

If that is their proposition, then, they will have to go to the skies to find out people to occupy this Chair. I say that belonging to a party and discharging the duties of these posts in a manner which is desirable and proper, is quite possible. I was glad to hear from my hon. friend Babu Ram Narayan Singh that at least Shri Purushottam Das Tandon discharged that duty in the best possible way. There can be no one exception. Those who say that there is only one exception to the rule, have not seen the whole thing. I say it is quite possible to discharge the duties of the positions of Speaker and Deputy-Speaker without resigning from the party to which they belong. I am not much enamoured about cutting the trappings and caps, as was said by an hon. Lady Member from the opposite side. It depends upon the persons who occupy this Chair, whether they want to discharge their duties in the proper way or not. From my experience of the short time that I have been here, I can say that our Speaker and Deputy-Speaker have done the job in the most faultless and most praiseworthy way.

As regards the question of pay and other amenities, in these days of rising expenditure, I do not know whether any thing less than what has been proposed in the Bill could keep these dignitaries in the position in which they ought to be placed. There may be some difference of about Rs. 100 or 200 here or there. That does not matter much. We should not grudge the salary that is given to a person. We should rather be careful about the way in which he discharges his work, as to how he performs his work. Even if he requires a little more salary, we should not grudge that; we should be glad to give it. Therefore on a matter of principle, I do not find anything that comes in the way of my subscribing wholeheartedly to the Bill before us and I support the Motion wholeheartedly.

**Mr. Chairman:** Now, on the Agenda there is the one-hour discussion regarding the new International Wheat Agreement for the supply of wheat at 2.05 dollars per bushel.

#### RENEWED INTERNATIONAL WHEAT AGREEMENT

**Mr. Chairman:** Those that had given notice of moving for this discussion are:

Shri Tribhuan Narayan Singh,  
Shri Radha Raman,  
Shri Shree Narayan Das,

Pandit Munishwar Dutt  
Upadhyay,

Shrimati Indira A. Maydeo, and

Shri Bhagwat Jha "Azad".

Besides, I think, about four or five other Members may like to participate. And this is only one hour's discussion, and after that discussion the hon. Minister, I understand, is likely to take about 15 to 20 minutes. Therefore, I would fix the time as ten minutes for those who have given notice of this motion and five minutes for others.

श्री राधा रमण (दिल्ली नगर): सभापति जी जिस सम्बन्ध में आपने इस सदन के सदस्यों को अपने विचार प्रकट करने के लिये एक घंटा दिया है वह विषय काफी महत्व का है। और मैं आपका विशेष रूप से धन्यवाद करता हूँ कि जहाँ हमने यह इत्नाहिश जाहिर की थी कि हमको इस विषय पर आध घंटे के डिसकशन का समय दिया जाय, आपने एक घंटे का समय दिया। इससे यह जाहिर होता है कि इस विषय का महत्व कितना है और देशवासी आज कल इस विषय पर कितनी चर्चा करते हैं।

मैं सबसे पहले आपका ध्यान इस विषय पर आकषित करूँगा कि अखबारों के जरिये मालूम हुआ है कि एक समझौता गेहूँ के सम्बन्ध में हमारे मंत्री जी ने उन सरकारों से किया है कि जो गेहूँ एक्सपोर्ट (निर्यात) करती हैं। अभी उस समझौते की सारी गतों हमारे सामने नहीं हैं। लेकिन इस चीज का हमें पता लगा है कि उस समझौते पर गालिबन आज दस्तखत हो चुके हैं।

**The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Kidwai):** May I interrupt the hon. Member? Mr. T. N. Singh had asked us for certain information, and we have sent him a full copy of the Agreement. If the other Members are not aware of it, then I am sorry. We had one copy, and we sent it.

**Some Hon. Members:** We could not hear.

**Mr. Chairman:** The position is this, that the hon. Member who was speaking said that he is not in possession of a copy of the Agreement. The hon. Minister says that Mr. T. N. Singh whose name appears first in the list of those who had asked for the discussion, was supplied with a copy of the terms of the Agreement.

**Shri K. K. Basu** (Diamond Harbour): For collective use?

**Shri Kidwai:** Yes, for collective use.

**Mr. Chairman:** Let the hon. Member proceed.

**Shri V. B. Gandhi** (Bombay City—North): Will the hon. Minister give us the terms in brief so that the discussion may be helped.

**Shri Kidwai:** It is a very long document, and one does not know in what portion a particular Member is interested.

**Shri Punnoose** (Alleppey): It is not a particular Member. It is the whole House that is interested in the loss that we have to sustain.

**Shri V. B. Gandhi:** Is there a minimum price provision there?

**Shri Kidwai:** In a few minutes, I may say what the Agreement is. When the International Wheat Agreement was entered into last time, i.e. four years ago, the maximum price was fixed at 1.80 dollar per bushel, and the minimum prices—because it was generally expected that prices would come down—as follows:

- 1.50 dollars in the first year,
- 1.40 dollars in the second year,
- 1.30 dollars in the third year, and
- 1.20 dollars in the fourth year.

But the prices always remained high, i.e., the exporting countries had to subsidise our imports. The rule was that if the prices ranged between the minimum and maximum, then we will get at the market prices. If the prices were higher than the maximum, then the exporting countries would pay the difference. We were allowed to purchase in the open market, but we would pay only 1.80 dollars per bushel, and whatever excess there was would be met by the exporting country. If the prices went down below the minimum, then we will have to purchase at the minimum price fixed. Last time we entered into an agreement it was

generally thought that the prices would come down below the minimum. Therefore, minimum prices were regulated as 1.50 dollars in the first year, 1.40 dollars in the second year, 1.30 dollars in the third year and 1.20 dollars in the fourth year. There was a similar experience. At one time Burma Government had offered us rice at very favourable rates, but then they had stipulated a certain price. That price was very favourable, but our advisers thought that these high prices would not be maintained for long. Therefore, we refused to enter into an agreement, and we have had to pay a high price. Similarly, today the market price in the U.S.A. is 2.28 dollars. In Canada, it is about 2.15 dollars. We are required to pay the maximum price of 2.05 dollars. Last time when we entered into an agreement, the maximum was 1.80 dollars, and over and above that, we were asked to pay .06 dollars per bushel for their storage and other purposes because they had guaranteed to supply. This year, the maximum includes all the other charges. Therefore, it is an increase of 0.19 dollars, which is cheaper than the present market price, and whenever the market price goes down from the maximum, then we are required to pay only the market price, except when it comes down below the minimum price. Then, of course, we will suffer.

**Shri V. B. Gandhi:** What is the minimum price in this agreement?

**Shri Kidwai:** 1.55 dollars.

**Shri Sarmah** (Goalghat-Jorhat): What is the maximum?

**Shri Kidwai:** 2.05 dollars.

**Shri Jhunjunwala** (Bhagalpur-Central): We are not bound to pay at 2.05 dollars?

**Shri Kidwai:** We will purchase at the market rate. We are today purchasing at the market price, but because the market price is high, the Governments of the exporting countries pay the difference. Similarly, if the market price goes below the minimum, then we will have to pay the minimum price. That is the agreement.

**Shri Punnoose:** On a point of clarification, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** If the whole time is spent in this way, the Members may not get an opportunity to speak. The basis has been given by him.

श्री राधा रमण : सभापति जी मुझे खुशी है कि चन्द बातों पर, जो हमारी आज की बहस में फायदेमन्द साबित हो सकती हैं, हमारे मिनिस्टर साहब ने रोशनी डाली है। मगर इस वक्त जो हमारे दिमागों में इस समझौते के विषय में कुछ शंकायें हैं उन पर पूरे तौर पर रोशनी पड़ना जरूरी है। यह बात अभी बताई गयी कि हिन्दुस्तान ने जो समझौता इस गेहूँ की खरीदारी के लिये किया है उस को दुनिया के बाजार में जो आम गेहूँ की कीमत चल रही है उसके मुताबिक कम से कम और ज्यादा से ज्यादा कीमत को ध्यान में रख कर किया गया है। संसद के सभी सदस्यों को यह ज्ञात है कि इस सम्बन्ध में पहला समझौता सन् १९४६ में हुआ था और वह चार साल के लिये हुआ था। मिनिस्टर साहब ने यह भी बताया है कि इन पिछले चार सालों में गेहूँ की कीमत किस तरह रखी गई और हिन्दुस्तान ने किन भावों से वह गेहूँ खरीदा आज जब हम दोबारा यह समझौता कर रहे हैं तो हम को कुछ अपने देश की स्थिति की ओर ध्यान करना पड़ता है। पहली बात यह बतायी गयी कि आज अमरीका और कनाडा के बाजार में गेहूँ का भाव कुछ ज्यादा है। इस सम्बन्ध में मैं यह अर्ज करना चाहता हूँ कि जब से इस समझौते के दोबारा होने की चर्चा चली है उसी समय से गेहूँ के भाव उन मुल्कों में बढ़ने शुरू हुए और . . . . .

श्री किबबई : जब से बातचीत शुरू हुई तब से दाम कुछ घटे हैं।

श्री राधा रमण : माफ कीजिये। मुझे मिनिस्टर साहब ने सही कर दिया। हो सकता है कि यह बात ठीक हो और मुझे यह मान लेनी चाहिए। तो मैं यह अर्ज कर रहा था कि सन् १९४९ में जब हमने 126 P.S.D.

गेहूँ की खरीदारी का समझौता किया था हमें यह मालूम है कि उस समय हमारे मुल्क की गेहूँ के स्टॉक की स्थिति कैसी थी और उस वक्त हम कितने मजबूर थे कि हम गेहूँ के समझौते में शामिल हों। ताकि हमारे मुल्क की जो खाद्य समस्या है वह कुछ हद तक हल हो। मगर अब अगर हम उन पिछले बयानों को देखें कि जो हमारे खाद्य मंत्री और उनके सहकारी मंत्रियों ने दिये हैं तो हों इस बात का संतोष होगा कि पिछले चार सालों में हमारी खाद्य समस्या बहुत काफी हल हुई है। यह हमारे मंत्री जी के परिश्रम, उनकी सक्षमता और उनकी नीति का नतीजा है कि आज हम अपने मुल्क की गेहूँ की समस्या को बहुत कुछ सुलझा हुआ पाते हैं : इसके लिए हमारे मंत्रीगण बहुत बधाई के पात्र हैं। हम यह देख रहे हैं कि हमारी जो चार साल पहल की गेहूँ की समस्या थी वह अब काफी सुलझती जा रही है और हमको इस बात का काफी विश्वास है कि जिस नीति को हमारे सर्वप्रिय मंत्री जी ने अपने आफिस में आने के बाद मुल्क में चलाया है उस से बहुत काफी संतोष हुआ है और लोगों को बहुत काफी शांति भी मिली है। ऐसी अवस्था में जब हम चार साल के कड़े प्रयत्न और परिश्रम के बाद एक नये तीन साल के लिये समझौता करने जा रहे हैं तो यह बात सोचना और विचारना जरूरी हो जाता है कि जब दुनिया के मार्केट में आज गेहूँ का भाव एक डालर और ८० सेंट आम तौर पर समझा जाता है और जब कि खास तौर से इंग्लैंड जैसा देश इस समझौते में शामिल होने को तैयार नहीं है और उसने हमारे सामने यह रखा था कि अमरीका और ऐक्सपोर्टिंग कंट्रीज (नियतक देश) ज्यादा से ज्यादा दो डालर प्रति बुशल गेहूँ के दाम आर्ज करें तो ऐसी कौन सी तकलीफ आ गयी थी कि हिन्दुस्तान ने अमरीका के

[श्री राधा रमण]

२.०५ डालर की दर को मंजूर किया। यह बात सोचने की है और हम जानना चाहते हैं कि जब हमारे देश की समस्या दिनों दिन सुलझती जा रही है और जब कि ग्राज हमारे देश में सन् १९४९ के मुकाबले में गेहूँ की स्थिति बहुत सुधर गयी है। तब ऐसी सूरत में हम किसी समझौते को करने में क्यों इतनी जल्दी करें। सन् १९४९ में जो समझौता हुआ था उसमें गेहूँ के इम्पोर्ट करने वाले, खरीदने वाले, करीब ४६ मुल्क थे और इस समझौते में करीब ३६ मुल्क शामिल समझे जाते हैं, जिन में हिन्दुस्तान भी एक है। इंग्लैंड ने इस समझौते पर अपने हस्ताक्षर करने से इन्कार किया और यह जानते हुए कि इंग्लैंड को गेहूँ की कितनी ज्यादा जरूरत है। सारी दुनिया में जितने गेहूँ की उपज बाहरी मुल्कों के लिये रहती है उस में से ३०वां हिस्सा इंग्लैंड खर्च करता है और हिन्दुस्तान सिर्फ उसका १०वां हिस्सा लेता है। इंग्लैंड एक ऐसा देश है जहां कि उस की तमाम गेहूँ की खपत बाहर से ही गेहूँ खरीद कर पूरी होती है और हमारे मुल्क में गेहूँ का बहुत बड़ा हिस्सा हम अपने आप पैदा कर लेते हैं। तो एक ऐसा मुल्क जब इस बात की कोशिश कर रहा था कि उस गेहूँ की कीमत जो बाहर भेजा जाता है कुछ कम ही जाय और कम कीमत पर उस को गेहूँ प्राप्त हो तो हिन्दुस्तान जैसे मुल्क को क्या ऐसी जरूरत पड़ी थी कि उस ने ५ सेंट ज्यादा दे कर समझौते पर हस्ताक्षर किए। यह बात जरा जानने की है।

दूसरे हम यहां पर यह अच्छी तरह से जानते हैं कि न सिर्फ हमारे हिन्दुस्तान में गेहूँ की उपज बढ़ रही है बल्कि जितने भी पश्चिमी देश (मगरिबी मुमालिक) हैं इन सब की रिपोर्ट और इन की उपज

को देखने से मालूम होता है कि वहां इस साल गेहूँ की उपज और सालों से कहीं ज्यादा है और जो उनकी खरीदने की जरूरत है वह भी कुछ कम हो गयी है। तो ऐसी सूरत में जब कि उन मुल्कों की उपज ज्यादा है और उनकी जरूरत भी पहले से कुछ कम है, हमारी समझ में यह चीज नहीं आती कि इस की क्या जरूरत महसूस हुई कि हम इस मैग्जिमम प्राइस (ज्यादा से ज्यादा दर) को जो घट सकती थी या, जिसके बारे में हम देशों को मजबूर कर सकते थे कि वह कम कीमत को मंजूर कर लें, मंजूर करें और हम जानते हैं कि ऐसे मुल्क हमारी जरूरत को महसूस करके कीमत को कुछ बढ़ा देते हैं और ऐसी कीमतें लेते हैं कि जिनको हम र मुनासिब कह सकते हैं। अगर फ्री मारकेट हो, यानी दुनिया के अन्दर जो गेहूँ पैदा होता है उस की खरीद और बिक्री अगर व्यापारी लोगों के हाथ में रखी जाय तो यह मानी हुई बात है कि जो कीमत हम दे रहे हैं उस से कुछ कम कीमत पर हम को गेहूँ मिल सकता है, तो ऐसी सूरत में यह एक चीज ऐसी है कि जो हमारे दिमागों में फिर रही है। इस से यह न समझा जाय कि हम गवर्नमेंट के काम की, जो उस ने समझ बुझ कर किया है यानी समझौते पर हस्ताक्षर किये हैं अचटेलना करना चाहते हैं। लेकिन हम जानना चाहते हैं कि क्या कारण है कि ऐसे मुल्क ने कि जिस की तमाम जरूरत दूसरे मुल्क पैदा करते हैं और जो हमारे से ज्यादा मुसीबत में पड़ सकता है, समझौते पर हस्ताक्षर नहीं किये और हमने क्यों किये और जब हमारे मुल्क की हालत सुधरी हुई है और अपनी उपज के बिना पर हम अपने को ज्यादा सुरक्षित पाते हैं, तो हमें क्या ऐसी जरूरत है कि हम एक ऐसे समझौते में पड़ने की जल्दी

करें जब कि और भी मुल्क इस में अभी शामिल नहीं हैं ।

एक चीज में और अर्ज करना चाहता हूँ कि पिछले दिनों में जब यह समझौता हुआ था उस वक्त जिन एक्सपोर्टिंग कंट्रीज ने उस के ऊपर दस्तखत किये थे उन में रूस और अरजेंटायना, यह दोनो मुल्क नहीं थे जिनके यहां गेहूँ की आमदनी काफी है और जिन से हम गेहूँ खरीद सकते हैं । हिन्दुस्तान ने पिछले वक्त में कुछ गेहूँ रशिया से खरीदा भी था और वह अमरीका से सस्ता खरीदा था ।

श्री किशबई : यह गलत है ।

श्री राधा रमण : अच्छा, "भाई स्टैंड करैक्टर्ड" । (मैं गलती मानता हूँ) तो ऐसी सूरत में जब कि यह दो मुल्क गेहूँ की उपज रखते हैं और उन से खरीद भी सस्ती की जा सकती है तो यह बात समझ में नहीं आती कि हमने इतने बड़े समय के लिये, तीन साल के वक़्त के लिये इस समझौते को मान कर अपने आप को ऐसी स्थिति में क्यों डाल लिया कि जहां हम को गेहूँ मंहगा खरीदना पड़ेगा विशेषकर जब कि हम को उम्मीद हो सकती थी कि हम सस्ता गेहूँ खरीद सकते ।

तो मैं यह बातें संसद् के सामने इस ब्याल से रखता हूँ कि हिन्दुस्तानियों के दिमाग में इस की काफी चर्चा है और इस के मुताल्लिक काफी शंका उन के दिमागों में है जिन के लिये हम यह जरूरी समझते हैं कि मंत्री साहब इन की सफ़ाई कर दें और हमारे दिमागों में जो शंकायें हैं उन्हें दूर कर दें । इन सबों के साथ मैं इस समझौते के मुताल्लिक जो ब्याल था वह आप के सामने रखता हूँ और आशा करता हूँ कि मंत्री जी इस पर रोशनी डालेंगे ।

Shri S. N. Das (Darbhanga Central): For the last two or three months negotiations have been going on between the exporting and importing countries on the question of the renewal of this International Wheat Agreement. It appears that 17 Governments have signed the agreement, while others including the Government of the United Kingdom which is the largest importing country that has participated in these negotiations, have been insisting that the price of wheat under this agreement should not be higher than two dollars per bushel. India has also been fighting for this, and insisting on this price, along with U.K. and other countries. From the papers, it appeared that this agreement would not be renewed, and that there was a breakdown.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

I do not know whether the international food situations, and the stocks held by the different exporting countries, and the food prospects for the coming year would justify the renewal of this agreement. As a layman, I feel that India also is not in the position in which she was in 1949 and subsequent years. Our food situation has improved. From the statements made by the Food Ministers, from time to time, it appears that the stock position in our country is satisfactory as also the production of foodgrains. Therefore, we thought that India should fight for a lesser price. But abruptly we came to know that India has signed the agreement while U.K. has not. In view of the fact that U.K. is the largest importing country among the participating countries—importing 30 per cent. of the total pool—we thought, rather everyone thought..

Shri Kidwai: Not everyone.

Shri S. N. Das: May be. But there is a feeling in the country. Sir, that there was no necessity at present....

Shri Kidwai: That is not the feeling.

Shri S. N. Das: .... for this agreement. Hon. Members of this Parliament would have liked that before concluding this agreement, they should have been consulted and the position cleared by the hon. the Food Minister. We the Members of Parliament have no impression as to what were the internal and external conditions, what were the prices prevailing in the international wheat market, and we do not know the reasons which impelled the Government of India to leave the Government of the U.K....

Shri Kidwai: In the lurch.

**Shri S. N. Das:** . . . and sign this agreement. So far as we know, in international matters, at least in economic matters, we have been just siding with the Government of the U.K. I think, any importing country would like that the price of wheat should be decreased. America which is the largest exporter,—the impression goes,—has compelled other importing countries or rather brought some pressure to bear upon them to agree to this price. As far as we know the production this year in the exporting countries as well as in the Western European countries has increased, and the European countries which were importing from America would import less this year. They are not going to import the quantity which they imported during the last two years. And we ourselves also are not going to import more than 1.5 million tons. In view of all these facts, the Government should not have been in a hurry to just sign this pact. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to request our Food Minister to enlighten this House regarding the reasons which impelled the Government of India to enter into this international wheat agreement and the extent to which we are going to import during these three years.

From the agreement it appears that it depends upon the importing countries to import, but we have to guarantee certain quantities of import. If we demand certain quantities of wheat from the international pool, we have to pay the maximum price. If there is no demand in our country, the exporting countries will compel us to buy certain quantities of wheat at the maximum price.

**The Minister of Agriculture (Dr. P. S. Deshmukh):** Minimum.

**Shri S. N. Das:** In view of the fluctuating prices and in view of the recession that is going on in our economic situation, I think it would have been better if the Government had not signed this agreement. That is my opinion. I would like to be enlightened by the hon. Minister. I would not take long, but just state that there is a feeling in this country, and it has also been expressed in certain newspapers, that the stand taken by the Government of the U.K. is more reasonable than the stand taken by the Government of India. I hope the hon. the Food Minister will make a statement and clarify the situation and remove these misapprehensions as to the loss that the signing of this pact entails.

**Shri Punnoose rose—**

**Shri Kidwai:** Sir, I have now only 20 minutes.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** It will go up to 1-15. I will call the Minister at 1 o'clock.

**Shri Kidwai:** It will be too short.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** Then five minutes more. Mr. Punnoose.

**Shri Punnoose:** Very disquieting news has been appearing in the papers, as for instance in the *Hindustan Standard* of 24th April, 1953, that our country will have to bear a loss of 9 crores of rupees by this bargain. At a time when Britain, which is related to America in several ways, is keeping out of the bargain and offering only Rs. 9-8-0 per bushel while America demands Rs. 10, India has straightway walked into the trap. I would like to know how and why these 9 crores of rupees we have to lose in this bargain.

Then again, the existing wheat agreement was signed by 46 countries, while only 24 countries have joined the new agreement so far.

**Shri K. K. Basu:** 17.

**Shri Punnoose:** Some papers say 24. The reason is simple. The exporting countries have produced double the quantity they produced last year. So Government of India could have waited a bit and bargained. But I think they sometimes forget what type of people they are dealing with on the other side. Now, it is not too late, I hope because this agreement cannot be binding unless it is ratified by Government of India.

**Shri Kidwai:** That is correct.

**Shri Punnoose:** So we have to stand up and show them that we also have got some kind of backbone. This is the time for that.

**Shri K. K. Basu:** With regard to what the Minister said in his interruption, I would like to know whether the actual price went down to the minimum level and the exporting countries had to pay for it in the last four years.

**Shri Kidwai:** Again there is some misapprehension.

**Shri K. K. Basu:** The Minister wanted to justify the position—if there is a likelihood of the thing coming down and the exporting countries having to pay for it, I would like to know on how many occasions in the last four years the exporting countries had to pay.

**Shri Kidwai:** The question has been perverted. Therefore, I will not answer it.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** Let him finish.

**Shri K. K. Basu:** The other point—this has already been referred to by previous speakers—is whether in view of the abundance of production, as revealed by statistics given by many economic journals, the Government has ascertained the internal market price in the major exporting countries and also in the other countries outside this pool, and whether Government has tried to go to other markets, apart from these American-dominated exporting countries.

Then another point which has come out in the papers and which the Minister wanted to justify was that these 6 cents, which used to be paid for storage, etc. was now going to be included. But one of the conditions is that there should be immediate delivery. Is there any time-limit within which to arrange for shipping, because in view of this 'immediate' delivery clause we might be asked to pay for damages. Then about the total loss, some papers say it will be 9 crores and some say it will be 7 or 8 crores. I would like to know what the Government expect will be the loss in view of the enhanced price. I would also like to know who are the new participating countries and the period for which we are going to bind ourselves under this international wheat agreement. These are the points I would like the Minister to answer.

**Shri Damodara Menon (Kozhikode):** I would like the hon. Minister to answer one or two questions. When the hon. Member Mr. Basu put a question, the hon. Minister said that it was perverted. So I would put it in another way.

**Shri Kidwai:** Yes. I hope it will not be perverted.

**Shri Damodara Menon:** The hon. Minister stated in his explanation that we have fixed a minimum in that agreement and when the price went below the minimum, the importing countries were to pay the price at the minimum rate.

**Shri Kidwai:** That is true.

**Shri Damodara Menon:** That means that they have to make good the difference and that was a loss. I would like the hon. Minister to give me some idea as to the loss we sustained as a result of making good this difference.

**Shri Kidwai:** In the last four years?

**Shri Damodara Menon:** No, not in the last four years.

**Shri Kidwai:** I do not think we suffered any loss.

**Shri Damodara Menon:** The hon. Minister said that especially last year the prices went down below the minimum.

**Shri Kidwai:** Last year? No; I said that it remained always above the maximum and therefore we were always gainers.

**Shri K. K. Basu:** Let us know the gain or loss we had.

**Shri Damodara Menon:** Regarding the minimum price, there were occasions....

**Shri Kidwai:** No; up to now there were no such occasions.

**Shri Damodara Menon:** I want the hon. Minister to tell me what were the reasons that weighed with the Government of U.K. to keep out of this agreement now.

**Shri Kidwai:** Anybody may try his guess and I will try mine.

**Shri Damodara Menon:** Is there any prospect of the price of wheat going down in the market now because most of the countries are producing more and the prospect of war is receding? Did the Government of India try other markets? Where was the hurry for the Government of India to enter into this agreement?

**Shri V. B. Gandhi:** I was one of the signatories to this requisition. Now, I see that we would have done better to have postponed this debate by a few days because today, I understand, happens to be the last day on which it is possible yet for Great Britain to decide whether or not to affix its signature to the International Wheat Agreement. And, therefore, the present debate is going to appear somewhat unreal, for after all, what is the debate based on? Now, Great Britain refuses to accept the price of 2 dollars and 5 cents per bushel. Supposing, Great Britain had accepted the price of 2 dollars and 5 cents, we all would probably have come to the conclusion that that was the right price to pay and this debate would never have come.

**Shri Kidwai:** That is correct.

**Shri A. M. Thomas (Ernakulam):** Then the question of Anglo-American bloc will arise.

**Shri V. B. Gandhi:** Now I want to begin by saying that I whole-heartedly support the stand taken by our Government and that for two reasons. For one reason because I do not believe that we are really having a bad bargain and we certainly do not want to join Great Britain if Great Britain wants to take a gamble.

**Shri Kidwai:** Yes.

**Shri V. B. Gandhi:** The second reason for which I support the stand taken by the Government is that they are supporting the idea of international agreements on commodities. This is the first big international experiment in the history of the world. The last agreement was a result of 7 international conferences and I am very glad that nothing is being done to harm this experiment and this experiment is going to be continued.

Now I come to the question raised by Mr. Basu. Mr. Basu wanted to know how much we lost or gained out of the last agreement. We actually gained, taking an average of our purchases as  $1\frac{1}{2}$  million bushels a year for the last 4 years at one dollar and 80 cents, and the average price during all these four years was always about 2 dollars and 10 cents—it sometimes reached \$2.20—and as the hon. Minister says, it is today \$2.28—but even taking it as \$2.10, every year about 4 lakhs dollars, that is, practically 20 lakhs of rupees for the last 4 years.

**Shri Kidwai:** Ten times.

**Dr. P. S. Deshmukh:** Four crores of rupees.

**Shri V. B. Gandhi:** That is really the position. Something is said about abundance of supply.

If this abundance theory is really worth entertaining, then how can we reconcile the fact that even Great Britain is willing to pay 20 cents more per bushel? It is going to pay 20 cents and that itself should make us think how far there is truth in this abundance of supply theory. Now, what are the real facts? This abundance is more superficial than real. Last year's exportable surplus produced in the exporting countries was 66 million bushels, and the current year's is expected to be of the order of 46 million bushels, that is to say, a decline of 20 million bushels. The position may be very nearly what it was last year, because of the fact that at the end of the current year we shall have a stock of 34 million

bushels as compared to 16 million bushels stock last year. So, the position may be very nearly what it was last year, but certainly it is not a position of any great extra-abundance.

For all these reasons, I whole-heartedly support the stand taken by our Government.

**Shri T. K. Chaudhuri (Berhampore):** I am hardly impressed by Britain not signing the agreement and I would not be impressed if Britain decides to sign the agreement today, because of the fact that Britain has in either case her own axe to grind. The House might know—or, it may not also know—that this price of 2 dollar and 5 cents has been the result of the Farm Support Programme of the United States Government and Britain wants the United States in return to consider favourably the Sterling Area support programmes for rubber, cocoa and other things. Thus, there is a bargaining tug-of-war going on between Britain and America. Our query to the Government is whether they have made an assessment of the international stock position before they agreed to the higher price demanded by U.S.A. I am not very much impressed by the figures just now cited by Dr. Gandhi. I have other figures with me. The international stock position in 1952-53 in the four exporting countries of the world, viz. the U.K., Australia, Canada and Argentina—of course, Argentina was not in the international wheat agreement—was 16 million tons. This year, up to June it is expected to be 34 million tons. In June 1954, it is expected that it would be 30 million tons. This stock position can be ascertained authoritatively. The hon. Minister has avenues to ascertain it. In view of this stock position, I want to know whether Government have made a proper assessment thereof and whether they have utilised our position as one of the principal buyers in the world market in having a voice in fixing the world wheat agreement prices irrespective of the Farm Support Prices of the United States or the bargaining position taken up by Britain. Have we moved independently and ascertained prices from other countries which are not in the agreement, say, Argentina, Russia or China? If we have done all this, I would be satisfied.

श्री चिन्नारिया (महेन्द्रगढ़) मेरा सवाल  
सिर्फ इतना है कि क्या कोई क्वालिटी का  
स्पेसिफिकेशन भी कायम किया गया है क्योंकि



अब तक का तजुर्बा यह है कि वहाँ से चाहे कैसा ही चलता हो यहाँ पर कन्जूमर्स के पास कूड़ा ही पहुँचता है।

**Shri Kidwai:** I think that some of the Members who have taken part in the discussion are not well aware of the conditions under which wheat has been purchased. Earlier, when explaining the terms of the agreement, I had stated that once the Burma Government had offered us rice on very, very favourable terms, and the price would not have been half of what we are paying today. But they wanted a long-term agreement—an agreement for about six or seven years. Our experts who smell something in everything heard that the price of rice was going down and so they, advised, "Why should we commit ourselves for this seven year period?" The prices that we have been paying now show how mistaken our experts were.

Since this Conference for reviewing the Wheat Agreement started in England last year we and Britain have been working in complete agreement. We resisted every attempt of the exporting countries to raise the price so much so that the London Conference was abandoned. Then the Conference re-assembled and again we and Britain started working in complete agreement and worked so till the Conference reached a decision. It reached a decision that the exporting countries will fix the maximum price at 2.05 dollars. Then we parted. I think hon. Members must have noticed that only seventeen countries at first signed the agreement, and that neither Britain nor India did it. One news agency also reported from Washington that India and Britain were not signing the agreement. But we considered the pros and cons of this matter here and thought it would be advantageous to sign the agreement.

Since the Conservative Government came into power in Britain, they are giving up all the State trading and passing their trade to private merchants. They are withdrawing all the subsidies and though I have no means of knowing it, my guess is that they are going to leave the wheat trade also to private merchants. Therefore they have not entered into this Agreement.

Now I have got the open market prices of the last four years during

which this Agreement has been in operation. The minimum price in 1950 was 2.17 dollars. That was the minimum price of the new crop in 1950 and according to quality the price was higher. The highest was I think 2.34 dollars. According to this Agreement, the quantities we had agreed to, were purchased at 1.80 dollars and whatever difference there was was paid in the United States by the United States Government. At that time also people thought that prices would come down; therefore, the minimum price was brought down from 1.50 dollars to 1.20 dollars. But what do we find? Next year the minimum price at which wheat was available was 2.26 dollars, that is a rise of 9 cents. Therefore we were gainers. Next year, that is in 1952 the minimum price was 2.34 dollars, which is a further rise. This year, that is in 1952-53 the minimum price at which it was available was 2.44 dollars. In spite of the accumulating stocks we would have paid higher and higher prices every year, but for this Agreement. This agreement entitled us to pay the maximum prices according to the agreement, that is 1.80 dollars and the balance was paid by the Governments of the exporting countries.

1 P.M.

We must in this connection remember that the United States has got a policy of price support. Whatever be the lowest price the United States Government will pay to the wheat producer 2.21 dollars. So long as that price support is there these high prices will continue, because nobody there will sell at a lower price than the price paid to the producer. The price support is to continue for another two years. Therefore, in the next two years there is no likelihood of the prices coming down. It is true that the United Kingdom has not entered into the Agreement. The United Kingdom was the highest consumer, but the wheat consumption will continue. If U.K. will not purchase according to this agreement then the U.K. merchants will purchase it in the open market. So long as U.S.A. which is the largest producer, has this price support policy that price will continue. This is the main reason why, although we did not sign the agreement on the opening day, we considered it and decided here to sign it. It is still said that we may not ratify it. It is open to us. But I have not heard anything in this House which could lead us to hope that we can get it elsewhere at cheaper rates.

[Shri Kidwai]

A friend spoke of Argentine and of Russia. I have been trying to contact Russia. I have contacted the Russian Embassy. Two years ago there was a barter agreement with them. Although it was stated here by a Member on this side that we got wheat from Russia cheaper than from U.S.A., it was not correct. Russia insisted that they would send wheat to us at the open market rate of the U.S.A. and they would take from us, in barter, things at our price, not at the world price. At that time we needed wheat very badly and we accepted it. We lost more in that deal than in the other deal with the U.S.A. or other Governments.

But this year I said I am prepared to enter into a long-term agreement with Russia, for supplying us for the next five years 1 million tons of wheat; but the prices will not be the international prices. I said that the prices will be the internal prices of East Punjab. The open market internal price of East Punjab I offered, and in lieu, we said we will supply them whatever they required, without any restriction, at our internal prices. That offer was made first through some friends, then officially, and I think more than a month has passed. We have not heard about it. It seems there is some mention of it in Moscow, because we received a cable from our Ambassador there wanting us to send to him the details of our offer. This is the position.

If Members still think that we are entering into a bad bargain, we are prepared to accept it. But we will be held responsible—if later on we do not find wheat at this price. As a matter of fact, we do not need much import of wheat. It is on account of the shortage of rice that we are importing it. I was in Burma recently and I said: when your prices come down below the wheat prices we will stop importing wheat, we will switch on to rice. But so long as the present international price continues, so long as the U.S.A. Price Support Policy continues, I do not think we will be a gainer if we do not enter into this bargain. Why Britain has done it I do not know, because whatever we agreed to we were constantly in consultation and we differed only in considering whether we should sign it or not. We here decided to sign. They want to pass on the trade also to private merchants and stop paying any subsidy. Now, the average income of a man in England is much higher than

ours. They can afford to pay a little higher price but is there any Member in this House who can say that we can also take that risk and force our consumers to pay a higher price. I think the price that we are charging is high. I would try to reduce it this year. We have reduced it by one rupee. Let us hope that, in spite of this price being high, we will be able to reduce it by another rupee next year. But if we do not get this assured price, there is the guarantee price. Supposing next year, the open market price in U.S.A. is lower than this price. Then we will have to pay only the open market price. We will be in a loss only when the open market price is below the minimum price. Then we will be required to pay more. That is not going to happen in the course of two years so long as the food policy continues. There is such a large margin between the present open prices and the minimum prices that I do not think it is going to come in the next four years.

Shri K. K. Basu: May I know the period?

Shri Kidwai: Three years.

श्री चिन्नारिया : मेरे सवाल का जवाब नहीं मिला ।

श्री किबवाई : जवाब उसका बहुत सीधा है कि खरीदने का तरीका क्या है कि हम उन के यहां से एकदम ले लेते हैं या ओपन मारकेट में खरीदते हैं। तो हम अपने आदमी भेजते हैं, वह जा कर वहां गेहूं लेते हैं और वह बेचने वाले अपने बिल भेज देते हैं जिस को वह अपनी गवर्नमेंट से ले लेते हैं। तो यह तो हमारा अख्तियार है कि किस किस्म से खरीदें। तो जो गेहूं अगर खराब आया तो उस की दो बजह हो सकती थी। या तो हमारे खरीदने वाले ने सही किस्म पसन्द नहीं की, या यह कि अच्छी किस्म का गेहूं वहां मौजूद नहीं था और हमारे यहां जरूरत थी, लिहाजा खराब किस्म का ही ले लिया गया ।

श्री बिनारिया : फीकट तो यही है कि बहुत खराब गेहूं आया है। ऐसा निकम्मा गेहूं मैंने पहले कभी नहीं खाया और एम० पी० बनने पर ही यह खराब गेहूं मुझे मिला।

श्री किबबई : यहाँ जितने एम० पी० बन कर आये हैं उन्होंने यह गेहूं लिया, लेकिन

हम लोगों के सामने अच्छी किस्म का गेहूं भी आया है। मगर मैं उम्मीद दिलाता हूँ कि अब जो सामान आवेगा वह बहुत अच्छा आवेगा, क्योंकि हम को ज्यादा खरीदना नहीं है।

*The House then adjourned till a Quarter Past Eight of the Clock on Tuesday, the 28th April, 1953.*