

Government have, despite the difficult foreign exchange position, made an additional purchase of wheat from Australia and had approached the Government of that country and also other countries to purchase additional quantity of wheat on easy payment terms. I am happy to announce that the Government of Australia have come forward and made an unconditional gift of 1,50,000 tonnes of wheat for shipment as soon as it can be arranged. I would like to convey on behalf of the Government of India our thanks to the Australian Government for their timely assistance in helping us to tide over the present difficulty. With this addition to our supplies, we hope to be able to meet the essential requirement of wheat in the country during March. The prospects of the wheat crop are very good. It is hoped that the strike at the Gulf Ports will be resolved soon and we expect an easing of the supply position at an early date.

12.25 hrs.

RE. RESIGNATION OF MINISTERS

Shri Nath Pai (Rajapur): Earlier you have guided me and I do not want to rub it in, but it is necessary to have proper precedents established.

It is a well-established convention in the House of Commons that if Ministers resign, they tell Parliament as to why they do, and if they also are taken back, they are received back. This is not a point which can be made a shuttlecock that people resign and come back as they like.

I have the highest regard for Shri C. Subramaniam, but we are also interested in this. May we know what led him to resign?

The first opportunity is taken by the resigning Minister in the House of Commons to explain to the Commons as to why he felt compelled to

resign. We demand that we be shown this courtesy. Resignation may be partly personal, but are not completely personal, and Parliament must be given a chance to hear Shri C. Subramaniam.

Mr. Speaker: I will study that position and convey to the House my reaction.

Shri P. K. Deo (Kalahandi): Being a member of the Cabinet, and being a party to the decision that a certain language...

Mr. Speaker: That cannot be discussed at this moment.

Shri S. M. Banerjee (Kanpur): About the statement made by the Minister, I think he has withdrawn the resignation, and so I am asking a question, not on the resignation.

Mr. Speaker: What has the resignation now to do with it?

Shri S. M. Banerjee: I am not asking anything about the resignation.

Mr. Speaker: Why say anything about the resignation?

Shri U. M. Trivedi (Mandsaur): Was there any resignation? That is the point.

Mr. Speaker: I do not know. Why should I go into it?

Shri S. M. Banerjee: My question is this. The supply of foodgrains, especially wheat, may be delayed, may be interrupted. I want to have a clear assurance from the hon. Minister that especially places like Calcutta, where statutory rationing has been implemented and where there is no open market, and other big cities, the supplies will not be interrupted and they will be supplied adequately.

Mr. Speaker: That is what he said.