

12.39 hrs.

MOTION RE: FOOD SITUATION—
—contd.

Mr. Speaker: The House will now take up further consideration of the following motion moved by Shri C. Subramaniam on the 7th September, 1964, namely:—

"That the food situation in the country be taken into consideration".

Shri Nambiar may now continue his speech.

Shri Nambiar (Tiruchirapalli): Yesterday, I was referring to the imports of foodgrains under PL-480. I was pointing out that recently the danger has arisen of the Americans asking for a change in the terms of the agreement to supply foodgrains under PL-480. Previously they had stated that this was a long-term loan which had to be repaid. But now they want the whole payment to be made in rupees as early as possible or otherwise to return it in kind. That is going to affect our food supplies very much. We are already in shortage of food and such other essential items. If we have to return the PL-480 loans in kind, we do not know how far it will be possible. Therefore, I have been requesting Government to discourage the PL-480 imports and see that immediate steps are taken to improve our own production of foodgrains to the extent required.

With regard to rural development works and other allied items, it has been stated in replies given to us in the House that orders have been issued to the States to see that these measures are expedited. But my experience in my district and in my State is that minor irrigation schemes are not properly being attended to. I know the case of my own district in the Cauvery delta area. In the Cauvery every year, we have floods. Even the normal improvement of the banks is

not done with the result that no year passes without damage to crops and harvest. Even this year we had this trouble.

The same is the case in Punjab which is very near to us. Even this morning, we discussed that point. I have studied this question. I find that a total amount of Rs. 60 crores is required for tackling the problem of waterlogging in Punjab and to see that the floods do not damage crops. Every year we are losing to the tune of Rs. 35 crores worth of foodgrains due to these floods. Rather than spend money on imports of foodgrains, if we had attended to the question of improving our flood control measures in our own States, we could have got more foodgrains from our own sources. But Government are reluctant to spend wherever it is required internally. On the other hand, they go in for dependence on Americans and others for a long period. That is why I say that these flood control measures, particularly in States which are producing more and more foodstuffs, must be taken in hand immediately on a war footing so that we will not suffer due to want of food.

Coming to the question of land reform, much has been discussed already. I do not know the mind of Government, whether they want land reform at all or not. But I find from the AICC *Economic Review* dated 10th July, 1964, that Government are half-hearted and reluctant to implement the land reform programme. This is what it says:

"It has been pointed out times without number that one bottleneck in our failure to fulfil our production targets is the slackness and tardiness in undertaking land legislation. . . . The inducement to greater production is lacking because of the absence of security of tenure and the presence of absentee landlordism still persisting in a vicious form."

Then I quote from the *Commerce*, which is the mouthpiece of monopoly capital in this country, dated 5th September, 1964, p. 398:

"The fact that the Food Minister, Mr. Subramaniam, himself has recognised this week the need for freezing all land reform measures at a particular level and for removing, as quickly as possible, the uncertainties in the ownership or management of land is yet another significant pointer to his realistic approach to the problems of food and agriculture".

So monopoly capital is feeling that Shri Subramaniam, the Food and Agriculture Minister, is not for any land reform, and the *AICC Economic Review* says that they are tardy about land reform. Will Shri Subramaniam say that the opinion of *Commerce* is wrong and he is also for land reform, and if so, what steps are going to be taken to proceed with land reform. The land reform question is very very germane to the issue. Without it, you are not going to produce the requisite food in this country. The land is limited. Unless it is utilised to the maximum and the actual tiller, actual peasant in the field is encouraged, there is no hope of achieving this objective, however much you may try for centuries. Therefore, Government must have a definite policy with regard to land reform. They should not talk in many voices. I want that the Government represented by the Food and Agriculture Minister should come forward and contradict the statement given by those who are speaking on behalf of the trade.

I must also say a word in regard to the land reform measures in my state of Madras. I shall quote a statement from a statement of a US expert team in this connection. They say that no land reform has been effected which has resulted in increase in production. This is what is said:

"Once the record of rights has been established and the right of resumption is withdrawn, we recommend that the Government

should enact suitable legislation for the transfer of ownership to the tenants in respect of non-re-sumable lands. The ceiling provisions in Tanjore.

Tanjore is one of the biggest rice producing districts in the South, as also Tiruchirappally and other districts in Madras State—

"have provided hardly any excess land for the establishment of farm ownership among tenants. With no other government-supported land purchase programme in existence, the non-resumed land could serve as a beginning of a land purchase programme. We are of the opinion that an announcement by the Government that ownership will be transferred to the tenants as soon as the records of rights have been prepared would remove uncertainty among tenants and create a more conducive atmosphere for the execution of the programme".

So unless something is done towards the implementation of the land reform programme, there is no possibility of making our peasants produce more. Many members of the Opposition, including the Swatantra Party, have stated repeatedly that no land reform is necessary. I find that in one of his statements, one of the members of the Planning Commission has also stated that land reform proposals are to be stopped for the present. If this is the policy of Government, then we are done away with; we have no chance of solving the food crisis. We will eternally depend upon American imports and we will ruin ourselves.

Therefore, I press that these long-term measures should be taken by Government, along with the short-term measures which I have already suggested.

OPINIONS ON BILL

Shri Shree Narayan Das (Darghanga): I am sorry, Sir, that I was absent when I was called. I had gone out for a short while.