

[श्री बड़े]

जब लोगों को खाने को अन्न पहने को वस्त्र मिलेगा, जब लोगों को नौकरियां मिलेंगी, जब सरकार की ओर से उत्पादन के साधनों (मोल्ड आफ़ प्राडक्शन) में इंटर-फ़ीयरेंस नहीं होगा, जब लोगों को छोटे से धंधे के लिये भी ब्वोटा, परमिट और लाइसेंस के पीछे भटकना नहीं पड़ेगा, तब अष्टाचार खत्म होगा।

मैं इस बिल का समर्थन करता हूँ, लेकिन केवल सेवन्य चेप्टर की रीकमेंडेशन्ज़ को एक्सेप्ट करने के बजाये सब रीकमेंडेशन्ज़ को स्वीकार कर के अगर सरकार कोई कानून लाती तो अच्छा होता। मैंने मंत्री महोदय के सामने अष्टाचार के उदाहरण रखे हैं। कितने बड़े बड़े गुनाह शासन ने हज्म कर लिये हैं। उड़ीसा का गुनाह, जट्टिस कृष्णन् का जजमेंट, सुखाड़िया मंत्रिमंडल की कार्यवाहियाँ—इन सब पर शासन ने कोई ध्यान नहीं दिया है। इस के अतिरिक्त मंत्री महोदय ने खुद ही जजमेंट दे दिया है कि बिहार के मंत्रियों ने कोई अष्टाचार नहीं किया है। मैं निवेदन करना चाहता हूँ कि इस तरह लोगों का विश्वास शासन पर से उठता जा रहा है और इसी लिए अष्टाचार बढ़ रहा है।

Mr. Chairman: We will continue with this Bill on the next day.

16 hrs.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

MINERAL OILS (ADDITIONAL DUTIES OF EXCISE AND CUSTOMS) AMENDMENT BILL*, 1964

The Minister of Finance (Shri T. T. Krishnamachari): Sir, I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the Mineral Oils

(Additional Duties of Excise and Customs) Act, 1958.

Mr. Speaker: The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the Mineral Oils (Additional Duties of Excise and Customs) Act, 1958."

The motion was adopted.

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: I introduce† the Bill.

16.01 hrs.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT—contd.

FAILURE OF GOVERNMENT TO ENSURE MINIMUM SUPPLY OF RICE TO KERALA

Mr. Speaker: We now take up the Adjournment Motion. Shri H. N. Mukerjee.

Shri H. N. Mukerjee (Calcutta Central): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I move:

"That the House do now adjourn."

Sir, it has fallen on me through this Adjournment Motion to give expression to the massive agony of our people everywhere specially as it has been reflected in the eyes of the people of Kerala on whom the burden of suffering has fallen in pre-eminent measure in recent weeks. Over food, the Government's recent record is dreadful, beyond words, though from time to time we are regaled by the Food Minister's accustomed assurances and even such things as the Prime Minister's rather factuous forecast which he made on the 12th November in Allahabad that the food crisis will end in a few days. I wish it does end in a few days. But the signs are nowhere

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†Introduced with the recommendations of the President.

there from which we can deduce that the food crisis is going to end in a few months, let alone in a few days. The situation has become chronic. Tragedy stalks the country. Wherever you look, the people clamour for food and in Kerala where you see perhaps the quintessence of the problems of our land, it took a grim shape which should shake off the complacency which is still sitting pretty on the treasury benches. If the present callousness of the administration continues, the handwriting is on the wall and perhaps much sooner than the Government thinks the people will push them off from power, first in Kerala and then everywhere else. (*Laughter*). I know it, Sir. Laughter might be provoked even by prediction of what is likely to happen if the Government continues in its present ways and it is our desire to do whatever we can to see that the Government changes its present ways or goes out of power.

The full story of the criminal muddle over food supplies to Kerala will be, if it is ever revealed, an epic of infamy. I can do no better than quote no less a person than the Governor of Kerala, Shri V. V. Giri. He is no foam-at-the-mouth agitator as some of us might be described by the Members from the other side if they could think of such an expression. This is what he told a conference of editors whom he had himself invited. His words were:

"We trusted the Centre and landed in the soup."

And then Mr. Giri offered to face a judicial inquiry into the handling of the food situation by the Government.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty (Barrackpore): Have one.

Shri H. N. Mukerjee: Members are suggesting: let us have the judicial inquiry. On this occasion, it comes not from the Opposition which Government is so accustomed to pooh-

pooh only because they are strong in numbers but it comes from the Rajyapal appointed by the Rashtra-pati, it comes from no less a person than the Governor of a State who makes an accusation that the most egregious bungling has taken place in regard to the matter which is nearest to the interests of the people, namely, supply of food. Let there be a judicial inquiry as Mr. Giri has said that he wanted it.

Only the other day, the Union Government took charge of Kerala and this happens. You know very well how we brag so often of our parliamentary system. You and I have shared in that pride and we sometimes express the way in which we work our parliamentary system. But in any conceivable parliamentary set up a Government which has failed as egregiously as Delhi has failed over Kerala would not last even one single day and the people would send them packing. I cannot conceive of a parliamentary system of Government, where this kind of failure takes place, where the people are driven to extremes and all kinds of incidents take place as they did in Trivandrum and other parts of Kerala and the Government sits mum, talks pretty and says all kinds of things in justification. I have not been able to read every line of Mr. Subramaniam's statement in regard to the food situation in the southern States as I got it rather late. There is not a syllable to suggest that the Government reacts in any human way to the sufferings which indubitably have taken place and continue to take place in so many parts of our country, not only in Kerala but all over the country, whether it is West Bengal or Madras or Andhra Pradesh. Even in a surplus State like Andhra you find long queues there. In Madras, terrible sights have been reported by all and sundry and in a place like West Bengal we live in a chronic state of piteous deprivation on account of the mal-administration which continues in our country. There is no co-ordinated policy from the Centre. So far

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every State follows its own policy specially the surplus States. The Government goes about saying that there is a deficit but it is only marginal and the result is that the hoarders take advantage. The Prime Minister, the Food Minister and even the Minister for Information and Broadcasting go about saying that the Opposition is responsible for all the trouble over food and that sort of thing. It is rather sickening to find Government trying to shove over responsibility which belongs to itself in order to find some sort of credit in a situation which they themselves have created. Even the surplus States like Andhra or Orissa could not protect their own people. As I said, earlier, long queues have been found not only in Madras but also in Andhra which is such a fabulously surplus area and in Kerala the position has been excruciating. For more than seven months now the Government has had very clear notice as to what exactly was likely to happen in Kerala. Of course, nothing very much happened. Sending special trains, etc. should have been done a great deal earlier. Is it melodrama which is wanted as the remedy to the situation? It is a good job, of course. It is very necessary to send special trains even when it is so late. I do not say, don't send these special trains. You do it by all means but do not for God's sake expect any credit from the people, do not expect any credit for these small and belated mercies which you vouchsafe to our common people, and do not forget that from Andhra, for instance, a great deal of rotten rice is being sent over to Kerala because that is the way in which Government and its friends function. That is a sort of thing which happens.

What has happened in Kerala is unprecedented in the recent history of that area. My friends on the treasury benches are responsible. The whole Government in Kerala came to a standstill. If the emergency steps which were taken after the distur-

bances which took place in Trivandrum and elsewhere were taken earlier, then, of course, something might have happened. Ugly developments could have been prevented. The Government invokes the name of the President and behaves in a manner which brings discredit on the President's own name. Transport has been found to be no problem as the schedule of the grain movement shows. There has been no co-ordination and no policy. Lack of policy has led to a state of things in Kerala where starvation deaths have taken place. I have got here a telegram sent to me by leading Members of Parliament which reports starvation deaths. I have just heard from a Member of the other House who arrived today from Kerala, saying that starvation deaths have taken place. There might be a slight improvement in the situation. But these starvation deaths have taken place. I know of Members of Parliament here who have told me that they know of school children in Kerala swooning away because of lack of food, because of lack of nutrition. I have been told, I believe at least Members of Parliament from Kerala when they tell me this, that the price of rice rose up to Rs. 90 for about 40 kilos. And even now the normal price is Rs. 70 to 75 for 40 kilos. But it is not available even at this rate. And what you have to do is to make surreptitious purchases from merchants who might consider you to be in their good books. That means that the generality of the people have no access to food.

This is the kind of stress to which the people of Kerala have now been reduced and which we see all over the country wherever we look. I have mentioned my own state; almost every other State, surplus as well as deficit, is now groaning under this burden of food crisis which the Government does not seem able to tackle. Any rational policy requires regulated movement of foodgrains from surplus to deficit States on an agreed basis. Otherwise no system of

controlled distribution involving statutory or informal rationing can be worked. But this Government seems to have no such policy. Or if it has such a policy it is only on scraps of paper which can be disregarded at will, especially by the friends of the Government, the hoarders and the profiteers. That is the record, not only in Delhi but also in all the States. The Government has no right to pretend that it can organise food supplies on a countrywide scale so that rationing in cities and in selected areas can be guaranteed and food also might be made available elsewhere. Its policy seems to be to stave off crises by desperate last-minute appeals by the Prime Minister. It is meant to be dramatic, as I said earlier. It is perhaps intended to bring dividends to the ruling party. But if the results are not produced, as they have not been so far, Government cannot fob off people with histrionic gestures of this sort which we see from time to time.

A little intelligent and honest planning and execution could have saved the situation in the south before the new crop came into the market. But Government seems incapable of such intelligence. This country is getting more and more disgusted with the Government every day.

We have been told about "firm and drastic action" against hoarders and profiteers. There has been so much of tom-tomming of the new measures against hoarders and profiteers. To criminals who steal people's food and play with the lives of our people "periods of grace" are given and then they are extended. Then ultimatums are given from time to time. But then what happens? I am quoting what the special correspondent of a noted daily, *The Statesman* of Delhi, wrote on November 13. He said, "The total inaction that has followed the expiry of each ultimatum is nothing short of a disgrace". Here is a paper which is supposed to talk in a language very different from the language

which we of the opposition have the right to use in Parliament. It says: it is nothing short of a disgrace. Government had all the powers in the world to deal with the hoarders, under the Defence of India Rules. But we know what happens. I know of Members of this House who have been to jail recently on account of the *satyagraha* over food; and they discovered when they were inside jail a few detenus who were alleged to be hoarders or profiteers and they were being treated with a kind of . . .

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty: Like the European wards in the British times!

Shri H. N. Mukerjee: They were having the best of everything even inside jail, and they were told that as soon as the *satyagraha* movement fizzled out they would be let off.

We know what happens. Actually, this ordinance which has been declared with so much fanfare and which is going to come before the House very soon, it might be good as far as it goes; but what really disfigures this kind of measure taken by the Government is that it shows up the inability of Government to tackle the point effectively. If you really want to deal with the hoarders you should use the emergency powers which you have got. But, of course, you don't do that at all.

Again, the *Statesman* correspondent whom I have quoted writes about this matter of the ordinance on November 13: "If the ordinance was originally intended to be a stunt, it has in practice turned out to be a hoax". I am not going into the details of the ordinance, but I mean to say this is the kind of thing which typifies the incapacity of the Government to deal with a matter effectively.

Why can't this Government, armed with so much power under the emergency regulations, come forward and

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deal with the food thieves in the proper manner? Why can't this Government, which is supposed to represent the Congress party ruling every area of our country, deal with recalcitrant Ministries in particular States if they happen to be surplus and if they happen to stand in the way of the execution of the co-ordinated food policy of the country? Why is it that this Government is found to be so utterly inept, and why can't they deal firmly with criminality, and why can't they punish those who play with the lives of the people?

This is a matter which has been highlighted by the events in Kerala as well as by the events elsewhere in our country. I am not going into details, because there will be Members from Kerala who would speak with more exact and more immediate knowledge of what has happened there. But I know for a fact from what has appeared in the most reputable papers that the picture in Kerala is such that it stinks in the nostrils of every decent person and it savours of such inefficiency on the part of the Government that this can no longer be easily tolerated.

Sir, there is a time for patience, and there is a time for anger. But as the Government goes on making a mess of the problem of food supplies which the people need so badly, the thing becomes exasperating from time to time. I was recalling what in the Faizpur Congress Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had said about "the massive agony in the eyes of our people". And he said that to remove that massive agony was the first and the last job that we have got. That job we have not been able to do. And we had no intention, it seems from the indications Government gives from time to time, to tackle this matter in the way in which alone it can be tackled. I feel therefore that the Government by its utter ineptitude has shown itself so incapable, so absolutely out of tune with the inter-

ests of this country that nothing but a censure is merited as far as parliamentary proceedings are concerned. And therefore I have sought by means of this adjournment motion to draw the attention of the House and of the country to the failures of the administration.

Mr. Speaker: Motion moved:

"That the House do now adjourn".

There will be a limitation of ten minutes each for the speakers now.

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy (Kendrapara): Sir, just after the discussion of the food situation in the last session we were given the assurance not only by the Food Minister but even by the Prime Minister that within two months this crisis would be over. Now, just after two months, when we meet we find that a crisis has erupted in Kerala, not because Kerala has not produced sufficient rice—it is a deficit State always—but because of the bungling not only of the State Government which was existing before President's rule but of the Central Government as well.

As has been pointed out, it requires no proof; the Governor Mr. V. V. Giri himself has said that the Centre has let them down.

This is the story, and if one goes into the position in the different States one will find almost the same picture in all the States of India in some shape or other.

In Kerala it is a problem of supply and distribution. I remember, the Food Minister in a bravado speech said that there is no scarcity and that it is the opposition parties who are responsible for creating a scare in this country. (An Hon. Member: Shame). After what has happened in Kerala, I think when he replies he will apologise to the country that it was a

mistake to say like that. It is the Central Government which is responsible for the muddle that is going on in the country today. Who is responsible for what has happened in Kerala? Is it the opposition parties who have brought about this crisis there?

Some Hon. Members: Yes.

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy: If there were no Opposition parties, if there were no movement, and if there were no agitation, probably thousands of Keralites would have died by this time. This situation did not develop in a day. It is not as if only when Shri C. Subramaniam was in Manila he realised the seriousness of the situation in Kerala.

Shri Koya (Kozhikode): Shame!

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy: This was continuing for a number of months there.

In August last, as it must have been known to this Government, in Calicut there was a raid on a foodgrains shop. The people were in a queue, and they wanted food articles, but the supplies were not available. So, they had necessarily to take the law into their own hands and they forced the dealer to bring out the stocks. They asked the dealer 'The Government say that there are sufficient stocks available. So, where has the food gone?'. At that time, the State Government was functioning there, that is, the State Government headed by Shri Sankar. That Government, of course, is no longer there because the Congress Party Members themselves found that such a Government was not only incapable of supplying or giving food to the people, but it being a Government which was corrupt and inefficient to the core should not exist for a moment. So, they revolted, and a no-confidence-motion was passed. But what have that Government done in the meantime, when the serious situation arose? There was a fight going on between the State Government and the Central Government in order to

fix prices of foodgrains. They refused to do that, as a result of which no foodgrains would flow either from Andhra Pradesh or from Madras into Kerala. When this dialogue was going on, what was the Central Government doing? When Shri V. V. Giri took charge, naturally, he took stock of the situation. Thanks to the fact that we have an administrator like Shri V. V. Giri there as the Governor at this moment, he took stock of the situation; and we read in the papers—it is not as if we are saying this from any confidential document that might have been received by the Central Government from him, but we read in the papers—that Shri V. V. Giri warned the Central Government that the situation was very critical and very serious, and the Central Government should immediately rush to the aid of the State Government.

Shri C. Subramaniam then visited the State on 1st October. And what was decided? There was no stock-taking of the position as it existed then, namely whether the State had sufficient foodgrains in store to feed the people of Kerala, but it was decided that from 1st November, there would be informal rationing. Of course, one would welcome rationing, if there were an efficient and incorrupt administration as well as a machinery which would reach out to the people. But informal rationing was introduced, but there was no stock available even in the Central reserves which were with the State Government. During the period from August to October, those reserves were there exhausted. And they were never replenished. I would like to ask what the Central Government were doing. I would like to know whether adequate reserves exist in the Central reserves available with the different States, which can be made available at the time of crisis. When Shri C. Subramaniam visited Kerala, did he find out whether the Central reserve stock was sufficient for the people of Kerala? He did not do so, but rationing was introduced

[Shri Surendranath Dwivedy]

According to the Government of Kerala, about 2000 tons of rice every day would be required in order to supply only to the rationing areas. That would come to about 60,000 tons a month. Now, it is the case of the Government of India that from Andhra Pradesh, Madras and other States, they had made arrangements for sufficient stocks to reach the people of Kerala. But I would like to know why that was not actually done. Is it not a fact that the traders in Andhra Pradesh and Madras, in collaboration with the traders in Kerala, saw to it that the prices of rice and other foodgrains were raised in Andhra Pradesh and Madras, so that the traders in Kerala could tell the Government that since at the procurement place the price of rice was high, no rice was being made available to the State of Kerala? Did this not come to the notice of the Central Government? If it did, what steps did they take to see that there was at least a parity in price so that the rice could flow to the deficit area of Kerala? But nothing was done.

Government are thinking of a Foodgrains Trading Corporation now, and that too in a half-hearted manner. This will be another anarchy in the food distribution machinery. If you want to take it up, take it up fully and completely; fix the minimum and remunerative prices for the producer, and have the procurement machinery in different States at your disposal, and procure the foodgrains in sufficient quantities from the surplus States which you can sell through the Government agency in a regulated manner by sending it to the deficit States. But you do not want to do that. You only want to play with this game, and we always find a statement which is in contradiction of what is happening in the State itself.

So, it is a case of bungling at the Centre. There is no definite food policy also, either in regard to prices or in regard to supply and distribu-

tion, which has been responsible for this chaos and confusion in the country.

In conclusion, I would only say this: that what you have seen in Kerala is just a symptom. You are complacent today because the people have not revolted in the other States, and you think that the position is very safe in other areas. That is not so. If Government feel that there is an emergency and they really want to tackle this problem, let them think very seriously about what is wrong in their entire food policy, how that policy should be changed radically and how the administration should be overhauled so that this problem could be tackled effectively.

Shri Maniyangadan (Kottayam): I have also to speak with great pain, especially because I am coming from the State of Kerala, and it is only three days since I left that State. I have to agree to most of the statements made here by the Opposition.

The trouble in the State, which is a deficit State and which has to get about 10 lakhs of tons of rice from outside every year to feed its people, is that it has been experimented upon recently in several ways. The southern zone consisting of Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Madras and Mysore was functioning in recent years in a smooth way and there was not much difficulty. But this year, according to the statement of the Food Minister, in June, the Central Government began to procure rice from Andhra Pradesh and Madras. Of course, some rice was being issued to the State of Kerala from the Central godowns for distribution through fair price shops, but that would not have made up for the rice that was procured. It was then that the trouble began, and the arrivals of rice from Andhra Pradesh to Kerala stopped to some extent. Of course, subsequently the Government thought that this should be stopped, and they stopped

it. Then again, the situation became almost normal.

Again, there were certain experiments made with the State. In September this year there was a conference where it was decided to fix the price. Of course, by that time, the price had increased to some extent. They fixed the price of rice, but not of paddy. I mentioned this fact in the House during the last session. When traders and representatives of cooperative societies in Kerala went to Andhra Pradesh and Madras for purchasing rice at the price fixed by Government, they could not get it. The millowners said that the price of paddy was not fixed, so they could not get paddy at such a price as to sell rice at the price fixed by Government.

In the statement, it is said that 'owing to the non-observance of price control in Kerala, it was reported by the Governments of Andhra and Madras that large scale movements of rice were taking place to Kerala and these Governments therefore started imposing informal restrictions on movement of rice to Kerala'. That is, the Governments of Madras and Andhra Pradesh put impediments on movements of rice from those States to Kerala on the excuse that price control was not observed in Kerala. This is not a true statement of fact. In Kerala, we cannot observe price control unless we get the grain from outside, and the fact was that we could not get it. I know of instances where the district co-operative society representatives went to the State of Madras on instructions from the Government of Kerala and also on the advice of the Madras Government. When they went and met the Collector, he called together some millowners and asked them to supply rice. But they would not. So the Collector said, 'We are helpless. What to do?'. This was the actual state of affairs. We could not get rice at the price fixed by Government. So the position started getting acute in the State.

Subsequently the price increased. There was acute shortage. During the end of the last session, we made representations to the Food Minister; we also represented the matter to the Home Minister in the consultative committee and warned that things were getting on to a crisis. Unfortunately, nothing was taken serious note of. Of course, the Food Minister went to Kerala and announced that from 1st November there would be informal rationing.

We thought this announcement was made after making some preparations. But what happened on 1st November? Before the 1st November, ration cards had been issued to all families in the State. Everything was ready—except the rice. That was the position. Then on 1st November they said, 'All right. We will begin with municipal corporation areas and towns'. Even there, the announcement was that 6 oz. of rice and 6 oz. of wheat would be supplied. But actually, that quantity was not supplied. There was no wheat at all supplied.

Then again, very recently the Minister went there. Of course, the statement made by the Governor was referred to here. There was absolutely no preparation for that. I am asking the Food Minister in all seriousness; when he made the announcement after consulting the Government of Kerala and also the Governments of Andhra and Madras that informal rationing would be started on 1st November, or at least on the 15th November, did he not make himself sure that the necessary quantity of foodgrains would be made available to the State for this rationing? If he did not, did he not come to know subsequently that these things were not being supplied? Why were no steps taken to see that this difficulty was avoided? These are the questions I have to ask. Either the State Government did not inform the Centre or if they did, the Centre did not take serious notice of this fact.

[Shri Maniyangadan]

As regards starvation, I know that in several thousands of families, not a grain of rice was cooked for days together. That was the actual state of affairs in the State when I left for Delhi.

Now, of course, they say that 3½ oz. rice would be supplied to villages also. I do not know how that could be supplemented. The position is that there is no supply in the open market from outside the State. This is not the harvesting season in the State. Rice or paddy could not be obtained by traders for sale in the open market. If all available sources of supply to the open market or to the private trade are closed, what can be done?

Then they say, we can give 3½ oz. of rice and people may supplement it through other sources, private trade. I am asking: how to get it when all channels are closed? There is no possibility of getting even a single grain of rice or paddy from outside. In such circumstances, if supply is to be supplemented through other sources, through private channels, my submission is that it is asking for the impossible. This is in a way a measure of the sort of indifference on the part of Government, without thinking of the consequences of their action.

There are certain areas in the State, plantation areas, where there is no possibility of getting any rice. The Minister is reported to have said that they do not deserve any special consideration. Kerala is a State where it is not possible to grow more food-grains. We have pepper, coconut, rubber and other cash crops. If the intention of the Central Government is to reduce the areas under these crops and grow paddy instead of wheat, that is a different thing, and people may try it. But we are earning a substantial amount of foreign exchange for the national exchequer on account of these cash crops. We are serving the nation that way. I submit therefore that this question of

food supply to the State must be taken as a national issue, specially when it is under President's rule; even if it were not, this should be treated as a national issue; and steps taken accordingly. The Central Government cannot offer any excuse about that.

The southern zone should be maintained and free passage of rice from Andhra and Madras allowed. If they are finding difficulty because of informal rationing, let there be statutory rationing; let the people of the State be given sufficient quantity of rice and paddy. Then we will be satisfied. Otherwise, there must be channels for getting rice through private trade.

Shri Ranga (Chittoor): Mr. Speaker, I am very glad indeed that quite a large number of our Congress friends are conscientious enough to clap their approval of the remarks made by one of their own colleagues who has just spoken.

Shri A. P. Sharma (Buxar): Do not exploit that.

Shri Ranga: I find now that there is spiritual unanimity in this House, on all sides of this House . . .

Shri J. B. Kripalani (Amroha): Excepting the Treasury Benches.

Shri Ranga: . . . in condemning this Government and its food policy, specially as it concerns and affects the State of Kerala.

My hon. friend from the State said just now that it was because the Kerala Government and Kerala consumers were not prepared to pay the price ruling in the supplying markets that the trouble arose. That provides the real key to a part of the crisis. Why is it that they are not prepared to pay the price that prevails in the market? It is because of the wrong policies that have been followed by Government till now in order to keep down the prices, in order to keep down

the peasants and rob them of the incentives that they should have to produce more and more. To achieve this objective, they relied upon P.L. 480 imports. The more the imports came, the less was the incentive to produce more. Less and less was being produced, more and more had to be imported. This vicious circle has been going for the last six years. That is one of the reasons why this crisis has arisen.

Secondly, who is the hoarder? My hon. friend Shri Mukerjee was very eloquent in his indignation against hoarders. The biggest hoarder I consider to be the Government. They have themselves been advertising that every day a ship was coming from America, it was being unloaded in Bombay, Calcutta, Madras or some other place. What have they been doing with all these stores, with all these buffer stocks? Are they keeping them in anticipation of the marriages of their sons and daughters? Are they not intended to meet the real primary objective with which they were supplied to us by America and other countries, namely to enable this Government to place these stores in all those vulnerable places so that it would be possible for them to make available these supplies the moment local shortage arises? It is not as if they have not been given any warning in regard to this particular matter. Several months ago we made this charge against Government when similar trouble arose in Bombay and Calcutta. In spite of it, Government has not become wiser. Therefore, I charge them with being the biggest hoarder in this country.

Thirdly, there is this question of rice. What is the use of trying to make scapegoats of the opposition parties on the one side and hoarders on the other, and the Andhra Government and other surplus Governments on the third side? It is inflation which is the primary cause of all this mischief. It is not the fault of my hon. friend Shri Subramaniam alone, the

poor, unfortunate man, who, because of his youthful impetuosity jumped from another Ministry into this cauldron of fire.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: Shri Shastri's also.

Shri Ranga: It is the fault of this Government as a whole.

I put this question earlier to the previous Food Minister, who certainly made a greater success of this, although he was also a failure.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: He has gone.

Shri Ranga: And that is why you have got this crisis.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: He said the granaries were full when they were empty.

Shri Ranga: He admitted that inflation was one of the principal causes of this mischief.

Is it not a fact that during the last six or seven months the price index has gone up? Why? Because inflation is having its free play. It is taking its vengeance on the social economy, and as long as this Government fails to tackle this terrible problem of inflation, it would be impossible for them to come to grips with this food situation.

Why do you blame the Andhra Government or any other surplus State? When there was not all this informal rationing, these controls and this incapable Government coming into the market and trying to pose as if it was going to manage this matter much better than the traders, was there all this trouble in Kerala? True, there was shortage in Kerala also; true, they had to go with much less than necessary rations, but nevertheless there was not this crisis. It has arisen only after this Government has come into the market in its incompetence, and that is why I am not

[Shri Ranga]

able to agree with my hon. friends, the socialists and communists, when they say that complete rationing should be introduced, that complete monopoly over the grain trade should be given to the State Trading Corporation, with all its traditions of profiteering and all the rest. In whose interests will they be profiteering? Not in the interests of the producers or of the consumers, but in their own interests and in the interests of this Government. Therefore, I cannot agree with them.

When there was not this trouble, Kerala was able to get its supplies, Kerala is unable to get its supplies now just because it is not being enabled by the Union Government to purchase these foodgrains in the supplying markets at the prices which rule there, which ought to rule there in all region. When they are prepared to get these supplies from America at subsidised rates, why should they not be prepared to supply it to Kerala at a price which would be within the capacity of Kerala to pay, and at the same time at prices which would be reasonable and acceptable to the people who are producing the foodgrains in the surplus States?

I want Government to consider this aspect of the problem. I agree with my hon. friend from the Congress when he says that it is a national problem. Therefore, if it becomes necessary, the Union Government should be prepared to sacrifice Rs. 10 or Rs. 20 or even Rs. 30 crores per annum to feed them. Certainly, the Union Government must be prepared to come forward to do that. But then what should we do? Should we supply this cheaper rice to all and sundry in Kerala? No, according to me. Only the poorer people should be supplied with this. Let the other people pay more and obtain these things in the open market, let them pay the market price. That is the only reasonable approach.

An Hon. Member: There is no open market.

Shri Ranga: I want an open market.

Shri Bhagwat Jha Azad (Bhagalpur): The trader and the profiteer is the open market.

Shri Ranga: I have to fight against time.

Unfortunately, in recent times, although my hon. friend has been in favour of abolishing the zones, some of these people, may be political parties I do not know, some of the interested State Governments were keen on keeping these zones, and they have also queered the pitch. Recently, the Andhra Government was given the power, I do not know why or on whose advice, to prevent lorry-loads of rice being speeded up to Kerala, I do not know in whose interests, but certainly in the interests of bureaucracy, with the result there is no open market in Kerala as there used to be earlier. If all this grain, whatever there is in Andhra, can be speeded up, can be allowed to be sent by roadways freely by merchants, surely whatever the Government is able to supply today can be supplemented by these supplies also, but the Government wants to pursue this wrong policy.

Lastly, I wish to warn Government that if they were to pursue this policy of so-called informal rationing in certain areas, what they call rationing in cities alone, they will be inviting too much trouble for themselves, as a result of which it would become the funeral not only of one Minister, but of the whole of this Ministry, here as well as in the States.

What is happening in Andhra? I went to my constituency, Chittoor, the other day and saw the huge, big serpentine queues of men, women and children, and women fainting. A woman who had already taken her grain went and sat there. I happened

to go there, and I asked her if she had not got her foodgrains.. She said yes. Then I asked her why she was sitting in such a doleful manner. She said that she had been standing there for so many hours in the sun, she got tired and she began to swoon, therefore, she was taking rest. These experiences are to be found in other towns in Andhra. Only the other day, my hon. friends had gone to Guntur. I do not know whether they noticed any queues there, but in the whole of Rayalseema there are queues now, even in Bombay and everywhere, and as a result of these queues, what would happen is that it is not necessary for the opposition parties to do any propoganda; all that the opposition parties have to do in 1967 is to keep themselves ready with their organisational machinery, then the tide will throw all the votes into their hands, provided they can hold them. If the opposition parties have not got bigger, stronger hands, they would not be able to win. The Congress also will not be able to win. A lot of politically illegitimate independents will be returned, and the Congress ministries will be thrown into the dust bin. Thereafter, whatever remnants of the Congress Party there might be, they will begin to play the usual unscrupulous game of purchasing these independents, and making up their own artificial majorities, and getting back again into sets of power, so that they would be able to continue this mess.

श्री बडे (खारगोन) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, केरल के सम्बन्ध में जो माननीय सदस्यों ने एडजर्नमेंट मोशन दिया तो उस का कारण यह हुआ कि एक देश, एक राष्ट्र होने से केरल संकट को देख कर हम को भी दुःख होता है। जितना दुःख केरल वालों को होता है उतना ही मध्य प्रदेश और केन्द्र को होता है। हम ने देखना चाहा कि केरल में दुखी होने का कारण लोगों के लिये क्या है। केरल के लोगों के दुःख

का मुख्य कारण यह है कि चावल के जो रेट बांधे गये हैं वे इतने कम बांधे गये हैं कि आंध्र प्रदेश से मद्रास और केरल को चावल जाना कम हो गया। इस के बाद रेशनिंग की गई। 1 नवम्बर, को रेशनिंग करने के बाद केरल में चावल नहीं था। केरल को 60 हजार टन गेहूँ और 60 हजार टन चावल की जरूरत होती है लेकिन वहाँ पर केवल 35 हजार टन अनाज था। ऐसी स्थिति होते हुए भी मंत्री महोदय ने वहाँ पर रेशनिंग कैसे करवा दी, यह बात मेरी समझ में नहीं आती। इस के बाद हम ने 10 नवम्बर को अखबारों में पढ़ा कि वहाँ पर विद्यार्थियों पर अश्रु गैस छोड़ी गई। वहाँ पर जो कर्मचारी जाते थे उनके टिफिन बाक्सों का खाना जनता के लोग खा गये, ऐसी स्थिति वहाँ पर आ गई। उस के बाद वहाँ पर आज एक तरह की अशान्ति हो रही है और शासन वहाँ है ही नहीं ऐसा मालूम होता है। ऐसी स्थिति के आने के लिये जिम्मेदार कौन है ?

मैं कहना चाहता हूँ कि शासन जनता को अन्न देने में असमर्थ है, शासन करने में असमर्थ है। जो शासन शासन करने में असमर्थ है उस को शासन से अलग हो जाना चाहिये। मैं चाहता हूँ कि जिस प्रकार से आज जो हमारे प्राइम मिनिस्टर हैं उन्होंने रेलवे में ऐक्सिडेंट हो जाने से रिजाइन कर दिया था उसी तरह से केरल की हालत को देखते हुए हमारे मंत्रिमंडल को रेजिनेशन दे देना चाहिये। आज केरल में जो स्थिति चल रही है उस को देखते हुए मैं मानता हूँ कि वहाँ रेशनिंग करने से भुखमरी हो गई। यदि देश में भुखमरी होती है और अछाचार होता है तो यह दो कारण हैं जिन से शासन को नालायक समझा जाता है। मैं समझता हूँ कि यदि केरल के लोगों पर और विद्यार्थियों पर शासन

[श्री बड़े]

द्वारा अशु गैस छोड़ी जाती है तो यह शासक दल शासन करने के लिये नालायक है। मेरी विनती है कि यह शासन वहां पर चावल भोजन में असमर्थ है और यह शाहन की फेल्योर है।

इस के बाद एक और कारण बतलाया गया कि कोचीन में लेबरर्स ने स्ट्राइक कर दिया। उन के हड़ताल करने से वहां पर बन्दरगाह में जो अनाज था वह केरल के अन्दर नहीं पहुंच सका। लेकिन यदि उन्होंने हड़ताल कर दी थी तो मैं पूछना चाहता हूँ कि आप की मिलिटरी कहां थी। आप के शासन ने वहां क्या किया। शासन कुछ नहीं कर सका, केवल यह उस ने बतला दिया कि केरल में अनाज भेज़ दिया। हालांकि कोचीन में ह्वीट आ गया था लेकिन वहां के बन्दरगाह में लोगों ने हड़ताल कर दी, इसलिये वहां पर अनाज नहीं पहुंच सका। मैंने देखा है कि कोई भी ऐडजर्नमेंट मोशन या नोकांफिडेंस मोशन अगर यहाँ सरकार के खिलाफ प्रस्तुत किया जाता है तो शासन नये नये बहाने बना कर उन से छुटकारा पाने की कोशिश करता है। ऐडजर्नमेंट मोशनों का या नो कांफिडेंस मोशनों का उस पर कोई असर नहीं पड़ता है।

एक माननीय सदस्य : उन को लाना बन्द कर देना चाहिये।

श्री बड़े : लोकनायक अणे साहब कहते हैं कि उनको लाना बन्द कर देना चाहिये। मैं कहता हूँ बार बार लाना चाहिये। मैं कहना चाहता हूँ कि अगर शासन चाहता है कि वहां अनाज पहुंचे तो उस को रेशनिंग को वहां पर बन्द कर देना चाहिये। जैसे मध्य प्रदेश में ओपन मार्केट में भी अन्न मिलता है

और रेशनिंग से भी अनाज मिलता है उसी तरह से वहां करना चाहिये। गरीब लोग रेशनिंग शाप पर जाते हैं और बड़े बड़े अमीर लोग ओपन मार्केट से मंहगा अन्न खरीदते हैं। इस प्रकार से मध्य प्रदेश में दोनों स्तर के लोगों का काम हो जाता है। यदि आप ने उसी प्रकार से केरल में किया तो कम से कम ब्लैक मार्केट से या चोरी से अनाज आ कर गरीब लोगों को मिल तो जायेगा। आप की जो पालिसी है, जैसे कि मंत्री महोदय ने केरल में जा कर राशनग को शुरू कर दिया, उस को उन को बन्द कर देना चाहिये और केरल में ज्यादा चावल और दूसरा अनाज पहुंचाना चाहिये।

इसी वास्ते मैंने यद् ऐडजर्नमेंट मोशन दिया है।

Shri Imbichibava (Ponnani): Mr. Speaker . . .

Mr. Speaker: Cannot he express himself in English?

Shri Umanath (Pudukkottai): Not effectively. He made a speech in Malayalam last time also, on a previous occasion.

Mr. Speaker: But he does not say that . . .

Shri Umanath: You are asking him in English; that is why he is not able to understand and reply to you.

Mr. Speaker: He signs very beautifully in English.

Shri Umanath: Yes.

Shri Imbichibava:* Mr. Speaker, Sir, the food situation in Kerala has risen to alarming proportions now. The entire machinery of distribution of food has completely broken down and availability of rice has become a

*English translation of speech delivered in Malayalam.

luxury all over the State. Starvation deaths have become a common affair and daily press in Kerala is full of such news. A large number of factories have been closed down since many days and workers have no stamina to work due to lack of food. All the educational institutions, from primary to university education, have been closed down indefinitely.

Near Tellicherry, five children died on 11th due to hunger and consequent illness. They are: Nellikka Govindan's 5 year old child in the Tellicherry Government Hospital, (2) in Pattiyam and Vellakkoottur Villages 2 boys died the same day; (4 & 5). In Mokeri Village near Tellicherry, Nanoth Katheeja a young Muslim girl and a boy Kannan S/o A Balan, died. In Orkatteri village Kelappan a young peasant became giddy and they died after purging. In the same area 2 children died and the elementary school closed due to this incident. Many more unreported cases of death are there.

Epidemics have spread in Onjiyam Village, cholera has spread in large scale. In Taliparamba village, several school children are attacked by Cholera and dysentery and almost all elementary schools in many villages are closed. In Eraman Panchayat, Karippal, Peribatav, Vellore, and Koyippara villages large scale epidemics have spread. Men, women and children are wandering all over in search of whatever kind of food available. People are turning on tender coconuts and whatever variety of roots and pulses available. This has caused varieties of diseases on a large scale. In Trichur over 100 persons were admitted in the hospital with cholera and dysentery. In Milimanoor, 2 women who went to secure rice fell unconscious were subsequently removed for first aid. A police constable reported to a correspondent of *Viswakeralam* at Quilon on November 10, that he could not give even rice kanji for five days to his wife who had just then delivered a child. In Mavelikkara children in

the school fell unconscious for want of food.

Mass starvation and epidemics are the order of the day. 40,000 tea garden workers in the high ranges are starving for the last several weeks and they could not work due to starvation. In Quilon 1,000 workers of cashewnut factories could not go to work due to starvation.

Thousands of employees of the State & Central Government including Railway, P. & T. and others are standing in queues for several hours daily for a measure of rice and are unable to attend to their normal duties.

Mass scale absenteeism and strikes are being reported all over Kerala and normal life no more exists there. It is the grip of a famine unknown in the history of that State but can only be compared with that of Bengal famine during the British rule.

About 25,000 hotels in Kerala decided to close even the light refreshment section by the end of this fortnight. They have already closed down their meals section.

17 hrs.

In Quilon, Trichur and Trivandrum and many other places the police lathi-charged, tear-gassed and even resorted to shooting to quell the people clamouring for a morsel of food. Harrowing instances of similar conditions can be listed endlessly as no village has escaped the clutches of hunger.

Sir, Can we say that all this calamity is due only to natural causes? Can we say that the Government had taken all possible steps to prevent this disaster? I dare say, Sir, that the entire responsibility for this catastrophe lies on the Government. The Government was warned earlier about the deteriorating situation on the food question. On 23rd September,

[Shri Imbichibava]

this year, I stated on the floor of the House, as follows:

"I have recently received a telegram from Calicut which says that food situation has become acute. Rice is not at all available in the market. The black market price has gone up by 25 per cent. In some places, rice is being sold at Rs. 77 per bag. District authorities are just expressing their helplessness and people are becoming restive. Similar situation is prevailing all over the State. In the absence of any democratic set-up the Central Government has to pay more attention to the grievances of the people."

However Sir, no attention was paid by the Government to the warning given on the floor of this House. The Food Minister satisfied himself by saying that the worst was over. The Prime Minister was busy in giving assurances on the public platform that the crisis would be over in some weeks' time. The local bureaucrats in Kerala naturally took clue from the responsible Government spokesman and were giving false picture of the situation in the State. Sir, on 9th November, the Kerala Government asked the Union Government to airlift rice stocks to the State which shows that the situation was pretty serious on that day. However, just one day before this the Kerala Government assured the people that "sufficient stocks are available with them for distribution to cardholders at the rate of 16 grams of rice per adult per day in the Municipal Areas and also for issue through fair price shops at two edangazhies per card per week in other areas of the State."

Sir, these irresponsible officers who have given such false statements should have been summarily punished for playing with the lives of millions of people in Kerala. The complacency shown by the Government in this regard is greatly responsible for this chaotic condition in the State.

Sir, on 12th November the Kerala Governor blamed the Union Government for not supplying adequate quantity of rice to the State as assured. The assurance given by the Union Food Minister, the Governor added, was observed "more in breach" and the Madras and Andhra State Governments too failed to fulfil their promises.

The Food Minister in his statement has put the responsibility for Andhra and Madras Governments. The introduction of rationing without ensuring guaranteed supply of rice to the State has led to this serious food situation in the State. Placing responsibility, on others only shows the irresponsible approach of the Governments, both Central and States, on this most important problem of the people's livelihood.

When the State government asked for airlifting the foodgrains, the Union Government preferred to airlift the Food Minister from one State capital to another. The bungling in the whole matter is also seen in a statement of the official of the Union Food and Agriculture Ministry before the correspondent of the *Economic Times* on 10th November that the food crisis in Kerala would be over in the next few days. Though the situation was becoming critical day by day the Government spokesmen were making false statements to hoodwink the people. What is, however, strange is that some Ministers even went to the extent of holding opposition parties responsible for the present food crisis. Can hypocrisy go further? Sir, I would request the Government to understand the gravity of the situation even at this stage. Immediate steps should be taken in Kerala to solve the food crisis before it is too late.

We make the following concrete proposals for proper distribution of rice and wheat and at the same time to introduce timely relief measures.

1 Ensure regular supply of 12 ozs. of rice and 4 ozs. of wheat per adult

immediately in all towns and villages. What is now being given is 6 ozs. rice and no wheat in town. In villages only 8 nP. worth of rice is being given to a family ration card for five people. If this quantum of ration is given, no family in villages can escape the clutches of slow starvation deaths.

2. As it is physically impossible to open ration shops and regular flow of stocks throughout Kerala within a few days, and as people are already on mass starvation, immediate relief measures are to be introduced, namely all district Head-quarters must organise free distribution of rice and wheat packets of two kilograms in rural and remote parts through all sorts of transport possible. This must be done as an immediate measure while simultaneously building up of stocks to introduce rural rationing and the mechanism for distribution is set up. This alone will save people from the danger of immediate large-scale starvation.

What has happened in Kerala today is likely to happen tomorrow in other States also. Press reports indicate that condition in Madras and Mysore is deteriorating fast. I hope even now the Union Government will rise to the occasion and pay some attention to the demands of the people instead of resorting to repressive measures and taking refuge under DIR.

Shri Kappen (Muvattupuzha): Sir, the famous historian, Arnold Toynbee, said that this age will be remembered not for the hydrogen bombs and atom bombs nor for its scientific achievement but for the fact that this is the first time since the dawn of civilisation when men thought of sharing the benefits of civilisation and scientific advance with other men and women in all parts of the world. The genesis of the Kerala food situation lay in the lack of this catholicity of feeling and want of nation-wide thinking on the part of persons in high places in India.

Kerala is a deficit State. It produces

only 50 per cent of its requirements and she was getting the rest from the surplus States of Andhra and Madras. When the zonal system was in existence, there was free movement of rice from Andhra and Madras to Kerala, and so far as Madras is concerned, there are two crops: the Kattichambala crop and the Kuruvai crop. Kattichambala is the largest one. Kattichambala rice was being sold at Rs. 42 per bag, weighing 75 kilos. It ranged from Rs. 42 to Rs. 48, and in Andhra Pradesh rice was being sold at Rs. 38 to the Kerala merchants. This was going on very well. Last year, the Central Government thought of creating a buffer-stock and for that purpose they wanted to purchase rice from the surplus areas of Andhra and Madras. They took to compulsory purchase from Madras, of 25 per cent of the stock of the mill-owners, and from Andhra, I understand, they purchased 30 per cent of the millowners' stock at a price much lower than the market price. Therefore, the merchants in Andhra and Madras suffered a loss of Rs. 5 to Rs. 10 a bag because of the Central Government's purchase. When the Kerala merchants went to purchase rice as they used to do, the Andhra and Madras merchants thought that they must make good this loss from the Kerala merchants. Naturally they were willing to sell only at a price of Rs. 5 or Rs. 10 higher than the market price. But they were not prepared to give a bill for that. In the meanwhile, the Government fixed the price of rice and they failed to fix the price of paddy. Then, the merchants in Kerala would not purchase rice because they could not sell at the billed rate and the Government fixed the price and they were compelled to sell at that rate. Naturally, forward purchase which they were making and which they used to make was cancelled and there was no stock of rice with the merchants. As has been pointed out in the hon. Minister's statement, the supply made from the Central Government to the Government of Kerala was distributed at

[Shri Kappen]

four edangalies at a time. While they were distributing for a long time only two edangalies, they raised it to four so that the Government stock also got depleted. There was absolutely no rice and then the price was going up. Towards the end of September, the situation was becoming very bad. In the first week of October it was becoming very acute. We the Congress Members from Kerala met the hon. Minister and apprised him of the serious situation that we were facing and how the people are starving and we told him that unless he did something immediately there would be starvation deaths in Kerala. He told us that the movement of rice from Andhra this year was greater than what it was this time last year. He added that he does not understand how the situation had arisen, but he promised that he would go to Kerala and study the situation first-hand and do the needful. When he returned from Kerala we again approached him, and he assured us that 12 oz of rice is guaranteed to every person and that informal rationing would be started from the 1st of November.

We were happy. After all, 12 oz of rice is very good, even though the prescribed ration for an adult is 16 oz.

Shri Koya: We are now getting three ounces.

Shri Kappen: What happened on the 1st November was, informal rationing was started only in the towns and cities and the villages were kept in the lurch. There was at that time absolutely no rice, and no food material could be purchased from the open market. The Minister calculated that out of the 50 per cent produced in the State, 30 per cent would come to the open market, but that calculation, according to me, is wrong. What ever it is, whatever surplus that could come to the open market was also

barred, because there was the police-checking to see whether it was Central Government stock that was being moved, so much so that the movement of rice in Kerala was absolutely stopped. There was not even a single grain of rice to be purchased. The people got anxious. Students got out of the colleges. In hostels, there was no food. Hotels were closed and there was absolutely no food anywhere. Students' strikes became the order of the day. There was no law and order. Of course, the police were forced to lathi-charge and even throw stones at the students in Trivandram city. A very bad situation was created. We have approached the Minister and told him of the grave situation. He assured us that 12 ounces of ration would be given. But in the villages today, from 15th November, 3½ ounces of rice are being given. Even this does not reach all the people in the villages and there is absolute starvation. This is really a serious situation.

Before I started for Delhi, I met the Kerala Governor and told me that he had sent a wireless message to the Centre asking for airlifting of rice, so that the serious situation might be met. He has issued a statement, as pointed out by Mr. Hiren Mukerjee, that the Central had let down the Kerala Government by not supplying what it had promised. Therefore, the so-called informal rationing has failed.

As I pointed out, the only possible solution to this whole problem is to allow free movement of rice. The Madras Chief Minister, on his gracious birthday, made a proclamation: "I am going to give 10,000 tons of rice to Kerala as birthday gift". When the Kerala Government issued licences to the merchants and when they went to Madras, the Madras Government said, we have no rice with us; we will give you paddy. When paddy was purchased and milled, the Madras Government freed it and said, we will give

you another quantity of paddy. That is why I say it is this want of catholicity of feeling and nation-wide thinking that has been responsible for the serious situation in Kerala.

I was told by the Kerala Governor that he approached the Central Food Minister and asked him for at least a small consignment of 5,000 tons from the Madras quota, which would be repaid after some time. But the Central Food Minister said, if the Madras Chief Minister is agreeable, I am agreeable. When the Governor went to the Madras Chief Minister, he said, nothing is available. What a bad situation in which that Government has been placed! So, I suggest that free movement of rice may be allowed and the price fixation may be changed.

When I was listening to the speech of Mr. Mukerjee, I was laughing in my sleeves, because in this country, these communists raise a hue and cry every day that controls must be imposed and State-trading must be introduced. But when there is some difficulty in the beginning, they go to the people, whip up an agitation and make political capital out of it. Of course, his speech was full of very high-sounding words, but it lacked sincerity.

Shri N. Sreekantan Nair (Quilon): Mr. Speaker, Sir, from the speeches made from all sections of the House, you could understand that the situation in Kerala is really critical. As a matter of fact never before in the chequered history of Kerala, has such a serious crisis faced the people. We produce only 40 per cent of our needs and the remaining 60 per cent has to come from outside. It has been coming all along. We have faced two World Wars. During that period, the Kerala people did not starve. We were amply supplied with rice by the British imperialist Government.

Now after 17 years of independence, Kerala, which also fought for independence, is being isolated and the people of Kerala are dying of starvation in thousands. Why is it so acute?

How could not the Government rush some help there? Certain aspects of the speech of our Governor have been quoted here, but the salient point have been left out by Mr. Mukerjee:

"The Union Food Minister, Mr. C. Subramaniam, had assured me last month that 80,000 tons of rice would be sent every month. Later on he said, not more than 60,000 tons of rice would be sent. But in fact, he sent only 5,000 tons".

From 80,000 tons, it came down to 5,000 tons. That is the categorical statement he has made. About neighbouring States also, the Governor said, the assurances given by Madras and Andhra were not fulfilled. At one stage, Madras and Andhra were approached desperately for a loan of some quantity of rice, which we promised to return, but they did not agree. This is the curious state of affairs.

We talk so much of emotional and national integration and unity of the nation. At the same time, a State which is producing cash crops and earning for India a sizeable amount of foreign exchange, much more in dollars than in sterling, is allowed to starve. Millions of children in Kerala are being emaciated and wasted away by acute hunger. They are the citizens of future India. They would not be fit to fulfil the task which they would be called upon to do, if during these early stages, they are dried up.

It has been mentioned here how rice was not sent to Kerala. As a matter of fact, rice consigned to Kerala was not sent there. Wagons of rice were commandeered by the Madras Government. Not only Madras paddy, but also paddy purchased from Andhra and taken to Madras for milling, were taken over. I do not mind Madras taking them over if the situation in Madras was more serious than in Kerala. As a citizen of India, I would say that Kerala should suffer a little so that the pangs of Madras may

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not be heightened. But Kerala was suffering acute shortage. People were dying of starvation. Children had come out of schools and colleges. I know of days when Government Secretariat did not function even with half the strength, because 50 per cent of the officers had come to stand in the queue for rations. At such a time, to impose restrictions and to behave in this heartless manner towards Kerala does not speak well of a nation.

The sufferings of the people were acute. Quilon, which I represent, had to start the food riots initially. If there is any blame in it, I accept it. The very next day, Mr. Giri told all the political leaders who met him that "it is only now that the Centre has realised the position." Is not that an encouragement not only to the opposition, but to every political party, to resort to violence, burning, arson and murder, in order to attract the attention of the Ministers at the Centre? The Centre is ruling Kerala now. At the time when Madras, his home State, was putting impediments in the path of giving the most meagre rations to the Kerala State, the Minister of Food at the Centre, was on a foreign tour. When Kerala was burning and the Neroses were fiddling!

As a matter of fact, the whole question of rationing has to be gone into thoroughly. What is this informal rationing? I beg to differ from the Swatantra leader on this issue. If rationing has to be introduced, it has to be through and complete. Otherwise, no hotchpotch is going to help. If procuring has got to be made and it is going to be made, it has to be done thoroughly. The other day I met the hon. Governor, Mr. Giri. I gave him a memorandum. He gave me a reply in writing later on. He told me personally at that time that the Centre would not allow taking away or procuring all the surplus rice available in the fields. If you do not take away

all the surplus rice, if you insist upon the so-called procurement as it is now being enforced and take five parahs of rice from every para of paddy field, it will be doing an injustice. There are certain areas where nothing is grown. There are dry lands and there are Kari lands where not even five parahs are produced as total yield. When the total crop is less than five parahs, how can you take away five parah in such cases?

Look at the rationing system, the so-called informal rationing system, that is introduced. It is a travesty of truth. It is the greatest disrespect that can be shown to the common people, to the poor people. A man may own one or two parahs of paddy field. That means he owns 20 cents of land on which paddy is grown. He is refused a ration card. He may have ten children. There may be 15 members in his family. They are all refused ration cards on the ground that the man owns 20 cents of land. Look at the injustice that is done to him. On the other hand, if he has three acres which is dry land or Kari land and the total crop is only 200 parahs, he has to give away 150 parahs of paddy under the procurement system. Where is he to go to procure seeds? Where is he to go to meet the expenses of cultivation? Again, there are places, I am proud to state, in my State where the per acre yield is 35 or 40 times. There also you take only five parahs. This is injustice. As was pointed out today by the hon. Minister in reply to a question in the morning, it is the land which produces. It is the fertility of the land and not the labour which produces more. The labour put in is equal everywhere. But some lands yield 40 times and some others yield only six times. In the case of lands yielding six times the cultivators are made to give five parahs per acre whereas in the case of lands yielding 40 times also you take only five parahs. This kind of approach is not going to help this country.

If we are serious, if we want to see that the people are at least fed so that they do not die of starvation, we have to bring in statutory rationing throughout India. Most of the Prime Minister's and the Food Minister's opinions which have been published in today's *Statesman* approve introducing statutory rationing throughout India including the surplus areas. If you do not bring in some sort of a system there also, we know what will happen. Even in Andhra there are long queues before grain shops. It is because the dealers try to hoard and sell away the foodgrains in black market and secure higher prices. They try to create a scare. In Andhra especially there is a deliberate attempt by the millers and the hoarders to create a semblance of artificial scarcity so that food may not be allowed to flow out to Kerala and they may get higher prices in the black-market from merchants who would be later on permitted to go to Andhra and purchase, as has been said by the leader of the Swatantra Party. We would not allow them to take it to Kerala and sell it at a higher price.

The other day the Labour Commissioner of Kerala came to my place. I am a villager. My house is in a village. He came to my house and told me that his car was stopped five times and searched whether he had any rice in his car. He said that for three days his people were not taking rice. Even if he got three or four measures of rice, he said, from his friends or relations he could not take it home because his car was stopped and searched five times in a journey of 45 miles. Every five miles people put barricades to stop vehicles and see whether anybody is taking away paddy to sell it in blackmarket.

So, Sir, an effective system of rationing must be introduced. If it is not introduced, if the Centre does not want to give us adequate rice at least for this kind of poor rationing, allow us at least the foreign exchange which we earn so that we may get rice from

other countries and meet our requirements. If that is not done, we will prevent this foreign exchange from being earned if necessary by resorting to violence and see that you shoot us down rather than allow us to die in hunger.

Shri Koya: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon Minister for Food, Shri Subramaniam, is today in a very pitiable position, because he cannot accuse us that we in the Opposition were creating trouble and we are saying all these things without any basis. I am very glad that the Members of the Congress Party also are vehement in their criticism. Food knows no political differences. I accuse Shri Subramaniam of misleading the House when he said last time, you may remember, **Mr. Speaker, that this food crisis is a creation of the Opposition Party.** He said that it was the smugglers and merchants who were responsible for the food crisis in Kerala. Now it is the Government which has taken charge not only of distribution but also purchases from Andhra.

But where is the rice? The people of my State, the most enlightened State in this country, a State which is earning about Rs. 80 crores worth of foreign exchange, are given only three ounces of rice per head. In the cities it is 6 oz. per head. No wonder the Minister is coming with such apologetic statements. The usual arrogance of the Food Minister is not seen in his statements. It was he who came to Kerala and promised the people that informal rationing will be introduced throughout the State on 1st November. On 1st November what was the position in the villages? He said in the statement given to us, the open market was also functioning. None of us has seen the open market there. The whole rice was freed by the Government. No free flow of rice was allowed from Andhra. The Government rice also did not come to the villages. There was actual starvation in the villages. Even in my house there was no ration. Nothing was available in the rural

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areas. They tried to create a wedge between the cities and rural areas in Kerala.

Shri P. R. Patel (Patan): For how many days did you not receive your ration?

Shri Koya: For weeks.

Shri Nambiar (Tiruchurapalli): This is not an individual case; thousands did not get their ration. (*Interruptions*).

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. The hon. Member's time is limited.

Shri Koya: These questions may be asked to Shri Subramaniam. The time at my disposal is limited and I refuse to yield to this kind of interruptions.

There are fishing villages. They are giving six ounces of rice in the towns and only three ounces in the villages. Palghat Taluk they said was a surplus district and therefore no ration was distributed there. In various places like Ponnani and other fishing areas where there is no rice production at all the fishermen are given these three ounces of rice per head. For that they have to go and stand in queue from morning till midnight only to be told in the end that the stock is over and they may come the next morning. For days together they could not do any other work.

I attended the conference called by Shri Giri. My car was stopped by students at practically all important places. They wanted to see whether there was any rice in my car. For a few days the whole administration failed there. My hon. friend, Shri Thomas, had to go a round-about-way to reach his place because he was afraid of the agitation. He went by boat to reach Bolghatty Palace. Even the hon. Governor, Shri Giri, I am told had to go by a private route from Madura. The people were waiting to stop his car and tell him that there was no rice. The tiffin carriers of the

poor employees in the Secretariat were snatched and the mob ate the lunch meant for the Secretariat people. All their lunch was eaten by the people who were starving for days together. This was the sort of thing we had in Kerala for days. Now we are given three ounces of rice a day! Is rice a medicine? Three ounces a day. I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, it is not three ounces but three and a half ounces, half an ounce more we have got. What a benevolent Government! It has taken up the responsibility of feeding the people to the extent of three and a half ounces of rice per day, the people who were earning Rs. 80 crores by way of foreign exchange. If only this foreign exchange is utilized for buying rice in the foreign market, we could easily get 10 lakhs tons for Rs. 60 crores. If the Government is to give us six ounces of rice per day, they must have a stock of 60,000 tons of rice per month. We want a stock of 10 lakhs tons of rice and a ration of 12 ounces of rice per day for both rural and urban population. Of course, along with this, 4 ounces of wheat is all right.

The hon. Minister has blamed the labour for not allowing the wheat to be unloaded. I was told that a new system was introduced unilaterally by the Port Commissioner in the emergency and the trouble is the result of that. If so, the Port Commissioner has to be blamed for it. Whoever may be responsible for this, Government could have adopted some measures to get over it. They could have diverted the ships to ports like Calicut or Alleppy or they could have asked the Navy to unload the ships. So, that is a very lame excuse that the few labourers prevented unloading and that is why this situation has arisen in Kerala. A responsible government should not give such an excuse.

As we have no elected government in Kerala now, it is the duty of the Central Government to give us 12 ounces of rice and 4 ounces of

wheat and see that enough stock is allotted to Kerala.

Here I may again repeat that it is the country, conflicting and contradictory statements of the Food Minister that are responsible for the confusion about the food position in Kerala. I am sorry, the Minister of Information and Broadcasting is not present here. She has stated that the opposition parties are responsible for this. Once Sir Sultan Ahmad was called by Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan as the hon. Minister for Misinformation and Ill-information, I am very sorry, I have to give that appellation to the present Minister of Information and Broadcasting. If Kerala is in its present position, it is not the fault of the Opposition; it is the fault of the Government and the hon. Ministers representing the Government here.

Mr. Speaker: Shrimati Yashoda Reddy.

Shrimati Yashoda Reddy (Karnool): Shri P. G. Menon would be speaking.

Shri Warior (Trichur): Mr. Speaker, I might also express my indignation at the most callous manner in which Kerala was treated by this Government which no civilized State or people will tolerate. The Central Government had previous information about the serious situation to be faced by Kerala. When the Consultative Committee on Kerala met on the 10th September under the Chairmanship of Nandaji we informed the Committee that the situation is getting worse and worse daily, that some prompt steps must be taken to tackle the food problem and that unless something is done in that direction the law and order situation will go out of hand. Everything has happened as predicted. In the mean time, the Central Government could have done something to improve the situation in Kerala. Now Government is rushing special trains. Why did they not do it earlier, in the name of emergency? What is the reason for it?

I do not want to be uncharitable to the Government but I cannot help saying that the rice which is now supplied to us is the most stinking rice from Tadepallikudam in Andhra. Kerala is getting that stinking rice because in Andhra the new harvest has come and the hoarders cannot hoard their old stocks any more. Though I would not like to be uncharitable, the fact remains that the rice which is now given to Kerala is almost uneatable; even when boiled it is giving a stinking smell. This report about it being from the old stock has been given to me by an hon. Member, Shri Yellamanda Reddy, who comes from that side. If that is so, it is adding insult to injury.

The position in Kerala about food has been grave and desperate for the last few weeks. Every day I have been approaching my District Collector in Trichur and asking him whether new stocks have come and he was saying that the situation is becoming more and more critical and desperate. He was getting 100 bags daily from Palghat district and no further rice from outside. And this was happening at a time when every day newspapers were publishing stocks going to Kerala as 60,000 tons, 80,000 tons or 1,00,000 tons in shiploads, trainloads and what not. At one time we were told that even air-lifting will be done to supply rice to Kerala. It is shameful for the Government to confess that they could not anticipate situations and they had to think of air-lifting food supplies, and that too during normal peaceful time and not during war. We have never experienced such callous treatment of the people by the Government in our whole history. As Shri Sreekantan Nair has said, we have witnessed two great world wars, and even during those world wars, even though rice was not available in plenty, still we were getting something and we could rely upon that supply.

Now they say they are supplying us 3½ ounces per day. Yesterday I saw a copy of the *Manorama* from

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Kottayam, a daily which is the most outstanding supporter of any Government in power in Kerala except the Communist Government, which says that the Collector of Ernakulam had stated that it will be 50 grams of rice and 50 grams of wheat. In our country we used to employ grams only for weighing gold. Now we are employing it for weighing rice. Perhaps, rice has become dearer than gold.

Now it has become a struggle for life in Kerala. There were cases of school children swooning in a class rooms. More energetic students started taking away the tiffin boxes brought by the teachers, which contained some chappatis or puris or something of that nature. When I approached the District Medical Officer of Trichur she told me that every day about 50 cases of gastro-enteritis are coming to that hospital. She has no knowledge of the number of cases reported in other hospitals of our district. She also reported that the entire stock of saline glucose has been exhausted. Not only that. Even the employees of the hospitals have complained that they cannot go on like this. They are sitting down or swooning, not because they are strike-minded or they want to revolt but because it is physically impossible for them to work for want of food. That is the grim picture of the situation obtaining in Kerala.

I do not know how the Government is going to tackle this problem. I will not say much because even the Head of the Government, in whom this Government should have complete confidence has told a party leaders' conference in Trivandrum "I am going to resign". If the State Ministry had been in power, you could have put all the blame on its shoulders. Now I ask this Government: on whom are you going to put all the blame for the present situation? Now you have President's rule. Are you going to take away President's rule and have dictatorship there?

So, I say that the Central Government stands indicted, stands condemned in the eyes of the people of Kerala. The co-operation of the entire nation is necessary to solve this problem and it has to be solved by facing it boldly and fearlessly. Otherwise, the situation will get out of control. So many people have said it even earlier.

Now what is the position obtaining in Kerala? If you travel in a car, you cannot go uninterrupted. Furlong after furlong your car will be stopped by people, infuriated people, who are searching for rice. If you do not stop your car, they will smash it. Of course, they are after rice alone and not your car. Even in those households where they have a bit of rice, they are afraid of cooking it because if people see it or feel the smell of cooking rice, they will rush in and take away that food. They are forced to become cannibals in Kerala. So, this Government stands condemned for permitting such a situation to arise. Unless the position is changed, and changed very soon, the people will remove that Government. They will not sit down meekly and tolerate it any longer. There is no politics at all in this matter.

It is all very easy to say that the opposition parties are responsible for this situation. I ask this Government: is it the opposition parties that are keeping hoarded rice in their hands or is it the hoarders that they are protecting? Yet, not a word about the hoarders, not a word about the profiteers or the soaring prices; not a word about those highly placed people in other States who are responsible for sabotaging the policies which our hon. friend, Shri Subramaniam, wanted to enunciate; not a word about them. They probably seem to think that because we are in the opposition, we are vulnerable and we can be beaten; so, they accuse us at every available opportunity. Yet, not a word against

the hoarders and profiteers. This is a man-made thing. That is why they are indifferent. If it is a natural calamity, we will understand it; if it is an ordinary calamity, we will understand it; if it is an ordinary famine, we will understand it, but it is a man-made calamity.

Shri Subramaniam was saying that it is only a marginal deficit. What is this deficit? Where is that stock gone? Where is the rice? Where have they been keeping all this rice all this time which they are now rushing to Kerala? Well and good, they are doing something now. They are alert because our people are alert. Should the people be always alert? Is that their way? Then only will they realise this? I think, this country is going to explode from Kerala; take it from me. I do not want it.

Shri Nambiar: That would be the starting point.

Shri Warrior: But nobody can stop it. No political party will be responsible then. The people will take the law in their own hands. An election is impending there but there is no talk of elections there. They talk only of food, food and food. I ask this Government to face it boldly.

श्री बागडी (हिसार): अध्यक्ष महोदय, इस गांधीजी का नाम लेने वालों की सरकार से सब से पहले यह अर्ज करना चाहूंगा कि गांधीजी कहते थे कि जिस शासन में जनता को अन्न न मिले उस शासन के शासकों को राज करने का अधिकार नहीं है और वह शासन पापी शासन है। तो मैं गांधी जी के शब्दों में इस शासन का पापी शासन कह कर यह कहता हूँ कि श्री सुब्रह्मण्यम जी का धर्म यह है कि वह इस्तीफा दे दें। और दूसरी बात मैं यह कहना चाहता हूँ कि अगर खाद्य स्थिति को बनाना है तो इस के लिये कुछ बुनियादी बातों को सोचना पड़ेगा।

आज इस सदन में जब इस बारे में चर्चा चलायी जाती है तो कह दिया जाता है कि भुखमरी क्यों हुई, या देश के अन्दर कमी क्यों हुई। कुछ लोग इधर से आरोप लगाते हैं और जो चीज दिखायी देती वह कह देते हैं, और जो लोग सरकारी कुरसियों पर बैठे हैं वह दलील दे देते हैं कि यह कमी क्यों हुई। सरकार का यह काम नहीं है। सरकार कोई जांच करने वाली कमेटी नहीं है कि वह यह बतावे कि यह कमी क्यों हुई। आज केरल में भुखमरी क्यों चल रही है, आज हिन्दुस्तान में अकाल की स्थिति क्यों है इस बात की दलील देना सरकार का काम नहीं है। सरकार कोई जांच कमेटी नहीं है। सरकार जिम्मेवार है, वह सरकार पूरी सरकार नहीं है और वह सरकार कहलाने के काबिल भी नहीं है जो हुकूमत की गलतियों की वजह से जनता को भूखों मारे और यह कह कर अपना पिंड छुड़ा ले कि यह गलती हुई और वह गलती हुई। सरकार का तो यह धर्म है कि जो लोग इस कमी के लिये जिम्मेवार हैं उन को सजा दे। अगर कोई राजनीतिक आदमी कोई बात करता है तो सरकार के कायदे कानून उस को दंड देते हैं। अगर एक भूखों मरता बच्चा किसी दुकान से पाव भर चावल उठा लेता है तो सरकार की पुलिस और कानून कहते हैं कि इसने कानून को तोड़ा है। अध्यक्ष महोदय, हिन्दुस्तान के अन्दर सब से बड़ा कानून को तोड़ने वाला खाद्य मंत्री है, जिसने एक एक दाने के लिये हिन्दुस्तान के लोगों को बगावत करने के लिये मजबूर कर दिया है। यह बदकिस्मती की बात है। अगर हिन्दुस्तान के गरीबों के दिलों में कुछ जाग्रति और जज्बा होता तो आज हिन्दुस्तान में कांग्रेस की सरकार न होती।

आज एक बात कही जाती है कि अराजकता फैल गई है। लेकिन मैं कहता हूँ कि यह सरकार अराजकता फैला रही है। और

[श्री बागड़ी]

हिन्दुस्तान की विरोधी पार्टियां कुछ राजकता फैलाना चाहती हैं। मैं इन की नीति के बारे में एक बात कहना चाहता हूँ। ये बड़े बड़े ऐलान कर देते हैं जो कि पूरे नहीं होते और जब बड़े आदमियों के ऐलान झूठे हो जाते हैं तो जनता में अराजकता फैलती है। मैं मिसाल के तौर पर एक बात कहना चाहता हूँ। प्रधान मंत्री ने कहा कि जीपें नहीं चलेंगी, लेकिन दूसरे दिन से जीपें चलने लगीं। इसी तरह से राष्ट्र-पति जी ने कहा कि भोज में कोई मंत्री खुराक का इस्तेमाल नहीं करेंगे। लेकिन प्लानिंग कमीशन के डिप्टी चेयरमैन श्री अशोक मेहता और पंजाब के गृह मंत्री ने इस बहाने एक बड़ा भोज दिया कि सोशलिस्टों को कांग्रेस में रलाना है। उनके खिलाफ एक परचा भी दर्ज किया गया लेकिन उनके खिलाफ कोई कार्रवाई नहीं की गई, क्योंकि वह कोई मनीराम बागड़ी नहीं थे जिसको पकड़ कर जेल में डाल दिया जाता।

इस सरकार ने भुखमरी के सवाल पर दो नुस्खे बताये, एक तो सुब्रह्मण्यम साहब हवाई जहाज से उड़ कर केरल चले गए और दूसरे हमारे लाल बहादुर शास्त्री जी ने ऐलान कर दिया कि मैं चावल नहीं खाऊंगा। यह बहुत बड़ी देन दी गई कि एक फाका दिया और एक मंत्री हवाई जहाज से उड़ कर चले गए।

मैं बहुत अच्छी तरह से तो व्यापार के मसले को नहीं जानता, लेकिन पंजाब के कुछ व्यापारी मेरे पास आये थे और उन्होंने कहा था कि हमारा चावल सड़ रहा है। मैंने सुब्रह्मण्यम साहब से फोन मिलाया और कहा कि हमारे पंजाब में चावल की खुराक लोग कम खाते हैं, अगर केन्द्र को जरूरत हो तो चावल वहां से लेंगे। मुझे पता नहीं कि उसका क्या हुआ

और क्या नहीं हुआ। लेकिन मुझे यह पता है कि पंजाब के व्यापारी पांच हजार टन चावल देना चाहते थे लेकिन वह लिया नहीं गया और उसमें से कुछ बाढ़ में सड़ गया।

खैर, मैं एक बात आपके मारफत कह कर अपनी जगह ले लूंगा क्योंकि डा० लोहिया को बोलना है मेरे समय में से समय काट कर।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : मैं कोई ऐतराज नहीं करता।

श्री बागड़ी : मैं कम समय लूंगा।

अध्यक्ष जी, अराजकता इस देश की सरकार फैला रही है और अगर इस अराजकता को रोकना है तो हिन्दुस्तान की विरोधी पार्टियों को कुछ करना पड़ेगा और मैं तो चाहूंगा कि हिन्दुस्तान के गरीब लोग इस सरकार की अराजकता को रोकें मैं तो उस आदमी को हिन्दुस्तानी मानूंगा उस आदमी को गांधी का बेटा और सेवक मानूंगा जो अगर एक दाना भी मिल सकता हो तो इसको लेकर अपने बच्चों का पेट भरे, अपने भाई बन्धों की भूखों न मरने दे और ऐसा करने में अगर कोई कानून और सरकार या कोई ताकत टकराए तो उसको खत्म कर दे।

सरकार लोगों को गिरफ्तार करती है कि तुमने चावल लेकर क्यों खा लिया। विरोधी पार्टियों ने कब प्रदर्शन किया कि किसी ब्लैक मारकेटियर के क्यों पकड़ा गया। नन्दा जी ने सदाचार समितियां बनायी हैं, जो कि असल में समाचार समितियां हैं। अगर वह हिन्दुस्तान के ब्लैक मारकेटियरों को पकड़ कर उनकी जायदाद जब्त कर लेते और उनका काला पैसा जब्त कर लेते तो लोगों में विश्वास पैदा होता और कुछ शक्ति बनती। मैं फासी

की बात नहीं कहता। फांसी की बात को जाहिल लोग करते हैं जिनको कोई काम न करना हो। मैं तो यह चाहूंगा कि इसके ऊपर कुछ कदम उठाएँ और कुछ ऐसा काम करें कि जिसका कुछ परिणाम निकले। और सुब्रह्मण्यम साहब से तो मैं कहूंगा कि देश पर दया करके चलते बनें, क्यों देश की लुटिया डुबा रहे हैं, क्यों अपने माथे पर यह कलंक का टीका लगवा रहे हैं कि इन्होंने देश को डुबाया।

Shri Nambiar: Mr. Speaker, many hon. Members from Kerala have explained the picturesque situation that has arisen there. I would rather call the Kerala affairs not much as the "food scarcity" but as a regular famine which can be compared only with the notorious Bengal famine. In every village, in every hearth, in every home no day goes with full or even half a meal. Thousands and thousands of families in the villages are unable to get even one meal, nay, not even half and sometimes anything at all. Not only that, students are going hither and thither; men and women are walking through villages and on the roads in search of food, whatever kind of food that is available—it may be rice, tapioca, bananas, tender coconuts or whatever it is every variety of food is by now exhausted. No sort of food is forthcoming. Whatever is supplied through the Government machine now goes to the towns and they get six ounces which is not enough for those who have been starved for months together. What little three ounces that reach the villages—that too does not reach properly—is not enough for anything. Therefore, epidemic and large-scale diseases have spread and large-scale deaths are taking place.

Shri Imbichiva has given you the list of deaths which have already been reported. Unless and until immediate relief is sent to Kerala, there

will be hundreds of thousands dying there. That is the position because nutrition, vitality has been exhausted. There is no resistance. There is no food for weeks together. What little food that you give will not be available or used by them. Therefore it is going to be mass deaths in Kerala. It can be compared only with that of Bengal famine. The difficulties are explained by the Minister. But from the report that he has given it is very clear that the Centre did not or rather could not supply rice to Kerala. The Minister says that at first the Andhra Government promised to give rice and the Madras Government promised to give rice but subsequently they withdrew and, therefore, there was the shortage.

In this connection, I would also submit that the situation in Madras is in no way better. I am coming from Trichunapalli which is a surplus district. We are not getting rice in our surplus district and there are long queues there. Everybody must try to understand the situation there. I know the railwaymen were working even without food and they worked because they wanted to keep the trains moving so that people get some food. Otherwise, there would have been complete strike by the railwaymen. The railwaymen worked even without food. I received telegrams from Quilon, Calicut and other places reporting that they are unable to move the trains because they cannot get food to eat. I contacted the General Manager of the Southern Railway and I asked him to give some relief to the railwaymen. And he said that he had no machinery and no foodstuff and so he could not do it except through the State Government's mechanism. There was a sit-down strike in Arkonam and Pambur Workshops. The Railway Minister must be knowing it. For many hours the railwaymen did not work because they could not get rice. Rice is in acute shortage in all the districts in Madras. In every district

[Shri Nambiar]

there is the shortage. What is the reason? The reason is very clear that the traders want to revolt against the Government so that they should get whatever price they dictate by making the machinery of the rationing a failure. They want to have the Government at their knees and dictate the prices. Some hon. Members on this side are also supporting that move. If they go back from the present position because of the pressure of the traders and if they go back to the original position, the prices of rice will go to such an extent that no ordinary person can purchase it. Today, rice is sold in the black market in Trichunapalli at Rs. 2½ a measure and in Madras at Rs. 3 a measure which we never dreamt in our life that rice will be sold at the exorbitant rate. If tomorrow they revert to the original position, what will happen is that that price will become the order of the day and that will be the normal price, say Rs. 3 or Rs. 2½ a measure. Then it will not be possible for anybody to eat rice. Even the highly paid employee will not be in a position to take rice. It will mean that people will have no go but to revolt against the traders and the Government and your Defence of India Rules cannot stop them and the result will be that you will face another situation. I say, don't be foolish. Please be careful and do not play with the lives of the people. You will also perish. These people think that with the collaboration of the traders they can dictate terms to the hungry people and kill the millions.

Now, in Kerala, this Government must be answerable for the deaths that have been occurred. We have given the names. They will have to answer for it. They are responsible for that. Everybody in Kerala is slowly dying, the rich, the middle-class, the poor, all alike. No home has escaped. Therefore, it is not an ordinary situation. When I was a

boy I had heard about the Bengal famine and the sad story about it. But today I see mothers, brothers, sisters, my kith and kin, my relatives, dying of hunger because of the inefficiency of this Government. The Government should not allow people to be killed like that. It is an open killing. Therefore, serious measures are required. Not only that. Immediately when they send rice to Kerala, it should be taken to district headquarters and packed in single measures and through any conveyance available it must be taken to remote villages and must be given free over a period of few days till such time stocks are built up and ration shops are opened and the things regularised. Otherwise, by the time the rice reaches the village, many more will die. It will take at least 7 days. In the meanwhile, many more will die. This is to be tackled on a war footing. Government should also think of taking relief measures in addition to opening of grain shops and doing other things. The relief measures are required now. Unless and until that is done, there will be serious repercussion for which this Government alone will be held responsible.

श्री राधेलाल व्यास (उज्जैन): अध्यक्ष महोदय, आज हम एक अत्यन्त गम्भीर प्रश्न पर विचार कर रहे हैं। अभी तक जितने माननीय सदस्य बोले हैं उन्होंने गवर्नमेंट की नीति की भर्त्सना ही की है। मैं समझता हूँ कि इस प्रश्न पर हम को अधिक गम्भीरता से विचार करने की आवश्यकता है।

यह सही है कि केरल में कुछ स्थिति गम्भीर हुई है। और माननीय सदस्यों के जो भाषण हम ने सुने उन में कुछ अलग अलग विचार व्यक्त किये गये हैं। माननीय रंगा साहब ने बतलाया कि आंध्र सरप्लस स्ट्रेट होते हुए भी वहाँ लम्बी लम्बी

लगी रहनी हैं। अभी नाम्बियर साहब ने कहा कि मद्रास में चावल काफी महंगा हो गया। मैं पूछना चाहता कि गवर्नमेंट की दस पालिसी की जिन चाइयों ने टीका टिप्पणी की है, आलोचना का है और कहा है कि फ्री मूवमेंट होना चाहिये, ती क्या यह फ्री मूवमेंट के करने से वहां लाईने छोटी लग जायेगी और क्या फ्री मूवमेंट के कर देने से वहां मद्रास में चावल सस्ता हो जायेगा? दरअमल यह एक काफ़ीगम्भीर प्रश्न है। मैं समझता हूँ कि गवर्नमेंट ने जो भी कदम उठाये हैं वह ठीक और सही दिशा में उठाव हैं... (इंटरप्शंस)

Mr. Speaker: Can I ask any Member not to say like that?

Shri S. M. Banerjee (Kanpur): At least not to say something which is nonsense.

Shri Radhelal Vyas: I leave it to you, Sir, to judge whether what I say is sensible or what I say is nonsense.

Shri Shinkre (Marmagoa): Is he contradicting his own Party members? (Interruptions).

श्री राधेलाल व्यास : तो यह निवेदन कर रहा था कि गवर्नमेंट ने जो भी कदम उठाये वह ठीक उठाये।

चूँकि मेरे पास समय अधिक नहीं है इसलिये मैं बहुत थोड़े में यह निवेदन करना चाहता हूँ कि जो प्रतिबंध फ्री मूवमेंट पर गवर्नमेंट ने लगाया है वह बिलकुल सही है और अगर वह यह प्रतिबंध नहीं रक्खेंगे तो वह सारे देश की खाद्य स्थिति को कंट्रोल नहीं कर सकेंगे।

जहां तक राशनिंग करने का सवाल है मैं इस को पहले भी कहता आया हूँ कि बड़े बड़े शहरों में, डफिसिट एरियज में जब तक कम्प्लीट और स्टैंचुटरी राशनिंग

नहीं की जायेगी, यह खाद्य की स्थिति को गवर्नमेंट सम्हाल नहीं सकेगी। मुझे इस बात की प्रसन्नता है कि गवर्नमेंट ने इस दिशा में कदम उठाया है। मैं आप से सन् 1947 की बात को बतलाना चाहता हूँ। सन् 1947 में यहां पर फूड मिनिस्टर्स कान्फ्रेंस हुई थी। उस समय स्वर्गीय राष्ट्रपति डा० राजेन्द्र प्रसाद सेंटर में फूड मिनिस्टर होते थे। महात्मा जी कंट्रोल के खिलाफ थे। उस कान्फ्रेंस में जितने भी स्टेट्स के चीफ मिनिस्टर्स और फूड मिनिस्टर्स थे वे सबकंट्रील हटाने के खिलाफ थे लेकिन कंट्रोलज हटा दिये गये। उसका परिणाम क्या हुआ? खाद्यान्नों की कीमतें हर जगह बहुत बढ़ गईं। पंजाब और उत्तर प्रदेश में गेहूँ 13 रुपये से 22 रुपये प्रति मन हो गया था (इंटरप्शंस)

इस लिए सन् 1948 में...

18.00 hrs.

एक माननीय सदस्य : आपके यहां क्या हालत थी?

श्री राधेलाल व्यास : हमारे यहां गेहूँ मिल नहीं रहा था, हमने उत्तर प्रदेश और पंजाब से 22 रुपये मन में बीज के लिये खरीदा था। हमारे यहां बीज के लिये भी गेहूँ नहीं रहा था इतनी फसल नष्ट हो गई थी।

1948 में दूसरी फूड मिनिस्टर्स कान्फ्रेंस हुई। उस समय भी बहुत से फूड मिनिस्टर्स यह चाहते थे कि कंट्रोल नहीं लागू होना चाहिये। उसके बावजूद एक्सपोर्ट्स की ओरिन्टेशन यह हुई कि कंट्रोल लागू हों। कंट्रोल लागू किये गये। और चौदह रुपये मन अनाज की, गेहूँ की कीमत तय की गई। यह पुराना इतिहास है। बंगाल के फॉमिन के बाद रायट्स हुए, इनक्वायरी कमिशन बैठा, ग्रंगरी ने अपनी रिपोर्ट दी। उस सब को देखने

[श्री राजेश्वर व्यास]

की जरूरत है। साउथ में, मद्रास में, कोचीन में, "त्रिवेन्द्रम में और मैसूर में कम्पलीट स्टेचुटरी राशनिंग था, मुकम्मिल सिस्टम आफ प्रोक्योरमेंट और डिस्ट्रिब्यूशन था। मैं समझता हूँ कि जब तक डिफिसिट एरियाजमें और सिटीज में स्टेचुटरी राशनिंग नहीं किया जाता तब तक खाद्य समस्या सरकार हल नहीं कर सकेगी। सरकार ने मद्रास में राशनिंग किया है, केरल में राशनिंग किया है, वह बहुत जरूरी था और मैं उसका समर्थन करता हूँ। उस में जो खामियाँ हैं, उनको दूर करने की जरूरत है। हर किसान का कांड बनना चाहिये जिस में यह होना चाहिये कि उसकी कितनी प्रोडक्शन हुई है, उसकी रिक्वायरमेंट्स कितनी है, उसके पास सरपलस कितना है। जितना उसके पास सरपलस हो वृ गार्निश ले ले। इस तरह से प्रोक्वोरमेंट करके सरकार राशनिंग सिस्टम को लागू करे। बड़े बड़े शहरों में और डिफिसिट एरियाज में तथा उनको कोरडन आफ करके और प्रोक्योरमेंट और राशनिंग सिस्टम को लागू किया गया और ठीक तरह से लागू किया गया तो मैं समझता हूँ—समस्या का सही हल होगा। जब तक चीनी आक्रमण का खतरा हमारे सामने है तब तक और जब तक हम डिफिसिट हैं तब तक गवर्नमेंट को चाहिये कि कंट्रोल कायम रखे और इसको ठीक तरह से लागू करे।

इन शब्दों के साथ जो एडजर्नमेंट मोशन आया है, उसका मैं विरोध करता हूँ।

श्री शिव नारायण (बांसी) : पांच मिनट हमें भी दे दीजिये।

श्री हुकम चन्द कछवाय (देवास) : क्या हम छः बजे के बाद तक बैठेंगे ?

अध्यक्ष महोदय : देखिये।

Shri Muthu Gounder (Tiruppattur): Sir, the food crisis has reached an explosive stage in Kerala. We were also able to see today some sample explosions from hon. Members representing Kerala State not only on this side of the House but on the other side also. If at all the Government, as the ruling party, allows any explosions to occur in Kerala, I warn the Government that it will not be a solitary explosion: there will be a chain of explosions in Tamilnad too.

It is the responsibility of the Government, it is the business of the ruling party, to see that the temperature in Kerala is brought down. The food situation in Madras State is deteriorating. It was bad, and it has gone worse now. And the situation is worsening day by day and deteriorating to the worst level.

I find from the statement made by the Food Minister today that the situation in Madras is improving. The people of Madras, the people of Tamilnad, are known for their tolerance and patience, no doubt. But there is a limit for it. The food situation in Madras State is not all improving. If at all there is an improvement, the improvement is in the length of the queues that are standing in the streets of Madras City. The length of the queues was a furlong fifteen days back; now it is 1½ furlongs. That is the improvement which we are able to see. There is no other improvement. We see here and also elsewhere statement and some insults, from responsible Ministers and also responsible Congressmen. But the people who are standing in the queue for hours and days together are not able to get even their rations; fifty per cent of the people are returning home empty handed in Madras. It is a most pitiable and pathetic sight that we see in Madras. That is the situation now

When we want, when the people of Tamilnad want, rice, the Government as the ruling party brings forward charges against us or puts the responsibility on some hoarders, profiteers this and that. When we want rice, when the people stand in queue demanding rice, they say that they are convening a conference in Delhi or that the Minister is going to a foreign country to get rice, or that a pact is being signed between India and Pakistan or Egypt, or other stories. The people are tired so much now that they cannot have any further tolerance to hear any stories. They want food alone. They are not prepared to hear any excuses.

Not only this. There are also other very insulting statements from responsible Ministers. One Minister of our State—I want to mention his name—Mr. Bhuvaregavan has the courage to declare somewhere that the lengthy queue in Tamilnad is only an indication of the economic prosperity of Tamilnad. Such is the insult offered by responsible Ministers. I remember—I am subject to correction—our Food Minister also said in Coimbatore that we cannot rely on cereals alone and that we have to change our food habits and take fruit and milk as if fruit and milk are available in good lot and at a cheap rate and at if our poor people can afford to buy them. These utterances by Government spokesmen, I regret to say, are so irresponsible. They do not devote any serious thought over it. That is why we are hearing such irresponsible utterances even from big Ministers. We could even tolerate the gross inefficiency from the officers, but we cannot tolerate such insulting words from these responsible persons.

I want to remind the House of a remark made by the Minister of Community Development, Mr. S. K. Dey. He once remarked that if the Government allows the food situation to continue like this for a long time it

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may lead to food riots which will destroy the very foundations of our democratic institutions. I fear that that day may come. But we want that it should not come. We depend and depend solely on a democratic set-up; we do not believe in or want any other type of government. Therefore we want the ruling party to be responsible and to be more realistic in its approach.

As far as Madras State is concerned I want to say that the Government should supply the starving people only food. They have issued cards. But the people do not think that the Government can give a guarantee over the cards, because they are already tired. We want the Government either to give us food or to go out of office. There is no other alternative in this democratic set-up of government.

Sir, I do not want to make a lengthy speech, because we are already very much pained on account of this food situation. There are three diseases in Madras State; one is the long queue which we see; the other is cholera which is very prevalent there; and the third disease which we should get rid of is the Congress, which is the biggest disease.

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri C. Subramaniam): Mr. Speaker, Sir. I share with the hon. Members the feelings of anguish, indignation and, if I may say so, the feelings of shame at the situation which developed in Kerala. In all conscience I could not object to the discussion of this motion in this House, because I know the situation which developed in Kerala was quite serious and therefore it is necessary, as representatives of the people, that we should give expression to our feelings and thoughts. I know, explanations could be given, and any amount of consolation may be given. But still I do realise that we will not be able to compensate for the sufferings which the people have to undergo in Kerala.

[Shri C. Subramaniam]

First of all, I should express my regret for the development of this situation, apart from the responsibility, in any event, the moral responsibility for the situation which developed in the country with regard to the food position.

If I refer to the background which led to this situation, it is not in extenuation of what had happened, but it is for the purpose of indicating to the House how Government propose to deal with this situation in the future so that such incidents and such situations may not occur again.

I would like to take the hon. Members back to June when there was a conference of all the Chief Ministers to consider the food situation. At that time, it was not a question of availability of rice in the southern region, which was the problem, but it was the rise in prices. And accusations were made that Government were not taking any steps for the purpose of arresting this rising trend of prices which were rising even from the time of the harvest, as far as this year was concerned. That was why after full consideration, we came to the conclusion that the levy procurement at a comparatively depressed price should be given up because that was distorting the balance of the price which was left in the hands of the trade which was allowed to charge whatever prices it would be able to get in the market. And after the withdrawal of this levy procurement in Andhra Pradesh and Madras, we were all happy that the situation eased considerably, and not only was there availability, but the price also showed a downward trend. As for my part, I was hoping that the trade would co-operate and see that it would not take the prices beyond the level which they had already reached; even that level was an all-time high level at that time. But this lasted only for

a few weeks, and, thereafter, the price began to rise again.

Then, it was thought necessary to stabilise the prices at the prevailing level at that time, if not to bring them down immediately. That was why at that time, we took the decision that we should introduce statutory price control, that is, maximum price control for the consumers and also have a price fixation at the wholesalers' level. That was done with reference to all the four States in the Southern Zone, namely Madras, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Mysore. In fixing the price, the fact was taken into consideration that the Andhra Pradesh rice had to move to Kerala and the Tanjore rice had to move to Kerala. Therefore, the price was fixed in such a way that sufficient margins were left with reference to the prices in Andhra Pradesh and the prices in Kerala so that they would make allowance for the transport charges and also make a reasonable allowance for the profits of the trade also. It was on that basis that the price fixation was made. As a matter of fact, the trade itself felt happy that at that time the price was fixed at the level which was prevailing then, and, therefore, nobody would be called upon to incur losses. But that also was only a shortlived satisfaction on the part of the trade, because they have got accustomed not to this reasonable margin of profits but under scarcity conditions to speculative profits at the rate of Rs. 10 or 12 per bag.

Therefore, again, the conditions became difficult, and because of the small margin, the trade was not interested in the movement; even though there was sufficient and reasonable margin, still the trade was not interested in making the movements to Kerala. And, therefore, a situation developed in Kerala which was becoming more acute.

Shri J. B. Kripalani: You relied on private trade to play your game? Had you any experience of private trade?

Shri C. Subramaniam: I have had experience now.

And because of that difficult situation, what happened was that instead of sitting together and evolving measures, unfortunately, the control on price in Kerala was relaxed, so much so that the merchants were able to operate outside the price levels which had already been fixed.

Shri J. B. Kripalani: Who relaxed them?

Shri C. Subramaniam: And because of this, large-scale movements began to take place to Kerala. But in spite of these large-scale movements, the prices were still ruling high. As a result of these large-scale movements from Andhra Pradesh and Madras, the Government of Andhra Pradesh and Madras become alarmed that their position would become difficult.

Shri N. Sreekantan Nair: If there were such large-scale movements in fact, then where did all that rice go?

Shri C. Subramaniam: I shall give the figures. My hon. friend may kindly wait. If there is anything more, he can ask his question later. I shall demonstrate it with facts and figures. As a matter of fact, large movements did take place, and it is quite a surprise where it went afterwards. That was the situation there. As a matter of fact, somebody else on my side of the House also questioned as to whether this large movement had taken place at all. I have gone through the figures while reviewing the situation, and I tried to find out the movement or rather the order of movement of rice from Andhra Pradesh and Madras during 1st January, 1963 to the end of September, 1963, and from 1st January, 1964 to the end of September, 1964. On

comparison, in spite of the difficult situation, I found that instead of 8 lakhs tons which had moved during this period in 1963, more than 9.3 lakhs tons had moved into Kerala during the corresponding period in 1964; therefore, 1.3 lakhs or so extra had been moved during 1964 as compared with 1963.

Therefore, the apprehension in the minds of the Governments of Andhra Pradesh and Madras were more or less genuine. Therefore, they became apprehensive. And while the Kerala Government did not enforce price control there, informal movement controls were imposed in Madras and Andhra Pradesh. So, from September onwards, we found that there was absolutely no movement taking place to Kerala either from Madras or from Andhra Pradesh, and it was in that situation that I had a conference of the Chief Ministers of the southern zone to consider the situation because if these informal bans were there banning movements from one place to another, then naturally, even at the high prices, Kerala would not be able to get the rice. That was why we sat down and discussed and then we came to the conclusion, and suggestions were made in that conference, that instead of allowing free movement from Andhra Pradesh and Madras to Kerala, if each State was constituted into a zone, and the responsibility was placed on the State Governments to supply to Kerala on the basis of the surplus available, then perhaps the situation could be better controlled. Instead of allowing this anomalous situation of informal controls where actually there was no movement, my judgment at that time was that it was better to allow a formal ban, banning the movement, and fixing the responsibility on the surplus State Governments to make available sufficient quantities for the purpose of feeding Kerala. It was on that basis that it was done.

It was not a question of experiment, as my hon friend had sought to suggest, but it was a case of realisation

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of the existing reality and the existing facts, and on the basis of those facts, I tried to find a solution which would be beneficial to Kerala and also to the State Governments of Madras and Andhra Pradesh which were complaining of large-scale movements; in the same way, Mysore was also complaining that there was no movement into Mysore at all whereas traditionally there were movements from Andhra Pradesh into Mysore. That was the situation. And that was why State-to-State movement was suggested, instead of State-to-trade movement on which my hon. friend Shri J. B. Kripalani blamed me for trusting the trade. Instead of State-to-trade movement, we wanted to depend upon State-to-State movement. It was on that basis that this was brought into existence there. On that basis we tried to find out what it would be possible for Madras to deliver and what it would be possible for Andhra Pradesh to deliver to Kerala to meet the situation.

It was in this context that I later on went to Kerala to find out what would be the best method with these quantities to tackle the situation in Kerala, whether the rice moved into Kerala as a result of State-to-State movement should be simply pumped into Kerala and indiscriminately distributed there through private trade or even through fair price shops or whether we should have controlled distribution of those quantities. Then, we came to the inevitable conclusion that when there was controlled movement from the various other States, there should be controlled distribution also in Kerala. (Interruption) I know my hon. friend Shri Ranga does not believe in controls at all. So, we have no meeting-point at all, and so there is no use of talking about it. After all, I agree that there could be varieties of views about it. So, there is no use of trying to throw one view against the other. As far as we, the Government

and I are concerned, we are committed to controlled distribution, regulated distribution.

Shri J. B. Kripalani: Have you the machinery for that?

Shri C. Subramaniam: We are building up the machinery.

Shri J. B. Kripalani: You are building up the machinery! In the meantime, people will die. You have no machinery.

Shri Ranga: Your machinery is corrupt and inefficient.

Shri C. Subramaniam: I do not know where I am. First of all, the hon. Member asked: why do you trust private trade? Then he comes round and says: you have machinery. Therefore, I hang in the air, in *trisanaku swargam*, if I follow his advice!

So that was the situation in which we discussed informal rationing. When we discussed it we took into account what was being produced within Kerala. Production in Kerala was round about 1.2 million tonnes of rice and the order of movement into Kerala during the last three or four years has been the same—about 1 million tonnes. Therefore, they were producing already 50 per cent of requirements, and 50 per cent used to move from other sources; it used to be made up by import also. That was the situation.

On the basis of the consideration and discussion we came to the conclusion that since half is already being produced in the State, under the informal rationing system, we need not provide for the producers. We made a calculation on the basis of data available there as to what would be the producing population, not only the actual owners of land or cultivators of land but also persons who would be

depending on them, who would be drawing rice or other grains from the farmer. On that basis, the figure was given to me that one third of the population could be left out. So two-thirds of the population should be put on this informal rationing. On that basis we made a calculation as to what would be the order of requirements at the rate of 12 oz. I want to make it clear and categorical that when we considered 12 oz. it was not on the basis of 12 oz. of rice. What the composition of these 12 oz. would be was to be decided, taking into account what would be available in the form of rice and what we would be able to make up by way of imported wheat. On the basis of 12 oz. the calculation was given to me that 80,000 tonnes of foodgrains should be made available to Kerala every month for the purpose of running this informal rationing. This is more or less the order of movement also which had been taking place during the last two or three years.

After taking this decision, I came over to Delhi. I had consultations with the Governments of Andhra and Madras on the quantities available from those States; I also took into account the quantity which would be available by way of imports, because imports could not be had to an unlimited extent in view of foreign exchange scarcity also.

Taking all these things into account, we came to the conclusion that it would not be possible to give more than 6 oz. of rice; the other 6 oz. would have to be in the form of wheat. I categorically made this clear to the Governor when he came here for the purpose of discussion that out of these 12 oz. 6 would have to be in the form of wheat and 6 oz. by way of rice. I also made it clear to the Governor that immediately, because of the difficulties which had arisen in Madras—

there was scarcity there, about which the hon. Member of the DMK spoke, the long queues and so on—they would not be in a position to stand by their commitment which they had undertaken; therefore, it would not be possible to build up all the stocks by the 1st November to have State-wide rationing immediately. So we informed him quite clearly that it should be on a gradual basis, starting from 1st November onwards and by the end of November he could have the whole State under informal rationing and we would take all possible steps for the purpose of seeing that during the course of this period sufficient quantities of rice and wheat would be available to meet the situation.

When the cards were introduced, another situation developed. We had originally calculated that one-third of the population would be producers and need not be provided for. But at that time, the Kerala Government took the stand that the producers also did not have anything in their hands and therefore, the whole population would have to be put on rationing. Thus, instead of 80,000 tonnes, adding the requirements of the one-third, it became 120,000 tonnes; so they wanted 60,000 tonnes of rice and an equivalent quantity of wheat for the purpose of meeting the ration requirements. That was how the figures of 80,000 tonnes, 60,000 tonnes and 40,000 tonnes which Shri Giri, the Governor, mentioned, came into the picture. Unfortunately, he has taken it as a commitment as a failure on my part to stand by that commitment. Evidently, there has been a misunderstanding, about which I need not further dilate; in so far as that statement is concerned, that is quite a different thing.

We were trying to get as much imported rice as possible moved into Kerala; we also tried our best to move as much as possible from Andhra. About Madras also, we wanted them to give that birthday gift, about which mention was made, that 10,000 tonnes

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at least should be made available to Kerala. Part of it has been sent not the whole of it. That is the situation.

These are the circumstances which arose. It is not as if we were not aware of them, as has been pointed out by hon. Members. The Governor was also intimating to us that food should be rushed to Kerala. We were also aware of their requirements and on that basis, we were making all arrangements for the purpose of moving rice to Kerala. As a matter of fact, before I left for Manila—about which a charge was made that I went away to Manila; I regret I left at that time, but I can assure this House that before I left for Manila, I took care to see by discussion, when I was at Guntur, with officials of the Andhra Government that the order of movement contemplated for the purpose of meeting the requirements of Kerala would be fulfilled during this month, and I was assured that a plan was being drawn up not under private trade but under Government auspices, and on that basis movement should start even as they had started planning. But I do agree that before all these things could happen, transition is always a difficult thing, from one system to another. Whatever may be the explanation, people certainly cannot stand hunger; particularly when they were deprived of essential foodstuffs, naturally there was an explosion.

Shri Ranga: Therefore, this Government should resign.

Shri C. Subramaniam: I know what you are interested in.

Shri Ranga: We are interested in seeing that this Government goes out of power, if you have got any sense of shame and conscience. Even in the light of what the hon. Minister had

been good enough to confess today, there is a total, abject and miserable failure on the part of the Government.

Shri C. Subramaniam: I would have gladly walked out, this Government would have walked out, if Shri Ranga had been in a position to form a Government.

Shri Ranga: The Government should resign on this issue.

Shri C. Subramaniam: If we go out, he will be only in the streets. Therefore, as I was saying, it is not as if we were not aware of the difficult situation. We were trying and we were taking all possible steps to move foodstuffs to Kerala. On the question of wheat, I would explain, because that was glossed over, particularly by the Opposition.

Shri J. B. Kripalani: May I suggest to the Minister that as he has said, every calculation of his has proved to be a miscalculation?

Shri C. Subramaniam: As far as wheat was concerned, originally consumption in the State was only of the order of 2,000 tonnes a month; when I visited the State in October, I told them to improve it, because rice was becoming more and more difficult to get. They agreed to absorb about 5,000 tonnes. At the time we took the decision about 6 oz. of wheat, there were not sufficient stocks in Kerala. That was why we moved shiploads of wheat to Cochin for unloading there. Unfortunately, at that critical time, labour took up a very strange attitude. They did not put forward any demand concerning their grievances, but they adopted go-slow tactics; instead of a discharge of 1000 tonnes a day, it was of the order of 100 or 150 tonnes. As a matter of fact, they were asked if they had any demands or grievances. They said no, because they cannot put forward any

grievances, because it was only recently there was conciliation and agreement, and therefore they cannot put forth any demands.

श्री हुकम चन्द कछवाय : उन्होंने मांग पेश की थी। उस के बाद उन्होंने हड़ताल की थी। -

Shri Nambiar: They wanted rice for eating. With that they could come and physically do the unloading. That rice was refused to them.

Shri C. Subramaniam: I am glad the hon. Member, Shri Nambiar knows why they did not do the work. So, he is in league with them, he knows the entire situation there, and therefore he is able to understand.

Shri Umanath: Is it a crime to know the situation?

Shri C. Subramaniam: And that is why he protests also now, and that is why, purposely labour adopted slow down tactics, and nothing could be done.

Then this question was put why the military was not used. As a matter of fact, we had alerted the military. It is only after that that some sense came, and later on, after a week, after all this tragedy had happened, they also started unloading, and I am glad they are unloading to the maximum extent now. If it is physically possible to unload at the rate of 1,000 to 1,500 tons a day now, why was it not possible for them ten days ago to unload more than 100 to 150 tons a day. If it is the case they have been given full rice now, and having vailed of the rice they are doing it now. then my case is proved that rice is made available now. There was some design behind it.

Shri Warrior: The Minister is making allegations against labour. The labour spokesmen are not here. There-

fore, that is not a matter on which he can speak. While there is a strike, there are two sides, labour's side and the Commissioner's side. He is siding with the Commissioner.

Shri C. Subramaniam: I can excuse labour, but I cannot excuse the instigators of labour, particularly when they play with the lives of people.

Shri Warrior: The Minister was the instigator by not supplying rice.

Shri C. Subramaniam: This was the position, and that is why, even though we could have distributed at least wheat, even the wheat was not available to us because of the tactics adopted by labour. That was the recent situation, and that is why an explosive situation developed there.

But, in spite of what has happened, I am sure the hon. Members would be interested to know what the present position is what is going to happen in the near future, what is going to happen this week, next week, during December. That is why I went to Kerala as soon as I came back from Manila, not only Kerala but all the other Southern States, and made a study there, to ensure that movements do take place to Kerala in proper order for the purpose of meeting the commitments which we have undertaken.

Mention was made about 3-1/2 oz. of rice. It is not merely 3-1/2 oz., but 3-1/2 oz. of rice plus 6 oz. of wheat till the end of November. After that, this 3-1/2 oz., which is equal to 100 grams, will be increased to 120 grams, which is a little more than 4 oz. and in addition to that, wheat also is being made available. This is in the rural areas where there are producers and landowners, there there would be some stock of foodstuff or other. That is why there is a smaller ration, but when the situation improves, it will be our attempt to increase this to 6 ob. I hope it will be possible to do it some time in January.

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But, as far as the urban area is concerned, we have taken care to see that sufficient quantities of rice for this week and for the next week and the movement has been planned; and for December, the movement has been planned from Andhra, from Madhya Pradesh, from Punjab, from Orissa, and also through ships so that this situation may not recur again. That is the only assurance I can give to the hon. Members.

In the same way, we are moving wheat in sufficient quantities so that whatever might be the demand there would be fully met. In addition to that, we are also making available every month 5,000 tons of wheat products in the form of maida, suji and atta, so that they also may meet the requirements of the people. This is the present position.

All this I have stated not in extenuation of the difficult period which the Kerala people had to undergo. As I already stated, I also express my feelings of anguish along with the hon. Members with regard to that. Some mention was made about my resignation. That would be the easiest thing for me to do. Perhaps that would give the greatest relief for me also, but I would be running away from my duty. In spite of whatever the Opposition might say, I shall not run away now. I hope to face the situation, and I have been facing the situation, and I cannot but face the situation, if possible successfully.

Shri Nath Pai (Rajapur): In view of the show of candour and honesty which he has made here, may I know even at this late stage if he will be prepared to withdraw this nefarious charge that the food shortage is the doing of an irresponsible opposition? In view of his own admission, will he be good enough to withdraw the charge?

Shri Nambiar: I wish to have a clarification. During the course of his statement, he said that 9 lakh tons

of rice had been moved into Kerala. He has not accounted for that. When we asked what had happened to it, he said he would explain the secret where it went.

Shri H. N. Mukerjee: I was expecting that my hon. friend the Minister would respond in a very different way to the debate as it has taken place. When I recall what I had said while initiating the debate, and recall what the Minister has just said, I feel that though I used somewhat extreme language, I am somewhat astounded at my own moderation. I do not know why that Minister and Government cannot come forward before this House, which is a body of the representatives of the people, with an ample and generous admission of defaults made, and with a real, genuine indication of an endeavour to rectify whatever has happened so far.

Shri D. C. Sharma: (Gurdaspur): He did so in the very beginning.

Shri H. N. Mukerjee: After desultory reference to his regret, which, towards the end, he thought fit to amplify into anguish,—the anguish I did not notice very much either in the presentation of the facts, the manner or the method of it —

Shri D. C. Sharma: Nor was there anguish in your speech.

Shri H. N. Mukerjee: . . . what his speech boiled down to was that all the trouble which happened in Kerala was substantially due to the fault of a certain section of the working population. It is amazing for a government of this country to come forward and say that because a few people somewhere did not do their unloading labour with sufficient ardour, the kind of thing which has happened in Kerala could take place.

I do not belong to Kerala, I have not been there for a long time, I have not seen what happened there recently, but Member after Member on

either side of the House—the Chairman of one of our important parliamentary committees, the former Chief Minister of Kerala, a leading light of the Congress Party, has come forward to say what he felt very strongly was the actual picture in Kerala—all Members, whoever knows a thing about Kerala, have painted a picture which is lurid enough; there might be some little exaggeration in it when one's own people suffer; naturally, there might be in the painting of it a certain amount of surcharge with emotion and all that sort of thing, but the fact of the matter is that in Kerala things have happened which were unprecedented, which were inconceivable, and yet what Government comes forward to say is that everything was done; that till September they knew nothing at all about any possible danger, that the figures show that everything was normal, that everything was lovely in the garden. No sophistry, no jugglery with figures presented by the Food Minister can explain away the sights which the Members from Kerala have purveyed to this House and the country, and yet the Minister says that nothing very much has happened.

I can understand his saying that he has got a massive brute majority behind him, his twitting the opposition and telling Shri Ranga, for instance, that since he cannot form a government, he is very safely ensconced in the upholstered chair that he has been adorning. He might live in that paradise for a particular period of time, but I am sure that if at this rate the Food Minister and his colleagues continue to misguide this country, they are wrong and very soon the Kerala people will give them the answer which they deserve, and after Kerala, the whole of the country would follow suit. That is the kind of parading which is put up before the country by their ineptitude. I am using this word over and over again. Here is a Government with a massive majority: here is a Government which has succeeded to the inheritance of the Congress Party; here

is a Government which claims to inherit whatever is best in the militant traditions of our national movement; here is a Government which if it can face the people can go and tell them all about what it wishes to do; here is a Government which controls the situation, which controls the Press, which controls every mechanism of publicity and here is a Government which fails over and over again and over the question of Kerala puts up a picture of absolute innocence of anything like efficiency, absolute freedom from anything like capacity: here is a Government which is a paragon of inefficiency: here is an exemplar of the utterest ineptitude and when the question of food is there, surely the country has a right to an answer. And what the Food Minister has told us is no answer at all. If he can still continue to be where he is—I do not mean him alone personally; he is part of the Government; they are all responsible for the kind of blackguardly thing which has happened all over the country—if they can go on for a long while they can wish to goodness that the present massive majority which they have got is a perpetual factor in the Indian situation. But that kind of expectation would, I am sure, very soon prove an illusion and the ground for that is being prepared by the kind of criminality which is the only description of the inefficiency which the Government is practising.

I say, therefore, that the House has no reason to be at all satisfied with the version of things which the Food Minister has given and the country will draw the only conclusion which is this: that while politically speaking in a parliamentary sense they can continue in Government, they have no moral right to exist where they are and show off the kind of powers which they do at present.

Mr. Speaker: The question is:

“That the House do now adjourn”

The Lok Sabha divided.

Division No. 1]

18.47 hrs.

AYES

Alvares, Shri P.
Aney, Dr. M. S.
Bade, Shri
Badrudduja, Shri
Banerjee, Shri S. M.
Berwa, Shri Onkar Lal
Bhattacharya, Shri Dinen
Bheel, Shri P. H.
Buta Singh, Shri
Chakravarty, Shrimati Renu
Chatterjee, Shri H. P.
Dandekar, Shri N.
Dwijvedi, Shri Surendranath
Gounder, Shri Muthu

Gulshan, Shri
Himmatsinhji, Shri
Imbichibava, Shri
Kachhavaiya, Shri
Kakkar, Shri Gauri Shanker
Koya, Shri
Kumaran, Shri M. K.
Mahida, Shri Narendra Singh
Manoharan, Shri
Masani, Shri M. R.
Mohan Swarup, Shri
Mukerjee, Shri H. N.
Nair, Shri N. Sreekantan
Nambiar, Shri

Pottekatt, Shri
Ram Singh, Shri
Ramabadrán, Shri
Ranga, Shri
Reddy, Shri Narasimha
Roy, Dr. Saradish
Sezhiyan, Shri
Shinkre, Shri M. P.
Sivasankaran, Shri
Solanki, Shri
Umanath, Shri
Venkaiah, Shri Kolla
Warior, Shri
Yashpal Singh, Shri

NOES

Abdul Rashid, Bakhebi
Abdul Wahid, Shri T.
Akkamma Devi, Shrimati
Alagesan, Shri
Alva, Shri A. S.
Ankineedu, Shri
Azad, Shri Bhagwat Jha
Bakliwal, Shri
Baswant, Shri
Bhagavati, Shri
Bhargava, Shri M. B.
Bhattacharyya, Shri C. K.
Borooh, Shri P. C.
Brajeshwar Prasad, Shri
Chandrabhan Singh, Shri
Chandrasekhar, Shrimati
Chandriki, Shri
Chaturvedi, Shri S. N.
Chaudhry, Shri C. L.
Chaudhuri, Shri D. S.
Chuni Lal, Shri
Daljit Singh, Shri
Das, Shri B. K.
Dass, Shri C.
Deshmukh, Shri B. D.
Deshmukh, Shri Shivaji Rao S.
Dhuleshwar Meena, Shri
Dighe, Shri
Dubey, Shri R. G.
Elayapenmal, Shri
Firodia, Shri
Ganga Devi, Shrimati
Guha Shri A. C.
Gupta, Shri Shiv Charan
Hajarnavis, Shri
Hem Raj, Shri
Himatlingka, Shri
Jadhav, Shri M. L.
Jadhav, Shri Tulshidas

Jagjivan Ram, Shri
Jamir, Shri S. G.
Jamunadevi, Shrimati
Jedhe, Shri
Jena, Shri
Jyotishi, Shri J. P.
Kabir, Shri Humayun
Kamble, Shri
Kanakasabai, Shri
Kanungo, Shri
Kappen, Shri
Karuthjiruman, Shri
Kedaria, Shri C. M.
Keishing, Shri Rishang
Khadilkar, Shri
Khan, Shri Osman Ali
Khan, Shri Shah Nawaz
Khanna, Shri Mehr Chand
Khanna, Shri P. K.
Kindar Lal, Shri
Kotoki, Shri Liladhar
Koujalgi, Shri H. V.
Kripa Shankar, Shri
Krisbna, Shri M. R.
Krishnamachari, Shri T. T.
Lakshmikanthamma, Shrimati
Lalit Sen, Shri
Laskar, Shri N. R.
Lonkar, Shri
Mahadeo Prasad, Shri
Mahadeva Prasad, Dr.
Malaviya, Shri K. D.
Malhotra, Shri Inder J.
Mallick, Shri
Manaen, Shri
Mandal, Dr. P.
Mandal, Shri J.
Mandal, Shri Yamuna Prasad
Maniyangadan, Shri
Mantri, Shri
Maruthiah, Shri
Mehrotra, Shri Brij Bihari
Melkote, Dr.
Menon, Shri P. G.

Minimata, Shrimati
Mirza, Shri Baker Ali
Mishra, Shri Bibhuti
Mishra, Shri M. P.
Mishra, Shri Shyam Dhar
Mohanty, Shri G.
Moraka, Shri
More, Shri K. L.
More Shri S. S.
Mukerjee, Shrimati Sharda
Naidu, Shri V. G.
Nanda, Shri
Nayak, Shri Mohan
Niranjan Lal, Shri
Ozs, Shri
Pandey, Shri Viswa Nath
Panna Lal, Shri
Pant, Shri K. C.
Paramasivan, Shri
Patel, Shri Chhotubhai
Patel, Shri Man Sing P.
Patel, Shri P. R.
Patel, Shri Rajeshwar
Patil, Shri D. S.
Patil, Shri S. B.
Patil, Shri S. K.
Patil, Shri T. A.
Patil, Shri V. T.
Patnaik, Shri B. C.
Pattabhi Raman, Shri C. R.
Pratap, Singh, Shri
Raghuramaiah, Shri
Rai, Shrimati Sabodmbai
Raj Bahadur, Shri
Rajdeo Singh, Shri
Raju, Dr. D. S.
Raju, Shri D. B.
Ramsevak, Shri
Ram Subhag Singh, Dr.
Ramswarup, Shri
Ramanathan Chettiar Shri, R.
Rampure, Shri M.
Rane, Shri
Rao, Dr. K. L.

Rao, Shri Muthyali	Shastri, Shri Ramanand	Surendra Pal Singh, Shri
Rao, Shri Ramapathi	Sheo Narain, Shri	Tahir, Shri Mohammad
Rao, Shri Thirumala	Shinde, Shri	Tantia, Shri Rameshwar
Rattan Lal, Shri	Shyam Kumari Devi, Shrimati	Thomas, Shri A. M.
Reddiar, Shri	Siddananajappa, Shri	Tyagi, Shri
Reddy, Shrimati Yashoda	Siddiah, Shri	Uikey, Shri
Roy, Shri Biswanath	Sidheshwar Prasad, Shri	Upadhyaya, Shri Shiva Dutt
Sadhu Ram, Shri	Singh, Shri D. N.	Vaishya, Shri M. B.
Sahu, Shri Rameshwar	Singh, Shri K. K.	Valvi, Shri
Samanta, Shri S. C.	Singh, Shri R. P.	Varma, Shri Ravindra
Saraf, Shri Sham Lal	Sinha, Shri Satya Narayan	Veerappa, Shri
Satyabhama Devi, Shrimati	Sinhasan Singh, Shri	Venkatasubbaiah, Shri P.
Sen, Shri P. G.	Sonavane, Shri	Vidyalankar, Shri A. N.
Shah, Shri Manubhai	Soundarem Ramachandran, Shrimati	Vijaya Ananda, Maharsjkumar
Sham Nath, Shri	Srinivasan, Dr. P.	Vyas, Shri Radhela
Sharma, Shri A. P.	Subbaraman, Shri C.	Wadiwa, Shri
Sharma, Shri D. C.	Subramanyam, Shri T.	Yadava, Shri B. P.
Shashi Ranjan, Shri	Sumat Prasad, Shri	

Mr. Speaker: The result of the Division is: Ayes 42; Noes 180,

The motion was negatived.

18.46 hrs.

ANTI-CORRUPTION LAWS
 (AMENDMENT) BILL—Contd.

Mr. Speaker: We shall now resume discussion on the Anti-Corruption Laws (Amendment) Bill. There was no Member in possession of the House. Any Member wishing to speak? Mr. Banerjee.

Shri S. M. Banerjee (Kanpur).
 Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to mention the recent instances of many States. The hon. Home Minister is trying to root out corruption.

Mr. Speaker: He will continue next day.

18.47 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Wednesday, November 18, 1964/Kartika 27, 1886 (Saka).