

## PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(Part II—Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

## OFFICIAL REPORT

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## HOUSE OF THE PEOPLE

Thursday, 17th July, 1952

The House met at a Quarter Past Eight  
of the Clock.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(See Part I)

9-10 A.M.

## MOTIONS FOR ADJOURNMENT

FOOD POLICY *re.* WEST BENGAL

Mr. Speaker: We will now take up the question of adjournment motions, consideration of which I had postponed yesterday.

The Minister of Rehabilitation (Shri A. P. Jain): During the course of the Budget debate in the House of the People, the Union Food Minister, while referring to arrangements made during his visit to West Bengal in June, said that cheap grain shops in the districts were being opened as also shops in Calcutta where rice would be sold to consumers at the economic price.

Earlier, in a press conference held in Calcutta on June 13, 1952, the Union Food Minister had given some details of a wider scheme, which consists of (1) cordoning off Calcutta and its industrial suburbs from the rest of West Bengal, (2) assumption of responsibility by the Centre for feeding Greater Calcutta, (3) introduction of free movement of grain in West Bengal outside Greater Calcutta, (4) procurement by means of levy on holders of land in excess of 15 acres, (5) opening cheap grain shops in West Bengal outside Calcutta for maintaining prices, and (6) prohibition of export of food-grains from West Bengal.

This scheme was to be worked partially immediately and partially

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next year. Calcutta and Greater Calcutta remain cordoned off and the Government of India, in addition to 30,000 tons of rice supplied between January and June 1952, agree to supply another 100,000 tons of rice to be sold at controlled rates to meet the rationing commitments of this area. Out of this, 18,000 tons have been already allotted and received in West Bengal. This allocation of 100,000 tons together with stocks already procured by the West Bengal Government will be enough to meet the rice requirements of Calcutta and Greater Calcutta at the present rationing scale.

Against the requirement of 350,000 tons of wheat for feeding Greater Calcutta, more than four lakh tons have already been supplied to West Bengal. In addition, the Union Food Minister offered to supply 100,000 tons of imported rice to be sold at a no-loss-no-profit basis for distribution at the rate of six chhataks to each ration card holder per week. 44,000 tons allotted out of this quantity have already reached West Bengal. This rice is at present being sold at the rate of Rs. 31/6 per md. through about 400 economic price shops. The Government of India are prepared to meet the balance of this commitment according to requirements.

The rest of the scheme relating to assumption of exclusive responsibility for feeding Greater Calcutta, levy, free movement in West Bengal outside Calcutta, opening of shops for maintaining prices will be enforced after the new *aus* and *aman* crop have come and levy made thereon.

As regards distressed areas of 24 Parganas and Nadia, etc., the arrangement with the West Bengal Government was that 10,000 tons of wheat and 10,000 tons of rice would be distributed at Rs. 15 per maund to needy persons. This is being done through 3,000 cheap grain shops. In addition, the West Bengal Government has allocated 15,000 maunds of rice and

[Shri A. P. Jain]

15,000 maunds of wheat for free distribution in these areas and the distribution has already started.

The Government of India are prepared to supply to West Bengal as much more wheat as that Government may require. The House is aware of the difficult rice situation both in India and outside. Nevertheless, the Government of India have already fulfilled a substantial portion of their commitment and will fulfil the remaining progressively.

It will thus be seen that the new food policy announced by the Union Food Minister is being implemented.

**Mr. Speaker:** Now what are the points that remain to be discussed in the light of this?

**Dr. S. P. Mookerjee** (Calcutta South-East): Sir, may I just draw the attention of the hon. Minister and the House to a statement made by the Union Food Minister, Mr. Kidwai, yesterday at Hyderabad? In that statement he says that at the time the decision was taken Calcutta had a stock of grains for 90 days and it was agreed that for the rest of the period this year whatever quantity was required would be supplied by the Centre, as also for the next year. That is a categorical statement which the Union Food Minister made at Hyderabad yesterday and I believe that also represents the policy of the Government as announced by the hon. Minister. I shall not use my own language, but the House should know what exactly the point of difference now is because the situation there is deteriorating. Although we as the Parliament have nothing to do with that, still this is a repercussion of some confusion which has arisen regarding the responsibility for feeding the Calcutta area. I have got here the full statement of the West Bengal Chief Minister which was published in the Calcutta papers yesterday. This is what according to Dr. Roy, the Union Food Minister had said:

"The State Government would not procure from any cultivator who cultivated less than 15 acres of land. They would, instead, impose a levy on cultivators who possessed 15 acres or more. With the introduction of the levy system restrictions on movement of grains from one District to another would be removed and the only ban that would remain on movement would be at the borders of the State and Greater Calcutta."

That was the scheme which he had announced. And Dr. Roy says:

"The whole scheme, as has been enunciated above, was mentioned to Dr. Banerjee and his friends."

who are carrying on the agitation now,—

"and it substantially corresponds to the demand which they put forward except that they wanted the implementation of the scheme this year whereas as I have pointed out above—and as I pointed out to the members of the deputation when we were discussing the matter—that the scheme depends primarily and fundamentally upon the Centre taking the responsibility of supplying six lakh tons of cereals consisting of two and a half lakh tons of rice and three and a half lakh tons of wheat for Calcutta and the industrial area. This is obviously not possible this year as the Centre is not yet in a position to accept the responsibility."

Then he says that he would implement the entire food scheme as announced by Mr. Kidwai. In the telegram which he has sent to Mr. Kidwai—I need not read the whole of it but the last sentence in that telegram is significant—he says:

"If you agree to implement this food policy immediately this year kindly send me a wire so that we might take action accordingly."

So, all that is needed here is not an elaborate statement but a repetition of the statement issued by the Union Food Minister, that the policy which has been announced will be implemented and the necessary supply of food grains as promised by the Food Minister will be made to West Bengal so that the food policy of Mr. Kidwai which has received the general support of the public of West Bengal may be implemented immediately.

**Mr. Speaker:** There is nothing now that requires further clarification so far as the admissibility of the motion is concerned. As I said, I am not concerned, or this House is not concerned, with the food policy of the West Bengal Government. The point of the adjournment motion was that the Government of India failed to implement its assurances. But from the statement made by the hon. Minister which is further supported by the report read by Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee, there does not appear to be any failure in implementation of the assurances given. If a situation has

arisen there which is difficult, it is due to various factors, for which failure to implement the assurance cannot be said to be the cause responsible. This clarifies the whole issue and I am not inclined to hold that this motion is admissible, after I have heard the facts and the explanation. But, before I formally say so I shall certainly give him a chance of saying whatever he has to say against that.

**Shri T. K. Chaudhuri (Berhampore):** Sir, the statement of the Chief Minister of West Bengal . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Member will remember that we are here not discussing the general situation or the food situation in West Bengal or even the other situation—we are concerned only with the implementation of what has been assured by the Centre.

**Shri T. K. Chaudhuri:** It has been openly stated by the Chief Minister of West Bengal in his statement that Mr. Kidwai's plan was to be implemented next year and it would not be implemented this year because the Government of India were not in a position to guarantee allotment of food grains, both rice and wheat, for Calcutta and the industrial area. That was a categorical statement, Sir. Then how is it that the West Bengal Government who act in this respect as the agents of the Central Government make this statement in the face of the statements that were made by the Union Food Minister? There is something wrong somewhere. A great agitation is going on, people are facing lathi-charges and all that. Something must be done. We want some assurance.

**Mr. Speaker:** That is quite a different matter altogether. The hon. Member may have negotiations, he may see the Food Minister, he may see the Prime Minister and try to get such assurances as he can. But at the moment we are concerned with the admissibility of this adjournment motion which specifically alleges failure to implement what the hon. Food Minister said in this House.

**Dr. S. P. Mookerjee:** Arising out of the motion will it not be desirable for the Minister to say categorically that there has been partial fulfilment of the promise made by the Union Food Minister and there will be the fulfilment of the remaining part this year? Let that answer go on record.

**Mr. Speaker:** I think any argument on the question of admissibility should not be taken advantage of to extort or get something more like an assurance.

The hon. Member will see that the hon. Minister replying on behalf of the hon. Food Minister has already given us the steps taken. A number of shops have been opened, rice has already been sent there, free distribution of rice has been ordered and is actually in progress. He further said in assurance that as time goes on, they will surely implement whatever the Food Minister stated on the floor of this House.

**Dr. S. P. Mookerjee:** That is not the point, Sir. All those items are within the responsibility of the West Bengal Government. The only responsibility which the Central Government has taken according to Mr. Kidwai's statement and Dr. Roy's statement is the supply of six lakh tons of cereals consisting of two and a half lakh tons of rice and three and a half lakh tons of wheat for the Greater Calcutta area. How much of this has been supplied?

**Mr. Speaker:** Will he not read further?

**Dr. S. P. Mookerjee:** Dr. Roy further said he had not got any promise or guarantee regarding the supply of this quantity.

**Mr. Speaker:** In his reply to the deputationists who met him he specifically says, if I remember aright, that he explained to them that he made a representation to the Food Minister, and he himself adds that the Food Minister will not be in a position, that is the Centre will not be in a position, to concede to the further demand that is made.

**Dr. S. P. Mookerjee:** I beg your pardon, Sir. Perhaps I have not made myself clear.

**Shri A. P. Jain:** In fact, there appears to be a little confusion in the mind of the hon. Member with regard to the commitments this year and the commitments . . .

**Dr. S. P. Mookerjee:** I am reading it from this published report.

**Shri A. P. Jain:** There appears to be some confusion with regard to the commitment made this year and commitments which may ultimately come next year. The total requirement for feeding Greater Calcutta is six lakh tons consisting of two and a half lakh tons of rice and three and a half lakh tons of wheat. So far as wheat is concerned the Government of India has already supplied a larger quantity of wheat, and wheat is mostly consumed in Calcutta town and not outside Calcutta.

**Dr. S. P. Mookerjee:** How much of the three and a half lakh tons of wheat has already been supplied?

**Shri A. P. Jain:** We have already supplied more than four lakh tons.

**Dr. S. P. Mookerjee:** Excuse my interruption, Sir, but this additional quantity is necessary only for Greater Calcutta area. Just visualise the scheme which Mr. Kidwai had formulated . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** Let us hear the hon. Minister completely.

**Shri A. P. Jain:** I will explain everything if the hon. Member will have a little patience.

**Dr. S. P. Mookerjee:** The point is very simple. This additional supply—not whatever has been made available for the rest of Bengal—of six lakh tons of cereals consisting of two and a half lakh tons of rice and three and a half lakh tons of wheat was intended for Greater Calcutta area alone. We must know how much of these two quantities have been supplied to Greater Calcutta. Let us not mix up these supplies with the supplies which have been made to areas in West Bengal outside the Greater Calcutta area.

**Shri A. P. Jain:** It is my hon. friend who is trying to mix up things. We have already supplied more than 400,000 tons of wheat . . .

**Dr. S. P. Mookerjee:** Only for Greater Calcutta?

**Shri A. P. Jain:** For the whole of West Bengal.

**Dr. S. P. Mookerjee:** That is a different matter.

**Shri A. P. Jain:** West Bengal Government have a limited space for storage. We are prepared to supply an unlimited quantity of wheat if it is required for West Bengal—even more than the three and a half lakh tons promised.

**The Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs (Shri Jawaharlal Nehru):** Say "for Calcutta alone."

**Shri A. P. Jain:** Yes, for Calcutta area alone. So, the question of supply of wheat does not arise at all, because apart from these 350 thousand tons, if Calcutta needs more, we shall supply more.

So far as rice is concerned, the Union Food Minister made two commitments. The Central Government

has already supplied 30 thousand tons of rice between January and June, 1952. Then the Food Minister promised that he would supply another 100 thousand tons of rice, to be sold at control rate inside Calcutta.

**Pandit L. K. Maitra (Nabadwip):** No, no. Through the economic shops.

**Shri A. P. Jain:** I am coming to the economic shops just now. Out of this quantity, 18 thousand tons have already been supplied. In addition to this, the Food Minister made another commitment that he will supply 100 thousand tons of imported rice to be sold through economic shops on a no-loss-no-profit basis. Out of this quantity, 44 thousand tons have already been supplied and the rice is being sold through 400 economic shops. These are the only commitments that the Union Food Minister made. For the current year, some procurement has already been made by West Bengal Government and that Government is going to make up the deficiency from out of the rice already procured by it, so that the total quantity of rice available for Greater Calcutta would be more than 250 thousand tons of rice.

**Dr. S. P. Mookerjee:** Again, Sir, a reference has been made to what has been procured. That is not the Kidwai scheme. The Kidwai scheme is that the Government of India will supply two and a half lakh tons of rice and three and a half lakh tons of wheat to Greater Calcutta. So far as wheat is concerned, the hon. Minister has stated that for Greater Calcutta the Government of India is prepared to give any quantity. That is a very clear and categorical answer.

So far as rice is concerned, the hon. Minister has stated that only 62 thousand tons out of two and a half lakh tons have been supplied up to now. Will the Government of India be in a position to supply the rice for feeding Greater Calcutta alone according to the scheme which Mr. Kidwai had agreed to. It is very simple question and requires a very simple answer.

**Shri A. P. Jain:** For the current year, the West Bengal Government needs only 250 thousand tons of rice for feeding Greater Calcutta. Arrangements have been made whereby some rice has been procured by the West Bengal Government and the balance of the rice will be supplied by the Government of India during the next year. A portion of it has already been supplied. The question that arises is this. When the full scheme is implemented, then any rice that is procured in West

Bengal will not be utilised for feeding Greater Calcutta but the people in the rest of West Bengal. The final scheme will come into force next year. It is different from the provisional scheme which was to be implemented this year and which has been implemented partially this year. This includes rice for feeding Calcutta supplied by the Government of India and procured in West Bengal. Next year, it will be merely the rice supplied by the Government of India.

**Dr. N. B. Khare (Gwalior):** The answer should not be like this. It should be mathematical that is an arithmetical figure.

**Mr. Speaker:** I am afraid that unnecessary confusion is being created. It appears to me clear—I do not know whether it appears equally clear to Members of the Opposition and even Members on this side—that in discharge of the promises made, the wheat is already there. So far as rice is concerned, the hon. Minister has specifically stated that it is to be supplied from imported stock. Obviously, imports cannot be available immediately on the spot. Therefore, it appears to me that an interim arrangement has been made with the Government of West Bengal. (*An Hon. Member: No.*) It is no use saying 'No'.

**Dr. S. P. Mookerjee:** But Dr. Roy has not accepted it.

**Mr. Speaker:** He may not accept it, but the position is that, in order to implement the scheme, the Centre has decided to borrow some quantity from the procurement rice of West Bengal for the purpose of feeding Greater Calcutta.

**Dr. S. P. Mookerjee:** If you use the procurement rice of the West Bengal State, then the whole scheme topples down.

**Mr. Speaker:** For Greater Calcutta's needs, a portion of the procurement rice will be diverted temporarily till the Government of India are in a position to secure imports.

**Dr. S. P. Mookerjee:** Then, how will rice be available to the rest of Bengal?

**Mr. Speaker:** In the rest of Bengal there will be free movement and the whole area would be treated as one area.

**Dr. S. P. Mookerjee:** If you take the procurement rice from the rest of Bengal, prices will shoot up and the scheme will break down.

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** I am merely trying to understand and possibly

make the House understand the position, because although long statements have been made there still appears to be some confusion. The Food Minister put forward a scheme which was accepted, under which he took a certain responsibility for Calcutta or Greater Calcutta. That responsibility was for wheat as well as rice. So far as wheat is concerned, he can fulfil it completely this year an offer further quantities if it is so necessary. So far as rice is concerned, it is physically impossible to meet the entire responsibility, because in the country there is not much rice. We have to get it from abroad and there the hon. Food Minister has gone as far as he can towards fulfilling the commitment. Speaking subject to correction, when this matter was discussed it was decided that this year a part of the procured rice from West Bengal would go to Calcutta. The figure was 137 thousand tons. That is the quantity of rice procured in West Bengal that will go to Calcutta area. That was the arrangement made, because there was not more rice in the country. Of course, we are trying to get more rice and as my hon. colleague said, about 92 thousand tons or whatever it is has been supplied and the rest is going to be supplied. In fact, even in regard to the quantity required for Greater Calcutta, a good part of the rice has been supplied and a good part will be supplied in the course of the year, but it cannot be the complete quantity, because it is simply not available. Therefore it was arranged that for the present some part of the West Bengal rice would be sent there and we can supply, if necessary, more wheat to West Bengal.

**An Hon. Member rose—**

**Mr. Speaker:** We are not concerned with carrying on a discussion.

**Shri Meghnad Saha (Calcutta—North-West):** We are getting confused by all these figures. I suggest that the hon. Minister and the Members who are interested in the Bengal food situation issue a joint statement, so that the position may be clarified.

**Mr. Speaker:** I do not think there is any scope for a joint statement, but I agree that the Members of the Opposition and those who have tabled this adjournment motion may discuss the matter further outside this House with the Food Minister, and get the position clarified.

As far as the immediate question is concerned, it is one of satisfying myself, whether the scheme has been implemented or not. After hearing the entire discussion and listening to the narration of what has already been

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done, I do not think that we can usefully pursue this adjournment motion or hear any further arguments about it. I do not give my consent to this motion. The position has been fully clarified and we need not go further than that.

**Shri Nambiar (Mayuram):** May I seek some clarification?

**Mr. Speaker:** There is no scope for any clarification now.

**Shri H. N. Mukerjee (Calcutta—North-East):** In spite of the Prime Minister's statement, there still appears to be a discrepancy which perhaps can be corrected by a simple method. It seems to me that the supply of rice has not been adequate so far. Of course, the Government is going to take all possible steps. If a statement to that effect is issued by the Centre, the discrepancy and the mis-giving which have been created in the mind of the public by the contradiction between Dr. Roy's statement and the statement made on the floor of this House by the hon. Mr. Jain would be removed.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, order. I am concerned only with the adjournment motion. The removal of the discrepancy is a matter between the hon. Members concerned and the Government. If they think fit to do so, they may remove it in such manner as they can.

We shall now proceed with the further business of the House.

**Shri Nambiar:** Can we have a half-an-hour discussion on this?

**Mr. Speaker:** This is not an answer to a question and besides hon. Members have already discussed this adjournment motion for more than half an hour. In a sense, the object of the adjournment has been served, because they have got all the information and clarification they wanted. They have had a confirmation of the assurance and have also secured an assurance for the future that the Government of India will do whatever is possible or lies in their power.

**Shri Nambiar:** I am making my suggestion to complete it.

#### PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

##### DECLARATIONS OF EXEMPTION ISSUED UNDER THE REGISTRATION OF FOREIGNERS ACT

**The Minister of Home Affairs and States (Dr. Katju):** I beg to lay on the

Table a copy of each of the following Declarations of Exemption issued under the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939, namely:

- (1) No. 1/8/52.F.1, dated the 31st January, 1952 (10 Declarations).
- (2) No. 1/10/52.F.1, dated the 5th February, 1952.
- (3) No. 1/11/52.F.1, dated the 7th February, 1952 (2 Declarations).
- (4) No. 1/14/52.F.1, dated the 17th February, 1952.
- (5) No. 1/15/52.F.1, dated the 19th February, 1952.
- (6) No. 1/16/52.F.1, dated the 23rd February, 1952.
- (7) No. 1/18/52.F.1, dated the 7th March, 1952.
- (8) No. 1/19/52.F.1, dated the 18th March, 1952 (4 Declarations).
- (9) No. 1/20/52.F.1, dated the 19th March, 1952.
- (10) No. 1/21/52.F.1, dated the 29th March, 1952 (5 Declarations).
- (11) No. 1/22/52.F.1, dated the 1st April, 1952 (2 Declarations).
- (12) No. 1/24/52.F.1, dated the 9th April, 1952.
- (13) No. 1/28/52.F.1, dated the 16th April, 1952 (5 Declarations).
- (14) No. 1/29/52.F.1, dated the 13th May, 1952.
- (15) No. 1/30/52.F.1, dated the 25th April, 1952.
- (16) No. 1/31/52.F.1, dated the 5th May, 1952.
- (17) No. 1/32/52.F.1, dated the 24th May, 1952 (3 Declarations).

[Placed in Library. See No. P-30/52.]

##### NOTIFICATION CONTAINING THE KUTCH MOTOR VEHICLES RULES, 1951.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Shri Satish Chandra):** I beg to lay on the Table, under subsection (3) of section 133 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1939, a copy of the notification issued by the Chief Commissioner, Kutch, No. J-150/50, dated the 5th July 1951, containing the Kutch Motor Vehicles Rules, 1951. [Placed in Library. See No. P-28/52.]

##### FAIR RETENTION PRICES OF STEEL PRODUCED BY THE MYSORE IRON AND STEEL WORKS, BHADRAVATI.

**The Minister of Commerce and Industry (Shri T. T. Krishnamachari):** I beg to lay on the Table a copy of