

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I am sorry.

Shri D. N. Tiwary: Sir, I want only one minute.

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy: There will be no discussion now. You should have thought about it before.

Shri D. N. Tiwary: Sir, everybody has spoken except myself.

श्री मधु त्रिवे : मैं कब से खड़ा हो रहा हूँ। मेरा एक व्यवस्था का प्रश्न है। उसको प्राप सुन लें।

Shri D. N. Tiwary: Sir, the precedent that you have read, if you read to the end you will find that there also it was adjourned to the next day.

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy: Yours was a wrong motion. Now it will be balloted again and there will be no discussion on the question of quitting the Commonwealth.

Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath: Let us have food first and then Commonwealth.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: That means this resolution is now finished in the sense that it has to be balloted again.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The rules will apply. If it has to be balloted again it will be balloted.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: Then it is finished. It is a very clever way of doing it.

श्री मधु त्रिवे मेरा भी एक व्यवस्था का प्रश्न है। प्राप मुझ को बुला ही नहीं रहे हैं। श्रीों को प्राप बुलाते चले जा रहे हैं।

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The hon. Member may resume his seat.

श्री मधु त्रिवे : प्रापने इस मामले को चरम कँसे कर दिया है, यह हमारी

समझ में नहीं आया है। प्राप नियम को तोड़ रहे हैं।

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Order, order. The hon. Member cannot go on like this.

श्री मधु त्रिवे : बैठ जाओ, बैठ जाओ, इतना ही प्राप कहेंगे। बिस्कुल गलत कार्रवाई हो रही है।

15.06 hrs.

RESOLUTION RE: IMPORTS OF FOODGRAINS UNDER PL 480

Shri H. N. Mukerjee (Calcutta Central): Sir, I beg to move:

"This House is of opinion that continued dependence on imports of foodgrains under P.L. 480 agreements with the United States is derogatory to our honour and injurious to our economy."

Sir, the number of amendments given notice of indicate the very wide support to the basic points raised in this resolution (Interruption). In view of this, I shall try to put my case on the platform of maximum unity among ourselves here in this House as well as in the country.

Sir, what is called in modern medicine "shock therapy" has recently been administered to our body politic. Call it "arm twisting" or by any other name, the United States attitude towards Indo-Pakistan conflict over Kashmir has shown us where we are likely to stand if we depend on aid, which aid, as the United States Government is never shy to declare, is intended to promote its own foreign policy and has nothing whatever to do with international benevolence. It is not only that revered men like Vinoba Bhave have strongly criticised our dependence on foreign food and its main symbol the P.L. 480 agreements. I find from the "self reliance" special number, Yojana, our Professor Dantewala, Chairman of the Agricultural

[Shri H. N. Mukerjee]

Prices Commission has written an article entitled.

"We can. . ."—he underlines the word 'can'.—"We can live with the food we grow". And, Dr. V.K.R.V. Rao a member of the Planning Commission, in the same number writes:

"It is not befitting either the dignity or self-respect of a nation with a total cropped area of nearly 390 million acres and a net irrigated area of 70 million acres to be an importer of foodgrains."

He adds:

"And, when it is remembered that our food deficit at current levels of consumption is less than 10 per cent, it should be a matter of comparative ease to make up this deficit. Government, planners and the public are all beginning to combine in one great national movement for self-reliance and self-sufficiency in food. The claimant is now right for attempting a great leap forward in our agricultural production."

When he says this, this is the mind of the Government also since he is a member of the Planning Commission. My object is to highlight this very idea and to say what is hurtful to our self-respect and injurious to our economy is a practice that we discontinue as quickly as ever we can. There is a consensus among economists regarding PL 480—Professor Gadgil, Dr. Gyan Chand and so many others that it would be invidious to name them—a whole host of these people who are authorities in the realm of economies who agree with the idea which I am trying to present. PL 480 is perhaps a boon to blundering bureaucracy, but it is in its nature pernicious and in practice it has been a brake to our national desire and determination to be self-sufficient in foodgrains, which given the requisite effort we can surely be.

I would wish my friends here to disabuse our minds of the idea that PL-

480 imports are a kind of generous bounty from the United States. The sales to us under this agreement have been—and I am quoting Mr. Clarence Miller, Associate Administrator of the Commodity Specialisation Services of the United States giving evidence at a Congressional hearing—"at competitive world prices in all cases". It implies no sacrifice to the United States but rather relief from what was described by the Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Douglas Dillon, as burdensome surpluses, in excess of the requirements of the American people, excess surplus production which could not be sold to the American people without collapse of farm prices and the consequent alienation of the farmers' votes from the United States' Administration. If benevolence was the motive of supplying these farm surpluses which are, of course, a tribute to the great efficiency of the people of the United States operating on their land, if benevolence was their motive, these farm surpluses could be given to an organisation like the FAO to be distributed among countries in need of assistance and to be used for relief and development. But, no, they are dumped on the likes of us and at a price which saps our vitality. The United States, in the name of food aid, pursues its own narrowly conceived national objectives, and I add, at no cost to itself.

When I say this I have in mind how the operation of the administrative control of PL 480 programmes were left till recently to the Department of Agriculture but the strings were pulled really speaking, by the State Department. Recently the President has given a directive, asking the State Department to take over this whole matter and President Jhonson said on that occasion and I am quoting his words:

"Additional steps are being taken to further strengthen the food for peace programme as an integral part of our foreign policy programme."

This political aspect of PL-480 is there and we have to realise that it is not just an accident that of all Cabinet Ministers a particular gentleman, who is not here at the moment, could put off the biggest PL-480 deal in 1960. In regard to this the United States Secretary of Agriculture, Mr. Orwell Freeman said on the 23rd March 1961, in relation to this very particular matter:

"food is a weapon of diplomacy;

food is persuasive; food is power.

Those were his exact words. Another gentleman in the United States said in 1961 that "if used wisely, our surplus production can be an important tool for fulfilling the aims and goals of our country and the entire free world". Another gentleman in the United States Congress, who is certainly not against the United States foreign policy, said and I am quoting him:

"We shall be generous to our friends who will stand with us when the chips are down."

On another occasion there was a Congressman who was livid with anger and he asked how food aid could be given to India when "Nehru of India was attacking the United States policy. "Are we crazy?" he asked, but he was fobbed off with the reply that the programme would "win friends throughout the world whom the United States needs in this precarious moment in history". This is the background of this PL 480 agreement and we have to find out how we have profited or not profited from having this bounty.

We already had a grindstone round our neck when in 1951 the so-called food aid from the United States was agreed to. For practical purposes this was hardly an aid; it was really a loan. We had to buy at 105 a ton while the United States market price was \$93.33 a ton and we have got now the 190 million dollar wheat loan which we are trying to pay back. But

I am ~~sure~~ we have paid perhaps Rs. 25 crores by way of interest while by way of repayment of the principal not more than Rs. 3 crores or 4 crores have so far been paid. But we have already got this grindstone round our neck. And on top of this from 1956 we are getting the more generously advertised PL 480 assistance.

I would say that if it was in real response to our national needs and if without it our people would have suffered grave privations I would surely say that it is an understandable proceeding. Surely when the first agreement was entered into, most of us had the idea that it was nothing very wrong, there was nothing wrong in having an understanding with the United States so that they supply foodgrains to us, there is nothing wrong in having to buy foodgrains from another country, there is nothing wrong about it. But the facts have proved that what we had anticipated by having this PL 480 assistance has been completely falsified and we are on the contrary left with a loan which is economically oppressive and politically dangerous, and that is why this kind of re-thinking becomes very necessary.

When Shri S. K. Patil, the then Food Minister, pulled off his big deal in 1960, he said and I am quoting him:

"It would give us a breathing space during which to build up domestic agriculture so that we will be, or expect to be, independent of imports by 1966."

A very good idea that, if we can be independent of food imports by 1966 and this assistance from America would contribute to that result surely there is nothing to be said against it. But we have to find out what actually has taken place. These PL 480 imports, judged from the angle of the effects on our economy have proved to be not the cure to our agrarian malady but the cause of it and without doubt an aggravating factor. Depending on these foreign supplies. Government has virtually scuttled all our nationally accepted policies in

[Shri H. N. Mukerjee]

regard to agricultural development. Brave words were said at the Nagpur Congress meetings in 1959 and Shri Subramaniam himself said some of those brave words. But action has been dismal or there has been no action at all. Neither the implementation of land reforms, nor State Trading in foodgrains, nor the provision of remunerative prices for our food producers has taken place. Relying on United States food we have gone to sleep all these days without waking up. Shri Subramaniam made even brave speeches when over Kashmir the United States Government treated us so shabbily, they threatened us—and the threat is still there in spite of Shri Patil's cajolery of his friends in the United States—the threat of withholding food supplies and pressurising us into yielding on the Kashmir issue.

During 1959 to 1963 we imported 30 million tons of cereals, costing us nearly Rs. 1200 crores mainly in terms of loans and grants under PL 480. These easy imports, which are in the final analysis disastrously costly, had a highly deleterious effect on our will to make the most of our internal food resources. The declared object of PL 480 imports, namely, stabilisation of prices and the building up of a buffer reserve of 5 million tons, has not been achieved not even seriously attempted. The only result has been loss of our will to procure. Between 1960 and 1963 for example, we procure very much less than the average procurement of the first four post-independence years. This is astonishing indeed, for in 1947 to 1950 production was very much lower.

In this regard I wish to quote certain observations made by one of our leading economists, Dr. Gyan Chand, who wrote in the paper, called, the Patriot, on the 8th January, 1965. I am quoting his words about this failure:—

"Out of the total production of 194.7 million tons in 1947 to 19660,

procurement amounted to 15.7 million tons while in 1960 to 1963—the hey-day of the PL-480 imports—it was only 3 million tons though the total production was 269.6 million tons. In other words, in spite of low production, procurement was nearly 4 million tons a year immediately after independence, but dropped to vanishing point in 1956 and was only 750,000 tons between 1960 and 1963."

It is Government's constant practice to be running away from vital decisions on procurement and equitable distribution of foodgrains. Instead of implementing our own national policies, we have been using PL-480 imports with thoughtless liberality. Far from building adequate buffer stocks out of these supplies we have frittered them away in current and avoidable consumption even in years when our own production should have been sufficient to feed our people. In relation to this I am quoting certain observations made publicly by the present Deputy Director of the Agricultural Economic Research Centre, Dr. S. C. Gupta, about this frittering away of our resources. He says:—

"We have frittered them in current consumption even in years when our own production of foodgrains has been more than sufficient to feed our people. We have released PL-480 wheat compulsorily through roller flour mills in the form of Atta, Suji Maida for consumption in the form of biscuits, cakes, halwa etc. We have placed no restrictions on the quantities of PL-480 wheat that one could buy over a period. We have subsidised their sale to the extent of more than Rs. 20 crores every year, and Rs. 60 crores in the year 1964. We have shirked away from the mobilisation of internal resources to the extent necessary and depended upon using the sale receipts of PL-480 wheat as our means for planned development."

receipts of PL-480 wheat as our means for planned development."

The result is that we have landed ourselves in a mess from which it is so difficult for us to get out.

In the same view Dr. Gupta has written a booklet which was sponsored by our friend, Shri N. C. Chatterjee, and it is by his courtesy that I got it. He writes at page 20 of this booklet, "Freedom from Foreign Food":—

"Our reliance on American food as a measure of policy has thus utterly failed, so much so that even American wheat which was imported to keep the prices of foodgrains low in this country has found its way into the black market in large quantities, and sold at sky-rocketing prices, providing illegitimate gains only to the hoarder and the profiteer, but little relief to the consumer."

Since 1956 we have had nine agreements totalling a payment due from us to the extent of Rs. 1,386.4 crores. Between 1961 and 1964 United States shipping has earned over Rs. 70 crores in freight in regard to these imports. There was an Act of 1963 in the United States which required freight charges to be paid in dollars and now these freight charges are going up $7\frac{1}{2}$ to 10 per cent. In May, 1965, there was an amendment which made it possible for United States tourists in this country to cash dollars for rupees at the United States Embassy and thereby our foreign exchange earning power was scotched.

It is necessary to go into a little more detail in regard to what is happening about this money, these enormous sums of money which we are now liable to pay back to America in one way or the other. It is good to remember that apart from foodgrains there are other items, like cotton, tobacco, even dry milk, soyabean oil evaporated milk, whole milk powder, canned fruit and cheese under which

heads as much as Rs. 24.72 crores were spent in the course of the last nine years. This accumulation of monies owing from India to United States has gone on so far that there was an article quoting the former Legal Adviser to the United States Embassies in South Asia, Mr. Mathew J. Kust, in the *New Republic*, which said—I am quoting:—

"...in the case of India, rupees acquired by the U. S. Government under Public Law 480...might in the conceivable future exceed those held by the Government of India. The mere thought of this is politically explosive in India, which is now in the midst of a frenzied reappraisal of its economic, which is to say political, future."

We notice also that out of this money, that is, Rs. 1,386.4 crores, more than half, or about Rs. 740 crores, is earmarked for loans to the Government of India. There is another group of allocation cover grant to the Government of India which also covers a certain number of other projects and the third group is rather important—allocations sanctioned for meeting the United States Government agency's expenses within the country. Already these dues come to Rs. 170.5 crores, 12.4 per cent of the total PL 480 funds.

In this country we place in the hands of the United States authorities and their proliferating agencies an enormous sum. We know what happens. The C. I. A., for instance, has openly boasted that it can make and unmake governments in any part of the world and here in this country we have placed purely at the disposal of the United States authorities operating in India Rs. 170.5 crores.

Then, there are allocations made from out of these funds as loans to the private sector. I do not know why we agreed to this. Yugoslavia purchased United States agricultural

[Shri H. N. Mukerjee]

products under this very same agreement, but there was obviously no provision for allocations for the private sector in Yugoslavia's case. It is, therefore, right to infer that if the Government of India had so insisted they could have managed to keep Rs. 100.4 crores for itself rather than for loans to the private sector.

Then, again, when this question of loans to the private sector and the projects comes up, we discover that what happens is that the United States has to be consulted in regard to the decision as to whom the loans are going to be made or to which projects the monies are going to be allocated and if you get a list—I have no time to mention all those names in the list—of projects from hotels to coal washeries which have been eligible for United States finance, the Government of India and the Planning Commission could hardly have any voice at all.

15.28 hrs.

[SHRI KHADILKAR in the Chair]

Here comes the application of PL 480. Their idea is to have a counterblast to the public sector. It is not only that with the enormous sums of money which are at the disposal of the United States authorities in this country a very powerful US lobby can be created, and free government in this country might be rendered very precarious at the same time, economic policies which militate against those ideas which the United States consider to be conducive to the idea of a free world, those economic policies which this country has naturally decided to pursue,—the goal of socialism and all that—should be subverted by the utilisation in whichever way the United States likes by the enormous sums of money which are made available through the mechanism of PL-480 transactions.

As early as December 1957 two of Delhi's leading economists, Dr. P. N. Dhar, who is presently Director of the

Institute of Economic Growth, and Dr. S. C. Gupta, now the Deputy Director of the Agricultural Economic Research Centre, warned against this strategy of balancing the food economy of the country on imports from abroad; but, of course, the warning was disregarded. We have seen Government failing egregiously in holding the price line, failing egregiously in regard to distribution, absolutely refusing to go ahead with the proper implementation of land reforms and as a result of all this we discover that even when we have reached the record rate of production, the food situation in the country has been the most dismal of all. What has happened to the P.L. 480 imports? Of course, we have got a great deal of imports. But instead of using them for having a reserve which would be operated upon in cases of emergency, we have been consuming them negligently because we do not wish seriously to go ahead with our basic economic policies in regard to agrarian development and agricultural production.

I am even inclined to agree with Prof. Ranga to a certain extent, namely, that if there was a real and genuine policy even from the right-wing point of view in order to have a kind of parity economy, where rightful agricultural prices will be offered to the producer and at the end of the Government a real distributive mechanism would be operated honestly and efficiently—that would be a right-wing way of operating—it would be something like facing the problems of the country. But here is this Government talking always in the sublimest left-wing phraseology but acting in a manner which would do discredit even to the right-wing Government which Prof. Ranga likes to head in the future in this country. This Government finds itself in the most peculiar predicament in so far as it talks so big and it tries to get round the people by giving them all kinds of hopes. I can understand the religious-minded man talking about

the pie in the sky when you die and in the meantime you suffer. They do not have the guts to say that. They are going forward to socialism but in the meantime in a year when we had the record rate of food production and when we had enormous imports from the P.L. 480, we have been confronted with the most terrible economic misery and degradation in this country. Therefore, I say that it is economically unhelpful, it is politically dangerous and it is detrimental to our national morale.

There is a wide consensus in the country from Vinobhaji to even Dr. K. M. Munshi saying that we do not need P.L. 480 imports. Can we run away from the problem of agricultural production catching at the straw of the P.L. 480 imports? What has been in reality our experience of it? I would like the House to take note of it. The House may consider that we belong to a particular group with a certain ideology and, therefore, they might consider our ideas to be motivated. But what are our economists thinking? They are sedate people and they are objectively analysing the facts. There was a Conference of Economists recently in Vallabh Vidyanagar and they have demanded a "serious review" of our dependence on P.L. 480 imports.

Our difficulty on the food front will not be solved unless we mobilise the national will and determination generated in recent months. I am quoting Mr. Subramaniam's own words: "However badly we may need P.L. 480 food, we would not accept it with strings." But let me tell him that no one attaches strings in writing to deals of this nature. Mr. Subramaniam and his chief, Mr. Lal Bahadur Shastri, will have to do a great deal of explaining before they can get the country to accept the proposition which presumably Government is putting forward, namely, that we shall go on depending upon the P.L. 480 bounties. It is to everybody's knowledge that the

United States is using all kinds of pressure on us to come to a settlement with Pakistan over Kashmir and, therefore, if all that his colleague, Mr. S. K. Patil, has publicly said is true, one would be justified in concluding that something might have happened behind the scene which has satisfied the United States about our stand. It is a point on which we will have to satisfy ourselves. He will have to give a review of what has happened with P.L. 480 imports, so far, what impact it has had on our economy and how far it has made us complacent to run away from the problem and that we have actually, in practice, repudiated nationally accepted decisions in regard to agrarian reconstruction. He will have to do that. If he is going to continue these things against the will of the people, then he will have to satisfy the country that behind the people's back nothing has been said or done which would really mean another and heavier grindstone on our neck.

Only the other day, in the *Yojana* of the 24th October, I read Mr. Bhagat's article—I mean the Minister of Planning who is not here now—and this is what he said:

"Happily, our dependence on imports is not so great as it appears at first sight. Taking the supply of foodgrains as a whole, we import between 6 to 7 million tonnes out of a total supply of about 87 million tonnes. With a marginal increase in production and a firm and equitable system of distribution, we should be able to manage with what we produce. The utmost discipline in the matter of food is necessary. A national food policy which aims at remunerative prices for the farmer and common sharing of scarcity must be put into effect forthwith."

That is what he has said. If there is a reduction of 10 per cent consumption, it may not, of course, be a hardship in the aggregate sense. But unless, strict distributional discipline

[Shri H. N. Mukerjee]

is enforced through rationing or otherwise, unless conspicuous consumption by the rich is sternly prevented, the reduction will fall entirely on the poorer sections of the society. Today, the atmosphere in the country is such that the people feel that P.L. 480 imports are insulting to our country and they are injurious to our economy. Our people are willing to do without it. But at the same time the people must have an assurance from the Government that the distributional discipline would be practised in such a manner that we shall really be able to do away with P.L. 480 imports.

Sir, now is the time to do something basic which really goes to the root of the matter in regard to the food production. In view of our will and determination, let the world powers realise that our people are awake and this country means business. The political climate for the implementation of nationally accepted economic policies would never be more propitious.

I need not go any further. But I would say that whatever be the efforts currently going on to sweeten the bitter pill, it has been our unpleasant experience to learn, as we have learnt recently, that our reliance on certain countries has been sought to be turned into a weapon of political blackmail against us. I do not speak as a communist who is approaching a hostile House. I speak in the voice of national unity and our determination to solve the problems and it is in that spirit that I place my Resolution before the House. Some amendments have been suggested. I am ready to accept the consensus of the House, the amendments, suggesting that the House desires that we make a gesture which would be in consonance with our honour as well as our economic self-sufficiency.

Mr. Chairman: Motion moved:

"This House is of opinion that continued dependence on imports

of foodgrains under P.L. 480 agreements with the United States is derogatory to our honour and injurious to our economy."

Shri B. K. Das (Contal): I beg to move:

That for the original resolution, the following be substituted, namely:—

"This House is of opinion that imports of foodgrains under P.L. 480 agreements should be without any strings and should conform to our minimum needs." (1)

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy (Kandrapara): I beg to move:

That for the original resolution, the following be substituted, namely:—

"This House is of opinion that continued dependence on imports of foodgrains is derogatory to our honour and injurious to our economy and recommends that necessary measures be taken to make the country self-sufficient in food and to stop all imports of foodgrains under P.L. 480 agreements with the United States within a definite time limit." (2).

Shri P. R. Chakraverti (Dhanbad): I beg to move:

That in the resolution,—

add at the end—

"and determined steps be taken to make the country self-supporting" (3).

Shri Yashpal Singh (Kairana): I beg to move:

That in the resolution,—

add at the end—

"and appropriate steps be taken to discontinue them

completely during the next three years" (4).

Shri K. N. Tiwary (Bagaha): I beg to move:

That in the resolution,—

add at the end—

"and suitable steps be devised to discontinue imports through phased programme" (5).

Shri Madhu Limaye (Monghyr): I beg to move:

That in the resolution,—

add at the end—

"Hence these imports should be discontinued forthwith and the country made self-sufficient in food". (7).

Shri Shree Narayan Das (Darbhanga): I beg to move:

That for the original resolution, the following be substituted, namely:—

"In view of the continued dependence on imports of foodgrains under P.L. 480 agreements with the United States which has made the nation complacent in efforts to be made for increasing food production, the recent attitude of U.S.A. in this regard and the fact that it is injurious to our economy, this House is of opinion that earnest efforts be made to make the country self-sufficient at an early date and in the meantime foodgrains should be procured only from such countries as do not attach any strings political or otherwise to such supply." (8).

Shri D. S. Pati (Yeotmal): I beg to move:

That in the resolution,—

add at the end—

"therefore, appropriate and determined measures be undertaken to

make the country self-supporting." (9)

Shri M. Malaichami (Periyakulam): I beg to move:

That in the resolution,—

add at the end—

"However, to overcome the present shortfall of foodgrains in the country, annual imports on a progressively reduced scale may be allowed and speedy steps taken to ensure self-sufficiency of foodgrains in the country." (10)

Shri P. Venkatasubbiah (Adoni): I beg to move:

That in the resolution,—

add at the end—

"Therefore, immediate steps should be taken by the Government to gear up the administrative machinery at all levels to provide necessary and adequate facilities such as supply of inputs to the agriculturists in time at subsidised rates so as to increase food production and attain self-sufficiency by the beginning of Fourth Five Year Plan." (11).

Shrimati Gayatri Devi (Jaipur): I beg to move:

That for the original resolution, the following be substituted, namely:—

"This House is of opinion that continued over-dependence on imported foodgrains is injurious to the economy of the country and hence the Government should give priority in Plan allocations to supply of water, credit, fertilizers, seeds, power etc. to farmers, end procurement and maximum price, abolish zonal system, evolve price support policy and give subsidised foodgrains to the poorer sections of the population." (13)

Shri T. Subramanyam (Bellary): I beg to move:

That for the original resolution, the following be substituted, namely:—

"This House welcomes unfettered assistance from friendly countries which enables the country to overcome shortages in foodgrains, or augments production thereof, but urges upon the Government to take active and urgent steps to achieve self-sufficiency in foodgrains." (14)

Shri Shivajirao S. Deshmukh (Parbhani): I beg to move:

That for the original resolution, the following be substituted, namely:—

"This House is of opinion that in order to implement as part of the Fourth Plan an integrated development programme of agriculture to make the country self-sufficient in foodgrains and with a view to progressively curtail and ultimately stop P.L. 480 imports, the Government of India should ensure a remunerative and economic price to the farmer, give highest priority in providing the farmer cheap credit and the material inputs such as fertilizers, pesticides, better seeds, water and agricultural machinery, and assign adequate resources for giving a new orientation and emphasis to agricultural research to enable it to tackle the problems which inhibit agricultural productivity." (15).

Mr. Chairman: The motion and the amendments are before the House. How much time will the Minister require?

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri C. Subramaniam): I would require about 15 to 20 minutes.

Mr. Chairman: We have to fix some time-limit, not more than 5 to 7 minutes to each Member.

Shri M. R. Masani (Rajkot): Party spokesmen cannot do justice in less than 10 minutes' time.

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy: Not less than 15 minutes should be given.

Mr. Chairman: Then we shall have to extend the time. Twenty minutes will have to be given for the Minister to reply.

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy: You can extend it by an hour.

Shri Indrajit Gupta (Calcutta South West): From that side only the Minister need speak; others need not.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty (Barrackpore): They should not speak; they opposed the extension of time.

Mr. Chairman: Let us begin. Not more than ten minutes will be given for the spokesmen of the Parties.

Shrimati Gayatri Devi: My substitute motion reads as follows:—

"This House is of opinion that continued over-dependence on imported foodgrains is injurious to the economy of the country and hence the Government should give priority in Plan allocations to supply of water, credit, fertilizers, seeds, power, etc., to farmers; end procurement and maximum price, abolish zonal system, evolve price support policy and give subsidised foodgrains to the poorer sections of the population."

Needless to say my Party and I are in complete opposition to the Motion that has just been moved by the hon. member. It is a politically motivated move which, if it were accepted, would bring starvation and misery to our people but would benefit those who believe in the theory of increasing misery as a means to capture power. But at the same time we have been amongst the first to say that our over-dependence on foreign food is a matter of shame to our country.

It seems that the Mover of this Resolution seeks to influence the House not to accept the P.L. 480 aid because, according to him, the United States is trying to use this aid to put political

pressure on India in the Kashmir issue. Responsible leaders, including the Prime Minister, have also recently declared that India would not accept any food that had strings attached to it. Several Chief Ministers too are understood to have told the Prime Minister that the country should starve rather than accept aid from the United States under pressure. We know that the Congress Party was itself, divided on this issue. The result of all this has been that. Mr. Mukerjee says there has been consensus of opinion in the country that we should not accept P.L. 480. But this is because of the contradictory statements that have been made on this issue all over the country confusing the people and at the same time leading them to believe that we could and should do without the P.L. 480.

No country can be strong and self-reliant unless the public is taken into confidence of the Government and are told the true position of our economical problems and of our general weaknesses. Our Government withholds all information and all we get from the Press are the sanctimonious sayings of Congress Ministers and MPs to give us any form of information on the conditions of things in the country. Take for instance, this talk of not accepting the P.L. 480 with all its strings attached. How is it that all of a sudden the strings have melted away and the Congress Executive Committee has been convinced that we must accept this aid. It would be interesting to know who started this rumour and in whose interest it lies that we should not accept any aid from America. In this particular case, it is even more shameful because, after all our talk about self-reliance, all our talk about not accepting the aid with strings attached to it, we had to come to the conclusion that we could not do without P.L. 480 and we have to accept this aid from a country who, we have been implying, has been resorting to political blackmail. On behalf of my Party I can assure you that, if the aid were to be

given with political strings attached to it, we would be the first to say that all aid from America should be stopped. But recently we have had assurances to the contrary from no less a person than our Minister for External Affairs. He has said that the United States has not only suspended supply of arms to Pakistan but has also asked all its allies in CENTO, SEATO and NATO not to transfer to Pakistan any supplies received under the U.S. Arms aid programmes. At the same time, our Food Minister, Shri Subramaniam, has also assured the Congress Executive Party that no political strings were attached to the P.L. 480. I feel that, in the larger interest of the country, we must accept this aid to tide over the period of acute shortage of foodgrains in our own country.

Already people in our country are suffering much privation and if the Government is unsuccessful in providing food for the population, it will only create chaotic conditions in this country which will only serve the purposes of anti-national elements in this country. Personally one cannot help but feeling relieved that the Congress Executive Party has taken a practical view of this issue and come to this conclusion because there was a time when some of us were beginning to feel that the Congress was being controlled by anti-national elements and that they were being forced in the name of self-reliance to create near-famine conditions in this country. However, I must emphasize that we cannot, for ever, go on relying on this crutch of P.L. 480 and we must impress upon the Government that it must give top priority to agricultural self-sufficiency in this country.

Despite all the tall talk of self-sufficiency to be achieved through planning, the Government has been unable to realise any of its targets and, in fact, the target for foodgrain is going down. It is all very well to blame natural elements like droughts, but in a predominantly agricultural country like ours, surely it is the pri-

[Shrimati Gayatri Devi]

mary duty of the Government to ensure against such natural calamities.

It is an elementary fact that agriculture depends on water. Since we cannot always depend on the rains, we have to make alternative arrangements by way of artificial irrigation and despite all the costly irrigational projects, the farmers have still to depend on the rains. The net result of this is that, if he has to use artificial water, he has to pay for that through his nose. Even the Prime Minister remarked on this when he visited his constituency recently. Instead of always depending on major irrigation projects, we should depend more on minor irrigation projects as their implementation is easy, costs less and takes less time. In Rajasthan, for example, there is an acute shortage of crude oil and consequently most of the irrigation wells are lying idle and as a result agricultural production has suffered badly.

Then again without adequate power supply, irrigation wells cannot be put into operation and this has also seriously affected agricultural production in this country. For instance, in Rajasthan, specially in the kharif crop, nearly 5,000 maunds of bajra have been completely destroyed because power was not supplied in time.

One could go on quoting several instances like this from all over the country, but what strikes one most is that the Ministers in charge of these important portfolios are not taken to task for not being able to implement the tasks given to them. This is a great weakness in our country: those who are given special tasks do not do them; they are not taken to task; they continue in power and our country goes down and has to depend on foreign aid for food.

We are fortunate that, in our country, people are ready to make any sacrifice for the sake of our national integrity but that is no reason that we

should be penalised for the blinding blunders and irresponsible policies of our short-sighted Government. Surely it must realise that if we were to end compulsory procurement and accept the right of the farmer to sell his grain in the free market without any maximum price being imposed, it would go a long way in bringing the hoarded stocks out in market. It is the lack of confidence in the Government that has caused the people to hold back their stocks and thereby cause an artificial shortage.

It cannot be repeated too often that we are predominantly an agricultural country and as such it is the bounden duty of Government to give the farmer every facility, but it seems as though they have as yet not realised that the peasant who is the backbone of our country must be dealt with sympathetically and with understanding.

Let me assure the House that I have no illusions about the Congress Government's ability or even, if I may say so, its willingness to cope with the situation. I am firmly convinced that their only objective is to keep themselves in power. At a time like this when quick implementation of work requires more co-ordination between the different Ministries, it is indeed a puzzle how our Union and State Ministers can afford to spend so much time away from their headquarters. What are they doing? They are touring round the country, holding vast meetings, taking upon themselves the credit of the success of our Armed Forces. They are coining get-popular-quick-slogans to hide their inefficiencies and deficiencies, while the whole of the administrative machinery is at a standstill and is geared up only to keep the Congress Party in power. This Government would have collapsed long ago had it not been for the Mao Tse-tungs and the Ayub Khans who have kept it in power, and believe me, they are taking full advantage of the situation and are bent

upon establishing an one-party rule in this country.

Shri Kapur Singh (Ludhiana): They have done it already.

Shrimati Gayatri Devi: They will not tolerate any opposition or criticism and are so short-sighted that they could not realise that they are playing into the hands of anti-national elements in our country.

However, I am glad on this occasion that due to the timely intervention of our Minister of External Affairs, our Minister of Railways and our Food Minister, Government have been persuaded to take the right path, and I would urge the Prime Minister despite any persuasion from some of the Members on this side of the House and indeed on that side of the House too that he should go to America as soon as possible to get for this country those essential commodities that we require in our efforts to make ourselves self-sufficient in all ways.

Before concluding, I would like to say that I am surprised that this resolution should have been moved by a person who comes from a rice-eating area where people are suffering from an acute shortage of rice and have no option but to eat the subsidised PL-480 wheat. I too belong to that area and I know what hardships the people are going through. So I cannot understand how a person who professes to speak for the poor can bear the sight of so many people going hungry and not accepting this aid when it has been offered to us. For this reason alone, I would say that while I agree to the principles of the resolution, I cannot accept it until such time as we become self-sufficient in foodgrains in our country.

In conclusion, I would urge Government to take practical measures to remove our deficiencies. There is no use coining popular slogans like 'Miss a meal', when the majority of the people do not have even one square meal a day. There is no use

asking people to change their eating habits and to substitute cereals for other forms of nutrition when we cannot have the wherewithal of producing them. There is no use asking our labourers and peasants to produce more on empty stomachs while the only contribution from those sitting on the Benches opposite is to miss their meal on Monday evenings. This, I might add, is good for their health, but not good for the health of the country.

Mr. Chairman: I would request hon. Members to please keep to the time-limit of ten minutes each, because I have quite a long list of names before me.

Before I call the next speaker, I have to make an announcement, and I would request all hon. Members to please listen to this carefully because otherwise on Monday we shall be in difficulties.

15-54 hrs.

RE: DISCUSSION ON INTERNATIONAL SITUATION

Mr. Chairman: As announced by the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs in the House today, the following motion given notice of by the Minister of External Affairs will be put down for discussion on Monday, the 15th and Tuesday, the 16th November, 1965, namely:—

"That the present international situation and the policy of the government of India in relation thereto be taken into consideration."

Members who wish to table notices of amendment thereto may do so by 5.30 p.m. today, because tomorrow, the Lok Sabha Secretariat is observing a closed holiday because of second Saturday. . . .

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy (Kendrapara): The time should be extended till Monday, because it is