा, किसान के परिश्रम का एक एक कण अपना उसकी रक्षा होनी चाहिए, उसका सदुपयोग होना चाहिए— इस भवती भावना से प्रेरित नहीं है।

आज स्थिति यह है कि राज्य सरकारें अपने अलग अलग कारपोरेशन कहिये या खाद्य विभाग कहिये, अलग अलग एजेन्सीज स्थापित कर रही है। क्या अलग अलग एजेंसियां स्थापित करना, यह केन्द्रीय सरकार ने मान लिया है? क्या केन्द्र ने मान लिया है कि यह काम अगर राज्यों को सौंप दिया जायेगा तो सस्ते में होगा? क्या केन्द्र ने मान लिया है कि अगर यह काम राज्य करेंगे तो भ्रष्टाचार नहीं होगा? क्या केन्द्र ने मान लिया है कि यह काम राज्यों को सौंपते ही, जो भी भ्रष्टाचार या अक्षमता है, अफसरों की मनमानी है, वह समाप्त हो जायेगी? ऐसा लगता है कि केन्द्र अपनी जिम्मेवारी टालना चाहता है, सारी वला को अपने सिर से उतारना चाहता है।

इस समय खाद्य निगम में छटनियों का जोर है, कर्मचारी काम से हटाये जा रहे हैं। उत्तर प्रदेश के 924 कर्मचारी निकाल दिये गये। 12 सौ कर्मचारी ऐसे हैं जिन्हें अपने पदों से और नीचे के पदों पर भेज दिया गया है। (व्यवधान) बनर्जी साहब कह रहे हैं उनकी संख्या 1242 है, मैं उस स्वीकार कर लेता हूँ। लेकिन आश्चर्य की बात यह है कि जब छोटे छोटे कर्मचारी निकाले जा रहे हैं, अफसरों की फौज बढ़ाई जा रही है। इन्हीं दिनों में 53 डिप्टी मैनेजर नियुक्त किये गये हैं, 10 फाइनेंशियल एडवाइजर्स तैनात किये गये हैं, 80 सीनियर असिस्टेंट मैनेजर्स को डिप्टी मैनेजर बनाया गया है। जो छोटे कर्मचारी रबी अभियान के लिए भर्ती किये गये थे, रबी अभियान समाप्त होने के बाद उनकी छुट्टी कर दी गई लेकिन उनी रबी अभियान में जो अफसर रखे गए थे उनको खाद्य निगम ने हज़म कर लिया। अफसरों के लिए खाद्य निगम ने जगह बना ली।

क्या खाद्य निगम का काम अफसरों को स्थान देने की दृष्टि से चलेगा? क्या किसी एक विजेय अफसर के लिए सेवा की शर्तों में परिवर्तन होगा? मेरे ध्यान में एक मामला लाया गया है, मैं किसी का नाम नहीं लेना चाहता लेकिन एक सज्जन क्वॉलिटी कंट्रोल मैनेजर हैं उनका ग्रेड 1600-2000 रुपए का है, चूँकि वे जून, 1975 में रिटायर होने वाले हैं, उनका ग्रेड दो हजार से बढ़ाकर ढाई हजार कर दिया गया है। बाद में उनको रिटायर होते ही वह ग्रेड फिर कम हो जायेगा। क्या व्यक्ति के साथ ग्रेड घटता बढ़ता है? अगर वे व्यक्ति असाधारण योग्यता सम्पन्न है तो शिन्दे साहब सदन को विश्वास में ले सकने हैं वरना इस तरह से ग्रेड में अन्तर करने का कारण मेरी समझ में नहीं आता।

उपाध्यक्ष महोदय जी, आपको सुनकर ताजुब होगा, खाद्य निगम में मितव्ययिता की चर्चा हो रही है। 43 लाख रुपया बचपया जगगा इम तरह का प्रचार किया जा रहा है। लेकिन खाद्य निगम का राज्यों पर 291 करोड़ रुपया बकाया है उसे वसूल करने का कोई प्रयत्न नहीं हो रहा है। वह रुपया खाद्य निगम ने बको से लिया है, इस रुपय पर खाद्य निगम व्याज दे रहा है। ढाई साल में 45 करोड़ रुपया खाद्य निगम ने व्याज की रकम का दिया है और 43 लाख रुपया की बचत की जा रही है। क्या राज्य सरकारों को खाद्य निगम का पैसा वापिस करने के लिए प्रेरित नहीं किया जा सकता है? क्या राज्य सरकारों को खाद्य निगम का रुपया वापिस करने के लिए विवश नहीं किया जा सकता। राज्य सरकार अगर खाद्य निगम का काम करना चाहती है तो कम से कम खाद्य निगम का रुपया तो लौटाये क्योंकि उनके रुपय न लौटाने के कारण खाद्य निगम को व्याज देने में घाटा हो रहा है, उससे खाद्य निगम की स्थिति विपन्न दिखाई देनी है तथा उनके नाम पर छोटे कर्मचारियों की छटनी हो रही है। क्या केन्द्र राज्य सरकारों से 291 करोड़ रुपय वसूल नहीं कर सकता है?

उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, सरकार अनाज का व्यापार करे या न करे, इसमें मतभेद की गुंजायश है। यह प्रश्न केवल सिद्धान्त का नहीं है बल्कि प्रश्न व्यवहार का भी है। हम किम एजेन्सी के द्वारा यह चाहते हैं कि किसान को उचित मूल्य मिले और उपभोक्ता को ठीक दाम पर अनाज उपलब्ध हो? हम व्यापारियों को मिडिलमैन कहकर निन्दा करते हैं, व्यापारियों में ऐसे तत्व हैं जो अभाव के समय मुनाफाखोरी करते हैं, इससे कोई इनकार नहीं कर सकता है, लेकिन फूड कार्पोरेशन क्या कर रहा है? क्या फूड कार्पोरेशन स्वयं एक मिडिलमैन को एजेन्सी के रूप में काम नहीं हो गया है? क्या फूड कार्पोरेशन के हैंडलिंग चार्ज ज्यादा नहीं हैं? क्या फूड

कार्पोरेशन मिलावट के लिए जिम्मेदार नहीं है?

पंजाब के दोराहा से मुंगेर के लिए गेहूं गया, किसी व्यापारी ने नहीं भेजा, सरकारी एजेन्सी के द्वारा भेजा गया और उस गेहूं में लोहे के कण निकले। गेहूं में लोहे के कण कहां से आ सकते हैं? माइलो में धतूरा तो आ सकता है क्योंकि अमरीकी मित्रों के अनुसार माइलो और धतूरा एक साथ खेत में पैदा होता है, मशीन से काटा जाता है, वह इकट्ठे कट सकता है लेकिन मैं जानना चाहता हूँ क्या वर्तमान शासन के अन्तर्गत अब लोहा भी खेत में पैदा होने लगा है? अगर लोहा खेत में पैदा नहीं होता तो फिर यह मुंगेर को भेजे गये गेहूं में लोहे के कण कहां से आ गये? . . . (व्यवधान) . . . उसको भेजा सरकारी एजेन्सी ने, उसको उतारा सरकारी एजेन्सी ने और वह गया सरकार की रेलवे में (व्यवधान.)

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE:
Some traders may have purchased some of our officers.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE:
Then they can purchase your Ministers also!

उपाध्यक्ष जी, मैं यह कहना चाहता हूँ कि खाद्य निगम के काम को राज्यों को सौंपने से समस्या हल नहीं होगी। उससे खर्च बढ़ेगा, देख-भाल में ढिलाई आयेगी और भ्रष्टाचार में भी वृद्धि हो तो कोई ताजुब नहीं है। न कर्मचारियों को हटाने से समस्या का हल होगा। होना यह चाहिए कि फूड कार्पोरेशन का आर्गनाइजेशन जिस तरह से लाइफ इन्वोरेन्स कार्पोरेशन बना है, उसी तरह से बनाया जाये। सारे देश के लिए एक संगठन बनाने के बजाये जोन के हिसाब से संघठनों की रचना हो सकती है। उसमें राज्य सरकारों से तल-मेल भी स्थापित किया जा सकता है। जो अध्यक्ष और भ्रष्ट तत्व है—भाफ कीजिए अफसरों में ज्यादा है, उनके खिलाफ कड़ी कार्यवाही होनी चाहिए।

[श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी]

लेकिन किसान और उपभोक्ता, दोनों के हितों को देखते हुए ऐसी एजेन्सी की आवश्यकता हरदम रहेगी जो किसान को लाभप्रद मूल्य दे और उपभोक्ता को उचित मूल्य पर अनाज उपलब्ध करे। ऐसी व्यवस्था को मजबूत करने की आवश्यकता है। किन्तु सरकार को मोनोपली अपने हाथ में नहीं लेनी चाहिए। मोनोपली न खरीद में, न बिक्री में। मोनोपली से बुराईयाँ उत्पन्न होती हैं। वैसे, डिस्ट्रिब्यूशन सिस्टम को हम और भी सुदृढ़ करें, लेकिन उस के साथ साथ हम उस में से भ्रष्टाचार मिटाएँ और उस में दक्षता लायें। फूड कार्पोरेशन आज फूड कर्प्शन के नाम से विख्यात हो गया है और उस का दोष छोटे कर्मचारियों को दिया जाता है। जब भ्रष्टाचारियों को पकड़ने का जाल बिछाया जाता है, तो छोटी छोटी मछलियाँ तो फंस जाती हैं, लेकिन बड़े-बड़े मगरमच्छ निकल जाते हैं। यह भ्रष्टाचार को मिटाने का तरीका नहीं है।

मैं चाहता हूँ कि इस विषय पर सदन गम्भीरता से चर्चा करे और इस चर्चा में कुछ ऐसे सुझाव आये, जो केन्द्रीय सरकार का मार्ग दर्शन कर सकें।

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Motion moved:

"That this House do consider the working of the Food Corporation of India."

श्री अमृत नाहाटा (वाडमेर): उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, मुझे प्रसन्नता है कि इस विषय पर चर्चा को प्राग्गम्य करने हुए माननीय सदस्य, श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी, ने बहुत ही रचनात्मक दृष्टिकोण अपनाया है और मैं इस दृष्टिकोण का स्वागत करता हूँ।

हमारी संसद की एक समिति है। पब्लिक अडॉरटेविंग्स कमेटी।

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी : माननीय सदस्य जिस के सदस्य हैं।

श्री अमृत नाहाटा : था। पिछले वर्ष उस समिति ने फूड कार्पोरेशन आफ इंडिया पर एक रिपोर्ट पेश की। मुझे मालूम हुआ है कि उस रिपोर्ट पर सरकार ने जो कार्यवाही की है, उस के सिलसिले में एक्शन टेकन रिपोर्ट शायद कल ही इस सदन में पेश की जाने वाली है। यदि हम यह चर्चा वह एक्शन टेकन रिपोर्ट आने के बाद करते, तो शायद यह अधिक उपयोगी हो सकती था। लेकिन खैर, यह चर्चा हो ही गई है और श्री वाजपेयी ने उस कमेटी की रिपोर्ट का हवाला भी दिया है।

वह रिपोर्ट बहुत व्यापक है। उस में बहुत गहराई से, भव्य पहलुओं में फूड कार्पोरेशन का अध्ययन किया गया है और उस की जिन खामियों की तरफ श्री वाजपेयी ने सदन का ध्यान खींचा है, उन रिपोर्ट में पहले से ही उन का जिक्र है। हम तो यही आशा करते हैं, कि सरकार ने उस रिपोर्ट के सम्बन्ध में जो जवाब दिये हैं, और उन जवाबों के आधार पर कल पब्लिक अडॉरटेविंग्स कमेटी की तरफ से जो एक्शन टेकन रिपोर्ट सदन में पेश की जायेगी उन को पढ़ने में शायद हमारे बहुत से मंग्य और संदेह दूर हो जायेंगे। अगर उस कमेटी ने उस के बाद भी सरकार से कुछ आशाएँ रखी है, तो वे भी हमारे सामने आ जायगी।

श्री वाजपेयी ने फूड कार्पोरेशन को जो मुख्य आलोचना की है, वह यह है कि उस में ऊपर से लेकर नीचे तक भ्रष्टाचार है। उन्होंने इस बारे में कई मिनारों भी दी। उन्होंने कहा कि अनाज खरीदा नहीं जाता है, बल्कि कह दिया जाता है कि वह घटिया किस्म का है। उस के बाद किसान मजबूर होकर वही अनाज व्यापारी को बेच देता है और फिर एफ०सी०आई० के

अधिकारी ऐसे व्यापारियों से वही अनाज उंची कीमत पर खरीद लेते हैं।

श्री वाजपेयी ने यह भी बताया कि गोंदाम का किराया ज्यादा दिया जाता है तां जो जमीन किराये पर ली जाती है, उस का ज्यादा किराया दिया जाता है। उन्होंने यह भी कहा कि एक ० सी० आई० के गोंदाम शायद खाली पड़े रहते हैं और प्राइवेट गोंदाम किराये पर चिन्ने जाते हैं।

यदि श्री वाजपेयी इन तम मजदूरों की तह में जाने, तो वह एक तरीके पर पहुंच सकते थे—और मैं उन में दरखास्त करूंगा कि वह उस तरीके पर पहुंचें और वह यह है कि फूड कारपोरेशन की बहुत सी खामियों, कमियों, भ्रष्टाचार और गलतियों का स्वतंत्र है प्राइवेट व्यापारी प्राइवेट व्यापारी फूड कारपोरेशन के स्थानीय अधिकारियों को अपने प्रभाव में लाता है, उन को प्रलोभन देता है और उन को भ्रष्ट करता है। यदि फूड कारपोरेशन के नीचे के स्तर के अधिकारियों को प्राइवेट व्यापारियों के प्रभाव से मुक्त कर दिया जाये, तो फूड कारपोरेशन की बहुत सी कमजोरियाँ और खामियाँ दूर की जा सकती हैं, यह मोटा तर्जुमा हम इन तमाम बातों से निकाल सकते हैं, चाहे वह अनाज में लोहे के कण मिलाने की बात हो और चाहे कोई और बात हो।

16 hrs.

मुझे क्षमा करें, अक्षर देखा गया है कि स्वयं फूड कारपोरेशन में बहुत बड़ी तादाद में ऐसे कर्मचारी और अधिकारी हैं, जो उस सिद्धान्त में विश्वास नहीं रखते, जिस का समर्थन श्री वाजपेयी ने किया है कि किसान को उस के उत्पादन के उचित दाम मिलें और उपभोक्ता को भी उचित दाम पर चीजें मिल सकें उस के लिए एक संगठ की आवश्यकता है और उस संगठ को

मुदुद और अधिक प्रभावशाली बनाया जाना चाहिए। जैसा कि मैं ने कहा है ऐसे लोग फूड कारपोरेशन में काफी बड़ी तादाद में हैं, जो कई तरह से फूड कारपोरेशन के उद्देश्यों के पूरा होने में रुकावट डालते हैं। जब फसल बाजार में आती है और जब किसान से अनाज खरीदने का मौका होता है, तब व्यापारी इस टोह में रहते हैं कि फूड कारपोरेशन अनाज न खरीदे ताकि कीमतों को गिराया जा सके और वे किसानों से सस्ते दामों पर अनाज खरीद सकें। ठीक उस वक्त फूड कारपोरेशन के कर्मचारी कई जगह हड़ताल कर देते हैं और इस में उन की मंशा साफ होती है कि ऐसे वक्त पर भावों को गिराया जा सके, ताकि व्यापारियों को फायदा हो जाये और फूड कारपोरेशन उस में हस्तक्षेप न कर सके।

यह सही है कि फूड कारपोरेशन एक बहुत बड़ा संगठन है। छः साल पहले वह बना था और इन छः सालों में वह काफी फैला है और उस में कई प्रकार के अधिकारी और कर्मचारी हैं। यह नहीं कह सकते कि वे सब दूध के धोये हैं; उन में भ्रष्ट और बेईमान भी हैं। लेकिन आवश्यकता इस बात की है कि जिन लक्ष्यों की प्राप्ति के लिए, जिन कार्य को पूरा करने के लिए, इस संगठन का निर्माण किया गया है, उन लक्ष्यों में सहानुभूति रखने वाले और इस संगठन में सम्बद्ध दर्शन से अंत प्रीत लोग उस में आय ताकि वह अधिक प्रभावकारी ढंग से कार्य कर सकें।

श्री वाजपेयी ने कहा कि फूड कारपोरेशन के भूतपूर्व अध्यक्ष के बारे में सी० बी० आई० की एनक्वायरी हो रही है। उन्होंने इस पर सरकार को बधाई क्यों नहीं दी, यह बात मेरी समझ में नहीं आई। उन्होंने कहा है कि छोटी मछलियां जाल में फंस जाती हैं और बड़े मगरमच्छ बच जाते हैं। लेकिन फूड कारपोरेशन के अध्यक्ष से बड़ा मगरमच्छ और कौन होगा। आज जब सी० बी० आई० के द्वारा

[श्री प्रमत्त नहाटा]

उन के बारे में एनक्वायरी की जा रही है, तो श्री वाजपेयी को यह विश्वास हो जाना चाहिये था कि सरकार इस बात पर आमादा है, इस बात की पूरी कोशिश कर रही है कि चाहे कोई भी क्यों न हो, चाहे कोई बड़े से बड़ा आदमी क्यों न हो, आवश्यक तथ्य सामने आने पर उस के बारे में जांच की जाये और उस के खिलाफ उचित कार्यवाही की जाये। फूड कार्पोरेशन के भूतपूर्व अध्यक्ष राजनैतिक रूप से हमारे दल से सम्बन्धित हैं, हमारे साथी हैं और यहां मिनिस्टर रहे हैं। जब उन के बारे में भी जांच की जा रही है, तो कम से कम इस मौके पर तो श्री वाजपेयी को सरकार को बधाई देनी चाहिये थी, लेकिन वह ऐसा करने से कतरा गये।

श्री वाजपेयी ने यह भी पूछा कि इस जांच की रिपोर्ट कब आयेगी। ठीक है, विरोधियों को विरोध करना चाहिए। अगर इस बारे में जल्दी की जाती है, तो वे कहेंगे कि रिपोर्ट इतनी जल्दी कैसे आ गई, जांच पूरी तरह से नहीं की गई। और अगर इस में कुछ देर हो जाये तो कहेंगे कि जांच में देर क्यों हो रही है। उन का काम विरोध करना है, वह विरोध करे। लेकिन इस में कोई संदेह नहीं है कि हमारे लोगों में एक नई आस्था पैदा हुई है कि चाहे कोई बड़े से बड़ा अधिकारी क्यों न हो, यदि उन के खिलाफ कोई शिकायत आती है, और उस शिकायतों में कोई तथ्य है, तो सरकार जांच करती है और कार्यवाही करती है।

श्री वाजपेयी ने एक बात यह भी कही है कि फूड कार्पोरेशन का खर्चा व्यापारियों से अधिक है। इस में कोई संदेह है कि व्यापारी का खर्चा कम पड़ता है। लेकिन इस का कारण यह है कि वह टैक्स की चोरी करता है। इस के अतिरिक्त वह अनाज को जमा करता है, ताकि कीमत बढ़ने पर वह उस को बेच सके।

अनाज खरीदने में और उस को फिर बच में जो टाइमलैग है, उस का लक्ष्य स्पेकुलेशन है, जो वह, लोगों के अभाव का अनुचित लाभ उठा कर मुनाफ़ा कमाने की दृष्टि से करता है। इस दौरान उन को व्याज देना पड़ता है, उस से कई गुना ज्यादा वह मुनाफ़ा कमा लेता है। बाज़े वक्त उस को व्याज देने की भी जरूरत नहीं पड़ती है। फिर वह अनाज को फुटकर बेचता है, थोक नहीं, और इस तरह उस की बोरियां बच जाती हैं और उन बोरियों से भी मुनाफ़ा कमा लेता है।

दूसरी तरफ़ फूड कार्पोरेशन को सारे देश में वितरण की व्यवस्था करनी पड़ती है और जहां अधिक अनाज है, वहां से लेकर, जहां नहीं है, वहां पहुंचाना पड़ता है। दुर्भाग्य से हमारे देश में सरप्लस क्षेत्रों और अभाव के क्षेत्रों में दूरी बहुत ज्यादा है। पंजाब सरप्लस है तो केरल डैफिसिट है, वेस्ट बंगाल डैफिसिट है तो मध्य प्रदेश बराबर है। इस प्रकार की दूरियां हैं। इस के बाद जब अनाज एफ०सी०आई० खरीदता है तो उस पर टैक्स देता है? सरकार को टैक्स देता है, अगर वह कृषि मंत्री है तो उस को टैक्स देता है। टैक्स की चोरी नहीं करता। व्याज उस को देना पड़ता है क्यों कि एफ०सी०आई० जो अनाज का बफर स्टॉक बनाता है, बचा कर रखता है वह स्पेकुलेटिव नहीं है। वह इसलिये नहीं है कि जब अनाज कम होगा तो उस का नाजायज फायदा उठाया जायेगा। बल्कि वह इसलिये है कि कमी के वक्त, परेशानी के वक्त वह जनता की मदद करेगा और उचित कीमत पर जनता को अनाज बेचेगा। तो क्योंकि उस को जनता की तकलीफ को दूर करने की दृष्टि से अनाज को बचा कर रखना पड़ता है तो स्टोरेज का और व्याज का खर्चा एफ०सी०आई० को उठाना पड़ता है जो कि प्राइवेट व्यापारी को भारी नहीं पड़ता क्योंकि उस का दृष्टि कोश मुनाफ़ाखोरी का है। इसलिए मैं आप से निवेदन करना चाहूंगा कि एफ०सी०आई० के हैंडलिंग चार्जज प्राइवेट व्यापारियों

धुकाबिले में कुछ ज्यादा हैं तो वह स्वाभाविक है। प्राइवेट व्यापारी ज्यादा से ज्यादा एक राज्य से दूसरे पड़ोसी राज्य में या एक राज्य छोड़ कर दूसरे राज्य में जाता है। लेकिन काश्मीर से कन्याकुमारी तक नहीं जाता है जब कि एफ०सी०आई०को सारे देश की व्यवस्था करनी पड़ती है और उस में भी एफ०सी०आई० यह भी नहीं कर सकता कि पंजाब में अनाज खरीद कर दिल्ली में बेचने वक्त सिर्फ दिल्ली में पंजाब तक का भाड़ा वसूल करे और पंजाब में अनाज खरीद कर केरल में बेचे तो पंजाब से केरल तक का भाड़ा वसूल करे। दिल्ली में कुछ मन्ता मिल जाये और केरल में कुछ महंगा मिल जाये, तो यह भी कुछ उचित नहीं होगा क्योंकि एफ०सी०आई० सारे देश के लिए है, सारे देश की इतना को एक भाव पर अनाज देना है, तो पंजाब और दिल्ली का भाड़ा और पंजाब और केरल का भाड़ा दोनों का एक औसत निकाल कर दिल्ली और केरल में बेचना पड़ेगा और बेचना चाहिए। यह एफ०सी०आई० करता है और सही करता है जिस का नतीजा यह है कि ऐसा लगता है दिल्ली वालों को कि हैडलिंग चार्जेज बहुत ज्यादा है। उन सब दृष्टिकोणों से हम देखें तो पाएंगे कि एफ०सी०आई०के हैडलिंग चार्जेज ज्यादा नहीं है। वाजिब है। शायद 23 रुपये क्विंटल के आसपास आता है और उसमें टैक्स, ब्याज और स्टोरेज ये मुख्य खर्चे हैं और ये वाजिब खर्चे हैं जिन को एफ०सी०आई०को करना पड़ेगा। टैक्स की चोरी एफ०सी०आई० नहीं कर सकता तब कि प्राइवेट व्यापारी करते हैं और स्टोरेज और ट्रांसपोर्ट का खर्चा उस को करना पड़ेगा। क्योंकि एफ०सी०आई०का मकसद यह है कि वह देश के एक कोने से दूसरे कोने तक अनाज पहुंचाए और एफ०सी०आई० का मकसद यह है कि वह बफर स्टॉक तैयार रखे ताकि अनाज के वक़्त वह उन्ता को अनाज दे सके।

एक प्रश्न अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी जी ने उठाया कि राज्य सरकारों को यह इजाजत क्यों

दी जा रही है कि वह अपने फूड कारपोरेशन बनाए या अपने खाद्य विभाग बनाए। हमारा देश बहुत बड़ा है, बहुत विशाल है। फूड कारपोरेशन की कई इनाफिथ्यमीज हैं, कई उस की कमियां हैं, कई दक्षहीनताएं हैं, शायद इस वजह से हैं कि उस को इतने विशाल पैमाने पर काम करना पड़ता है और इतनी बड़ी कर्मचारियों की एक फॉज रखनी पड़ती है जिस को संभालना कई वार संभव नहीं होता है, इसलिये मैं समझता हूँ कि यह स्वाभाविक है कि हर राज्य सरकार चाहे कि उस की अपनी ऐजेंसी हो तो राज्य के भीतर अनाज प्रोक्वायर करना, उस का बफर स्टॉक बनाना और उस का विवरण करना, ये काम तो यह देखे और एक राज्य से दूसरे राज्य में अनाज को ले जाना, उस की व्यवस्था करना और राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर एक बफर स्टॉक का निर्माण करना, इस को फूड कारपोरेशन आफ इंडिया देखें तो मैं समझता हूँ कि यह व्यवस्था अधिक व्यावहारिक और सफल रहेगी।

अटल जी ने कहा कि क्या इस से भ्रष्टाचार खत्म हो जाएगा। क्या इस से नुकसान खत्म हो जायगा। यह बात नहीं है। बात यह है कि फूड एक ऐसा विषय है जो राज्य के अन्तर्गत भी आता है, केन्द्र के अन्तर्गत भी आता है। जहां तक देशव्यापी राष्ट्रीय नीतियों का प्रश्न है केन्द्र उन को प्रस्थापित करता है। देशव्यापी लक्ष्यों को प्राप्त करने के लिए एफ०सी०आई० बना है। इस के कार्य का क्षेत्र और बढ़ने-वाला है। और अधिक अनाज हमें लेना पड़ेगा, और अधिक अनाज का बफर स्टॉक हम को बनाना पड़ेगा और राज्यों में प्रभावकारी ढंग से यह कार्य किया जा सके इस के लिए अगर राज्य सरकारें अपना कोई कारपोरेशन या विभाग बनाना चाहें तो मैं समझता हूँ कि केन्द्र सरकार को इस की इजाजत देनी चाहिए, इस में कोई एतराज नहीं होना चाहिए।

इस में, कोई संदेह नहीं कि अगर फूड है कारपोरेशन आफ इंडिया इस देश में आज

[श्री अमृत नहाटा]

न होता तो अभाव के वक्त, अकाल के वक्त, परेशानियों के वक्त हमारा देश को ऐसे संकटों और मुश्किलों का सामना करना पड़ता कि जिज्ञा की कल्पना नहीं की जा सकती और यदि कल्पना करें तो हमारे रोये खड़े हो जाते हैं। देश में पिछले वर्ष भी इतना भयंकर अकाल रहा। ठीक है एक जमाना था जब बाहर से अनाज आता था, फूड कारपोरेशन आफ इंडिया उस का वितरण कर देता था। लेकिन ज्यों ज्यों हम एक और आत्म-निर्भरता की तरफ बढ़ते जा रहे हैं, दूसरी और अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय मजबूरियां हैं तो अब एफ०सी०आई० को दूसरा काम करना पड़ता है, अनाज को प्रोक्वायर करना पड़ता है, उस का विवरण भी करना पड़ता है, उस का स्टोरेज भी करना पड़ता है। इतने बड़े विशाल कार्यक्रम को देखते हुए भी करीब 11 करोड़ हिन्दुस्तान के लोगों को अकाल और अभाव के वक्त अनाज वितरित करने का काम फूड कारपोरेशन आफ इंडिया के किया। लोगों को परेशानियां थीं, कमियां थीं, लेकिन हम गौरव के साथ कह सकते हैं कि हम इन संकटों का मुकाबिला कर सकें वरिष्ठ एफ०सी०आई० तमाम अपनी कमियां और खामियों के बावजूद भी एक बहुत बड़ा काम कर रहा था और देश के लोगों को अनाज पहुंचा रहा था।

मैं समझता हूँ कि इतने बड़े संगठन में कई कमियां रहती हैं सरकार उस और जागरूक है और अब जो नये अध्यक्ष एफ०सी०आई० के आए हैं, सुना है वह बड़े दक्ष हैं। बड़ी कट्टरता के साथ और बड़ी दृढ़ता के साथ वह इस की कमियों को दूर कर रहे हैं, इस को और ज्यादा दक्ष और कुशल बनाने में लगे हैं। आशा है इस में वह सफल होंगे। लेकिन एक चीज और राज्य सरकारों को और केन्द्र सरकार को करनी चाहिये कि एफ०सी०आई० के आरेशन में हर स्तर पर जनता के कार्यकर्त्ताओं का, सामाजिक कार्यकर्त्ताओं का और सार्वजनिक कार्यकर्त्ताओं

का सहयोग लेना चाहिये। उस से बहुत सारी कमियां एफ सी० आई० की दूर हो सकती हैं। उस और अगर हम कदम उठाएंगे तो बहुत अच्छा होगा। धीरे धीरे अनाज के व्यापार को, चाहे वह गेहूं हो, चावल हो या मोटा अनाज हो, सरकार को अपने हाथों में लेना होगा क्योंकि अनाज जैसी चीज को मुनाफाखारों की चीज के रहम पर नहीं छाड़ा जा सकता। हिन्दुस्तान की जनता व्यापारियों के हाथों में निर्भर नहीं की जा सकती। इसलिए किसान को उचित दाम देने के लिए, जनता को उचित दाम पर अनाज मुहैया करने के लिये यह सरकार की जिम्मेदारी होगी और शनैः शनैः प्रगतिशील रूप में सारे अनाज के व्यापार को सरकार अपने हाथ में ले सके तथा उस के लिए एफ०सी०आई० जैसी संस्थाएं उस भार को उठा सके इस के लिए आवश्यक है कि उन को और अधिक दक्ष बनाया जाय।

*SHRI BIREN DUTTA (Tripura West): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, while initiating the discussion Shri Atal Bihari Vajpai has raised many issues and pin pointed many corrupt practices prevalent in Food Corporation of India. Without trying to reiterate them once again, I would like to draw the attention of this House to the corrupt practice prevalent in regard to medical bills in this Corporation even though this has been touched by him in a general way. Sir, you will be surprised to know that the *per capita per annum* medical bill in West Bengal is Rs. 2,662. West Bengal has become a heaven for corruption because we find that the corresponding figure for Madhya Pradesh is only Rs. 79. This is Siddhartha Babu's West Bengal and these are the persons who had, only the other day, welcomed the Prime Minister with a slogan "Yug Yug Jio". Obviously like the medical bills in FCI they wanted perpetuation of the different channels of corruption which is so active there today.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI (Chirayinkil): We agree with your views. This kind of medical Bills should not be

allowed to any employees. We agree with your observations.

SHRI BIREN DUTTA: If you look at the working of the FCI you will find that the number of employees is increasing every day. The number of posts of senior officers is being increased whereas the income of FCI is dwindling year after year, out of total salary Bill of Rs. 3.35 crores drawn for the staff during 1972-73, the Corporation paid Rs. 1.37 crores by way of overtime and medical bills. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether this is correct. I understand that the matter is under investigation by the CBI and the hon. Minister may please tell us whether this also is true or not? In this connection Sir, I would like to suggest to the hon. Minister to examine whether it would be desirable (in view of the steep increase in the medical bills) to bring the FCI employees under the ESI Scheme.

During the last 16 years, right from the time when the Ashoka Mehta Committee was appointed and subsequently when the FCI came into existence till today we have found one thing very common with this Government. During all these years Government have not made any honest effort to procure all the marketable surplus (and not the marketed surplus) of rice and other foodgrains. My predecessor speaker had tried to raise a voice of protest against this but it cannot be denied by any one here that a very strong lobby within the Congress party itself has prevented the Government consistently and persistently to procure this surplus and as a result this surplus has gone into the hands of profiteers, blackmarketeers and vested interests. In this way when a great bulk of agricultural produce went into the hands of these unscrupulous elements then the Government came forward with a new policy which raised the price of the foodgrains but the Government's policy has only helped these elements to reap better profits than before and it has in no

way helped the Government's policy of take-over of foodgrains. We have made a calculation, Sir, and we have found that even if holdings of 10 acres of irrigated and 15 acres of non-irrigated land are exempted and even if allowances are made for seed, labour and domestic consumption of the cultivators we would be able to procure enough to meet our requirements from the rest of the cultivated land and we would be able to sell rice for Rs. one per Kg. to the consumers but as I have already stated Sir, that the present policy has only helped the hoarders to inflate their profits. The present policy is motivated to ensure that a great bulk of the foodgrains should continue to be in the hands of blackmarketeers and only a small portion of it to be given to those areas which have been affected by famine or where people have risen in revolt with arms in their hands or there has been food riots like a small soup to the hungry beings. The present policy does not in any way want to touch blackmarketeers and their interests.

No doubt an inquiry is now going on against the Chairman of Food Corporation of India and it is not known how many more such big fishes can be netted if a thorough enquiry into the entire working of the FCI is conducted. A little while ago an hon. Member was trying to suggest that the entire lot of the FCI employees is corrupt. I have here with me a copy of a memorandum which has come from one of the employees union of the FCI. I can give to the hon. Minister if he likes to pursue the matter. The memorandum itself speaks how employees themselves want to eradicate corruption from the FCI and how genuinely they are interested in this matter so that they may benefit out of this move and the consumers at large all over the country may also be benefited by it.

Sir, on the one hand the number of senior posts in FCI is being increased while on the other hand we find that a flood gates of corruption are opened every year when ad hoc

[Sri Biren Dutt]

appointments are made. These appointments are made not entirely to meet the urgency of the situation but another objective of such appointment is to help the Congress party directly. Through these appointments the Congress party distributes favour to their own men and also the agents of blackmarketeers and the Government too plays a willing tool in the hands of the Congress party in furthering the party interests even at the cost of the national interests. (Interruption) Sir, it is not a matter to be taken lightly or launched at. If the hon. Minister probed into such appointments then he will find how these appointments have been influenced by the Congress MLAs and MPs by giving letters of recommendations to the candidates. I speak with a sense of certainty as I am aware of the things prevailing in my State. I had stated the other day on the floor of this House that the State administration is hand in glove with the blackmarketeers. The hon. Minister has said that the matter will be inquired into and when such an inquiry is made the truth of my assertion will no doubt be established.

Sir, now I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister to the fact that nearly 10 years ago, some 5000 persons were recruited by the FCI from West Bengal. Till today no decision has been taken about their future. During the course of the present discussion we have been told that quite a few thousand employees are going to be retrenched in U.P. Therefore it is necessary that FCI should go in for a structural change. An hon. member has suggested that FCI should be modelled on the lines of LIC. I do not know whether this would be good or not but it is true that looking at the state of affairs prevailing in the FCI it is imperative that some sort of restructuring is absolutely necessary. While considering this issue the Government will have to say in very clear terms as to the policy they would like to pursue in matters of foodgrains trade.

They must clearly say whether they want to nationalise the foodgrain trade entirely and implement it seriously and not the half-hearted manner in which the present policy is being pursued. Demands have now been made by some State Governments to constitute their own Food Corporations. This is not a bad idea. Through these State organisations, with local cooperation and assistance from the Centre, the work of procurement can be improved substantially. It is also necessary, Sir, that the employees who have been serving this organisation since its inception and who have no stigma of corruption labelled against them should be consulted. These employees have formed their associations and unions and I have no manner of doubt to suggest that Government will benefit immensely if they take the views of their employees in matters of administration and functioning of the Corporation. It is really unfortunate Sir, even the labour laws have not been made applicable to them and they are completely at the mercy of the local administration so far, as their confirmation, promotion etc. are concerned. It is necessary therefore, that an early decision should be taken in regard to these matters and the staff should be given a sense of confidence in regard to their tenure of service and if it is done it will be reflected in better procurement of foodgrains by the Corporation.

I would now take transit and storage losses suffered by the FCI. You will be surprised to know Sir, that the loss suffered under these heads amounts to Rs. 83 crores. It is a colossal amount. How is it done? In Kashipur (W. Bengal) godown of the FCI very recently huge stocks of sugar were stored but due to the negligent supervision a good quantity of this stored sugar melted into water and this has been widely published in the newspapers and I am sure the hon. Minister must be fully aware of this incident. There is no practice of stock verification bag by bag. There is no machinery to check how

bags disappear between the points of loading and unloading. There is no method to prevent the sale of goods during transit and in this way we find thousands of maunds of rice and paddy are lost every year for improper upkeep in the stores. The inspection of the godowns done visually and when we ask the officials as to why timely action was not taken to prevent the rot during storage we are simply told that nothing better can be done when one has to be content with visual inspection only. Thus much of the foodgrains which could have been salvaged and made fit for human consumption are allowed to rot and finally they are disposed of as being unfit for human consumption. The stranglehold of the bureaucracy is so great that it does not allow things to improve. Even when the roofs of the godowns leak, no action is taken for who will pay for the bill? There is no coordination between the FCI, the Railway authorities, the Inspector General of Police and because of this divided responsibility corruption continues to flourish merrily. There are instances where the FCI has not taken steps to prevent leakage merely on the ground that it was a PWD godown and it was for the PWD not the FCI to take necessary preventive measures. In this way Sir, we are losing thousands of manunds of foodgrains owing to the callous neglect and poor maintenance of our godowns. I would therefore urge upon the hon. Minister that he must take the employees into confidence and there are many trade unions who can be depended upon and who can always help the Government to suggest ways and means to prevent such colossal losses which are taking place every year. As at present Sir, the employees are not in a position to convey to the Government their suggestions which are leading to corrupt practices because they are constantly under the threat of losing their job. Most of the employees are still temporary and they have not been made permanent and it is always easy for the senior

officers to terminate the services of such employees when they come forward to reveal the sources of corruption which may be emanating from the top level of the officialdom. I would therefore suggest that the Government must try to improve relations with the staff and a Parliamentary Committee should be constituted to inquire into the various corrupt practices that are still prevalent in this organisation. I trust the hon. Minister will reply to the points that I have now raised and take necessary action in this regard also. With these words Sir, I conclude.

SHRI DINESH CHANDRA GOSWAMI (Gauhati): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, my learned friends, Shri Vajpayee and Shri Biren Dutta have dealt at length with the various shortcomings of the Food Corporation of India. I take my stand here not to give a blank chit in favour of the Food Corporation of India, but, at the same time, I feel that if we do not highlight the good work that has been done by the Food Corporation of India and only highlight the shortcomings we will be doing a great disservice to this country; because this will create an impression that the public undertakings in this country cannot deliver the goods and that it is the private businessmen who can deliver the goods. In order that this type of feeling may not go in the country, it is necessary that the good work which has been made by the Food Corporation of India should also be highlighted, and at the same time, we should be also cautious of the shortcomings. After all, we should not forget the fact that it is the Food Corporation of India that helped this country in tiding over the serious food crisis that we have experienced in the last year. We must not forget that it is because of the buffer-stock of the Food Corporation of India that in the most serious food crisis—this country could at least claim this great achievement—there was no starvation death in this country.

[Shri Dinesh Chandra Goswami]

We also should not forget that when the country suffered one of the most acute droughts in Maharashtra and other areas, it is because of the buffer-stock of the Food Corporation of India the people could be given the necessary subsistence requirements. We should not also forget the fact that when there was the Andhra agitation and the Andhra crisis, when there was no communication between Kerala and the rest of this country, it is because of the Food Corporation of India which shipped the necessary food materials to Kerala by sea, at heavy expense, that the people of Kerala could be supplied their essential requirements. These are some of the achievements of the Food Corporation of India which we always should bear in mind and we should project them before the people so that the people can understand that in the moments of acute crisis it is not the private businessmen, not the private individuals who can come to our rescue but it is the public undertakings which will come to our rescue. It is in this spirit that we can expect a complete economic change in this country.

At the same time, I am completely in agreement with other that the shortcomings of the Food Corporation of India should be looked into seriously and remedied. It is true that there is corruption in the Food Corporation of India. Even the hon. Minister has admitted it. And the corruption has gone to the extent that the CBI had to make enquiries against Shri Iqbal Singh. I must compliment the Government that even they have allowed an enquiry even against the highest official and I hope this will create an impression round the country that a person, however high he may be if he is corrupt, will not be pardoned by this Government.

16.28 hrs.

[SHRI SEZHIYAN in the Chair]

Sir, one of the difficulties of the Food Corporation of India has been the overhead administrative expenses. I think the overhead expenditure should come down. Mr. Vajpayee has criticised that there has been a certain amount of retrenchment in Uttar Pradesh seems to be a great problem to us. Now, to Uttar Pradesh, if you give kerosene immediately there is a hue and cry raised, that, you give kerosene to Uttar Pradesh because there is election. If you employ people in Uttar Pradesh, they will say because of the elections you are employing people. If you retrench people in Uttar Pradesh, they will say you are refinding people. Therefore, it seems that in Uttar Pradesh, you can only maintain the *status quo* but cannot do anything else. After all, I feel that if there has been an excess number of people in the Food Corporation of India and if the Corporation cannot function properly, there should be a retrenchment. But at the same time, I will ask the Government, and I would appeal to the Government to see that this question of the employees should be dealt with in a compassionate manner an attempt should be made that they should be provided with alternative jobs with equal benefits if possible.

I will not advocate that employees should be kept at the cost of the functioning of the Corporation. But, we have got a moral duty to the employees also. I hope the Government will take a compassionate view of the whole thing.

The other thing about which we should be careful is about increasing pilferage cost in the F. C. I. Whereas the number of pilferage in 1966 was 8 and the total amount involved was Rs. 3,660 it increased to Rs. 26,131 in 1967, the number of pilferage having risen to 32. In 1969, the number was 69 and the amount involved was Rs. 4,92,637. In 1970, the number rose to 72 and the amount involved was Rs. 5,04,739. These are the things

which have come to the notice of the Corporation. Without coming to the notice of the Corporation, I think there are an equal number of pilferages which go unnoticed. Unless we do something about it, there will be a great difficulty in proper functioning of the Food Corporation of India. I hope, the hon. Minister, the Government, will see that some very serious attempt is made to stop the pilferage and see that no mercy is shown to the delinquent officers who have not been able to deal with these pilferages. After all, the responsibility should be attached with every employee of the Food Corporation of India. If there is a dereliction in duty, they should be dealt with mercilessly.

Then, the question of discipline takes us to a question of unions. The last speaker said that you deal with one union and that will remedy the whole thing. At present, there are almost 20 registered and unregistered unions in the Food Corporation of India. You cannot have real discipline in an organisation with 22 registered and unregistered unions, each union trying to create an impression on the workers. Therefore, they will try to group themselves with the employees. Here, it is the trade unions and labour leaders who have some function to perform. We have got here trade union leaders who want public undertakings to succeed and who want the take-over of rice and wheat trade by the Government to succeed. My appeal to the trade union leaders on both the sides is to see that the number of registered and unregistered trade unions is brought down and there is perfect harmony amongst the workers and the employees of the Corporation.

Before I take my seat, I would request the hon. Minister to look particularly to the case of Assam. I know the Agriculture Minister himself comes from Assam and he knows the problems there. But, I feel, unless the House strengthens his hands, he has certain compulsions. At this stage, I

would ask the House to give an applause to the Assam Government for taking over the rice trade. This is the Assam Government for taking over the rice trade. This is the first State which has taken over the rice trade. Obviously, it is on the success of the taking over of the rice trade that the future policy of the Government in regard to taking over of trade in other commodities, to a great extent, depends. Taking over the rice trade has started in a very well-organised manner in my State. I feel, the Food Corporation of India has a very important role to play there. I am happy to know that the Food Corporation of India is rendering co-operation there though their cooperation has to be increased.

I had requested Mr. Shinde long ago that the administrative machinery, the administrative set-up, of the Food Corporation of India in Assam and in the neighbouring States should be strengthened. After all, we have got three States and two Union Territories in that region. Assam has taken over the rice trade. I think, a zonal office of the Food Corporation of India should be immediately established there. Mr. Shinde had, on principle, accepted it. But I do not know what actually has prevented him to transferring the principle into practice. I hope, with his dynamism, he will not merely accept it in principle but also accept it in practice. I am appealing to Mr. Shinde again to do it. I know, the Agriculture Minister may be reluctant to doing it on the ground that he may be showing undue favour to Assam. I hope, Mr. Shinde being impersonal will do greater justice to it.

The functioning and the strengthening of the F. C. I. in Assam will undoubtedly give a new fillip and encouragement to other States who are thinking in terms of taking over the trade in essential commodities. It is on this that the Food Corporation of India has not only a function to perform in Assam but also a function which will ultimately determine to a

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great extent the future food policy of this country. Therefore, my appeal to the Food Corporation of India officials here is to strengthen the organisation in Assam, to streamline it and to remove the shortcomings.

I am confident that the new awareness in the Food Corporation of India will undoubtedly increase and that it will play a greater role for the good of this country.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE (Kanpur): I have heard carefully the argument advanced by my hon. friend Shri Vajpayee, who initiated the debate and other friends such as Shri Biren Dutta and Shri Goswami. The Food Corporation of India has some to stay and it should be our earnest endeavour whether from this side or that side to see that it is not swindled by a handful of people. We discussed the nefarious and shady deals which took place when my hon. friend Shri Iqbal Singh was the Chairman. The entire question was referred to the CBI and I am told that the CBI has already established certain charges. I should like to know from the hon. Minister whether that gentleman has been charged or is going to be prosecuted by the Food Corporation of India. I also want to know whether a copy of the report would be laid on the Table of the House for eliciting more information and for the education of all of us to enable us to assess how best the Food Corporation of India could be run.

It is true that there is corruption at various places. I come from Kanpur. There is a huge storage depot at Chandari. I know that there were certain cases of pilferage and misappropriation which were going on. The definition of honesty has changed in this country. A person who takes bribe and does the work is supposed to be an honest person. A person who takes the money, but does not do the work is supposed to be a dishonest person.

The question of retrenchment was mentioned. I heard with great attention the speech of my hon. friend Shri Goswami and he told that U.P. was a peculiar place. If there was recruitment, the Government was criticised; if there was retrenchment, the Government was equally criticised. That is what he told. I do not think that anybody criticises the Government or the Food Corporation of India when they recruit certain hands.

I had a very useful discussion with Shri Shinde the other day and I am happy that the Managing Director and the Chairman of the Food Corporation of India were also present. In U.P. alone they are going to retrench 834 people out of a total number of 945 cases of retrenchment. I do not know whether U.P. is the biggest State and, therefore, the retrenchment should also be the biggest. This is the result of the reversion of 1242 staff of the Food Corporation of India in a northern zone.

I am told that the salaries of those employees who were reverted had been protected by granting them personal pay. If they had been granted personal pay, I am afraid that the personal pay is going to absorb all their future increments. That is why we are against granting of personal pay. The policy of wheat take-over has been decided by the Government. Is it not a fact the storage capacity is full. If the norms are properly accepted, then these employees need not have been retrenched. I speak subject to correction. I have got a statement here which shows what staff would be needed as per norms and what staff actually exists. In Punjab as against 90 AM(D) staff needed, there are only 35; as against 378 AGI(D) staff needed as per norms, there are only 128. In AGII(D) category, the respective figures are 536 and 244. At AGIII(D) level it is 1715 and 815 respectively. That means at the AGIII(D) level itself 900 additional staff are required. In Haryana again, as against 16, 93, 126 and 420 staff needed under various categories,

there are only 11, 45, 65 and 305. That is also the case in Rajasthan. In U.P. where retrenchment is threatened as against 63 AM(D), you have only 58; as against 272 AGI(D), you have only 256; and as against 1256 AGIII(D), you have only 1191. Taking the overall picture, as against 3700 AGIII(D) posts, you have only 2524; that means you need an additional 1176 hands in this category alone, if the norms prescribed by the Food Corporation of India are properly followed.

One may argue that procurement is not so much. It was also explained by the hon. Minister that the imported wheat was distributed to various States from the port itself and as such no additional staff was needed. As per the norms, we need 5818 staff; the total posts sanctioned in different categories come to 3835 and the total additional posts required come to 1983. I would have understood had these posts not been filled as an economy measure and side by side no promotions also took place, promotions have taken place. I should like to know from the hon. Minister what kind of economy is this. Has any class I officer lost his job because of the economy measure, because of the non-procurement of rice which they were expecting to take. Is it also a fact that there are many employees who are working in the FCI as deputationists for the last so many years. If there is no need, they should be sent to their parent departments; if they came from the Railways, they should go back to railways, because they have a lien there. One may argue that the railway staff was needed by the FCI to control the godowns, siding purposes, for determining the quantity in destination, etc. But you must consider the number of class I, II, III and IV staff who had been drawn from various departments including the Railways who are now working in the FCI and whether they could not be sent back to their departments. If that is done nearly 500-600 employees at least, if I am not wrong, could be saved from re-

trenchment. So, I suggest to the hon. Minister to keep all these people till the next Budget session so that the Budget might be increased or work might be increased. I would also request the hon. Minister to kindly assure us that these people who have already faced retrenchment will be provided with alternative jobs. I can give the example of the census department in U.P. They wanted to retrench 500 persons. A representation was made to the Cabinet Secretariat here and ultimately it was decided not to retrench them upto 28 February, 1974. They were to be absorbed in various departments and I am sure with the growth of the public undertakings at various places, if there is co-ordination, those people would also be found employment. There is constant struggle going on between hunger and anger. These 834 people who are to be retrenched in U.P. alone will provide an opportunity to those who want to exploit this issue. The reactionary forces who are out to sabotage the working of the FCI will take advantage of it. Certain suggestions had been given by the unions. Mr. Goswami said that there were 12 unions or 20 unions. There are two unions, which are representative unions—the Food Corporation of India Employees Union and the Akhil Bharatiya Khadhya Nigam Karmachari Sangh. They have joined together. It is only one union now. So I request that the suggestions given by them to the Labour Minister and to the Food Minister should be considered by the Government. They have given the suggestions to the Prime Minister also.

If you really analyse, there are two points. One is the capacity of our storage. I have talked about norms prescribed by the Food Corporation of India which I have quoted. Then, there are a number of deputationists. If you consider these two points then you can accommodate 945 unfortunate people who might otherwise be thrown on the streets to face starvation along with their wives and children.

[Shri S. M. Banerjee]

I beg of the entire House not to be miserly. If it is necessary, more money could be asked for in supplementary grants to save their jobs. I told you how the census department could save these employees. You also know how the Defence Minister is trying for jobs for 11000 MES employees.

A suggestion has been made by Shri Biren Dutta for the appointment of a Parliamentary Committee. I do not know whether a Parliamentary Committee will be useful or not for this particular case. No body denies corruption. It is part and parcel of our daily life. There might be corruption. I do not hold any brief for any corrupt union member or union leader. If a corrupt man is the leader he should be chucked out by both the union and the Government. After the CBI probe and report has any action been taken against the persons concerned? There are people who say that once you nationalise anything, it will become a bundle of contradictions and a den of inefficiency. They also say that the prices will be exorbitant and overheads will be more. They want to sabotage the growth of public undertakings in this country. As an ardent supporter of public undertakings and as a good friend of this Government whenever they take progressive decisions I would request them to consider this matter very seriously. If a Parliamentary Committee is needed to streamline the administration it should be there. Or this question should be referred to an Expert Committee, because I do not consider every Member of Parliament to be a versatile genius. They are not supposed to know everything. Sometimes we also take partisan attitude. A committee of experts might go into the cause of certain losses. The blockage of funds by the States as on 31st August, 1973 is to the extent of Rs. 291 crores. I do not think that any State is going to pay this amount to FCI. If that has been given on

'payable-when-able' basis, then that is a different matter. The point is that Rs. 291 crores are blocked by the States. Now what are the charges? Food Corporation of India Rs. 7.72 per quintal; Co-operatives and State Governments Rs. 10.26 to Rs. 11.66 per quintal. Why is there this difference? I would like to be educated on this matter. Then you have subsidy and everything. After all, we have to run this entirely on a profitable. If there is no profit in the profitable.. If there is no profit in the Food Corporation, let there be no losses. If there is no profit motive, let there be at least the service motive. It should not be devoid of both private and service motives.

With these words I would like to assure the hon. Minister that we shall help him to the last to see that the Food Corporation of India exists in this country and all other items are also taken over by the FCI. Secondly those 945 unfortunate persons should not be thrown to the wolf of starvation at this hour when it is impossible even for those who are employed to meet both ends. I would request him to take pity on them purely on compassionate grounds. Let them continue upto the next budget... (*Interruptions*) I would request him to accept this so that the lives of those persons can be saved. As a matter of fact, when those people came to me, they were in tears and asked me, 'What would we eat after 1st January?' I had no answer. I was also unemployed for about 14 months. My son's name was removed from the school's register because I had no money to pay; I have faced starvation; for 14 months I was unemployed. That is why I feel the pinch. I would request the hon. Minister to consider this.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI (Chirayinkil): Of course, I share the views expressed by my hon. friend, Shri S. M. Banerjee. I consider the Food Corporation of India as one of the vital public sector undertakings playing a crucial role both in economic

and in political life. The Food Corporation has been subjected to criticism, but unfortunately it is not objective but subjective and is made with different purpose and motives. I also criticise the FCI but it is only with the purpose of correcting and streamlining the whole thing for the benefit of the people of this country.

I have argued with the hon. Minister that the labour relations which constitute one of the important factors in the Food Corporation of India, are not sound; in fact, they are getting worsened every day. You will be surprised to know that whenever there is a division in the management, when there is a fight between the Managing Director and the Chairman or between the different group of officials they use the employees to fight for them. It has happened on many occasions in the FCI. They encourage small splinter groups in the Union. I have already raised about some top men in the Personnel Department. They encourage factions in the Unions. (*Interruptions*) I am saying this for the information of the present head there. (*Interruptions*). When I went for the conference, they said that they would not recognise me as the President of the Union; they said, 'We welcome you as Member of Parliament, but we cannot put your name in the minutes because we do not recognise you as the President'. I can force them to come before me and discuss with me. But, I keep the interest of the country higher than my own vanity. Otherwise I could have done it, but I did not note. This is the way how they function.

With regard to the present set up in the FCI, especially, I am very happy about the new Chairman and I have openly congratulated him in the Press. He should try to streamline the whole administration. Unfortunately, there is a notion and I do not know whether he believes in it or not, that by retrenching employees, the whole administration can be streamlined. As Mr. Banerjee

pointed out, about 945 people have been declared surplus. I do not want to elaborate as he has put it very correctly. You may understand that there are already vacancies and according to the norms accepted by both the employees and the management, 1983 vacancies are already there, you are retrenching 945 people. I put a question in this regard and I got an answer from the Minister. I will quote them. My question was:

"(a) Whether no systematic transfer and promotion rules are observed in the FCI;

(b) the total increase in the category I vacancy of FCI during the last three years; and

(c) the reasons for such large increase in these numbers and the steps taken to implement a regular transfer and promotion policy."

The answer was:

"Transfers and promotions in the Food Corporation of India are made in accordance with a well defined policy and as per prescribed procedures. The total number of posts filled in Category I in the Corporation increase from 500 in 1970-71 to 679 in 1972-73. This increase was due mainly to the general expansion in the activities of the Corporation."

The answer is very interesting. The number of Category I posts has increased from 500 to 679. I do not know whether it was in the same year or not. Anyhow the number of category I posts has gone up. It is not going down. But you are retrenching people at the lowest level and throwing them in the streets. In Category I the increase is about 679 in 1972-73. What is the purpose of category I staff? It is said that their policy of promotion and transfer is according to well-defined rules. I do not want to mention the name. You may be surprised to know how the officer—he is a Deputy Quality Manager—has been given promotion. He was in the

[Shri Vayalar Ravi]

grade of Rs. 1600—2000 and he was promoted to the grade of Rs. 2000—2500 and that is only for a specific period and within that period he was due to retire. Then you say that the promotions and transfers are according to rules. It does not go together. It all shows that favouritism and nepotism are quite rampant and groupism is being built up in the organisation.

Only my thinking is that the new Chairman must be able to overcome all these things. I do not want to criticise him. You take up the whole FCI. Now, Mr. Vajpayee has made some criticism. The CPM Member also made some criticism. He could not understand what is going on. He said that the medical bill of Rs. 1 crore is unjustified. But he is forgetting the fact that the 7000 deputationists have created this mischief. They have conflicting interests. Unfortunately, the hon. CPM Member will not understand what the problem is. The present set up in the FCI is that there are direct recruits numbering about 28,000, employees transferred from the Food Departments number about 12,000 and deputationists number about 7,000 and these 7,000 deputationists are doing this mischief. They have no loyalty to the FCI. They are getting 20 per cent extra wage and their loyalty lies elsewhere, i.e. to their parent departments. Naturally, they are creating the mischief. They are responsible for this inflated medical bill, not the regular employees of the FCI. The transferred officials from the Food Departments number 12,000 and naturally, there is a conflict of interest in the matter of promotion etc. The matter was not discussed with the employees to find a solution. They are encouraging factionalism among the employees which you have to undo. Today, there is a new Chairman and my appeal to him is that if you want to proceed on proper lines or if you want to streamline the whole set-up without the co-operation

of the employees of the FCI and without taking them into confidence, nobody can do it. They should discuss with the employees and they should find out their problem. They should see how to streamline the whole organisation. That is very necessary. I had suggested sometime back to the Minister that there should be de-caderisation. Then this confrontation can be avoided. The deputationists should be sent back. By keeping them, the problem will become more dangerous.

Shri Vajpayee referred to wages as well as procurement prices. It is true we must have a wage study. Labour charges have gone up. Regarding procurement and incidental expenses, the FCI spends Rs. 7.72 whereas Punjab and Haryana Governments spent Rs. 11.60. Expenditure on wages during 1971-72 comes to Rs. 23 crores. It may go up to Rs. 39 crores this year. There are other expenditure items which they forgot. FCI has to pay interest on loan which they have taken from the banks and other financial institutions. It comes to the tune of Rs. 45 crores or Rs. 42 crores. An amount of Rs. 291 crores is stuck up with the cooperatives and with the State and Central Governments. On this amount which is stuck up they are not getting any interest at all. This is a particular problem which we must appreciate. They are not getting any interest and on the top of it they have to pay Rs. 42 crores as interest for the money which they have borrowed. This is a thing which should be looked into and the hon. Minister should see that the economic affairs of the Corporation are streamlined. The administrative expenses come to Rs. 5 crores a year. I believe the FCI should make a reduction in it because it is too much. The losses have got to be reduced. What happened in 1973-74? The loss comes to Rs. 28 crores. That is to say if 2.72 lakhs tonnes of foodgrains are missing it means Rs. 28 crores worth of foodgrains is lost. This mistake should be

rectified. This loss should be avoided. We cannot tolerate this thing.

17.04 hrs.

[SHRI S. A. KADER in the Chair].

The Government is paying a subsidy of Rs. 22 per quintal. This Rs. 22 per quintal should be analysed. Only Re. 1 and 96 paise is spent for salaries and wages per quintal. The expenditure on procurement and distribution expenditure comes to about Rs. 7.60 and Rs. 15 per quintal. If you calculate wages of employees they are very much less. It is very unfortunate that propaganda is made that employees get more and it is because of the trouble of the employees the corporation is being into a mess.

FCI spent huge amount for purchasing machineries. All the machineries are lying idle. FCI should look into this. This is a very serious matter. Rs. 20 crores worth of machinery including rice mills, cleaning machinery, platform scales and water-coolers are lying idle. Many of these items are even now lying idle. If I am wrong, I am subject to correction. But, I know that the cooler has been installed where there is no electricity available. Machines are installed in places where no electricity is available.

You are not looking into these things such as how much of machinery has been purchased and where were they installed and how much of money had been spent. You know this is paid by the consumers. My State has to pay for it because we are taking 50 per cent of our requirements through FCI every year and so we have to pay for this.

Now I come to West Godavari District about which the Minister knows very well as he has to pay about .75 million as damages to the millers in the khariff season. I do not know why they have given the contract without calling for the tenders to the private sellers of paddy, at double the

rate of last year's. The loss might come to Rs. 3 crores to the FCI. And without calling for the tenders, they are giving this to the private sellers at double the rate of last year and that is a heavy loss to the F.C.I. I hope the Government will look into it as to how it has happened.

I am not going to take much time of the House. I shall conclude my speech with a hope that this vital public sector undertaking will be streamlined. If we are asked for support, we are prepared to give our fullest support. Also we may assure you that the employees are prepared to give their full support to the new Chairman and to the new management. My only submission is that it is only a better labour-management relation can serve the purpose. I request that you will take the workers also into full confidence and discuss with them their problems and see that whatever be their grievances are looked into sympathetically. I appeal to the Minister that he should take back the retrenched workers in U.P. and other places. I think about 945 were retrenched. They should be taken back as early as possible. The Government should not stand on their prestige; it is not a question of a prestige of A or B but it is a question of human consideration.

I agree with Shri Guha in what he says. I appeal to the Minister that this matter should be considered sympathetically and the whole working of the F.C.I. should be streamlined. The present management should take an objective view of what all is said in Parliament about the F.C.I. We want that the F.C.I. should function properly. We feel that this should be the best public sector undertaking which should make an impact in the distribution system of our country which alone can prevent blackmarketing in foodgrains and ensure supply of foodgrains to the poor people at a cheaper rate. It is the duty of the F.C.I. to see to it that it is able to

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supply the foodgrains to these poor people and the salaried people at cheap rate. The present management, I hope, will understand the problem of these people. The difficulty is with the top officials of the management who do not treat the workers properly. I hope that the present management will look to their demands sympathetically. I hope the employees will give their whole-hearted support to the new management. I may assure you their full support to the new management.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA (Contai): Sir, for the discussion on the working of the Food Corporation of India, four hours were allotted. But, suddenly, I have come to know that the Government wants to wind up this debate today itself. The hon. Speaker had convened a meeting—an important meeting—of the Rules Committee to which we all had been invited. And that was the reason why I did not give my name earlier. Other members of different parties have also been invited to attend this meeting. Food is of vital importance to us. The food situation in this country is most crucial. We are dealing with the F.C.I. And so, under no circumstances, the debate should be allowed to be wound up today. That should be allowed to continue the next day. This is a debate for which four hours have been allowed.

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI F. A. AHMED): I have no objection if the debate is carried over to the next day. But, I was told that there were no other speakers. So, I thought that I should wind up the debate today. But, if the hon. Members are anxious to carry over this debate to the next day, I have no objection.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is that the wish of the House that the debate should be carried over to another day?

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Yes, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. I have with me a long list. I shall now call Shri Krishnan to speak.

*SHRI E. R. KRISHNAN (Salem): Mr. Chairman, Sir, on behalf of my party, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, I rise to say a few words on the Motion regarding the working of the Food Corporation of India.

From the inception of F.C.I. in 1965 till today, the F.C.I. has not been able to achieve the target of procurement of foodgrains even in a single year. There is the gap of 12 per cent to 20 per cent between the target of procurement and the actual achievement. This in a nutshell shows the inefficiency of the F.C.I.

Out of the total procurement of foodgrains, the direct purchase from the farmers is just 0.1 per cent to 3.4 per cent; 25 per cent of the total procurement is being done through the co-operatives and the remaining 70 per cent of the procurement is being done through the private sector middle agencies. I would like to know from the hon. Minister of Agriculture the percentage of procurement done directly from the farmers, the percentage of procurement done through the cooperatives and the percentage of procurement done through the private sector middle agencies during the year 1972-73. I would like to point out with all the force at my command that this 70 per cent procurement through the private sector middle agencies is open sesame for corruption and malpractices in the activities of the F.C.I. To prove my contention, I would like to refer to two instances of corrupt practices, which relate to the procurement of mustard oil and pulses by the F.C.I. for meeting the needs of Bangladesh refugees. I understand that the Central Bureau of Investigation has instituted an inquiry in this matter

*The original speech was delivered in Tamil.

against the former Chairman of the F.C.I. who was also a Deputy Minister in the Government of India. I welcome this prompt action. It is also stated that a case has also been filed against him in this regard. Two cloth merchants, after establishing personal contacts with the former Chairman of the F.C.I., made a profit of Rs. 3 lakhs in supplying the mustard oil to the F.C.I., out of which a large share went into the pockets of the former Chairman of the F.C.I. Though the F.C.I. officials rejected the tenders of the two people, the former Chairman of the F.C.I. prevailed over them in accepting their tenders. Similarly, in the matter of pulses also meant for the Bangladesh refugees, the very same gentlemen are reported to have cheated the F.C.I. with the connivance of the former Chairman of the F.C.I.

SHRI F. A. AHMED: May I submit that a charge-sheet has been submitted in respect of the matter which is being referred to by the hon. Member? So, I would like him not to refer to it but await the result of the case.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I hope the hon. Member understands what the hon. Minister is saying, namely that it is *sub judice*. So, let him not refer to it.

SHRI E. R. KRISHNAN: Sir, I may not refer to it, but in August 5, 1972 issue of Blitz, December 8, 1973 issue of Blitz and November 30, 1973 issue of The Patriot these issues have been given wide coverage. You know, Sir, that Blitz and The Patriot are the drum-beaters of the Government of India led by the Prime Minister, Shrimati Indira Gandhi. When a debate was raised about the F.C.I. in this House last time, many hon. Members referred to the allegation of corrupt practices against the former Chairman of the F.C.I. In reply, Shri Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed as also Shri Shinde, the Cabinet Minister and the State Minister respectively, stated that these malignant allegations had no basis and the critics of the former Chairman were keen to denigrate the working of the public sector undertaking like the Food Corporation of

India by circulating such rumours. Now, when the C.B.I. has instituted an inquiry against the former Chairman, I am eager to hear the comments of the hon. Ministers on this issue.

In our country we have about 3406 markets, out of which 1261 are unregulated markets beyond the purview of any law, from where the F.C.I. makes the procurement. The hon. Minister might say that certain State Governments have not yet passed any law in this matter. We have a sprawling Ministry of Agriculture at the Centre. Two or three conferences of the Ministers of Agriculture and Food are held invariably every year. During the inter-session period, Shri Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, Shri Shinde and Prof. Sher Singh are regularly touring the country. I don't think that they have emphasised the need for having laws for regulating the markets upon the Ministers of Agriculture and Food in the States. The procedure of procuring through 1261 unregulated markets is the breeding ground for unbridled corruption. I would like to know from the hon. Minister of Agriculture the concrete steps taken by the Government in the matter of having only regulated markets throughout the country.

It is accepted that the F.C.I. has not got adequate storage capacity. Consequently, the F.C.I. depends to a large extent on the private storage facility. I need not say that this also generates unfair practices. During the period 1966-67 to 1970-71, for a period of five years, the total loss of foodgrains in the private sector godowns is of the order of Rs. 21.96 crores. As on 31-10-71, the F.C.I. had about 20 lakh tonnes of foodgrains in the godowns of private people. The F.C.I. does not seem to have enquired in all earnestness about the loss in the private sector godowns. The dependence on the private sector godowns has contributed greatly to the increasing loss of F.C.I. I request the hon. Minister of Agriculture to inform

[Shri E. R. Krishnan]

the House about the steps taken for preventing such huge losses in the private sector godowns.

Besides this, the theft in the F.C.I. godowns are going up. The total loss in the F.C.I. godowns seems to be of the order of Rs. 40 lakhs. But the F.C.I. is unconcerned about such losses in its own godowns. Will the hon. Minister explain the steps taken by the F.C.I. in this regard?

When the performance of the F.C.I. in the procurement of foodgrains is so miserable, the Government are not also willing to encourage the setting up the Food Corporations by the State Governments. The only remedial step that the F.C.I. has conceived of is, as has been pointed out by my hon. friend, Shri S. M. Banerjee, to retrench the low-paid employees in hundreds. When a question was asked in this House, the reply was that the overheads of the undertaking are mounting up and the retrenchment of surplus staff is not improper. Here, I would like to point out that during 1970-71 the F.C.I. procured about 31.86 lakh tonnes of foodgrains and the total transit loss was 57,790 tonnes. The approximate value of the transit loss was of the order of Rs. 28 crores. This has also been published in the November 24, 1973 issue of Blitz. If the F.C.I. had taken prompt steps to prevent such transit loss, there would have been no need for taking recourse to retrenching the low-paid employees in hundreds.

It is strange that when the F.C.I. is not able to discharge its allotted duties effectively and efficiently, the F.C.I. should express its desire to take over the distribution of foodgrains being done by the State Governments. No State Government would agree to this proposal because it has the Civil Supplies Department doing excellent work. Here, I am reminded of the Tamil proverb which means that an inexperienced dancer is lamenting over the inadequacy of the floor-space

for her dance. The F.C.I. should first concentrate on its present onerous tasks.

Sir, there is another fertile ground for breeding corruption in the activities of the F.C.I. and that is the large number of rice mills in the private sector. As on 1-1-1970 there were 67,100 rice mills in the country out of which 665 rice mills were in the cooperative sector. All the remaining rice mills are in the private sector, which are fed by the paddy supplied by the F.C.I. The F.C.I. should have made efforts to bring as many rice mills as possible in the cooperative sector. Besides this, the F.C.I. and the Central Ministry of Agriculture should have tried to set up as many rice mills as possible in the public sector. Whenever the State Governments come forward to set up rice mills in the public sector as also storage facility in the public sector, the F.C.I. and the Central Government should not hesitate to extend financial and technical help expeditiously.

In conclusion, I would say that though the total turnover of F.C.I. has gone up from Rs. 289.61 crores in 1965-66 to Rs. 1423 crores in 1970-71, the profit of F.C.I. has declined from Rs. 3.05 crores to Rs. 1.58 crores. This is a classic illustration of inefficient functioning of the F.C.I.

Summing up, I would like to suggest:

The F.C.I. should stop procuring from private sector, middle agencies and procure directly from the farmers and through cooperatives. The F.C.I. should end its dependence on the storage facility in the private sector. The F.C.I. should implement expeditiously a programme of having adequate storage facility in the public sector. Similarly, the private sector rice mills should not be encouraged by the F.C.I. The F.C.I. should give paddy only to the rice mills in the cooperative sector. A national programme of having rice mills in the

public sector, especially in the paddy-growing States, should be implemented forthwith. Only then the F.C.I., the premier and vital public sector undertaking, will be able to ensure remunerative prices of the millions of farmers in our country and also the availability of foodgrains at fair price for the 55 crores of people of our country. Unless the F.C.I. takes steps in this direction, it will not be able to get out of the clutches of corrupt practices and maladministration.

श्री शंकर दयाल सिंह (चतरा) :

सभापति महोदय, भारतीय खाद्य निगम के कार्यों के सम्बन्ध में इस सदन में कई बार चर्चायें हुई हैं और उन में माननीय सदस्यों ने जो विचार प्रकट किये हैं उन से सरकार को बराबर इस बात की जानकारी होती रही है कि इस सम्बन्ध में लोगों में काफी असंतोष है।

भारतीय खाद्य निगम की स्थापना क्यों की गई? उस की स्थापना के पीछे यह उद्देश्य था :

“भारतीय खाद्य निगम खादानों की अधिप्रति, आयात, वितरण, संचयन, संचलन और उन की बिक्री करने के लिए केन्द्रीय सरकार की एकमात्र एजेंसी है। निगम अन्य विविध प्रकार के कार्य भी कर रहा है, जैसे कि उर्वरकों को सम्भालना, धान कटना, और पौष्टिक विधायित खाद्य पदार्थों का उत्पादन करना।”

मैं बिल्कुल स्पष्ट शब्दों में कहना चाहता हूँ कि भारतीय खाद्य निगम की स्थापना जिन उद्देश्यों को ले कर हुई थी, उन में से कुछ की पूर्ति जरूर हुई है लेकिन बहुतों की पूर्ति नहीं हो सकी है। व्यापारियों द्वारा की जाने वाली मन्तानी और लूट पर रोक लगाने, मूल्यों में स्थिरता लाने और डिमांड बढ़ा सप्लाई में एक रूपता लाने के लिए

भारतीय खाद्य निगम की स्थापना की गई थी। लेकिन जैसे खाद्य निगम के कार्य आगे बढ़े, करोड़ों रुपये का उस का व्यापार बढ़ा, वैसे वैसे असंतोष भी बढ़ता चला गया। क्यों? जैसा कि दोनों ओर के माननीय सदस्यों ने कहा है कि यह मानना पड़ेगा कि भारतीय खाद्य निगम में भ्रष्टाचार है, अनुशासनहीनता है और उस के कर्मचारियों में जवाबदेही की जो भावना होनी चाहिए, उस का नितान्त अभाव है।

जब एक छोटा व्यापारी किसी चीज में मिलावट करता है, तो हम मांग करते हैं कि उस के खिलाफ कड़ी से कड़ी कार्यवाही की जाये। लेकिन जब सरकार की एजेंसी का एक कर्मचारी वही मिलावट करता है, तो मैं समझता हूँ कि उसे के लिए दोहरी कठोर सजा होनी चाहिए। एक साधारण व्यवसायी और नागरिक की तुलना में सरकारी एजेंसी के कर्मचारी की जवाबदेही बहुत बड़ी है। इसलिए उस के लिए सजा भी बड़ी कठोर होनी चाहिए।

कई माननीय सदस्यों ने कहा कि भारतीय खाद्य निगम के द्वारा जो गेहूँ या चावल सप्लाई किया गया उस में मिलावट थी। मैं इस सम्बन्ध में एक उदाहरण देना चाहता हूँ। मेरे हाथ में 5 मई, 1973 का हिन्दुस्तान है। उसमें कहा गया है :

“बम्बई 4 मई। भारतीय खाद्य निगम ने महाराष्ट्र को जो लम्बे व मोटे किस्म का चावल सप्लाई किया है उस में नोड़े के छोटे कण मिले हैं।

पत्रकारों को यह सूचना देते हुए महाराष्ट्र के खाद्य एवं सिविल सप्लाई मन्त्री श्री एस०जी० पवार ने आज बताया कि इस प्रकार के 400 टन चावल को, जो उपभोक्ताओं को बांटने के लिए पहली मई को राशन की बुकाने

[श्री शंकर दयाल सिंह]

को दिया जा चुका है, वापस लेने के लिए आदेश जारी कर दिये गये हैं।”

जो चावल सप्लाई हो चुका है, उस को वापस लेने के लिए आदेश जारी किये गये हैं, यह दुर्दशा है भारतीय खाद्य निगम की। केवल महाराष्ट्र से ही नहीं, बल्कि पंजाब, बिहार और अन्य प्रदेशों से भी ऐसी शिकायतें मिली हैं।

जहां तक अनुशासनहीनता का सम्बन्ध है, कई प्रदेशों में कई बार ऐसा हुआ है कि सीसक खड़े हैं, लेकिन 5 बजे यह कह कर गोदाम का दरवाजा बन्द कर दिया गया कि अब हम एक रस्ती भी अनाज नहीं देंगे।

आज के अखबार में यह समाचार देख कर मुझे खुशी हुई कि “स्टेप्स टु स्ट्रीमलाइन एफ०सी०आई० आपरेशन्स”, लेकिन आगे पढ़ कर मुझे खुशी के साथ तकलीफ भी हुई। उस में कहा गया है :

“To streamline its operations in Delhi the Food Corporation of India has set up Advisory Committees at all its food storage and supply depots.”

यह व्यवस्था केवल दिल्ली के लिए क्यों की गई है? दिल्ली में सप्लाई की स्थिति के बारे में कहा गया है कि अक्टूबर में 35,000 टन अनाज की सप्लाई हुई थी, जब कि नवम्बर में 50,000 टन की सप्लाई हुई। और इस के बारे में कर्मचारियों से काफी योगदान मिल रहा है। रात में भी गोदामों से सप्लाई किया जा रहा है, क्यों नहीं दूसरे हिस्सों में यह काम हो सकता है? मैं समझता हूँ कि सरकार को भी इस बात की पूरी जानकारी नहीं है कि फूड कारपोरेशन आफ इण्डिया का कोई कार्य कैसे चलता है, उस में कितने कर्मचारी हैं, उस के अन्दर

अष्टाचार कितना है और इस का सबूत मेरे पास है। आज 12 तारीख है। परसों 10 तारीख को मैं ने एक प्रश्न पूछा था—

“क्या कृषि मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) देश भर में भारतीय खाद्य निगम के कुल कितने कर्मचारी हैं और प्रति माह उन के वेतन तथा भत्ते पर कुल कितना व्यय होता है; और

(ख) पिछले छः महीनों के दौरान उक्त निगम के कुल कितने कर्मचारियों के विरुद्ध अष्टाचार के आरोपों के कारण कार्यवाही की गई है और तत्सम्बन्धी व्यय क्या है

कृषि मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री अण्णा साहेब पो० शिन्दे) (क) और (ख) भारतीय खाद्य निगम से सूचना एकत्रित की जा रही है और सभा के पाल पर रख दी जायेगी।

हम लोग जो सवाल पूछते हैं वह पन्द्रह बीस दिन पहले पूछते हैं। पन्द्रह बीस दिन में जब एक छोटे से सवाल का उत्तर मंत्रालय से नहीं मिल सका,

डा० कैलाश (व बई दक्षिण) : उत्तर तो चार मान तक नहीं आया।

श्री शंकर दयाल सिंह : आप स्वयं समझ सकते हैं मंत्रालय को खुद पता नहीं है कि भारतीय खाद्य निगम में कितने कर्मचारी हैं, उन कर्मचारियों का काम क्या है, वहाँ अष्टाचार किस तरह का है कितने लोगों ने वेतन लिया, कितना भत्ता लिया, कितना और सब बिल उठाया, इसकी जानकारी मंत्रालय को नहीं है, यह बहुत दुख की बात है।

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE:
 On this, I would like to submit this. Broadly we know the figure. But when we come to Parliament and give the figure, it has to be very precise. For instance, the total number of employees in the FCI is 50,000. They have this figure, but if it is found to be a few hundred this side or that side, the hon. Member would charge us with having misled the House or giving imprecise information. We are a responsible government and we have to be very sure that whatever information we give on its behalf is absolutely precise with no inaccuracy in it.

This organisation is spread all over the country. We have naturally to collect the information from all over these branches. It takes time. Their headquarters has to collect information from the various branches. But it is not as if we would like to avoid giving information or that it would not, as the hon. member here says, come for four years. It would be our endeavour to sincerely share whatever information we have with us.

DR. KAILAS: Can he assure us as to after how many days, weeks or months he will lay it on the Table?

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE:
 Before the end of the session.

श्री शंकर दयाल सिंह: सभापति जी/मैंने तो एक छोटा सा उदाहरण रखा मंत्री, मजदूर चाहता और ज़ायद भविष्य में भी इस की आवश्यकता नहीं आएगी

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE:
 We do not misunderstand him at all.

श्री शंकर दयाल सिंह: लेकिन जो चार्ज एक्ट 1920 में शामिल हो चुका है जिस की सी.बी.आई. द्वारा पुनर्वापसी हो रही है उस के सम्बन्ध में मैं क्या बात कहूँ? मैं तो यह चाहता हूँ कि जिन उद्देश्यों को लेकर भारतीय खाद्य निगम की स्थापना हुई थी

उन उद्देश्यों की पूर्ति होनी चाहिए। मैं चाहता हूँ कि खाद्य व्यापार में जो मनमानी है उस को रोकने के लिए अब इसकी स्थापना हुई है तो आप उस को कारगर तरीके से रोकिए। बढ़ते हुए मूल्यों से तो आज तबाही हो रही है, अनता परेशान हो रही है, उस को आप खाद्य निगम के द्वारा राहत पहुँचाइए।

MR. CHAIRMAN: As it is 4-30 P.M.; this debate is now postponed to a day to be fixed by the Speaker. He may resume his speech then.

17.30 hrs.

HALF-AN-HOUR DISCUSSION RISE IN SHARE PRICES

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU (Diamond Harbour): There has been an unprecedented rise in share prices in India. According to the Reserve Bank's index of variable dividend industrial securities, taking 1961-62 as the base year (100), they have recorded a rise of about 26.7 per cent. They have attributed this to higher commodity prices and general encouraging performance of the private sector.

If we look into the increase in the assets of these concerns, it will be more surprising as it will reveal what is the pre-monopoly attitude and character of the present Government.

Samvart 2029 has been described as an excellent year for the share market, because it has recorded on impressive boom and the equities have risen by over 38 per cent. In the case of the previous year it was only 5 per cent. The year before that saw a fall of 13 per cent. Calcutta reflects, more or less, performance of the far eastern region. Jute is produced out of the flesh and blood of the poor kisans. It has recorded a rise of over