

MOTION RE FOOD SITUATION Contd.

Mr. Speaker: The House will now proceed with the further consideration of the following motion moved by Shri Ran Ahmed Kidwai on the 17th November, 1952, namely:

"That the food situation be taken into consideration."

Along with this, there is also the consideration of the amendments which are printed and circulated to Members.

Shri Barman (North Bengal—Reserved—Sch. Castes): Sir, at the very outset I must state that I am in full agreement with the new policy that has been announced by the hon. Food Minister yesterday. These changes in the administration of controls, though they may seem to be simple, would go a long way to remove further recourse to control. One of the changes announced yesterday is that there would be no restriction on the movement of grains, whatever these cereals may be, within a State. I would like to show how this policy of restriction on movement has been operating, and for this purpose I would take the help of the very statements that have been supplied by the Food Ministry. If we refer to the prices that were ruling since 1947 up to the first week of November, 1952, so far as West Bengal is concerned, it will at once be evident that in the same State of West Bengal while the price of rice—I am referring to the year 1952—in the Sub-division of Contai varied from Rs. 16 to 23, in the district of Cooch-Behar of the same State in the same year the fluctuation was between Rs. 30 and Rs. 35. That is to say, while the people of one part were getting rice at Rs. 16, it cost the people of another part of the State as much as Rs. 35. What I want to point out is that this was an absolutely unsatisfactory position and the people who had to purchase food at double the price prevailing in some other part were very much dissatisfied. I hope that with the removal of internal movement restrictions, this wide disparity will go and prices of rice and other foodgrains within the same State will find some economic level.

I would like to mention in this connection that the northern areas of West Bengal are completely cut off from the Southern part and there is absolutely no chance of grains of the northern districts being smuggled into the industrial areas of Calcutta which are not only far off, but also cut off by Pakistan.

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER in the Chair]

Let us consider the prices obtaining at Barasat within the district of

Twenty-Four Parganas contiguous to Calcutta. While the people of Calcutta were getting rice at Rs. 17 per maund, the price ruling in the adjacent part of Calcutta ranged between Rs. 30 to 41. In this case also the people of Barasat had to pay almost double the price. What does it indicate? It indicates and the Food Minister himself had admitted it some time back that about 5,000 to 6,000 maunds of rice were being smuggled into the city of Calcutta from the neighbouring areas. Two things are to be seen in this connection. It is the city of Calcutta which is the nerve centre of police administration in the State. Calcutta is a statutorily rationed area. Even with a large police force and the vigilance which the State Government could exercise, it was not possible for the Government to enforce the control, because it was helpless in the face of the economic forces which were operating. Now, what is the use of keeping such inter-district restrictions within the State? It is not only undesirable but also ineffective and leads to large-scale corruption as in the case of Calcutta *ris-a-ris* Barasat Sub-division. So, it is a welcome move on the part of Government that this internal movement is being done away with from the 1st of January, 1953.

In this connection I would invite the attention of the hon. Food Minister that he has taken the responsibility upon himself to feed Greater Calcutta. When that is so there will be very little necessity for control on a large scale in the other districts of West Bengal. But I should mention one important point in this connection. The rationed people of Calcutta were consuming about six lakh tons of cereals. If these restrictions of the statutory rationed area are going to be enforced strictly and effectively, six lakhs tons will not suffice for Calcutta; something more will have to be provided for that area. Otherwise there will be some dislocation of arrangement.

The second modification in the administration of controls is that any State requiring any millets or coarser grains will be permitted to purchase them in any other State which is surplus. On the floor of this House, sometime ago Chaudhuri Ranbir Singh complained bitterly that though in his part of the country (Rohtak) there was enough gram and it could not be sold even at Rs. six or seven per maund, there was large scale necessity for it in other parts of India. But because of this restriction, the people of Rohtak or the agriculturists of Rohtak were not getting proper price according to their standards; they had no incentive to grow more. Besides those people

who would be satisfied with gram in other parts of India because of their economic circumstances, were rather forced to use finer grains at higher prices and thus their economic stability was disturbed to that extent. So, this modification of administrative policy is also welcome.

In this connection, Sir, I would also like to refer to a statement made on the floor of the House by Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava that the rationing policy was causing some dissatisfaction to some people. He stated that in the Punjab, people were not willing to take rice; they liked wheat rations but because of the control and the rationing system, they had to take rice, while in other parts of the country which are rice-eating, as for example, West Bengal, people could not be persuaded to take wheat. So this sort of maladjustment of diet of people happens under the controls. But it cannot be helped so long as it is necessary.

So, both these administrative changes in the control administration are quite welcome. I would in this connection wish to state that if gradually we could decontrol the coarser grains, the prices of finer grains will automatically fall. We had such an experience in 1942 in the Punjab. When the Japanese entered the war and there was scarcity of food-grains and prices of food-grains began to rise, the Punjab Government found that grains were not coming to the Lahore market, in spite of the fact that there was enough food stocks. So they decontrolled wheat. At once within a month the price of wheat went up three times, but after reaching that level it began to come down and found its economic level at double the original price. I think the control price was Rs. seven and it stabilised at Rs. 14 ultimately and there was plenty of wheat in the Lahore market. The inference is this that when the price of a commodity is decontrolled it suddenly shoots up. But if there are other substitutes available at a lower price, people according to their economic standards take to them—people who cannot afford to purchase finer grains at higher prices take to coarser grains—and the pressure on finer grains reduces itself. And thus there is some adjustment amongst the prices of different kinds of grains. What I want to say is, that we should begin with decontrolling the coarser grains and then gradually we should take to the control of the finer grains.

I think that the Government is removing a great hardship by the policy of decontrol and I hope that the whole country will welcome it.

The Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs (Shri Jawaharlal Nehru): Sir, I have hesitated to intervene in this debate because I wanted hon. Members to have as much time as possible to discuss this most important matter. My colleague the Food Minister will reply to the debate fully later on. Yesterday my colleague the Finance Minister gave a very lucid analysis of the situation and made clear what the basic policy of Government was. He spoke not only on behalf of Government but also of the Planning Commission—not that the two are separate from each other or are in opposition to each other—nevertheless he spoke with authority on the part of both, of Government and the Planning Commission of which he has to bear a considerable burden. Yet I decided to speak, to say a few words, because there has been in the recent past some confusion in the public mind on this issue, and many things have been said which appear to me to have no justification whatever, that is in so far as the Government is concerned. And that was one reason why I welcomed this debate in this House. When I was asked earlier in this session if we would have a debate, probably the hon. Member who put me that question was under the impression that some big changes were under contemplation. In fact he asked me if big changes would be introduced and the debate will take place afterwards—a kind of *post-mortem*—or before. As a matter of fact, as the House will realize, no change in policy was intended or is suggested. Certain changes are certainly suggested, but they have nothing to do with the basic policy that Government has attempted to follow and intends to pursue in future. But this confusion was caused and some of our friends in the newspapers gave big headlines and imagined many things which did not exist.

Now, this question of food has been one of our most difficult questions during the last few years, and I suppose the Food Ministry, whoever has been the incumbent of it, has had to face very difficult problems, as the House knows. We have all, of course, shared, that is the Government and the Cabinet have shared to some extent in the burdens that the Food Ministry carried, but ultimately it had to be carried by the Food Minister of the day. We have, I suppose, in the course of the past few years made mistakes. We try to profit by them. It has been an exceedingly difficult situation. On the whole we are somewhat better off; we are in a somewhat more favourable situation. Of course the favourable situation is not so much due merely to Government policy; it

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is due to other factors also. But naturally to some extent I think we are justified in saying that it is to that extent a result of Government policy also. And I should like in this connection to pay my tribute to my colleague, the Food Minister who has approached this very difficult and complicated subject with an energy and a vitality and an awareness which, I think, have produced certain results all over the country.

Now, I do not propose to go into any detailed analysis of figures. The House has had perhaps a fair dose of them already. But what is necessary is for us not to get lost, not to forget the wood for the trees. In such a debate each hon. Member is naturally concerned more with the particular situation that exists in his State or his particular area. And it is right that he should lay stress upon it. Nevertheless, the most important thing is that we should keep this whole picture of India, this whole question of food as a whole, and to remember what our basic policy is.

The House can discuss, of course, the basic policy. So far as we are concerned, no question has arisen to discuss it or to change it. And so far as we can see, no question is likely to arise when we should change that basic policy. I would add that however much you may vary, however much you may bring relaxations or adjustments here and there, that basic approach will continue even though the food position may be much better. I might even go so far as to look into the future somewhat and say that instead of our being deficit in food as we are at present—at least to some extent we are, or at any rate (although statistics apparently differ even about that) let us presume that we are deficit in food, but I would go a step further and say that—if we are clearly and demonstrably surplus in food, even then the basic approach would continue. You may change the method of approach, you may change many things, but the basic approach will have to continue, I think.

Why do I say so? Well, my colleague the Finance Minister referred of course to the inter-connection with planning. That is there. I put it in a more homely way: it is a kind of house-keeping for the nation. Now, we are not going to give up house-keeping for the nation and leave it to all kinds of odd forces even though we might be better off. Of course, if the method of house-keeping is wrong—we have to improve the method.

But in regard to food supply and in regard to other necessities of life, if we are to plan we have to look after this house-keeping for the entire community. We have not merely to see, first of all, that there is a fair distribution, that some people do not suffer at the cost of others and so on and so forth, but we have to see also—there is an aspect of it—that we get the best out of it for our development and planning programmes. That is to say, suppose we become a surplus nation in food. Well, we would not like all our surplus to be, in a sense, not used to the best advantage. We would of course like better feeding, etc., but, if I may say so with all respect, even that with some limitations. Because, the pressure on us for development is so great and we want to develop the country, we would like to use some of the surplus we get for export, if necessary—there is no question of export now; I am merely putting the argument before the House—so as to get more capacity for importing essential goods like machinery, or whatever it may be. Perhaps the House may remember that many years ago, about twenty years ago or slightly less, in Germany there was a phrase which became rather notorious: guns *versus* butter. That is, the Nazi Germany of the day said they preferred guns to butter; they would rather do away with butter, export it, get money for it so that they could get guns. Well, we are not interested in guns that way, and we are not going to give up butter for guns, too.

We might have to give up butter for something more useful for our economic development. In regard to development I think the country should realise that we should be prepared to tighten our belt here and there even though we may possess the thing necessary in order to get something more necessary, something quite vital for future growth. Of course there are limitations to that. We want the entire community to have adequate food, healthy food, and we must provide for that, but I see no reason why we should waste food and allow circumstances to flourish which involve wastage of food and all that, or something which may not be absolute waste. Therefore all this requires careful house-keeping. Now it is a difficult matter, I suppose at least for some of us, even to be in charge of our own house-keeping, and to think about house-keeping of the entire nation becomes a very intricate and a very difficult matter; but the principle remains that we must house-keep for the

nation and the basic issue before the House therefore is whether we can entrust these vital and important matters to what is called free enterprise and an absolutely free market. The whole conception of free enterprise and an absolutely free market is today out of date. It goes out of control. Things happen and in a country like India where our resources are limited, where we have to spread them out, we cannot allow this business of free enterprise and an absolutely free market. That again does not mean that there is no free market left for anything. Inevitably we have to control strategic points so that we may control the basic economic situation in the country. That applies to food. Now I am not prepared to say that there should be no free market in food. Certainly there might be. I am not prepared to say that this particular control elsewhere should not be relaxed. It may be. It depends on circumstances. Let us discuss them. I am prepared to say we must keep the tightest grip of the situation in regard to food and as regards other matters we must always be in a position to control the situation. How can we do that? It is a matter of circumstances and factual data. I may give the House a military parallel. An Army controls an area or a State. He would be a foolish General who spreads his army in every village and every part of it to control every independent individual there. He cannot really control the situation as effectively as if he controls the strategic points. He has a firm grip on them. He can swoop down on any place when any untoward incidents take place. He is in complete control of the situation and yet it is really that he controls the strategic points. What the strategic points are is a question to be considered. But the point is that the strategic points have to be controlled and we cannot allow forces, very important forces to be set in motion which will upset our basic policy, upset our basic policy of proper food distribution, etc. So, I wish the House to appreciate fully that now and later even though there might be—and, as I hope, there will be—a continuing improvement in the food situation, I cannot base any policy on a hope. I must base a policy on the possibility or even the probability of untoward contingencies and we cannot obviously build up a firm policy hoping for a good harvest for all the time. Take Pakistan. Pakistan flourished like the green bay tree in regard to food for three years or more. Then prices shot up because of the Korean war and they made lots of money and very unfavourable comparisons were made between India and

Pakistan in regard to the food situation. It is not for me to criticise their policy. I do not know the details but it is obvious that one bad season has upset them completely this year. They have had a bad time in regard to food; and here is a country which is surplus in food suddenly becoming deficit and having to go to the extreme course of bringing food from the far corners of the earth. Therefore we cannot base any policy on hopes. Let us by all means work up to realise that. We have to base a policy expecting that untoward occurrences will take place. I go a step further. Even if we are fairly satisfied that our hopes will be realised, that circumstances are better and will be better, even then we cannot let go of the strategic points from every point of view. I would like to make it clear therefore that strategic controls over the food situation must remain.

The only other question that is to be considered is the application of those strategic controls or the relaxation from time to time of non-strategic controls. It really is a detail although it is a very important detail and one has to see whether that does not affect the strategic control somewhere. Now, again, it does not necessarily follow that any absolutely uniform policy is essential or necessary for the whole country. Conditions vary in different States and one has to adapt oneself to those circumstances keeping in view that basic thing. The basic approach is the same but the implementation of that basic approach in any part of the country, in any State, may vary, may differ due to so many conditions. That has to be remembered because I find that there is a slight confusion in the basic approach, of its particular implementation in a particular area or State. That implementation will depend on so many factors which are peculiar to a State, more especially on the food situation, but some other factors too have to be considered. Then again while you have these strategic controls, if you spread them out too much, as in the case of military control, it means less control. I am talking in terms of military analogy. A spread-out army is a weak army. It is not controlling the situation. Therefore look at that from this point of view. I heard the other day that in one State the Government was proceeding against a large number of, I think it was 15,000 young men, boys, for the pettiest offences of carrying a handful of rice or wheat from here to there. It was an offence. Now when a State spends all its energies in catching little boys, there is something wrong in the method of approach. There is nothing wrong in the controls. That is a different thing.

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but there is something wrong in the energy being spent while probably the major offenders get away. It is far better to impose some kind of procedure which, if I may repeat here again, gives you control over the strategic points, and not to catch hold of every boy and girl for technical breaches. Now, if the proposal that has been placed before the House, with this small provision added, that head-loads will be free of movement—head-loads are obviously not going to change the general food position in the country.....

Shri T. K. Chaudhuri (Berhampore): Whether head-loads of all grains will be free of restrictions, or only millets?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: This applies to millets only. However much people may carry in head-loads, that cannot much affect the major situation. It is a nuisance if you think of it. After all, we talk of this State and that State. There is a tendency for each State to consider itself as something apart from the rest. But, the poor men who live in the borders of the States have possibly no such distinctive feeling. They may have their relatives on the other side; they may have their land on the other side; the nearest market may be on the other side of the border and it will be natural for them to go there. So, the less we upset the normal functions on the border, the better. It is a needless burden and a most harassing situation is created without any effect on the basic economy that you are trying to pursue. You may utilise that analogy elsewhere. In that sense, if you relax the controls here and there, it is worth while provided it does not affect your basic control of the situation. You can examine this from time to time and see how far, in view of the situation, you can adjust yourself or relax something here or there, always remembering that the basic policy to be pursued remains the same and has to remain the same.

We are not dealing at the present moment with rice and wheat. It must be made perfectly clear that this has nothing to do with rice or wheat where the situation remains exactly where it was. We are dealing with millets. Millets form a fairly considerable part of our food consumption, about 40 per cent. or thereabout. Whatever that may be, nevertheless, millets, normally, have been produced for local consumption. A large part of the millets are consumed locally. Movement of millets has been much less than the movement of rice and wheat, and it

has not affected the situation so much as the movement of rice and wheat does. Although forming 40 per cent. of our food consumption,—I speak subject to correction—actually, within the rationing system, only about eight per cent. came in.

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Kidwai): Only seven per cent. was procured.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I am merely saying that any step that we may take, we should examine from the point of view of the effect of that step on the general situation, and on the rice or wheat situation. As far as one can see, the millet situation does affect, but does not affect very much. If you go a step further and if, as is proposed, you maintain State barriers for millets, and there is only internal freedom of movement, and you only allow one State Government to purchase from the other State Government, you are really maintaining quite a great deal of control even on the millet situation, although the millet situation by itself does not affect very largely the entire situation. It does affect somewhat, but it does not affect as much as wheat or rice, though it forms 40 per cent of our food consumption. Even that you are controlling. So that, step that we are taking, from the point of view of the larger policy, appears to be a fairly safe step. At the same time, it removes a good deal of petty troubles and petty harassment. It allows us to see how things develop and if they do not develop rightly, it is always open to us to go back and do something else. I suggest to the House that that is the proper approach to the question, I believe there is one amendment that has been put in, to the effect: accepting and approving of the general policy of controls, but accepting also adjustments or modifications keeping in view that basic policy. The amendment runs thus:

“and having considered the same, this House approves of the policy of Government regarding general control of food grains and welcomes the desire of the Government to adjust the same to suit local or temporary conditions without prejudice to the basic objectives.”

I think that amendment represents correctly the position of the Government.

Shri S. S. More (Sholapur): Is the latter part of the amendment necessary, because, control, by implication, will mean all that.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: It is a question of wording. I did not draft this amendment. I should like it as it is. It is good enough. It may have been slightly differently worded. That is immaterial. The main thing is, I should like the House to lay stress that the basic fact of controlling the food grains remains. At the same time, recognising that our approach is not merely a doctrinaire approach, which has no relation to changing facts and changing situations, an approach which merely harasses people without producing results, we adjust it from time to time, always keeping that basic thing in view.

Pandit L. K. Maitra: (Nabadwip): May I ask for some clarification, Sir? The hon. Prime Minister has explained the effect of the continuance of this new scheme. I want to know whether the policy that is going to be pursued from now onwards, will have some salutary effect on the general consumers. You know, at the moment, in the whole of India, the total rationed population is about twelve per cent. The rest i.e. 88 per cent. are not under rationing. In the case of State Governments their Food Ministers feel that if they can meet the statutory requirements, their work is over. For instance, in the city of Calcutta rice is sold at Rs. 17/8/- a maund. Ten miles outside Calcutta, or in the district from which I come, for the last six months, price of rice have been ranging between Rs. 30 and 38. The purchasing power in the city of Calcutta is much higher than in the rural areas. The general thing is, the Government always thinks in terms of the statutory requirements, as necessitated by statutory rationing. As was pointed out to the hon. Mr. Kidwai, take for instance, Bihar, Jamshedpur is rationed. The coal field area is also rationed. Elsewhere, where there is free movement of grains, they somehow get them at cheaper rates. In West Bengal, for instance, Calcutta and other industrial areas, such as Darjeeling, Asansol, Kalimpong, etc. are areas under statutory rationing. In the rest of the places, 88 per cent. of the population, has to pay more throughout the year much more—sometimes twice the price in the rationed area—excuse me, for the strong language, but I am not speaking perfervid language. You can have it verified any time you like. Even today, prices range about Rs. 30.

Shri Velayudhan (Quilon *cum* Mavelikkara—Reserved—Sch. Castes): There is no rationing?

Pandit L. K. Maitra: Sometimes there is a sort of modified rationing.

Sometimes people of these areas get some foodstuffs at controlled rates. Normally, that is not the case. There are classifications of consumers and a certain limited percentage only gets the benefit under modified rationing. Under the present scheme, as propounded by the hon. Prime Minister, elucidating the position after other Ministers and Mr. Kidwai have spoken, I am not clear in my mind whether the common man who is not fortunate enough to live in Calcutta with a higher purchasing power, or in Bombay, whether the common man living within 20 or 15 miles away from Calcutta or their cordoned off rationed areas, is going to benefit by it. High hopes were raised that if these internal barriers were lifted, and sufficient buffer stocks rushed, prices, would go down. (*Interruption*).

Shri Bansal (Jhajjar-Rewari): Is it a speech or a point or order?

Pandit L. K. Maitra: It is only seeking clarification. Why are you worried? The Chair is there. I was just asking, Sir, whether it would be possible for him to throw light on it. If it is a speech, I cannot help it.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I think that the point mentioned by my hon. friend, Pandit L. K. Maitra, is very important, and must be borne in mind. We cannot just function by thinking in terms of ten or fifteen per cent. of the population, forgetting the others. Well, among the others, there are a large number of those who are food producers. The real difficulty comes in in the case of the others who are neither food producers, nor city dwellers or dwellers in rationed areas. They get into these difficulties. Any policy that we frame must keep that in mind, i.e., to keep the price down for these people too. Obviously, the point suggested by the hon. Member has to be borne in mind. How it is to be worked out, of course, is a different matter. In fact, suppose there is internal free movement of millets in the States, that itself, so far as millets are concerned, will probably equalise things. The other points also must be taken into account, but my main point was that essentially control must remain because, after all, what are we working for? We are working for a steady and, as quick as possible, reduction of imports of foodstuffs from outside by growing more in our own country, and by better distribution of it.

Hon. Member Dr. Lanka Sundaram yesterday reminded me of a statement I made—not a statement, but repeated statements—three years ago,

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I think, it was, to the effect that we must put an end to food imports by 1952—March or April, 1952. I said that, I think, in 1950 or 1949—I forget when—and when I made that statement, I did so with all honesty of purpose, and with every intention that we should try our best, but I regret that my words were falsified, and I felt thoroughly ashamed of myself for having made that kind of, almost, a pledge to the country and therefore, I am very much averse to making any definite statement or pledge now (laughter).

Shri Gadgil (Poona Central): An occasion for experiment?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru : But I do not see why I should not say that we intend making every effort to reduce these food imports, and, if possible, within the period of the plan, put an end to them, except in a very grave emergency. That is our intention, and statistics, as they appear now, give us some hope that is a feasible proposition. That is all I can say.

Pandit L. K. Maitra: Have you got any idea of progressive decontrol?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: When you say "progressive decontrol", I would say "progressive adjustments", but always the full strategy, particularly strategic positions, must remain in control: otherwise, you can only progress round about the outskirts.

Shri T. K. Chaudhuri: May I seek another clarification, Sir? The Food Minister, in his speech, criticised the procurement system both in north and south India. Do the Government have in contemplation an over-all revision of the procurement system, because in the rural parts, control means procurement. In the deficit States, control means procurement. I recognise there is necessity for retaining some sort of procurement, so long as controls are there, so long as the Government is under statutory obligation to feed a certain part of the population. But my specific point is whether there is going to be an over-all revision of the procurement system?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I think it was made clear—the Finance Minister also made it clear—that any attempt to have uniformity all over is very difficult, and I think it is undesirable to have the same method everywhere. The conditions are different, and after all, we have to work through the State Governments, and it is largely for the State Governments to consider and decide. There is no doubt that

procurement must continue. I would go a step further. It is perhaps not quite self-contradictory to say that even if we have no control, we require procurement. We must keep enough stocks in our hands. We must supply stocks to the deficit areas.

There are obviously deficit areas in the country. Conditions have improved generally, but, for instance, the State of Madras has been peculiarly unfortunate year after year, and the situation there is bad at the present moment—bad in the sense there has been no rain again, and they have to go through the next few months, and we have to face that. Some of the Karnatak districts, and some other areas of India, are deficit areas. They have not been having rain or something has happened. We have to supply them. Where are you going to supply from? Obviously, either from purchases abroad, or procurement locally. We want to restrict food imports from abroad. Anyhow, we cannot buy everything from abroad. Procurement has to continue and stocks have to be got, whatever methods of local control there might be. It is a matter of adjustment and suitability.

Shri S. S. More rose—

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The hon. Food Minister will reply at the end, and will answer all the questions put to him.

Shri Bansal: I am sure this House will be thankful to the hon. Leader of the House for taking out this debate from the confusion into which it was inevitably led yesterday. It is not a discussion between control and decontrol. It is a discussion as to what types of controls are necessary for our developmental economy. I take my stand in this House four-square on a developmental economy, and I was happy to hear from the Finance Minister yesterday that he was in favour of embarking on a developmental programme where controls would become necessary. I hope, Sir, he will keep to his word and increase investments to the extent that controls will become necessary.

But, what type of control? When we discuss controls, we cannot discuss them in a vacuum. After all, what is the type of control that we have got used to? These controls were not devised for a developmental economy. They were devised to meet a situation created by war-time contingencies. And in my opinion we will have to examine the balance sheet of these controls in a dispassionate manner very carefully as to whether these controls are go-

ing to help us in our developmental economy.

I have here before me certain figures. I will not call them statistics, because I am not a statistician. Ever since 1946, we have been importing foodstuffs in an ever-increasing quantity. This has been one aspect of the controls. Now, up to date, my figures tell me that nearly Rs. 900 crores—more than Rs. 900 crores—have been spent on importing foodgrains from abroad. What does it imply? This is 75 per cent. of our total outlay on our entire developmental schemes—75 per cent. of our financial resources. If in future also we go on importing foodstuffs in such huge quantities, what will become of our plans I shudder to think.

The second aspect of these controls has been that we have been maintaining them at the cost of ever-increasing subsidy. I have here also before me figures of subsidy. In 1946-47 we spent more than Rs. 22 crores on subsidy. In the next year, we spent nearly Rs. 17 crores. Then,

1948-49	Rs. 26.93 crores.
1949-50	21.15 crores.
1950-51	15.32 crores.
1951-52	57.63 crores.

And for 1952-53, the estimated figure is Rs. 15 crores, but I do not know what it will come to because, besides this figure, there is going to be some huge figure on trading loss and some other account. This again means that on subsidy alone we have spent from 1946 till now, a sum of Rs. 175 crores. The hon. Finance Minister yesterday referred to a certain datum-line. I am one with him in the datum-line; I am also one with him on the red signals to which he referred. I think without these we cannot plan. But at what cost have we maintained this datum-line? We have spent Rs. 175 crores during the last six or seven years to maintain this datum-line. And in respect of how many persons? I shall give the figures for the year 1951 published by the Government. Our rationed population, statutorily rationed is 4.6 crores. If we divide this figure of Rs. 175 crores of food subsidy on the quantity of foodgrains which have been procured and imported—and that is the one which Government handles—it will be found that it comes to about ten per cent. and I doubt very much whether under non-statutory rationing, the entire benefit of subsidy was being given to the consumer. We shall have to take into consideration all these things, when we decide as to

what sort of controls we will require. The organisation with which I am associated may cause a doubt in the minds of the hon. Finance Minister and certain other friends, that what I am saying is not without some mental reservations. As I have already stated, I stand for well-thought out controls at strategic points. In a note which I gave to the Planning Sub-committee of the Congress party, this is what I have said, and I stand by it. I have said that Government will also have to take action in the following directions i.e. instituting well-thought out controls at strategic points or essential consumer goods. And food is an essential consumer good. Then, the cost of controls has been rather a huge one on administration also.

The Minister of Finance (Shri C. D. Deshmukh): On a point of clarification. I am not quite clear whether the hon. Member's contention is that it is on account of controls that we had to import foodgrains.

Shri Bansal: It is not so.

Shri Gadgil: Not because of that; it was because there was shortage.

Shri Bansal: It is not so. I am not applying that argument in the case of controls.

Shri C. D. Deshmukh: Or is it because of badly administered controls that we had to import?

Shri Bansal: I could not follow the Finance Minister. But what I say is that we have had to maintain these controls at these huge costs, and of course some of these things will have to be there as long as we remain in short supply—I do not deny that, and I understand it perfectly well—but the time has come when we must sit down and consider dispassionately whether we cannot do something by which we may be able to save on some of these huge costs. The hon. Minister of Planning yesterday was saying that we want to reduce our imports in the future. So far so good. But the House is not going to be so credulous as to believe that we will do without any imports of foodgrains, because that kind of assurance has been made in the past and it has not kept.

Again Sir, I think these controls have not helped us in increasing production. Yesterday the hon. Finance Minister stated that there is no conclusive proof to show whether production has increased or decreased, as a result of these controls. But I submit that there are certain things which we cannot prove. We cannot prove whether controls have led to the in-

[Shri Bansal]

crease in production or not, but the net result is before our eyes, and we can see that ever since controls were introduced in this country, production has not increased. Take the case of certain industries; as soon as you relaxed controls, you find that the production had increased. Whether this argument will be applicable to agricultural commodities or not, I am not sure, but I do believe that controls have hindered and actually affected production in an adverse direction, and I certainly think they have affected the marketable surpluses. After all we are dealing here with marketable surpluses. In as much as lesser quantities of grains were coming in the open market, the net result was the same as that of a decrease in production.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I thought the hon. Member is now concluding.

Shri Bansal: I have taken only about six minutes, and I have to take some more time.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The hon. Member has taken ten minutes already, and will be given five more minutes. He can resume his speech in the afternoon.

The House will now stand adjourned till 2-30 P.M.

The House then adjourned for Lunch till Half Past Two of the Clock.

The House re-assembled after Lunch at Half Past Two of the Clock.

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER in the Chair]

Shri Bansal: Sir, when I was on my legs I was making out the point that these controls have not helped in increasing production. The other point that I want to make is that although these controls have helped in keeping the datum-line at a particular level in the sectors where there was strict food rationing and also perhaps in those sectors where there was non-statutory rationing, they have had no effect on prices in the large sector in our economy where there was no control at all. In fact from the figures that have been supplied to us it seems that the prices which were not controlled, i.e., free market prices, were gradually rising.

So, Sir, this is the balance sheet of our controls as they have existed so far. Naturally faced with this situation early this year when this House

met, a change in the food policy was initiated and the first...

Shri Velayudhan: There was no change.

Shri Bansal: Please listen. The first aspect of that change was that the Finance Minister removed the food subsidy. I remember, Sir, at that time a wave of relief passed throughout the country, and people began to think that something was going to happen now with regard to these out-moded and fossilised food controls. And then came the announcement that some sort of relaxation of controls was initiated in Madras. What was that relaxation, Sir? That relaxation was that certain chronically deficit areas were sealed off and a freer movement of foodgrains was made in those areas which were comfortable in regard to supply of certain essential foodgrains. Now, I remember that even that decision was very enthusiastically greeted in the whole country and the country began to look forward to an era of gradual decontrol.

Sir, as I have said in the very beginning, I am not for decontrol. I am all for controls at strategic points, but there will have to be some sort of a revision of our idea of these controls which, as I said to begin with, were initiated in our country on account of wartime exigencies. I have referred to certain aspects of our food control. What has been the other result of this food control? Sir, a mention of irksomeness of these controls was made in this House yesterday by my friend, Mr. T. N. Singh. The hon. the Leader of the House also made certain references to that kind of irksomeness. I come from Punjab which is a surplus area, but I remember during the election tour when I moved about in my constituency, if a peasant had two plots of land but they happened to be in two different *tehsils*, he could not bring the produce from the one pocket to the other. Then, Sir, in villages there was no rationing, at least in my village there was no rationing at all. But there was no wheat available anywhere and for the month that I stayed there from time to time, I could not get any wheat to eat there, although in the neighbouring area there was some wheat available. Now, Sir, it is this kind of irksomeness of controls that has got to be mitigated and this third step which has been announced by the hon. the Food Minister yesterday only goes to this extent: that is, coarser foodgrains will now get slightly more freedom to move within the provincial boundaries. As far as the other deficit areas are concerned,

they will be allowed to procure those grains from the surplus provinces. Now, Sir, I think it is a very reasonable step and we must all thank the hon. Food Minister for having taken it.

In the morning the Leader of the House gave us the impression that the policy which was now being initiated was not a question between control and decontrol. It is just a question of reorientation of our ideas of these food controls and I am sure the House will be in wholehearted agreement with him, and I, Sir, join my feeble and humble voice in congratulating the hon. the Food Minister in initiating that policy.

Shri Ramachandra Reddi (Nellore).
Sir.....

Kumari Annie Mascarene (Trivandrum): I rise on a point of order, Sir. The Prime Minister this morning compared food controls with house-keeping. We are authorities on this subject. Why don't you give us a chance?

Babu Ramnarayan Singh (Hazari-bagh West): Yes, yes.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The hon. Member has not yet come to the position when she can confidently say so (laughter).

Kumari Annie Mascarene: I wish to contradict that point. Do you want any special position to cook?

Shri Ramachandra Reddi: Sir, it is very good of the Government to have initiated this discussion in this House. Evidently they have postponed discussion with the Ministers of States with a view to see that this discussion takes place in this House and a sort of lead is given to the States also on this subject. We have realised within the last five months that a practical approach to the problem has been made both at the Centre by the hon. Mr. Kidwai and in the States also, especially in Madras, where the experiment of decontrol has been tried recently. You know, Sir, within the last five months the names of 'Kidwai' and 'Rajagopalachari' are household words in Madras State. That is an indication of how well this decontrol has been received in the province.

Yesterday reference was made to the statistics that have been placed on the Table of the House. A perusal of these will show that the vast difference between the controlled prices and black-market prices in deficit areas has been very much reduced. After

the decontrol we would observe that there has been a very surprising adjustment between the deficit areas and the surplus areas. For instance, in Vizagapatam which is a deficit zone the black-market price in 1951 was Rs. 50 per maund and in the last three or four months it has come down to Rs. 23. Similarly in other deficit areas; in Bellary from Rs. 45 it has come down to Rs. 28. For Madanapalle the figures are not available here. In the surplus areas we find the appreciation of the prices has not been very much, so much so that now in both the deficit and surplus areas the price level has more or less become the same. It ranges between Rs. 20 and Rs. 23. That shows how well the adjustment of food prices has been made by the proper trade channels, however, quickly it might be. It is very unfortunate, Sir, that on the floor of this House there are three hon. Ministers of the Cabinet speaking on the same subject with three different voices.

The Minister of Planning and Irrigation and Power (Shri Nanda): I regret very much that I have to interrupt again. There is no contradiction.

Shri Ramachandra Reddi: I quite agree with the hon. Minister of Planning that there has been no contradiction, but all the same, there has been enough confusion. But in Madras, if one thing had been done, there would have been less confusion even there. I mean to say that if the de-control had been started just at the harvest time, namely, from the month of December to March, or April, even this disparity would not have been found. But, having started it late, there was a little confusion for the first one or two months and things have adjusted themselves wonderfully well and within the last two or three days I have seen a press note that in Tadepalligudem, which is one of the biggest exporting centres from the rice-growing area, the prices have begun to fall. That shows how price adjustment is going on regularly and consistently. If there has been some disparity in prices between 1947 and 1952, it is not due to the black-marketing conditions alone. In the province, from 1947 to 1952, there has been a regular increase in the procurement price itself. So, if you compare the 1947 prices with 1952 prices, the gap has considerably been filled up by the procurement prices offered by the Government itself from time to time. There has been an increase not only in the price offered for procurement by the Government itself, but there has also been a surcharge on rice procured at the rate of Rs. 1/5/- per

[Shri Ramachandra Reddi]

naund. That has increased the price for the consumer. And so many other factors have been brought to play between the producer and the consumer so much so the price level had to go up. At every stage there was no impediment or the other, the licensed procuring agent, the mill-owner, the wholesale dealer, the retail dealer. At every stage there is the sale-tax operating, so much so the price level had necessarily to go up. It is not due entirely to the black marketing conditions there. Even before 1947, the producer was getting only 50 per cent. of the consumer's price. It is very well reported in the Rice Report of the Government of India, which was published some years back. The conditions have not changed with the introduction of procurement rules and the control methods. With the introduction of the procurement and control methods, a number of middle men have come in and their operation has necessarily increased the price for the consumer. It is, therefore, very clear that while the producer did not get as much as he ought to, the consumer has to pay more than he ought to. Between the two, a number of middle-men, rather institutions have come in so much so the price level has gone up. I would like to make one or two practical suggestions, Sir, while pressing for de-control.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Modified control.

Shri Ramachandra Reddi: We can safely call it de-control, Sir.

Shri B. S. Murthy (Eluru): Progressive adjustment is the proper word, Sir.

Shri Ramachandra Reddi: A number of epithets have come into operation in regard to that control. There is progressive control, there is progressive de-control, there is de-control or modified de-control, so many other words but, anyhow, all these mean the same thing more or less.

If de-control can be adopted with these conditions, namely, that from surplus areas procurement might be made by a light levy from the producers or the rigour of the present procurement rules be mitigated and the option given to the purchaser to give so many bags per acre, it will work well. Hitherto, it was not the case. The authorities would leave very little even for cultivation purposes and used to procure what all was possible from the producer with the result that the producer himself was very much dissatisfied with the procurement operations and there was naturally mental

revolt against controls. After procuring that way, whatever is procured might be stored up and distributed in cities and towns and also in other areas. To supplement this, whatever food grains are imported and made available for each State might be utilised. That will certainly work well and I think there will be no difficulty about that. Even the deficit areas like Malabar and Travancore-Cochin might be supplied in that manner.

I learn, Sir, that in Ceylon there is a method adopted: The local produce is distributed in the villages themselves and whatever is imported from outside is distributed in the towns and cities. If that is adopted, there will be less demand from the cities, from the rural areas and whatever is easily procurable from the rural areas can be supplied to the urban areas and the deficit areas. The 'light levy system' is not at all a new thing. A few years back, in Hyderabad, I am told, the light levy system had been adopted and it was found to be very successful.

With regard to de-control of millets that has been so much talked about on the floor of this House, I think we in Madras have already de-controlled millets in 1951. When the millets began to move out from the producers, whether openly or through clandestine methods, scarcity in certain areas has been very much reduced with the result that the complaints from those areas have also been reduced. The demand for millets in the absence of rice grew up so much that the millet price today is higher than the rice price. So, whatever may be said on the floor of the House about the de-control of millets, I wish to say that millets have already been decontrolled and there is no use controlling them once again, because when the control on millets was there, it was found that in many places millets were available but were not procured by the Government, because there was no offence and the Government was not interested in procuring millets. The result was that in certain places the smugglers were openly taking some of the millet stocks out of hiding and they were arrested and paid for at the procurement rates, since the stocks were not allowed to be moved from the producers and the millets were losing their value due to deterioration. So, the decontrol process in millets started in 1951 and since then there has been a regular flow of millets from the upland areas in several districts where millets are grown to areas where millets are also used as a supplementary

food to rice. These several adjustments are possible only when there is decontrol.

I have just tried to impress upon the House as well as the hon. Food Minister that the policy that has been adopted so far is good and it need not be changed. If there are any conditions to be imposed on the decontrol system, then let them be imposed, but let it not be said that we are introducing controls once again and we would make other adjustments later on. If we do it the other way, it would be far better, i.e. you effect decontrol and then put in as few conditions as possible. In this way, the consumer and the producer in the urban as well as the rural area will be benefited.

One other thing that I would like to mention is this. There is a good deal of propaganda about synthetic rice. This rice is manufactured out of tapioca. The moment the manufacture of synthetic rice began, the tapioca price has shot up and the result is that people in Malabar who consume tapioca as a staple food are suffering. The manufacture of sago from tapioca was bad enough but this attempt has put the poor people of Malabar at a great disadvantage.

Shri Kidwai: But tapioca can be grown anywhere. It need not come only from Malabar.

Shri Velayudhan: No, it cannot be grown. Only in our place it is grown.

Shri Ramachandra Reddi: I know that it can be grown anywhere, but sufficient propaganda is not made for it. If facilities are afforded, there is a good possibility of tapioca being grown elsewhere also to a far greater extent. My suggestion is that the money spent on synthetic rice is a waste. It is not good. I have myself eaten synthetic rice. The preservation value is very little. After one or two hours, it does not taste well. I do not think the people will be anxious to take to synthetic rice.

Shri Kidwai: May I interrupt the hon. Member for a minute? When I was in Malabar, I was approached on behalf of another kind of poor man who was growing tapioca. I was told that on account of the ban placed there, the prices have gone down with the result that these growers were finding it hard to carry on their living through the growing of tapioca. I think they require some relief.

Shri Ramachandra Reddi: I do not know why it is so, but I can assure the hon. Minister that it is possible to grow tapioca anywhere and if only there is a price incentive tapioca will be increasingly grown by agriculturists.

There is only one other question that remains. It is the bigger question of ceiling and floor prices. If the procurement is to go on, it is very necessary that floor prices have to be fixed and with a view to helping the consumer the ceiling prices have also to be fixed. Since the time is over I beg to conclude.

Kumari Annie Mascarene: The nation had been looking forward with great anxiety to the future food position and we on this side were wondering what the hon. Food Minister was going to present to us.

Shri Kidwai: Tapioca.

Kumari Annie Mascarene: The hon. Food Minister's speech would have been a bit encouraging to me, had it not been smashed by the Prime Minister's first speech and the Finance Minister's interference and finally the Prime Minister's closing speech. We on this side are in a confusion as to what the real policy on the other side is. There is a conflict of opinions—control; decontrol; relaxation of control; house-keeping; and basic approach to principles—all leading to basic confusion.

The food problem has been a very sore point as far as the Congress administration is concerned. It is the very clear result of utter incompetence and maladministration. We are, I am told, open to correction with regard to our figures. We are told that about Rs. 75 crores were spent during the last five years for the Grow More Food Campaign and the result is that the aggregate production of the country is on the decrease. Whether that amount is really irrigating fields or the pockets of some persons is my wonder.

Babu Ramnarayan Singh: The latter.

Kumari Annie Mascarene: What could be the reason for the failure? The Finance Minister yesterday placed before us from printed statistics—God alone knows who printed them—certain figures showing that the cultivator gets now a better price for his produce. It may be that he was speaking of Bombay, but that is not true of South India as a whole. While meandering through the fields in my constituency during the last two months, I had come across fields which are growing bananas now but which had formerly been growing paddy. I asked the farmers the reason for the change. I was told, "It is more paying to grow bananas than paddy."

Shri Kidwai: That is so.

Kumari Annie Mascarene: I am told that the State Government is now giving them a few more annas than formerly for the grains procured by the Government. Therefore, from my own experience I want to contradict the Finance Minister that his figures do not apply throughout India. We on this side should not be misled by such figures. The Grow More Food Campaign has been going on rather vigorously. The real reason for decrease in production is that they have no sincerity or honesty in executing schemes of growing more food.

3 P.M.

For instance, in Travancore-Cochin means of minor irrigation like canals and ponds which were in full working condition before the last five years are now filled up with sand. I have seen it with my own eyes. Is it a means of supplying the cultivator with sufficient water in order to encourage him to grow more food?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Is it suggested that the Government threw sand there?

Kumari Annie Mascarene: Government did not throw sand.

Shri Kidwai: I am told that the hon. speaker was a member of the then Government which caused all this.

Kumari Annie Mascarene: That is why I am not a member now.

Then, Sir, favouritism and corruption are playing such a part on the part of people distributing seeds and manure that the Grow More Food Campaign has become more a hindrance than a help to the cultivators. The policy of procurement in Travancore-Cochin State is very rigorous as far as the small holdings are concerned. Small holders have to sell their foodgrains for two rupees and a few pies per para to Government.

Shri P. T. Chacko (Meenachil): Rs. 1/14/0.

Kumari Annie Mascarene: It was formerly Rs. 1/14/0. Now they have increased it by a few annas. The hon. Member is behind the times. It is now Rs. 2/1/6 to be exact. I have come across a huge field in my constituency which is exempted from procurement. It is just bordering on a beautiful lake between two hills in my constituency of Vellayani. The neighbouring field-owners complained to me that a vast area of field is exempted from procurement and when I asked them the reason, they told me the owner of that

field had got an exemption from Government on the plea that there was a flood and his crops had been destroyed. The actual fact is otherwise. The flood came and went back in a few hours and his field was in good condition full of crops. But the owner is related to Government not by blood, but by party! In this manner much of food grains are not procured. They are converted into rice and are sold in the black-market which is very open on the public road-sides and markets in Travancore-Cochin State under the eyes of the Government and nose of the Police Department.

Shri A. M. Thomas (Ernakulam): Is not open market allowed there now?

Kumari Annie Mascarene: I am not speaking of the immediate present.

I am speaking of the past two years, Sir.

Shri A. M. Thomas: Here the hon. Member is behind the times!

Kumari Annie Mascarene: Not with regard to facts.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The hon. Member is evidently justifying the change of policy.

Kumari Annie Mascarene: Yes, leading us to starvation.

The Travancore-Cochin State occupies a special place so far as Government's food policy is concerned. If the hon. the Food Minister is for decontrol with special provisions for deficit areas, I am with him, though I come from a deficit area. We produce only 40 per cent. of our requirements of grain which during the last five years has 'increased' to 36 per cent thanks to the Grow More Food Campaign! But even at this stage we are willing to favour decontrol, because the Food Minister told us that the north is a surplus area and the south is a deficit area and if they make up their minds to make an equitable distribution of the produce of the whole country the problem is solved. But how to oblige foreigners to import their foodgrains here on terms of their own and exploit India?

The failure of Government policy, Sir, has been due to the lack of fundamental principles of respect for moral values. If the Government will have intellect, will, energy, character and fidelity to principles to enforce the moral law in the rank and file, of their organisation this problem can be solved without any difficulty. We are confronted today with control and

decontrol. The national exchequer, Sir, is exhausting a good amount for this. They are willing to spend any amount of the nation—I appreciate their love for the people—but they are not willing to change their land policy, or to make radical changes in the land policy which alone will solve the present situation.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

So far as Travancore-Cochin State is concerned, even if you sell rice at a lower price people are not able to buy because the average income of the common man has fallen owing to unemployment. The ration shopkeepers complain that the foodgrains supplied to them are not disposed of because people have no money. How are you going to solve that problem? We have land, we have labour, we have capital—we have all the agents of production at our command, but we do not adjust them and we do not follow a principle that will enable the utilisation of these agents of production and benefit the country. Our neighbouring nations have shown us the way. We will not take long to solve this food problem. Sir, I am for decontrol with provisions for deficit areas for the present.

Shri M. A. Ayyangar (Tirupati): Control is not an end in itself; it is only a means. Control is necessary only so long as the country is deficit in any particular essential commodity. The necessary corollary to this is that greater and greater efforts should be made to produce more and more.

I come from Madras and from Rayalaseema. Now Rayalaseema has been a famine-ridden area for a long time. Four districts out of five have had famine for every alternate year. My district escaped famine conditions for a long time, but now it had also got into the Rayalaseema group. Today it is not as if foodgrains are not available there. But people have no purchasing power. All round my town we have got heaps of foodgrains. But the poorer section are not able to purchase, because the main occupation and employment of the poorer section is agriculture. When for five successive years rains have failed and agriculture has come to a standstill, they have not got the wherewithal to purchase, notwithstanding the fact that grain is available and is flowing in plenty from other parts of the province. Therefore it is wrong to say that decontrol would solve this problem. The right remedy must be sought by way of providing employment for the poorer section of the population.

So far as Madras is concerned, though the delta areas are capable of

raising abundant crops, they in actual fact are not producing, because of the rigorous policy of procurement adopted. Even a man who produces can keep only four months' requirements. He has to part with the rest. The man who produces the best grain has to eat the poor stuff which is distributed in the ration. How will there be incentive for production? The low procurement prices sapped all the incentive of the cultivators. Added to that, in five districts there has been successive failure of the monsoon. Therefore it is not on account of the policy of decontrol. On the other hand this policy of decontrol which was started boldly by the Chief Minister there, aided by our Food Minister here, has paid wonderful dividends. There is a psychological effect that people are free to purchase. If only you had pursued this policy a short time before the elections I am sure there would not have been one non-Congress Member in this House.

Shri Nambiar (Mayuram): Question.

Shri M. A. Ayyangar: You may remain questioning till the end of the world. I am not trying to make it a political move. For five years there is no difficulty! I need not enlarge upon that at all. Nor am I speaking on behalf of any of the merchants who have profited at the expense of the common people. Two new classes have been created as a result of food control: one in the Government who do not know what will happen if decontrol comes into being; a number of young men will be thrown out of employment. The other is the new type of businessmen who have been created as middlemen and who had nothing to do with grain. People who do not know how to differentiate between one kind of grain and another kind of grain have become millionaires overnight. In my town there is a case pending. A man who never knew what it was to produce grains became a seller and for every bushel of grain he would add one bushel of sand. We have a reservoir where no water flows and it is full of sand. He mixed the grain with sand and offered it in the market. You have got your experience also when you purchase grain in the ration shops or fair price shops. For five years I have been eating food mixed with sand whereas today beautiful, flower-like rice I am able to get. Academically we can say that $a + b$ whole squared is equal to a squared plus b squared plus $2ab$. Likewise we can argue that in a deficit area you must have control. Barring these text book slogans people do

[Shri M. A. Ayyangar]

not address themselves to the realities. There is plenty of food. Of course there is not over-plenty and we are supplementing our food supply by millions of tons from foreign countries. And that has to go on for some time to replace our import from Burma and fill the deficit on account of partition two and a half million tons of rice or wheat are in short supply.

A long time ago it was suggested that we must create a grain bank to draw grain into it whenever there is a slump and release it whenever there are high prices. Even today, in spite of our getting 190 million dollars worth of grains from America we have not moved a step in that direction. I speak subject to correction. By this time we must have built a grain bank which will ease the situation.

Shri Kidwai: We have got the stocks.

Shri M. A. Ayyangar: I am exceedingly glad to take this opportunity of paying my tribute to the hon. Minister for his zeal and enthusiasm. He is one of our Ministers who generally does not speak much but acts very much. I am not saying this merely for praising him. What I say is certainly the truth and nothing but the truth. I am exceedingly glad that he is full of enthusiasm and enterprise. He even takes risks, but risks not attendant with any real risk, and ultimately it proves all to the good. He started the night aeroplane service which today is much better than even the day-time service. What he has done in Madras in this matter is right and it must be followed in the other Provinces also.

He gave some figures. I can place reliance on his figures. I am not prepared to compare them. Comparisons are odious. He said that in the surplus provinces there has been the Grow More Food Campaign. On account of the absence of procurement in the rigid fashion irrespective of the consequences, they have produced better results. Each surplus province has shown better results. If that had been adopted in Madras I am sure they would have produced more. It is not for love or for charitable purposes or for philanthropic motives that the agriculturist, who is almost starving, can be induced to produce more. There must be other incentives also. That was lacking and in my province to the last grain it has been drained off from the agriculturist. This will not happen hereafter. Let there be no break from this. Let us be wedded to this

policy. If a plan is dependent upon control even when there is surplus I cannot understand it. Why should there be control if there is a surplus? I am not able to see why any plan should be dependent entirely upon controls under all circumstances. Let us assume that we have twice or thrice as much of foodgrains as we have today. Even then do you want control?

I was one of the friends quarrelling with Mr. Sidhva who again and again produced statistics to show that there was no food deficiency in this country. At one time I said—because I come from a deficit area—that Mr. Sidhva wanted to kill us with his statistics. He did not kill us. I am growing fatter and fatter!

There must be a halt to this. Call it by any name. Some people are afraid of the term 'progressive decontrol'. All right, progressive adjustment or some adjustment that will ultimately lead to a cypher of this control. That is what I want. Under the circumstances I consider that a right step has been taken by our Food Minister. I whole-heartedly support the manner in which he has proceeded. On account of the restraints placed on him and the way in which he is perhaps pulled constantly, poor man, he is afraid of proceeding further. Otherwise he would have done so. And after all, the hon. Ministers have not spoken with different voices. Each one has tried to emphasize one aspect lest we should embark upon a policy which may lead to some difficulty in a particular path.

Some say that it is on account of lack of rains in my part of the country that the prices have gone up. Others will emphasize that it is on account of decontrol and reckless decontrol. The truth is in between these two, possibly on the one and possibly on the other. Let us not attribute it entirely to decontrol. On the other hand, the producers in the surplus provinces ought not to feel that they are under any restraint. I have to make one suggestion here. In all the surplus provinces there may be a particular kind of levy, so much per acre, leaving a minimum holding of two or three acres. Where it is beyond that, not more than half the produce from each person at a particular rate may be asked to be given. The rest let him sell at any price. The prices will equalize themselves or come to the lower level. Barring that nothing more need be done.

The other suggestion I have to make is that as early as possible steps may

be taken to create a grain bank which will from a distance serve as a deterrent against rising prices. As soon as prices show a rise, these stocks can be released and the prices will come down.

These are the two things that may be adopted. And decontrol must be progressively carried on, so much so that in a short time, along with the Grow More Food Campaign and our river valley projects will help us to grow more food and at the end of five years we will have no control but plenty of food to eat.

Shri Damodara Menon (Kozhikode): Sir, the Food Minister is a man of few words. As you remember, yesterday it was by a good deal of persuasion that he was made to speak for ten minutes. He wanted only two minutes. I think this attitude in the present circumstances is a good thing. We have had long speeches from other Ministers and from that we were not able to gather very much. It only added to the confusion if I may be permitted to say so. Probably the Food Minister wants that facts should speak for themselves. The facts he gave have shown clearly that the policy he is now pursuing is in the right direction. He stated that in surplus areas where procurement was not very strict, there was more food production. The Grow More Food Campaign there was more successful than in areas where procurement was very strict, especially in the South. He also gave us some figures. He said that in the Punjab for example about ten lakhs of acres were brought under cultivation whereas in Madras about ten lakhs of acres went out of cultivation. Now these statistical figures really show that we must make a change in our policy of procurement throughout India. But the Finance Minister gave us other statistics. I do not know whether he was trying to criticise the Food Minister but anyway he said that there is no relationship between the price of procurement and production. He also had statistics to support him. Now this seems to be rather a strange position. What the cultivators require is some kind of inducement to produce more. As the hon. Deputy Speaker has just now said if the cultivator who is producing grain feels that he cannot eat what he produces, that he cannot get returns for what he produces, there is possibly no inducement for him to produce and it is also a cruel thing to make him produce. In my own place, Sir, I know that this kind of strict procurement was applied only, as has been already suggested, to small cultivators. Big

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landholders and estate-holders succeed in finding means to escape the rigour of procurement. And more than all that, because of statutory rationing, when a poor woman goes about with two bushels of rice, she is caught by a policeman and the figures of such punishment are very large. But if you had analysed, what you would find is that the real culprits often escaped and therefore, as was suggested by an hon. Member, there was a moral degradation. If people who have been producing food can have a full meal, they are committing a crime in society! Now at least that idea has been removed. I do not know whether what is done in Madras, according to the terminology which is applied here, is decontrol or not. If it is decontrol I do not want to make any change. As it is millions of people are far more happy especially in the villages. Sir, I agree with the Food Minister and also with our Prime Minister when they say that our policy must be to reduce imports as far as possible and also to see that people get foodgrains at a reasonably low price. These objectives are very good. Now we have been trying to produce more food for the last many years. I do not know whether we can pronounce an opinion on it but the figures show that there has not been much success in this endeavour. I have got the Report of the Grow More Food Enquiry Committee before me. That Report makes interesting reading. First of all it challenges all the statistical figures that have been placed before the country. We know that we cannot rely very much on them. I would like to State my own experience in this connection. A subordinate officer of the Revenue Department told me just a few days before I started for Delhi that when he was asked by the Government to supply them within 24 hours the number of palm trees in his *firka*, he sent a telegram to the Government saying that there were 357 palm trees in that area. He had no statistics with him. Nobody had calculated the number of palm trees and there was no time for him to find it out. Even if he had time he could not have ventured upon such a procedure. I asked him why he pitched upon an odd number, why he did not make it 358. He told me that odd numbers have an appearance of precision and therefore he sent that figure. Now when figures are compiled in this manner and presented to the State Legislatures, one can understand what reliance can be placed upon them. I agree with the Food Minister that probably the food shortage in the country is not as much as it has been made out. As my hon.

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friend Mr. Kelappan pointed out yesterday, in our own place, even in the rationed areas, there were times when we were supplied only about four ounces of rice per card holder even though the fiction was that a card holder would get twelve ounces of ration. As a matter of fact we were given sometimes only four ounces. Nobody can live with four ounces and how were the people living? I am saying this because it applies more to poor villagers as well as the workers in urban areas. No body can believe that these people lived with four ounces ration. They were getting food from the black-market and paying a far higher price than probably they could afford to pay and they were spending all their money in the purchase of food in the black-market. The people in rationed areas told me that previously they depended on black-market rice but today they get more rice at a cheaper rate. I am sure they are benefited to that extent.

Now, Sir, I want to say a few more words about the way in which this Grow More Food Campaign has been working. I find that the Government, even the Planning Commission, is expecting to get about five million tons of foodgrains from the Grow More Food Campaign.

An Hon. Member: Seven and a half million tons.

Shri Damodara Menon: On the whole they are expecting to get five million tons from the Grow More Food Campaign. I am quoting from the figures given in this book. I do not know how far they will be able to do so. For the last six years this Grow More Food Campaign has been in existence in this country and we understand that after all, very little progress has been made. Government have spent a lot of money and even in regard to the expenditure of this money, no proper account is maintained. I find from this Report Sir, that about Rs. 28½ crores have been given as loans and the Report says that the actual amount of loans drawn and distributed by the State Governments are not available. These figures are not available and in the absence of the figures of actual expenditure, it is not possible for the Committee to estimate the extent to which the amount sanctioned has been utilised.

An interesting sentence occurs in page 43 of this book. It is this: "one of the good things of the Grow More Food Campaign is that good results have been achieved in the production of cotton and jute."

Now we started growing more food and we succeeded in growing more jute and cotton and that is the achievement of the Grow More Food Campaign. It would appear that cotton and jute are the staple food in this country, but it also has a lesson. What does it say? It says that wherever people got a chance they diverted their energies to the production of money crops because production of food crops was unremunerative. Therefore, Sir, if this Grow More Food Campaign should succeed, it is necessary for us to adopt a change of attitude—I would only say—in food policy and that change is slowly coming. Although the planning conscience of the hon. Mr. Nanda would not accept that position, or even the Prime Minister would not use that word, I am sure a change of policy is contemplated and it is in the right direction. The hon. Prime Minister in his speech was using another term for the policy of the Government. He called it strategic control. The Finance Minister called it overall control. I think 'strategic control' is probably more proper in this context, because, the Prime Minister has always been speaking of treating the food question on a military or war footing, and therefore, we must have some strategy. If we are having this strategic control, it would also make it possible for us to withdraw whenever necessary and manipulate our forces as and when it is required according to the exigencies of the situation. Therefore, let us call it strategic control. In this strategic control, let us hope that there will be more and more decontrol so that the people are not subjected to a lot of privation and harassment, and there is no necessity for the honest man to eat his food with a sense of guilt.

Shri Gadgil: Sir, I have listened with great attention particularly to the speeches of the Minister for Food and the Minister for Finance and the Prime Minister. Although the second speech of the Prime Minister has removed some of my doubts, yet, I am unable to say exactly what this present policy which has been enunciated by the Food Minister really means.

Shri Kidwai: That is plain English.

Shri Gadgil: I know that it will be a policy for control if in experience it retains all the advantages of control avoiding all the disadvantages of decontrol. But, to say anything at this stage will be hazarding merely a guess and it is much better to await the result. But, if past experience is any guide, I remember whatever has been said yesterday and today about seeing that the Government

has its hands on the pulse of the situation, that it will not allow it to deteriorate, that every step will be taken to see that no serious consequences follow, all these phrases are familiar or practically the same phrases which were used in December, 1947 by the then Food Minister when he enunciated the policy of gradual decontrol. Today's policy is 1952 Rafian Edition of the same and I have not the slightest hesitation in expressing my doubt that whatever followed after December, 1947, may substantially follow the adoption of the present policy. From December, 1947, the prices, whatever they were, rose by leaps and bounds.

Shri Kidwai: No.

Shri Gadgil: By July 1948, when the situation became worse, when it had gone out of hand, Government awoke and after four months of consideration, conferences after conferences, re-imposed controls. But, the prices that had gone up to that level have not come down. In 1948, when the gradual decontrol policy was reviewed, we were promised that every effort will be made to see that the prices go down, and that it was not immediately possible to cut down procurement prices, but that in the course of a year or two that would be done. It was not possible in 1949; it could not be possible in 1950. In 1951, being an election year, obviously, it was indiscreet on both economic and political grounds. Now, in between 1948 and 1951 came the Korean War. Prices again went up. And now, on top of that come Rajaji and Rafi and prices are again going up.

Shri Kidwai: That is wrong.

Shri Gadgil: In 1947, the Father of the Nation, advised, and in spite of at least my own judgement, we adopted a policy of decontrol, with results now well known. I remember on one occasion the Prime Minister admitted that it was a great mistake and that the mischief that was done has not been retrieved. The Korean War was something on which we had no control. But, here we are told that what we are following is nothing inconsistent with our basic principle. I tried to understand in my own humble way what it means. The whole of Madras State is completely under decontrol; in Hyderabad, except rice, complete decontrol; in UP, except wheat, complete decontrol.

Shri Kidwai: Decontrol of wheat also?

Shri Gadgil: We are told that this has nothing to do with the basic plan which remains as it is. My own feeling is that Shri Rajagopalachari,

for whom I have great respect and admiration—he is a great statesman, a man of great sagacity and high purpose; but that will not prevent me from subjecting his policy to a critical analysis and comment—has forced the hands of the Government of India. That is my view. It may have been politically good.

Shri T. K. Chaudhuri: On a point of order, Sir,.....

Mr. Speaker: Order, order: There is no occasion for a point of order.

Shri Gadgil: But, the question is whether it is economically in the best interests of the country. We are told that the policy that has been enunciated yesterday by my esteemed friend Mr. Rafi is no departure at all. He called it relaxation; another colleague of his called it modification; a third colleague of his called it strengthening of control. The hon. Prime Minister says that there is no change whatsoever and that the basic principles remain the same. I understand control to operate in two ways: either in territory or in commodity. In both ways it will be affected by the policy that has been now enunciated. Instead of calling it retreat all along the line, the Government has chosen to say, 'we have re-aligned our forces'. That was a familiar phrase in War time.

I am not at all dogmatic about control or decontrol. I am prepared objectively to apply my mind to the circumstances in which this or the other policy will be followed. The conditions under which there will be any thought of a change in the policy that was continuing has been well stated in the outline of the Planning Commission. This was published in 1951, and accepted by this House a few months after. As far as I understand, the policy of the Government continues to be consistent with the principles laid down here. Here is, Sir, what the report has stated:

"Moreover, if past experience is any guide it is clear that where the controls are efficiently managed, the prices in the rationed and non-rationed areas remain fairly close. On the other hand, in the case of States which gave up procurement and rationing in favour of free movement and distribution through trade channels, prices rose to levels higher than in deficit States where the control system was comparatively more efficient. Any step in the direction of decontrol is under present conditions certain to raise prices and is likely to jeopardise the entire system of food control which has been built up

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in the country with considerable effort. The consequences of complete decontrol, it is hardly necessary to say, would be even more dangerous."

Then, it goes on to say what would be the result under partial or complete decontrol if expectations of availability are falsified and prices rise. It states:

"Since internal procurement would already have been given up or greatly reduced, this would make the economy highly unstable and vulnerable. It is, therefore, necessary to continue internal procurement until the marketable surplus increases sufficiently either through increased production or through assured availability of imports."

As regards production, here are figures—they are our printed statistics and "Rafian" statistics (*laughter*), the printed ones we are told are not very reliable, and the other ones are yet to be finalised. So, in this context whatever I say, I say with a measure of caution. In the printed statistics, the production for 1948-49 was 47 millions and a little more;

In 1949-50	44,681,000 tons.
.. 1950-51	41,382,000 tons.
.. 1951-52	44,421,000 tons.

Now, if I apply the test laid down by the Planning Commission to which the Government is a party, to which this House is a party, to which, in a sense, the whole country is a party—has production gone up? The area under cultivation has gone down. The reasons given by the Food Minister are different, but the fact remains that the area has gone down. The point is that when the production has gone down, when you know there are scarcity conditions in one-third of the country, does the only circumstance that we have a little stock of two million tons justify our embarking on this policy? I agree with the Finance Minister that all efforts must be made to stop or at least reduce by a substantial measure our imports. That will save our foreign exchange. If that is No. 1 ideal, No. 2 fact is that our country does not produce at present as much as we require. That is a fact which has been clearly stated by the Planning Commission, and on which I think there is no dispute. If these two circumstances are there, the wiser course would be to see that whatever is produced in this country is collected in such a manner as to give, in the maximum way, equitable distribution to every citizen in this country.

My hon. friend Shri Rafi said that the policy of procurement was leaky in the north, and stricter in the south. What is the remedy that he proposes? Give up the policy of procurement itself. In Madras it is given up.

Shri Kidwai: Did I say that?

Shri Gadgil: You did not say so, but Rajaji has made it clear that if controls come, he will go out. There is no question of procurement. Then, what is the position? Assuming that procurement is there, that it is resorted to in Madras hereafter, at what rate would procurement be possible? Prices have gone up in some places by 60 per cent.

Shri Kidwai: Wrong.

Shri Gadgil: There are the statistics.

Shri Nambiar: More than 100 per cent.

Shri Gadgil: I stand corrected. When the Government machinery starts work of procurement, the rate of procurement will have necessarily some relation with the prevailing prices in the province. I mean Government will have to purchase at a much higher rate. Naturally, the price in Madras will go up. Assuming they do not procure, and if there is some difficulty, they will use the stock that is with the Government for the present, and later on they will call upon the Central Government to come to their rescue. According to Mr. Rafi, this policy of procurement which is leaky in the north and stricter in the south, has led to loss of acreage in cultivation and production. I think it is not a proposition which at least I can accept, nor is it accepted by Mr. C. D. Deshmukh. There has been procurement in Punjab, and production has gone up. There has been strict procurement in Bombay, and the area under cultivation has increased. So, it has nothing to do with it. The wiser course is that in the surplus provinces you must procure in such a manner as to give as much as possible to the deficit provinces, and to cut down your imports to the maximum extent possible. That is not done. The real thing is that this Government does not enforce its policies so far as C.P., U.P., and other northern provinces are concerned, and those who, unfortunately like me, live in the deficit States, are asked to take from the imported food at higher prices, especially when subsidy is withdrawn. You talk of this country as one. You say that there must be one integrated economy. If you really believe that this is one integrated economy, you will see that

not one citizen in any province gets more either in quantity or quality than a citizen in any other part of the country. This should be done if it is one country, if it is a country in which I have a right to live, a country in which I must be properly fed, a country in which I must get employment, I must get justice. What is being done is that procurement is to be given up. What is the exact meaning of Mr. Rafi's policy, that there will be no undue rise in prices.

Mr. Speaker: I think the hon. Member will take much more time at this rate.

Shri Gadgil: Have I taken more time, Sir?

Mr. Speaker: He has already taken 16 minutes, and I rang the bell twice.

Shri Gadgil: I am very sorry, Sir. If that is so, I will conclude in a couple of minutes.

The point is that the policy which he is proposing, if carried out, will virtually mean complete decontrol, and handing over us poor people hand and foot to the mercantile community who have never been faithful or grateful to this country. I have not the slightest doubt. I have a right to warn the Government that although the Prime Minister says that nothing will be done, that there will be no releasing of forces which will undermine the plan, I honestly feel that this policy,—I do not say it will be intentionally, but unintentionally—if all the expectations that are raised are to be fulfilled, will be a time bomb for the planned economy.

Shri Nambiar: Sir, the question was posed here as to whether the policy is one of control or decontrol. Here, I have to submit....

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. Hon. Members will not speak from bench to bench and create disturbance. I always find a tendency to speak to each other when the debate is going on.

Shri Nambiar: As I understand it, the question should not be looked at from that angle. The question here is whether Government should take the responsibility for feeding the people or not. If Government takes the responsibility of feeding the people, then Government will have to find the ways and means as to how food should be procured and how it should be distributed.

From the points enunciated, and from what is seen in the south especially now under Rajaji's regime, I see that the responsibility of feeding the

people is not being taken by the Government of India. I can say with authority that today in the south prices have gone up very high. I can say that in my own district, in the district of Tapjore, before decontrol.....

An Hon. Member: It is not your district.

Shri Nambiar: It is my district. I am here because of that district. In that district, the price of one bag of paddy which was Rs. 12 before decontrol, is Rs. 28 today, and the price of the latest Kuruvai crop, according to yesterday's Hindu, is Rs. 24 which is cent. per cent. more than the price before decontrol. And I can quote with facts and figures, that in the streets of Trichinopoly while during the days of the war, the black-market price was only Rs. 1-2 per Madras measure, today it is Rs. 1-4 and Rs. 1-6—more than the black-market price. I can prove my statement with facts and figures with regard to Coimbatore. Madura district and other places. In Palani taluk, which is a deficit taluk, the rice is not even available at Rs. 1-4-0 a Madras measure, which was never the price there even in the history of the worst days of war. I am prepared to go and sit with the hon. Minister and show him facts and figures to prove that the prices all over South India have gone considerably high. Apart from this, the people have become more pauperized due to unemployment, because of the slump in the handloom industry. In this background when the prices are even equal to and are more than the black-market prices, does it not become all the more the responsibility of the Government to distribute food at much cheaper prices? On the other hand, we find from the statement that has been made in the House, that the prices have gone so high, compared to the controlled prices, that we cannot even imagine to what heights they will soar. In 1947 in Vizagapatam, the price per maund of rice was Rs. 13-14-0, but now it is Rs. 23; in Eluru in 1947 it was Rs. 9-1-0, but now it is 14-6-0; where it was Rs. 15-7-5 in 1947, it is now Rs. 42-0-0 and so on. Compared to the year 1947, during the course of these five years, when the purchasing capacity of the people has gone down, is it not the responsibility of the Government to feed the people at a much cheaper price than what obtained during the control period? What we find here is that they come and say, 'We have decontrolled, and because of our present policy, prices have gone not to the level of the black-market price, but are still less'—and this is the first time that the black-market prices have found a place in Government records.

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and they give some imaginary figures for the black-market prices.

Shri Kidwai: May I ask a question? The hon. Member should also say what is the price in the Government fair-price shops, which are still continuing, and which are still serving those who are served with rations.

Shri Nambiar: I would submit to the hon. Minister that the prices in the fair-price shops have become more or less equal to the market prices—and in fact it is a misnomer to call it a fair price. The price in the fair price shops in Madras is shown as Rs. 1-1-0 per Madras measure, whereas in the open market, the price is about Rs. 1-2-0 or Rs. 1-4-0. In Madras in certain areas, it is selling at Rs. 1-1-0. But the prices have gone up compared to the ration shop prices. The price per Madras measure of rice when it was controlled as per ration shops was annas ten and a half to annas eleven, while now in the fair price shops, it sells at Rs. 1-1-0 or Rs. 1-2-0, which is annas five or annas six more than the ration shop price. Therefore you must not tackle the situation in the abstract way whether rice is available or not, as the hon. Deputy-Speaker has tried to put it. The question is rice is available to those who have the money, and for those who had the means to buy—it was available even in the days of black-marketing—but to the majority of the people, it is not available. It may be due to the decrease in the purchasing power of the people. But it is the responsibility of the Government to feed the people. I can say that the Government of Madras absolved itself of this responsibility of feeding the people, and has created a famine not only in the districts of Rayalaseema, but even in Trichinopoly Perambalur taluk, Udumalpet taluk in Coimbatore Dist. and in Madura district Palani taluk; and the whole of South Arcot and Ramnad districts which I visited recently. My other hon. friends who hail from those places will vouchsafe the fact that it is really a famine condition that prevails in these places. The food is not available to the majority of the people at cheaper rates. Even if they are available in the fair price shops, they are unable to purchase them, with the result that the people there are really in a famine condition. Is this what is known as the Rajaji experiment? Is this the success of the Rajaji experiment? Is this that is intended to be expanded throughout the country? Of course, we have to measure the success of the Rajaji experiment by counting the number of the dead rather than that of the living, which we will do later on. A similar experiment is going to

be followed in Bengal also. In Bengal the responsibility of feeding the people has been taken over by the Government only with regard to the city of Calcutta. With regard to the suburbs, they had a policy of A, B, C, rationed areas, and now they say by January this also will be withdrawn. So a more or less similar situation exists in Bengal also. In the 24 parganas and the Sunderbans, you can see that a famine situation already prevails. The Government report says that they are feeding 1,60,000 people through private sources. There also the purchasing power of the people has gone down. Where the controlled rate was Rs. 17 a maund, it is now Rs. 32 per maund in Calcutta in the fair price shops. In the name of fair price shops, in the name of the new method of implementation of the Madras experiment in Bengal, they are bringing the price to the legalised level of Rs. 32 per maund, and I can show that the situation is in no way better in Bengal than in Madras. This will be the situation, if this experiment is followed by the Government, all over the country, and now our Government comes to us and asks 'Do you want control or decontrol?'. What we require is that every ounce of paddy or rice that is available with the stockists and the landlords must be procured in toto, and they should not have the licence to sell things at their own rates; they are not the masters to dictate at what prices the things should be sold, and they are not the people to decide the fate of thousands of millions of people. As a result of the procurement policy the Government had procured from the middle-class and the poor peasants whatever they had, with the result that the people have developed an averseness to control. This is due to the maladministration of controls and the policy of the Government that has been followed so far in this connection. When people are threatened with this situation, the Government are putting the question: "Do you want control or decontrol?" In that way, they are protecting the landlords and inviting them to get themselves enriched at the expense of the people. Therefore, I say, that the Rajaji experiment must be put an end to, and that the Government should come forward to feed the people. The people must get their ration of seven ounce or more, per day. As to whether this will be done through fair price shops in the urban cities or in the villages etc., I can only say that it has to be decided by the Government with this objective in view that the people should be fed at cheaper prices. In the famine-stricken areas, they must be distributed free rice, because they are not able to pur-

chase what is sold in the fair price shops. For instance, in Travancore-Cochin, in Shertalai-Ambalapuzha taluks, where the coir industry has failed, even if rice is distributed at a lower price, the people are unable to purchase, because the whole industry has collapsed, and as a result their purchasing power as well. In the same ways rice should be distributed freely in Malabar, Tellichery, Camanore and other places where the handloom industry has collapsed. In my own districts in Madras State also, I would say that free distribution should be started. Wherever necessary more gruel centres should be opened. (Interruption).

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER in the Chair]

Yes, there is demand for them. If you go to Udumalpet taluk, you can see half-naked women and men standing in queues, in the hot sun, in large numbers, for a cup of this gruel *kanji* that is distributed. It is not even rice *kanji*, but it is *cholam kanji*. I saw it with my own eyes. You will find the same situation in Alleppey and other places throughout the South. (Interruption). I saw with my own eyes, and do you want to say that it has to be denied? In these circumstances, what I say is that I want the people to be fed properly. If you cannot feed them with rice, at least give them gruel or some *kanji* or *ragi*, because there is a demand even for that. But do not go on with this experiment which would.....

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Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Is not that measure to be adopted independently of food control?

Shri Nambiar: The question is whether you have the food control or not! What is the result? You make the people suffer. You call it decontrol or you call it by whatever other name. You have not alleviated the condition of the masses. You are thinking whether more money can be made by decontrolling in such a way that those landlords and the rich stockists and the traders may be benefited more. Whether more money will be made or not—that is the discussion. (An Hon. Member: No, no). That is the discussion in its context. You may not put it in that form. I can understand that. But that is the discussion. I can understand from the Madras and Bengal figures. What is that levy system that you are having in Bengal? You say above ten acres there must be a limit. For the 1,000-acre man also you have put a limit. But between the 1,000-acre man and the 10-acre man, what is the difference? There is no difference.

(Interruption). There may be a slight difference. You get from the 1,000-acre man on the same scale as you get from the ten acre man. (Interruption). The proportion may be a little different. But my point is that you should not take anything from the man who has got ten acres or twelve acres or thirteen acres and that you should take everything, that is, above the minimum allowed for his consumption, from the man who has got 1,000 acres. Have you done that? I can give you facts and figures from Bengal. In Bengal 40 per cent. of the land is owned by 30 to 40 thousand people *Zamindars* and *Jotedars* and they control 30 per cent. of the stocks of foodgrains, which come to ten lakhs. Out of these ten lakhs, leaving a margin for them to eat—two lakhs—if you procure all the eight lakhs, then the deficit in Bengal can be made up. Not only that, but you can send something to Madras. But are you taking these eight lakhs in full? No. Not only are you not taking that, but you are allowing them to sell at their prices at the cost of the ordinary man in Bengal, in Madras and throughout India and make the whole food policy completely go sattered over the country and you come here and say: 'All our control, all our rationing has failed. Therefore, let us go to the good old method of supply and demand and let us do whatever is possible'. You never accept the fact that people are starving and dying. Is it not a fact that reports are appearing daily in the papers that so many are committing suicide for want of food? Is it not a fact that you get daily figures in the Press saying that people have gone starving and due to want of food they are committing suicide? (Interruptions). You have always suppressed those figures. You never allow this sort of news to come to the forefront. And here in the House let us see the discussion that has continued for two days! The discussion is whether there should be control or decontrol? If there should be decontrol, how, and whether it should be in a graded way or a gradual way or whether it has to be qualified by some other term.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The hon. Member has taken 15 minutes.

Shri Nambiar: I will finish, Sir, therefore, I submit that I completely disapprove of the policy enunciated or likely to be enunciated by Mr. Kidwai. Whether there is any difference between Mr. Deshmukh and Pandit Nehru on the one side and Mr. Kidwai on the other, that is a matter for judgment. If at all the policy pursued in the south by Mr. Rajagopalachari is to be continued—I do not know whether it

[Shri Nambiar]

is the Rajaji plan or Kidwai plan—then there must be an end to that here and now and we must get an assurance from Mr. Kidwai that it will never be followed in any part of India. It is very necessary to put an end to this Rajaji policy. Otherwise the people of Madras—and I am one of them and I represent many there—suffer (interruption) and some immediate relief must be sent to Madras to save them from the dangers of this policy.

श्री टंडन (ज़िला इलाहाबाद-पश्चिम):
उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, जी मैं इस प्रश्न पर उसी रास्ते से बहस नहीं करूंगा जिस रास्ते को हमारे अधिक सदस्यों ने अपनाया है। उस रास्ते पर भी मैं चलने का प्रयत्न करता, परन्तु उस में इतना समय लग जायेगा कि मैं जो मुख्य मौलिक बात निवेदन करना चाहता हूँ उसके ऊपर बल नहीं आ सकेगा। इसलिये मैं एक दो प्रश्नों की ओर ही आप का ध्यान दिलाना चाहता हूँ।

हमारे प्रधान मंत्री ने आज एक कुछ मजेदार बात कही। उन्होंने अंग्रेज़ी में बोलते हुए कहा कि हम देश भर के लिये 'हाउस कीपिंग' (house keeping) कर रहे हैं। बात मुनने में बड़ी अच्छी लगी। देश भर के लिये हाउस कीपिंग करना अच्छा आदर्श है। बूढ़ी दादी कहती है कि हमारा तो बड़ा भारी कुटुम्ब है, हम सब कुटुम्ब को रोटी देंगी, सब कुटुम्ब की रसोई की चिन्ता करेंगी। देश भर की हाउस कीपिंग ऐसी ही बात है। कुटुम्ब भर की, इस देश भर के कुटुम्ब के चूल्हों की चिन्ता यदि यह गवर्नमेंट कर सकती तब तो बहुत ही सुन्दर व्यवस्था होती। परन्तु वास्तविकता यह है कि वह सब चूल्हों की चिन्ता नहीं कर सकती है। और वह इस बात का दायित्व, इस बात की जिम्मेदारी, भी नहीं लेती कि हम हर पुरुष को और हर स्त्री को रोटी पहुँचायेंगे। आज तक उस ने कमी दायित्व नहीं लिया। वह प्रयत्न

करेगी, यह कहा, परन्तु यह दायित्व कि हमारे देश में कोई आदमी भूखा नहीं रहने पायेगा, इसका कोई दायित्व गवर्नमेंट ने नहीं लिया। यह आप भूलिये नहीं। यह मौलिक बात है। तो जब लोग इस तरह का चित्र खींचते हैं कि लोग इधर भूखों मर रहे हैं, उधर मर रहे हैं, उसके यह मानी नहीं हो सकते कि नियंत्रण या विनियंत्रण की नीति के कारण ऐसा है। उस स्थिति के दूसरे कारण हैं। अगर यह गवर्नमेंट यह जिम्मेदारी लेने के लिये तैयार होती कि हम हर एक की चिन्ता करेंगे, किसी को बेकार नहीं रहने देंगे, तब तो उन दलीलों में वर्तमान विषय से कोई सम्बन्ध होता, नहीं तो वह असंगत है, उनका उम प्रश्न से कोई सम्बन्ध नहीं है जो उस समय विचाराधीन है।

मैं इस कंट्रोल या डीकंट्रोल के प्रश्न को या कहां तक नियंत्रण किस अंश तक अपनियंत्रण इसको इस दृष्टि से देखना हूँ कि हमारी योजना हमारे समाज के स्तर को ऊंचा करती है या उसके नीचा करती है। मेरे सामने यह मुख्य प्रश्न होता है। हमें एक रोटी की जगह सया रोटी मिलती है, इसको मैं जीवन के लिये गोण मानता हूँ। यह सही है कि हम रोटी खाते हैं और रोटी की बदौलत जीते हैं। लेकिन रोटी, रोटी, सुबह से शाम तक रोटी, यह क्या है? हम मनुष्य हैं या पशु हैं, कि कुत्ते की तरह जहाँ भी रोटी मिली दुम हिलाने लगे। हमारे और भी काम हैं। हमें देखना है कि गवर्नमेंट जो काम करती है उससे हमारा नैतिक तल गिरने तो नहीं पाता है। मैं इसका विरोधी नहीं हूँ कि गवर्नमेंट बूढ़ी दादी बन कर सबके चूल्हों की चिन्ता करे। आप इसे उठाइये, अगर आप में शक्ति है। लेकिन आप बूढ़ी दादी तो बन और साथ ही साथ आप ऐसे गुमास्तों को रखें जो आपकी मंशा पूरी करने के बजाये समाज के स्तर को अधिक नीचा करें इस से देश गिरता है। मैंने जो देखा है, वह मैं

अपने अनुभव की बात कहता हूँ। आप की जो पुरानी नियंत्रण की नीति थी उसमें आप ने मूल्यों को बांधा था। अमुक, वस्तु आपके निश्चित मूल्य से अधिक पर न बिके, यह आप की नीति थी। उस का क्या परिणाम हुआ ? चारों ओर बेईमानी, न केवल बेचने वालों की तरफ से—वह तो उसके आदी हैं लेकिन खरीदने वालों की तरफ से भी होने लगी।

मैं अपने अनुभव की एक मिसाल देता हूँ। मैं एक संस्था का अध्यक्ष हूँ। उस संस्था के पास कुछ भूमि है, उस भूमि में कुछ चना बोया गया। वह भूमि पंजाब में पानीपत के पास है। हमारे प्रबन्धक ने आ कर मुझ से कहा कि हमारे पास चना हुआ है, उसे हमें बेचना है। चारों ओर हमारा चना १७ रुपये मन मांगा जा रहा है और १७ रुपये मन बिक रहा है। पंजाब के बड़े बड़े खेतिहर लोग हैं, उन में एक एम० एल० भी हैं, वह सब १७ रुपये मन चना बेच रहे हैं। यह बता कर कि हम से भी खेत के ऊपर १७ रुपये मन मांगा जा रहा है, मेरे प्रबन्धक ने पूछा कि क्या मैं उसको इस भाव बेच दूँ। उस समय गवर्नमेंट का निर्यात १२ रुपये मन का था। दिल्ली, पंजाब और उत्तर प्रदेश में शायद दो चार आने का फ़र्क रहा हो। मैं ने उस से कहा कि अगर तुम १७ रुपये मन बेचोगे तो वह तो गवर्नमेंट के नियम के विरुद्ध होगा। तुम हमको भी ब्लैक मार्केटियर बना दोगे; तब उस ने कहा कि फिर पांच रुपये प्रति मन का घाटा बर्दाश्त करके आप खेती तो नहीं कर सकते। मैंने उससे कहा कि खेती हो यान हो, लेकिन हमारी संस्था एक अनैतिक काम करे, मैं इस की इजाजत नहीं दे सकता। मैं ने उसको कहा कि तुम गरीबों को १२ रुपये मन के हिसाब से ही अपना चना बेचो। उसने १२ रुपये मन के हिसाब से बहुत से गरीबों को चना दिया। हां ! इस से

हमारी संस्था को घाटा ज़रूर हुआ। वह दूसरी बात है। वह फिर मेरे पास आया और उस ने कहा कि इस तरह से तो काम नहीं चलेगा, आप हम को भैंस खरीद दीजिये, तो हम उसको १२ रुपये मन चना खिला सकेंगे और हम अपना दूध बिकरी के वास्ते दिल्ली भेज देंगे। उस ने मुझे बतलाया कि इस तरह कुछ बचत हो जायेगी और मैंने उसके सुझाव को स्वीकार कर लिया। यह मैं आप को एक उदाहरण दे रहा हूँ, जो स्वयं अपने ऊपर बीती बात है। चारों तरफ तो १७ रुपये चने का भाव है, खेत के ऊपर १७ रुपये का भाव है और खेतिहर खेत पर १७ रुपये के हिसाब से चना बेच रहे हैं परन्तु दिल्ली में केन्द्रीय गवर्नमेंट यह आशा करती है कि चना १२ रुपये मन पर बिकेगा ! यह क्या कोई अक्ल की बात है ? मेरी तो इस बारे में कुछ मिनिस्ट्रों से भी बात हुई। एक ने कहा कि हम भी तो उसी भाव खरीदते हैं जिस भाव पर बाज़ार में चना बिक रहा है। बाज़ार भाव उस समय यहाँ पर २०-२१ रुपये मन का था। मैं एक दूसरी संस्था को जानता हूँ जहाँ छात्रों को चना खिलाना पड़ता था, वहाँ के प्रबन्धक २०, २१ रुपये मन चना लेते थे, क्योंकि राशन में केवल ६ छटांक था और छः छटांक में वहाँ के तगड़े लड़कों का गुज़ारा नहीं होता था। लड़के लगभग ८, ९ छटांक खाते हैं, पूरा भोजन देने की संस्था के प्रबन्धक चना बाज़ार भाव पर खरीदते थे। कुछ दिनों बाद मैंने उन से कहा कि यह चना आप कैसे खरीदते हैं, यह तो अनुचित और नियम विरुद्ध है। वह इस प्रश्न में कुछ घुसे तब मालूम हुआ कि वह बाज़ार में चना खरीदते हैं परन्तु किताबों में मटर लिखा जाता है। व्यापारी अपनी इस तरह बचत करते थे, क्योंकि मटर के ऊपर आपका कोई दाम नियत नहीं था। यह बात मैंने आप को मिसाल के तौर पर बतलाई। ऐसे ही गुड़ के बारे में हालत

[श्री टंडन]

श्री गुड़ का भाव गवर्नमेंट ने उस समय १९ रुपये मन निश्चित किया था। आज तो उसका भाव बहुत गिर गया है। मैं उस समय की बात बतलाना चाहता हूँ जब गुड़ का भाव १९ रुपया मन निश्चित था। एक रोज मुझे रखनऊ में खांसी आ रही थी, मैं चीनी नहीं खाया करता, और न ही चाय का सेवन करता हूँ। मेरे आदमी ने कहा कि आप के लिये तुलसी और अदरक की चाय बनायी जाय, उस में गुड़ पड़ता है। नौकर बाजार से चार आने का एक पाव गुड़ ले आया, मुझे जब गुड़ का भाव मालूम हुआ तो मैंने अपने नौकर से कहा कि तुमने चार आने पाव के भाव से गुड़ खरीद कर मुझको ब्लैक मार्केटियर बना दिया, क्योंकि इस तरह तो गुड़ का भाव चालीस रुपये मन का पड़ा।

श्री किबबई : आप ने बेचा नहीं, खाया।

श्री टंडन : मगर खाने वाला भी तो ब्लैक मार्केटर हो जाता है। मैंने उस समय के जो मिनिस्टर थे उनको यह बात बतलाई और कहा कि हालत यह है, यह मेरा पाप है और आप मेरे ऊपर मुकदमा चलायें। नौकर की भूल के कारण मैं इस पाप में लिप्त हो गया। मैं यह बात इसलिये कह रहा हूँ कि इस प्रकार के कंट्रोल और नियन्त्रण से समाज गिरता है और उस का भला नहीं होता। गवर्नमेंट जब किसी वस्तु पर कोई सीलिंग प्राइस (cealing price) लगाती है तो उसकी इतनी बुद्धि तो होनी चाहिये कि वह प्राइस (price) ऐसी हो जो चल सके। मुझे खुशी है कि बाद को हमारे मिनिस्टर ने वह सीलिंग प्राइस उड़ा दी। मेरे कहने का मतलब यह है कि जब आप किसी चीज का अधिकतम मूल्य निश्चित करते हैं

तो आपमें इतनी बुद्धि तो होनी चाहिये कि बैठ कर यह समझें कि किस भाव में यह चीज वाकई बिक सकती है। आप को इतना तो समझना चाहिये था कि बनिया जो छोटी दुकान ले कर बैठा है, वह हाथरस की मंडी के भाव से तो नहीं बेच सकता। आप ने तो १९ रुपये गुड़ का भाव नियत कर दिया। सम्भव है कि हाथरस में आप को १९ रुपये के हिसाब से मिल जाता लेकिन वह बनिया जो सड़क के किनारे पर बैठ कर बेचता है, वह तो हाथरस की मंडी के भाव से नहीं बेच सकता। नतीजा यह होता है कि वह कुछ बढ़े हुए भाव पर बेचता है और उसकी दुकान से जितने आदमी खरीदते हैं वह सब ब्लैक मार्केटर बन जाते हैं क्योंकि उस की दुकान से खरीदने में १९ रुपये के भाव से ज्यादा देना पड़ता है। मैं कहता हूँ कि आप की यह नीति देश को बर्बाद करने वाली है, यह कोई नीति नहीं है और जो लोग इस नीति का समर्थन करते हैं, उनको सोचना चाहिये और देश को सम्हालना चाहिये। कोई भी कंट्रोल अथवा नियन्त्रण जिस का आप अच्छी तरह से पालन नहीं कर सकते, नहीं रखना चाहिये। मेरी समझ में १००, २००, १०००, २००० या लाख दो लाख आदमियों का भूखा मर जाना अच्छा है, इस की अपेक्षा कि आप चोरी करके लायें और खायें खिलायें। यह देश का पतन है। जो मंत्रिगण नियन्त्रण के पक्ष में हैं, उन से मैं कहना चाहता हूँ कि अगर आप बूढ़ी दादी का ईन्तजाम करते हैं, तो उसके लिये आप के हाथों में शक्ति होनी चाहिये। लेकिन आप के तो हाथ कांप रहे हैं और आप के आदमी बराबर बेईमानी करते रहते हैं। इस कंट्रोल की बदौलत आप के एक एक राशनिंग इंस्पेक्टर को बेईमानी और रिश्वत लेने का अवसर मिलता है। मैं इलाहाबाद की एक छोटी सी मंडी का हाल जानता हूँ। हमारे एक बड़े

विषयसनीय कांग्रेस कार्यकर्ता ने मुझे कई बार बताया कि हमारे जिले की एक छोटी सी मंडी में एक इन्स्पेक्टर रोज लगभग १०० रुपया ऊपर से पैदा कर लेता है। उस की माहवारी तनख्वाह मुश्किल से सवा सौ या डेढ़ सौ रुपया रही होगी वह आठ आने प्रति बोरे के हिसाब से जो मंडी में आता है, व्यापारियों से बसूल करता है, बोरे लाने वाले तो आखिर हमारे व्यापारी भाई होते हैं, जो कहीं भी पैसा देने को तैयार रहते हैं, जहां पर उन को पैसा मिलने का रास्ता दिखाई पड़े। लेकिन साथ ही आप के जो आदमी हैं, जिनको आप इस कंट्रोल व्यवस्था को चलाने के लिये नौकर रखते हैं, राशनिंग इन्स्पेक्टर, (Rationing Inspectors) और प्रोक्योरमेंट इन्स्पेक्टर (Procurement Inspectors) यह भी बेईमानी करते हैं और नतीजा यह होता है कि भ्रष्टाचार बहुत फैल जाता है। मैं आप से केवल इतना ही कहना चाहता हूँ और यह सब बतलाने का मेरा उद्देश्य यही है कि आप जो कुछ भी करें, यह सदा ध्यान में रखें कि उस से समाज पर क्या असर पड़ता है और आप का वह कदम समाज के नैतिक स्तर को किधर ले जा रहा है। यह ठीक है कि बेईमानी संसार भर में है, बेईमानी हमारे देश में भी है।

पुलिस का विभाग सब से अधिक रिश्वत लेने में मशहूर था, हम यह भी जानते थे कि अदालतों में मुंसरिम और डिग्री नवीस खुला हुआ पैसा लिया करते हैं और हमारे बकीलों को इस का खूब अनुभव है, लेकिन जब से यह सफ़्लाई विभाग खुला है, मेरा तो अपना यह अनुमान है कि रिश्वतखोरी में इस ने सब को मात कर दिया है।

बहुत आप पक्ष करते हैं कंट्रोल का। कंट्रोल का मैं हर सूरत में विरोध नहीं करता। लेकिन आप समझें कि जो आप चाहते हैं उस को

पूरा करा सकें अगर आप अधिक सक्ती से दाम बाँचेंगे तो आप का बाँधा हुआ दाम चलेगा नहीं। मैं मिनिस्ट्रों से कहना चाहता हूँ कि अपने हृदय पर हाथ रखें। क्या वह कह सकते हैं कि उनके घरों में, जिस समय गवर्नमेंट का मूल्य चने के लिये १२ रुपये मन था, वह १८ रुपये और १९ रुपये मन नहीं आया? वह पूछें अपने घर में जा कर, अपने हाउस कीपर से पूछें, अपने यहां की औरतों से पूछें।

श्री सी० डी० बेशमुख : मैं तो चना खाता नहीं।

श्री टंडन : आप ज़रा अपनी पत्नी से भी पूछिये आप नहीं खाते तो क्या हुआ।

श्री अलगू राय शास्त्री (आज़मगढ़ ज़िला—पूर्व तथा बलिया ज़िला-पश्चिम) बेसन के पकोड़े खाते हैं या नहीं ?

श्री टंडन : आप के नौकर हैं, रिश्तेदार हैं, वह खाते हैं या नहीं ? हां ! मैं असम्भव नहीं मानता, मैं मानता हूँ कि बहुत ध्यान अगर आप रखें तो यह गलत चीज़ नहीं होने पायेगी और आप सफल होंगे। परन्तु इतना ध्यान कौन देता है ? जो महत्व के घन्चों में लगा हुआ है, वह देखे कि नौकर क्या भाव सामान लाता है यह साधारण रीति से होता नहीं। वास्तविकता यह है कि घर घर में मंहगा खरीदने वाले पड़े हुए हैं, हम केवल व्यापारियों को दोष देते हैं, लेकिन जिन लोगों को खाने का शौक है जिन लोगों को खाने के विषय में उदासीनता है उन की बात और है—लेकिन जो लोग खाने पीने के शौकीन हैं, जो चाहते हैं कि उन को दस चीज़ें खाने को मिलें, आप को मालूम है कि प्रायः उन सब के यहां गलत तरीके से सौदा आता है। मैं तो यह निवेदन करता हूँ कि आप व्यापारियों को बहुत अवसर न दें बेईमानी करने का और जो माल के खरीदने वाले हैं उन की भी संभाल कीजिये आप उन को लाचार

[श्री टंडन]

कसब मनुष्य इतनी सस्ती के साथ अपना जीवन बिताने के आदी नहीं हैं कि वह हर समय इस बात का ध्यान रखें कि निश्चित मूल्य से अधिक पर कोई वस्तु मोल न ली जाय। बस में इस एक दृष्टिकोण पर आप का ध्यान दिलाना चाहता हूँ। आप की नीति चाहे जो कुछ भी हो, आप कंट्रोल रखना चाहते हो या नहीं, लेकिन आज की नीति में मुझ को यह बात अच्छी लगी कि हमारे देश में जो बेईमानी करने का दस्तूर पड़ गया था उस में इस नीति से कुछ कमी हुई है। यह फायदा तो मैं देख सकता हूँ। हो सकता है कि कहीं कुछ चीजें मंहगी हों गई हों, जैसा कि मेरे कुछ भाई कहते हैं लेकिन यह लाभ में प्रत्यक्ष देखता हूँ कि आज अगर हमें किसी चीज की जरूरत हो तो हम कुछ ज्यादा पैसा देकर खरीद सकते हैं, बिना किसी सरकारी नियम को तोड़े हुए। फ़ेयर प्राइस शॉप्स (fair price shops) की बजाय जबर्दस्त राशनिंग करने के काम चल जाना चाहिये। जो गरीब हैं उन के लिये आप बराबर इन्तजाम रखें शहरों में। लेकिन हम सब भूलते हैं कि जिन लोगों को हम राशन के द्वारा मदद देते हैं उन की तादाद कुल जनता को देखते हुए कितनी कम है। देहातों में तो आप पहुंच ही नहीं पाते। उन की तादाद बहुत बड़ी है जो लोग देहातों में रहते हैं। जैसा प्रधान मंत्री ने कहा था कि एक तरफ आप शहर के राशन की चिन्ता करते हैं, दूसरी तरफ उन्होंने कहा कि ऐसे लोग हैं जो कि खुद अनाज बो लेते हैं। यानी किसान। ठीक है, लेकिन जो तीसरी श्रेणी है जिस के पास ज़मीन नहीं है, किसानी नहीं करते, और जो शहरों में रह कर तन्ख्वाह नहीं पाते और मजदूरी नहीं करते उन की तादाद बहुत बड़ी है। किसानों की अपेक्षा भी कहीं ज्यादा है, उन की आप ने क्या चिन्ता की। उनके पास तो आप पहुंच भी नहीं सकते, उन का इन्तजाम भी नहीं कर सकते।

मेरे कहने का सार यह है कि आप इस एक सिद्धांत को न भूले चाहे कुछ भी हो। मरना जीना तो लगा ही रहता है, जिन की आप रक्षा कर सकें अवश्य करें, लेकिन यह ध्यान रखें कि आप की कोई नीति इस तरह की न हो जिस से समाज का स्तर नीचा हो और जिससे बेचने वालों में बेईमानी बढ़े या जिस में कि यह प्रवृत्ति हो कि खरीदार बेईमानी करे। बस, यही मेरा सुझाव है।

Shri Kidwai: Sir, I have listened with interest to the speeches of the different Members. I am sorry that the debate which was to take place on the present food situation and Government's food policy has been converted into a discussion of control versus decontrol. In my opening speech, I had stated what the aims of Government were in regard to the policy of controls. These controls were introduced during war-time to feed the cities at reasonable prices. The prices in the open market were very high and, therefore, Government had to procure grain by levying something on each producer and to sell the procured grain to the cities at comparatively low prices. Now, the situation is different. We are now trying to develop this country according to a plan known as the Five-Year Plan. During this period, we have to keep the prices down. Therefore, some sort of control has to be maintained. As I had stated, our objectives are to produce more and more in this country, so that, in the course of the next few years, we may not have to import any foodgrains in large quantities and we may be able to so arrange the distribution that everybody, both in the rural and urban areas, may get the foodgrains at reasonable prices. We have been trying to present form of controls since 1944-45 or, to be more correct, since 1946. We have to see whether we have gained our objectives. If you compare the ration shop prices of today with those in 1946, you will find that, except in some places and in respect of some commodities, there has been a rise of from 30 to 90 per cent in regard to different commodities. There has been a rise in the distribution price as well as the procurement price. As I had stated, although more land has been brought under cultivation, in the south, our production has gone down. Mr. Gadgil has questioned the figures. I may tell him that the area under cultivation today in regard to cereals

is 189 million acres, while in 1947-48 it was only 172 million acres, i.e. an increase of 17 million acres. In 1950-51, the acreage was 193 million, but four million have gone out of cereal cultivation between 1951 and 1952. There has been a corresponding increase in the area under commercial crops.

Shri S. S. More: Does the hon. Minister accept the reliability of the agricultural statistics?

Shri Kidwai: I am coming to that also. My contention is that the statistics are not correct. They are much under-valued.

The other thing is that there has been an increase in production in North India and a decrease in South India. Amongst others, I have also cited Punjab. We are told that in Punjab procurement is ideal and that there is nothing to worry. I am afraid my hon. colleague the Finance Minister has been misled by the figures. I have got the figures before me.

Now, in Punjab and Uttar Pradesh, the procurement system is known as monopoly procurement. In 1947, 1948 and 1949, procurement in Punjab was 46,000 tons, a very insignificant figure compared to production. If monopoly procurement had worked well, the figure would have been at least 50 times more. In 1949, 1950 and 1951 when the outside prices were lower than the procurement prices, procurement naturally went up to figures in lakhs. I have got the prices of that area before me. I stand by what I have said that where procurement has been loose and leaky, production has gone up.

My hon. friend has asked me why I question the statistics produced by the different Government Departments. I have tried to find out our production in each State and what is the requirement of each State, and then I came across startling figures. I have come to know that Rajasthan, which is supposed to be self-sufficient and does not depend upon imports except when the crops are bad, is only producing 110 lbs. per head per year, which means it is living on less than five oz. a day. I call it ridiculous, because nobody in Rajasthan can live on less than five oz. per day. It seems that the old States had no records. There were no *patwaris* and the old *jagirdars* did not allow any records to be sent to Government. Even when the present Rajasthan Government was formed in parts the *zamindars* opposed the appointment of *patwaris*. Therefore, there are no records. If Rajasthan is

considered to be self-sufficient, its production must be calculated on the basis of 12 or 16 oz. per head, or even more. That is why I call our figures defective.

The same is the case in regard to other States as well. If we keep away these States which claim to be self-sufficient we find that the requirements of the deficit States can be easily met from the surplus States. Now, here are the figures of production per capita in each different State. The hon. Members will appreciate that these are not figures sent by the States themselves, but collected by the I.C.A.R. by a sample survey.

Assam's gross availability is 375 lbs per head; it is self-sufficient Bihar, whose availability is 226 lbs. per head, also claims to be self-sufficient, except when crops are bad and when imports have to come. Bombay, which we call deficit, has 263 lbs per head. If Bihar can be self-sufficient, then Bombay should also be considered self-sufficient, but it is considered a deficit State. Madhya Pradesh has 488 lbs. Madras gets 284 lbs. that is much more than Bihar. Orissa's availability is 543 lbs, Punjab's 315 lbs. and Uttar Pradesh's 291 lbs. Similarly, West Bengal gets 378 lbs. I think no State can be more self-sufficient than this. It is, in fact, a surplus State. Rajasthan, as I have said, gets 110 lbs. and Saurashtra 156 lbs. Saurashtra says it is deficit in rice. Four years back, it was producing 5,000 tons of rice per year. It has been increased to 36,000 tons, and this year this State has supplied 2,000 tons to the neighbouring State of Kutch. Otherwise, it is self-sufficient, except that this year the monsoon has been bad and therefore it wants some millets. But, according to these figures, its availability is only 156 lbs. Travancore-Cochin gets 184 lbs. I think it is correct, because it is living on subsidiary food. Ajmer has 142 lbs. Bhopal is surplus, and according to these figures, its availability is 258 lbs. Therefore, I thought that restrictions on movements were holding up stocks in some areas and an artificial scarcity was produced in other areas.

Our aim, as I have said, is to reduce the prices and to improve the availability of grains. Therefore, relaxation was tried in some States, like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madras, and some forms of relaxation in almost all the States, except Bengal and Bombay. Now, the figures supplied to the hon. Members will show, there has been a decrease in prices in almost every State. An hon. Member from Madras has compared the rationshop prices with the open-market prices. He has:

[Shri Kidwai]

forgotten that these ration shops are still functioning, supplying the same quantity as was being supplied when rationing was there. He has said that the Madras Government is now trying to get away from its responsibility. I find that they are feeding more people today than they were doing when rationing was there. I am sorry the rains have failed in Madras, and this requires special attention. I do not think anybody will contend that the rains have failed because Rajaji has become the Chief Minister and he has introduced decontrol. If controls had been there and rains had failed, then the position would have been worse. Now, as many Members, including our Deputy-Speaker, have said, there is no scarcity of grain. It is available in abundance and at reasonable prices. Government shops are also functioning.

Shri Nambiar: In one breath the hon. Minister says that because there are no rains there are no grains; in another, he says that there is abundance of grain and there is no difficulty about its availability.

Shri Kidwai: Grain is in abundance because it has been sent from the surplus areas, because Government stocks are being used there to supply the needy people. So, all that is required is being done and if the scarcity conditions continue, the Madras people will get all the help they require and people will be fed.

When the acreage is not correct, then it becomes difficult, as in the case of Rajasthan and Madhya Bharat. In respect of Madhya Bharat, which is supposed to be a surplus area, I find that from the acreage given, it is producing not more than 185 lbs. per head. Therefore, the mistake has to be corrected.

But we have got one figure which I think Members will try to judge from the results: we know what is our stock. In 1952, we had a carry-over of 13.3 lakh tons. Then we imported, during the year, 39 lakh tons. That made it 52 lakh tons. Now, our carryover for the next year, that is at the close of the year, is expected to be 18 lakh tons. Therefore, we have consumed less than what we have imported.

Shri S. S. More: Is it not due to the lessening of the purchasing power of the people? They are not able to purchase so much.

Shri Kidwai: But the grain is being sold cheaper, in whatever quantities

and wherever it is required. This year, compared to last year, on account of the free market, there was less consumption from Government shops than during last year. Last year, the offtake from Government shops was 7.76 million tons, and 126 million people were served in the rationed, non-rationed and scarcity areas. This year, on account of scarcity in U.P. and Bengal, the number of people served from Government shops rose from 126 million to 133 million. But, as the grain was available in the open-market in most of these areas, except in Bengal, the offtake from Government shops went down from 7.76 million tons to 6.8 million tons. The number of people served was more but the offtake was less than last year. This also shows that relaxation in certain areas is helping in bringing more foodgrains into the market than was available before. But, as I have said, the aim is to produce more foodgrains and to distribute them at reasonable prices. Whenever we find that the situation requires any further strengthening of controls or relaxation, so that the prices may remain what they were before decontrol, all the measures will be taken.

As, I think, I had an opportunity of explaining earlier, with this relaxation of controls we have issued a new Foodgrains Order, which authorises Government to take over the stock with the dealer, if the prices in any area rise unduly, at the procurement price, plus a little expenses allowed, and to distribute it as cheaply as possible. I am sure, if the States act accordingly, there will be no difficulty in keeping the prices down.

I hope Members will remember that when rationing was relaxed in U.P. the prices of wheat rose from Rs. 16 to Rs. 22. Then the U.P. Government warned the dealers that unless the prices are brought down action would be taken under this Order. Then the prices came down to Rs. 17-8 and are now ranging between Rs. 17-8 and Rs. 19-4 according to the availability of wheat and the stocks in the market.

I hope Members will realise that we have not given up controls. I found, as I have said, that the controls we had in this country did not help in our objective, they did not increase production nor did they keep the prices down. As I have said, the prices rose from 30 to 90 per cent. in some places between 1948 and 1952. But relaxations in the restrictions on movement have again brought down the prices.

I have mentioned about Bihar once before and I would like to say it again because Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra has raised the point. There was rationing only in one city, i.e. in Jamshedpur; there was some sort of rationing in Patna city. Over the rest of the State, people had to live on the open market. Now, in the surplus areas, like Ranchi, the prices are lower, but in all the others they are high. Now, if you compare last year's prices with this year's, you will find that they are very much lower now.

The same has been the experience in U.P. The prices of all food commodities in that State now are lower than the control price, except of wheat. And the wheat prices are high because relaxations were made when the State Government had already procured a large quantity out of the surplus stock. Therefore, the prices naturally rose. Then, Government were selling at subsidised rates. They were purchasing at Rs. 16 a maund. And Government had to acquire from the Centre 2,18,000 tons of wheat at Rs. 20/8/- a maund (at port); later on, it was reduced to Rs. 18-8 a maund. But with the transport expenses it must be coming to over Rs. 20; and the incidental charges on wheat were Rs. three a maund. Therefore, had they not been subsidising it, they should have been selling wheat at about Rs. 21 or Rs. 22 a maund. Now, they have recently raised the price, and it is Rs. 18 a maund. There is, thus, hardly any difference between the open market and the controlled market.

There has been some discussion about the new step that is being taken. Some people have called it decontrol of millets; some have called it general decontrol. But it is nothing of the kind. The original proposal which I had made was that millets should be given free movement, as there was hardly any procurement of millets. The millet procurement in 1951 was less than six per cent. of the total production. In some areas, because the stocks of millets are more than the local requirement, the prices are falling. In some areas, because the requirement of millets is more than the availability, the prices are rising. The surplus States do not intend to procure millets because they are afraid that with the falling prices they may have to lose. I may tell the hon. Members that this has been the experience of the Madhya Pradesh and Hyderabad Governments who have from last year's stock, 70,000 tons each. The prices outside are lower than the prices at which they have been purchased, and they have made storage and other charges. The prices outside are

collapsing. One day, we received a report that in Wardha the prices were Rs. 6/4/- a maund. That means that the producer must have sold at Rs. 5/8/- a maund or even at less. Therefore, if the prices collapse we will suffer enough. Last year we had imported more than six lakhs tons. This year also there is a demand that we should import some. Bombay wants three lakhs tons of millets, Madras 40 lakhs tons, Mysore 80,000 tons and Saurashtra 50,000 tons, of which we have already given some from Hyderabad and Madhya Pradesh and they still require about 25,000 tons more. We hope that from the surplus areas of Madhya Pradesh, Madhya Bharat, Hyderabad, PEPSU and Punjab, we will be able to procure and supply to them, when we will not be required to import any more. This is the only change—you may call it decontrol, you may call it relaxation or you may call it extension of the procurement area, because up to now a State Government was authorised to procure within its jurisdiction but it was not allowed to go to other States for purchasing. Now my friend Mr. Gadgil has said, "Why not ask the State Governments to procure and supply to other Governments?"

Shri Gadgil: What I said was: "Do not allow private merchants either to buy or to sell in other States. Do it on the State level and through State agency".

Shri Kidwai: Private merchants do not come into the picture, except that the State Governments do not have control over milo. They will take it to their States and the final handling will be done by the State Governments.

Now, in the State-to-State dealing we shall see what are the additional charges besides the transport charges and the commission of the agents, because these have to be given over and above. Over and above them, the State Governments have got their own charges which makes the cost prohibitive. Supposing U.P. wants to send rice to Bombay. The price of coarse rice is Rs. 22 a maund while the transport charges are Rs. 3-12-7 a maund. Adding the transport and incidental charges, it comes to nearly Rs. 27 a maund. The Bombay Government add nine per cent. for handling charges, and by the time it reaches the consumer, Rs. 22 become Rs. 30. Therefore, I think, if we want to keep the prices down, all these charges have to be eliminated. This is what the new change is intended to do.

Shri H. N. Mukerjee (Calcutta North-East): According to the plan

[Shri H. N. Mukerjee]

named after the hon. Minister, West Bengal, it seems, was to have a levy on the surplus stocks with owners of 15 acres and over. Now it seems to have been changed and there is to be a levy on those who have ten acres and over. I want to know the reasons for it and also the reason why West Bengal, in the present position, is being required to give to the Central pool 1.5 lakhs tons.

Shri Kidwai: Orissa, for no fault of its own, has to give three lakhs tons. We asked Bengal and they willingly agreed to supply 1,50,000 tons. The claim that was preferred at that time was that a levy should be imposed on cultivators who cultivate 15 acres or more, but it was found that the figures on which the Bengal Government were calculating were old, pre-partition figures. Therefore, we thought that we would be able to secure four and a half lakhs tons by imposing a levy only on cultivators of 15 acres. Now, we find we were mistaken. Therefore, it has been revised and now the levy will be made on cultivators of ten acres or more.

Shri H. N. Mukerjee: Would it not mean privation for those who are least able to bear it?

Shri Kidwai: I hope the Member will see that it was originally proposed that when making the levy over surplus rice or paddy, seven maunds per unit would be allowed to be retained by the cultivator. Now, it has been relaxed a little so that each cultivator will be allowed ten maunds, i.e., about 22 oz. or more per head per day. I think that is a sufficient guarantee and there will be no hardship.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: There has been sufficient discussion for a couple of days on this motion from all sides of the House. Now I will put the amendments to the vote of the House.

Dr. Lanka Sundaram (Visakhapatnam): Sir, I beg to move for leave to withdraw my amendment.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Has the hon. Member leave of the House to withdraw his amendment?

The amendment was, by leave, withdrawn.

Sardar A. S. Saigal (Bilaspur): I beg to move for leave to withdraw my amendment which was moved on 17th November 1952 on the motion moved by Shri Rafi Ahmad Kidwai.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Has the hon. Member leave of the House to withdraw his amendment?

The amendment was, by leave, withdrawn.

Shri Sivamurthi Swami (Kushtagi): I am not withdrawing my amendment.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The question is:

That at the end of the motion, the following be added:

"and having considered the same, this House urges upon the Government—

- (1) to take firm and effective steps to make the Grow More Food Campaign a success by creating mixed agencies of State and its farmers among each group of villages in the State districts on co-operative basis with an active management to discharge the responsibility of executing the schemes of planned economy for concerned villages and thus for the whole mother State; and
- (2) to have an uniform policy towards decontrol and for the meanwhile to procure and to distribute certain foodgrains on fair prices to scarcity areas."

The motion was negatived.

5 P.M.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I shall now put Mr. Altekar's amendment

Dr. Lanka Sundaram: Sir, there is an amendment to this amendment, No. 5.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Is the hon. Member pressing the amendment?

Shri R. K. Chaudhuri (Gauhati): Yes.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I believe it was not moved at all. Amendments numbers 5, 6, 7 and 8 were not moved. I will only put the other amendments to the House.

Shri Raghavachari (Penukonda): The Speaker said that these would be allowed to be discussed this morning.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Hon. Members can speak on any number of things, moved or not moved.

Shri B. S. Murthy: The Speaker said that these amendments will be taken as moved.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: But, there is no record to that effect.

Sardar Hukam Singh (Kapurthala-Bhatinda): In the beginning, the names of hon. Members were called. Those who answered in the affirmative, their amendments were taken as moved. All these amendments were moved.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I find here in the Speaker's own handwriting only four amendments moved on 17th November 1952, that is, the amendments of Dr. Lanka Sundaram, Shri Sivamurthi Swami, Sardar Amar Singh Saigal and Mr. Ganesh Sadashiv Altekar. The three earlier amendments have already been disposed of by the House. I shall put the last amendment to the House. The other amendments have not been moved.

Shri Nambiar: I have sent notice of an amendment yesterday. It was circulated. This morning the Speaker said that the other amendments as printed will be taken as moved.

Shri R. K. Chaudhuri: May I mention, Sir, that I moved my amendment to the amendment immediately after the amendment was moved. Mr. Chatterjee was in the Chair at that time.

Some Hon. Members: Put them to the vote of the House.

Shri B. S. Murthy: The exact wording of the Speaker was, the other amendments as circulated are taken as moved.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: That was said yesterday.

Shri B. S. Murthy: Today.

Some Hon. Members: We were also here; we have not heard this.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The hon. Members will have the satisfaction of my placing them before the House. Now, the amendment to Mr. Altekar's amendment. The question is:

That in the amendment moved by Shri Ganesh Sadashiv Altekar, the following be omitted:

"without prejudice to the basic objectives."

The motion was negatived.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The question is:

That at the end of the motion, the following be added:

"and having considered the same, this House approves of the policy of Government regarding general control of foodgrains and welcomes the desire of Government to adjust the same to suit

local or temporary conditions without prejudice to the basic objectives."

The motion was adopted.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Mr. Jhunjhunwala.

Shri Jhunjhunwala (Bhagalpur Central): I did not move it, Sir.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Mr. Nambiar's amendment.

Shri Nambiar: I move it.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Moving it now?

Shri Nambiar: I have already moved it; I am not withdrawing.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Treating it as moved, I will put it to the House.

The question is:

That at the end.....

Shri Sinhasan Singh (Gorakhpur Dist.—South): On a point of order, Sir.....

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: In view of the amendment now carried by the House, how can the others be added? It is not clear to me.

Some Hon. Members: All the others are defeated.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: There is no harm. What is the point of order?

Shri Sinhasan Singh: The point of order is this. The other amendment was put to the House and carried by the House unanimously.

Some Hon. Members: Not unanimously.

Shri Sinhasan Singh: Nobody said 'No'.

Some Hon. Members: No, no.

Shri Sinhasan Singh: The other amendments need not be put to the House. How do they stand now?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The mere fact that the other amendment has been carried unanimously does not preclude this amendment unless this amendment covers the same ground. He wants to add something more.

Shri Kidwai: Inconsistently with that.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Yes, it can be fitted in. Let me not stand on technicalities. With respect to the motion that the Food policy be taken into consideration, a number of suggestions

[Mr. Deputy-Speaker]

can be made by various hon. Members. One suggestion is that adjustments may be made from time to time. That was carried by the House. Now, there are some more specific suggestions regarding the food policy, and what the Government has to do.

Shri Kidwai: The Speaker had disallowed two paras. in that.

Shri Nambiar: Not this amendment.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I have not got the record here; I do not find it. I shall put the whole amendment to vote.

The question is:

That at the end of the motion, the following be added:

"and having considered the same, this House is of opinion that—

- (i) that Government should take the responsibility of feeding the people;
- (ii) that more fair price shops should be opened in all the urban areas and in the deficit and rural areas in the State of Madras consulting the popular organisations of the peasants, workers and the people;
- (iii) that in the fair price shops all who apply should be given ration cards and distribution should be guaranteed at still more reduced prices;
- (iv) that in the famine areas in the various districts and taluks of Madras State free distribution of food stuff to the famine-stricken people be undertaken in addition to opening more gruel shops;

(v) that in order to achieve the above objective, procurement from landlords and stockists must be resorted to;

(vi) that the question of decontrol without specific reference to the possibility of implementing the above policy is harmful and disastrous."

The motion was negatived.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The question is:

That at the end of the motion, the following be added:

"and having considered the same, this House is of opinion that a very effective step to improve the food production would be to ensure governmental purchase at an economic price over a period of not less than five years".

The motion was negatived.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I will now put the main motion before the House as amended by Mr. Altekar's amendment which has been accepted by the House.

The question is:

"That the food situation be taken into consideration, and having considered the same, this House approves of the policy of Government regarding general control of foodgrains and welcomes the desire of Government to adjust the same to suit local or temporary conditions without prejudice to the basic objectives."

The motion was adopted.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The House now stands adjourned to 10-45 A.M. tomorrow.

The House then adjourned till a Quarter to Eleven of the Clock on Wednesday, the 19th November, 1952.