

[Shri Mentay Padmanabham]

karia Commission made some recommendations. Even though those recommendations are not to the best satisfaction, are not in the best interest of the States, most of the State Governments have agreed to them, and they are asking for the implementation of these recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission. In this document nothing has been said about them. They have absolutely no idea about what is happening between the Centre and the States. I do not know what the policy-makers of the new Government are thinking about the federal structure of the Constitution.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. NAGEN SAIKIA): Please conclude.

SHRI MENTAY PADMANABHAM: Tomorrow I will continue. There are some more points, and I have some more time.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. NAGEN SAIKIA): Okay. Now the Finance Minister will make a statement regarding gold transactions.

डॉ० रत्नाकर पांडेय : माननीय उप-सभाध्यक्ष जो हिंदी की प्रतिलिपि नहीं मिली है और यह बाबर होता है। नई सरकार आई है, तब पहली बार ही हो रहा है। हिंदी की कापी जब तक नहीं आए, कोई स्टेटमेंट हम नहीं सुनेंगे।

यह रूल है कि दोनों भाषाओं में कापी संसद में मिलती रहे। राज्य सभा का कार्यालय क्या कर रहा है? दोनों भाषाओं में कापी क्यों नहीं दे रहा है?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. NAGEN SAIKIA): I think now you have. For the information of the Members the copies are not circulated by the Rajya Sabha. I think now you have got the Hindi version of the copy also.

Statement by Minister—Gold Transactions

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI MANMOHAN SINGH): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, we are faced with balance of payments crisis of an unprecedented nature. Our foreign exchange reserves have, despite significant borrowings from the IMF in July 1990 and January 1991 fallen to a very low level. Due to the weakening of international confidence in the rupee, international commercial banks have become extremely reluctant to lend us money. For the same reason, inflow of remittances from non-resident Indians into foreign currency and rupee denominated general accounts with banks in India has ceased to be a positive figure and in the last month there were signs of a large net outflow on this account. All over the world, expectations about the future value of the rupee were highly unfavourable and this was encouraging India exporters to delay the remission of export proceeds to India and also encouraging illegal export of capital from India.

It is in this background, that we took the decision on 1st & 3rd July, 1991 to adjust the exchange value of the rupee. This action has had a favourable impact on the psychology of international markets and all the principal players therein. I am confident that over time, the exchange rate adjustment together with the trade policy reform measures we have taken our balance of payments will significantly improve and there will be a return of international confidence in our currency.

However, in the immediate run, we have a major liquidity problem. We have compressed our import bill to an unprecedented degree to save foreign exchange for import of only the most essential articles.

At the same time, we have large external debt service payments falling due. We have taken a firm decision to honour all our international

commitments and not to default on payment of debt.

We are, therefore, faced with a situation where we have large financing requirements which cannot be met immediately by increase in exports, or by further import compression, or by increased external borrowing from international commercial banks or by way of increased flow of remittances from non-resident Indians.

It was in this background that the previous Government led by Shri Chandra Shekhar took this decision to sell abroad 20 tonnes of gold out of Government stocks with an option to repurchase it at the end of six months. The actual export of this gold took place between 21st and 31st of May, 1991.

The previous Government had also agreed with the decision of the Reserve Bank of India that in the present difficult situation, upto 15 per cent of Reserve Bank of India gold could be sent abroad to be kept in safe custody with a Central Bank. The Reserve Bank of India's intention was to seek a short term loan against the pledge of gold sent out of India. Under Section 33(5) of the Reserve Bank of India, Section 33(5) of the Reserve Bank of India has the power to keep up to 15 per cent of its gold abroad and the Reserve Bank of India can take decisions in this regard on its own. However, for the sake of abundant caution the Reserve Bank of India consulted the previous Government and they agreed with the Reserve Bank of India's proposed course of action. When our Government came into power, I was aware of the decision of the Reserve Bank of India as concurred in by the previous Government. But I did not consider it wise to countermand that decision. In exercise of its powers, the Reserve Bank of India sent abroad 48 metric tonnes of gold on 4th July, 1991 to be kept in safe custody with the Bank of England. On 7th July, a

further quantity of 20.01 tonnes was sent. On 11th July, a further quantity of 10.01 tonnes was sent. On 18th July, a further quantity of 12.09 tonnes was sent. Thus in all, the Reserve Bank of India has sent abroad for safe custody with the Bank of England a total quantity of 46.91 tonnes.

Against the pledge of 46.91 tonnes of gold, the Reserve Bank of India can borrow for a period of one month at a time a total sum of about \$ 400 million to help us tide over the serious liquidity problems we are now facing.

With the transfer abroad of the final instalment of gold on 18th July, the whole operation has been completed as originally planned. For obvious security reasons, the movements of gold had necessarily to be done without prior public announcement. Hereafter no further gold from the Reserve Bank of India stock will be sent abroad.

The export of gold was a painful necessity. However, I am confident that the various measures we have now taken will, over a period of time, lead to a significant improvement of our balance of payments. It will be my sincere effort to work to bring back to India as early as possible the gold we have sent abroad.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. NAGEN SAIKIA): I shall call the Members who have already given their names for seeking clarifications. But at the same time I shall request them to be brief as much as they can. Shri A. G. Kulkarni.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI (Maharashtra): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I was a little surprised when a question came up in the Rajya Sabha two days back about the selling of gold by Government abroad to meet balance of payments crisis; and the Finance Minister explained the posi-

[Shri A. G. Kulkarni]

tion. Personally I have got great respect for the expertise of Shri Manmohan Singh on financial and monetary managements. However, here we are all political animals. We are not experts here. Some of us may be experts but we are mostly politicians. I shall be failing in my duty if I do not draw the attention of the Finance Minister to the feelings, the hurt feelings, of the people of this country. As I said on that day, the ethos and culture of this country are really so powerful that all your explanation has no meaning whatsoever to ladies or to persons of old age who have got certain vested interests in gold. Mr. Finance Minister, I am really surprised. You talk of security and all those things. I can understand. But your entire operation seems like a cloak-and-dagger performance. What is this? On that day, when you replied you could have said that you were sending another 10 tonnes. (Interruptions).

SHRI MANMOHAN SINGH: Sir, I would like to say this. (Interruptions).

SHRI MENTAY PADMANABHAM (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, let the hon. Minister reply after hearing others also.

SHRI MANMOHAN SINGH: Sir, on this one particular point I do want to say that it was not any double action. If I had announced that I was sending gold abroad, with people indulging in terrorist activities around, that plane could be hijacked, that plane could be drowned in the sea. If I did all these things in the glare of publicity, I could have endangered the lives of several passengers by plane. I want Members to realise the situation that we are faced with. Suppose somebody sends a rumour that a particular passenger plane is carrying gold. Not only there would be danger to the gold; there would be danger to the lives of all those people who might be travelling by such a plane.

In this background, I would be absolutely irresponsible if I were to say before sending this gold that I was going to send it.

श्री राम अवधेश सिंह (बिहार): मान्यवर यह नहीं कहा जा रहा है कि आप किस जहाज से सोना भेज रहे हैं, इसकी पब्लिसिटी करें ... (व्यवधान) ...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. NAGEN SAIKIA): Mr. Ram Awadhesh Singh, please take your seat. When your turn comes you have your say.

श्री राम अवधेश सिंह: मान्यवर, वित्त मंत्रीजी ने जो कहा है, उसके बारे में मैं यह कहना चाहता हूँ कि यह नहीं कहा गया है कि किस जहाज से भेज रहे हैं इसकी आप पब्लिसिटी कीजिए। अगर आप सोना भेजते हैं तो किसी एअरप्लेन या एअर फोर्स के प्लेन से भेजिए, किन आपको इस बारे में कोई दबाव नहीं डाला जा कि आप जहाज की पब्लिसिटी करें। यह आपका जवाब नहीं है।

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. NAGEN SAIKIA): Ram Awadhesh Singhji, I am asking you to take your seat. If you do not, then what you speak will not go on record.

SHRI RAM AWADHESH SINGH:*

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. NAGEN SAIKIA): It will not go on record. Take your seat. I request the hon. Minister to react afterwards.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: Mr. Vice-Chairman, I can appreciate the atmosphere, his feelings, the ethos in the outside world, the terrorist problem, etc. But the feelings of the people are more important than what the terrorists might have. Now, your policy of putting all these things in bits and pieces has created further accentuated feelings of the people in the country. I also suggested to him that day that there might be a dispute

*Not recorded.

as to the quantum and the value of the gold with the people. Even Mahatma Gandhi in his days fought with the Britishers for adjusting the over value of rupee. There are various instances. I don't deny that. But there are instances, Mr. Finance Minister, during the time of Second World War, when Mr. Churchill was the Prime Minister, the austerity measures started from his home. Please show to the people what this Government is going to do. Show to the people that we are austere enough. I don't speak now on other issues like subsidies and air travel, your bureaucrats travelling and flying abroad. I am not talking on that. But austerity must start from home. Then only the people will feel about it. When you are talking of tightening up of the belt, I think, Laxman's cartoon in "The Times of India" is just more crucial more eloquent

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. NAGEN SAIKIA): Please conclude.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: Mr. Vice-Chairman, I am not making more points because I am not banking on ideology as the survival of the issue. But I demand from the Government, through you, Mr. Finance Minister, you cannot bear this cross like this, excuse me. It is the political approach which is necessary and this exercise should be done by the politicians, the Prime Minister, the Cabinet and we people of the Congress Party must be involved in this effort to salvage the economic chaos that was created during the regime of last two years and by previous rulers also. I don't blame them alone. The money was overvalued and now it seems it is the political approach and no other approach that is going to salvage the credibility. You should make a fervent appeal to the people. What was "Jai Jawan. Jai Kisan"? The appeal was made by the Prime Minister, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri, to the people. You will be failing in your duty if you

do not appeal to the people. For heaven's sake, appeal to the individual Indian who believes in the future and credibility of this country. We will fight as one brother whether in the Opposition or in the Treasury Benches. But the necessity is to take the bull by the horns and face the consequences and request the Prime Minister, his Cabinet colleagues along with the Congress party and my friends sitting here to convince the people that the situation is very bad. It is no use politicising the issue. I have nothing more to say.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. NAGEN SAIKIA): I will request the Members to be brief as much as they can. Instead of making a speech, they should only make points. Now, Shri Sukomal Sen,

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN (West Bengal): Sir, only day before yesterday, this issue was raised during Question Hour and a deep concern was expressed at the pledging and selling of gold by both sides of this House because the entire country is feeling highly concerned about it. Now on that day, there was no indication that any further amount of gold may be sent abroad. The Minister said that for security reasons, he did not disclose this thing. I very much appreciate it. But at the same time, I would say that after all, this is the Parliament of the country. This represents the sovereign will of the country. Instead of giving details on accuracy when and what is going to be sent, the Finance Minister could have given some indication that if necessary, further amount of gold may be sent out because we have a responsibility to the people also. (Interruptions).

श्री रत्नाकर पाण्डेय (उत्तर प्रदेश) :
अगर राकेट में जहाज उड़ा देते तो आप ए
रेस्पॉन्सिबिल्टी लेते ?

श्री सुकोमल सेन : पाण्डेय जी, आप बैंकर
राजीव गांधी को उड़ा दिया, आप क्या कर
सके ?

श्री सन्तोष बागडोविया (राजस्थान) :
हमारा राज नहीं था । हमारा राज होता
तो राजीव गांधी नहीं उड़ते । . . (व्यवधान)

डा० रत्नाकर पाण्डेय : राकेट से सोना
भरा जहाज उड़ जाता तो आप रेस्पॉसिबिलिटी
लेते ? . . . (व्यवधान) . . .

श्री मोहम्मद अफजल उर्फ मौम अफजल
(उत्तर प्रदेश) : इंदिरा जो के जमाने में
किसका राज था हुजूर ?

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: Sir, the problem is they are not understanding the whole gamut of the problem. Their selling of gold and pledging of gold is creating a terrible, panicky, situation in the country. Particularly in Indian tradition selling of gold is considered as a last resort of living. The day before yesterday the Finance Minister was saying: "We are selling gold as the last resort and we are not feeling proud of it." Perhaps, he remembers it.

Another point. He started making his statement by saying that despite significant borrowings from the IMF in July, 1990 and January, 1991, our foreign exchange reserves have fallen to a very low level. Then what is the guarantee that despite the fact that you get the loan of 400 million dollars, your balance of payments position will improve? Now he says that this amount of borrowing will lead to a significant improvement in our balance of payments position? What is the basis of the optimism of the Finance Minister? Only a few months back he took a huge amount of loan but it could not help. We are sliding down and down. Then how will this loan of 400 million dollars help us, how will it lead to a significant improvement in our balance of payments position? What is the balance of payments position today? The newspapers are guessing all sorts of things but the Government is never coming out to the Parliament with the exact balance of payments position. It is being kept secret. How are we to believe that our balance of payments position

will improve with this borrowing? The Government is responsible to the country. At least we have also a responsibility to the country.

Next point. What are the terms and conditions of taking this loan of 400 million dollars? There must be some conditions that by a certain period we have to repay it; otherwise, it might be forfeited. Then what are the terms and conditions? By when do you have to repay this borrowing and if you fail to repay the borrowing, when is this going to be forfeited? What are the terms and conditions? By when do we have to repay this borrowing? All these things are not made public. This gold is the property of the 85 crores of people of the country. So, the people have got a right to know what the fate of their gold will be.

Another funny statement he has made: "Hereafter no further gold from the Reserve Bank of India will be sent abroad." How can Dr. Manmohan Singh say that, when the Act says that not more than 15 per cent of the total stock can be sent abroad? The Reserve Bank of India has got a stock of, I think, about 320 million tonnes and 15 per cent of this 320 tonnes of gold is 48 tonnes. So the Reserve Bank can send 48 tonnes of gold abroad. Out of this, 47 tonnes have already been sent out. How can Dr. Manmohan Singh send more gold to foreign countries now? This statement is capricious. It has no meaning at all. It is no assurance to the people because under the Act you cannot do it. Unless the Parliament amends it, you cannot do it. Sir, the point is the Government should dispel the panic which they have created. They should clearly tell the people that these are the terms and conditions under which we have borrowed the money and by when they are going to repay it. They should clearly tell us what the actual balance of payments position is.

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I

could understand the plight of the Finance Minister. The economy is in a state of great crisis and it has no parallel. A desperate situation is being tackled by resorting to some drastic measures. But what pains me more and what makes me anxious is this whether the sale or pledge of gold can really solve the present crisis. I have no quarrel with the pledging of gold to raise or to borrow money or to resort to short-term borrowing to meet the urgent commitments. But my hon'ble friend knows very well that for the last few years we have been following -- the Finance Ministry has been following -- very unorthodox measures for meeting the budgetary deficit in the country. I may quote only one instance. The Finance Ministry has been taking considerable amount of money from the Oil Pool Account to finance the revenue deficit. It is not proper; may I say it is not legal? It is not a correct budgetary practice either. The second instance I say is that the Finance Ministry has been asking the oil companies to raise resources in the European market for meeting the budgetary requirements. There was only one sector which was credible in international market and that was the oil sector. Even that oil sector which enjoyed reputation in the world has been affected adversely. I do not think the oil sector can help the Government in raising resources in the European market now. I am not sure whether they are making any effort to salvage the oil sector. The Reserve Bank permitted this knowingly. Knowingly they have permitted this wrong.

Coming to the present situation, Sir, I do not know the latest figure, for how many days the foreign exchange reserves are adequate. Is it for 15 days, 20 days or one month? I do not know. But I want my friend to tell the House, how much we have now and for how many days it will be adequate. Now, Sir, we are at the threshold of a debt trap. Let us agree on that. We may not be in the trap itself, but we are on the threshold,

on the brink of it. How do we salvage the economy from this impending debt trap? It has got serious consequences. Our credibility in international market is the lowest. The rating is going down and down for the last few months, may be for the last two or three years. And the signal is clear. When the NRIs take back the monies deposited here, that can be construed as a run on the Indian economy -- as they say, there is a run on a failing bank. There is a run on the economy itself. The NRIs no longer think that our economy is strong, viable, credible. They think that the fiscal management is woefully bad in India. Therefore, this run. The outflow may be more. I am not sure whether the outflow is going to stop very soon. My friend, Mr. Birla, was just saying whether we should not explore various other methods of getting over the crisis. Maybe, the NRIs can be invited to invest gold or bring gold here, purchase and take Indian rupees. Maybe, they may be invited to participate in new enterprises -- not in the old enterprises; in new enterprises -- so that the economic activities can expand. The Finance Minister has not taken us into confidence. I expected him to, but perhaps there was too short a time. We have been following a cheap money policy. Fiat money is being produced on a large scale. That has led to a parallel economy, price distortions and dislocation of the entire fiscal system. The interest rates are rising high contributing to the high cost of the economy. Therefore, I would like the Minister to come out with a statement as to how he will be able to arrest the cheap money policy that is being pursued for years and years. Finally, what is the interest rate? Now he has said 400 million dollars will be raised pledging the gold in England. What is the interest we are paying? And is this amount of 400 million dollars going to meet our debt obligations or payment of interest and the like? What is it? He has not spelt it out at all. I would

[Shri Sukomal Sen]

like him to give information for the benefit of the House. I agree with him, finally, that export of gold is a very painful necessity, perhaps, and should have been avoided. But they could not perhaps avoid it. They have done it. This is the first time in our history after independence that we have resorted to this kind of a desperate method to save our economy and it will disturb the world opinion about us, about our economy. Though I don't criticise him on this account, I only say that it is a very dangerous signal that we have given to the world.

SHRI JAGESH DESAI (Maharashtra): Mr. Vice-Chairman, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to seek some clarifications. First of all, we agree that the situation is very bleak. To get Rs. 1,000 crores of foreign exchange we had to send our gold to England. The position is very very grave. Just for Rs. 1,000 crores of foreign exchange we had to do it. **If the rupee was not depreciated, the fear of the Government was that the NRIs would withdraw their deposits and then the situation would have got worse. It would become so bad that I do not know what would have happened. As far as I understand, about Rs. 16,000 crores are being kept in fixed deposits by the NRIs in our country and if the deposits are required only to correct the rupee value, then I think it is not correct. The Reserve Bank of India announces the buying and selling rates of dollars and pounds on a regular basis. Why was it not done regularly on the correct basis? If the figures that I have with me are correct, -- and if they are not correct, I would request the hon. Minister to correct them; I have got these figures from the Reserve Bank bulletin -- on January, 1991 the value of rupee in relation to the US dollar was 13.15 and on the 3rd of July, 1991 it has come to 25.88. This shows that the rupee has been depreciated to the extent of 43 per cent in relation to the US**

dollar within six months. I would like to know from the Finance Minister whether what I have understood is correct or there is something wrong with the figures as mentioned in the bulletin. Similarly, we have been told that the value of rupee has been depreciated so as to encourage more exports. In this connection I have a few figures with me. In the year, 1986-87 the rupee value depreciated in relation to the pound sterling by 11.6 per cent, in relation to the DM by 27.6 per cent and in relation to the yen by 29.2 per cent. Then the exports had gone up by 15 per cent only. Again in the year 1988-89, the rupee value depreciated in relation to the dollar by 10 per cent in relation to the pound sterling by 13 per cent, in relation to the DM by eight per cent and to the yen by 16 per cent. What I would like to point out is, in spite of this depreciation, the exports had gone up by 35 per cent. So, I would like to know from the Minister whether because of the depreciated value of the rupee we are going to have more exports. From the past experience, I gather, that is not the correct thing to do. That is why the Government must look into it. Thirdly, I would like to know from the Minister that when the depreciation was done on the 4th, 7th and 11th, why did he not come and inform the House about it? Parliament is in session now. He should have informed the House on the 15th that we have sent the gold to the Bank of England. The Minister informed the House only on the 18th. Why did he delay in informing the House? I can understand that on the 12th, after the President's Address, since the House was adjourned, it would not have been possible on that day. But, he could have informed us on Monday. Please see that the Parliament is informed in time and it should not so happen that we get the news from the newspapers. I have got to make a few suggestions too in this regard, since we are all concerned about the economy and want that the economy should improve. When

the NRIs decide to come back to India for ever, from the foreign exchange reserves which they have with them, they bring videos, TV and such other durable items. But, instead, if we allow them to bring gold it will be better. For example, supposing I have got 10,000 pounds in England and if the country allows me to carry gold, then I can bring 5,000 pounds in gold and another 5,000 pounds in foreign exchange. Then if the foreign exchange is immediately converted into rupees, you can have foreign exchange for meeting your requirements. The present position is that 50 per cent of the foreign exchange is converted into rupees and the remaining 50 per cent he is allowed to keep so that he can meet his travelling and medical expenses. I think here also you have to change your policy. Those NRIs who come here on transfer of residence can bring foreign exchange here and get it utilised for this purpose. If that is done, I think that would be useful. But I would like the honourable Minister to examine to what extent we can allow them to bring gold and what percentage of their foreign exchange they can bring as gold. I think in this way only you can augment the foreign exchange reserves of our country.

Our Prime Minister has already said that about a hundred NRIs were much impressed by the action taken by the Government. But this hundred is only a small number. There are lakhs and lakhs of NRIs in the various countries. Lakhs of them are there in the Gulf countries, in America and in certain other countries. But I do not know how many among this hundred are industrialists who want to invest in this country. I think this will not help. I would, therefore, like to know how many are there among this hundred who want to invest sizeably in this country so that this problem can be solved.

There is one more thing which I would like to know from the hon-

ourable Finance Minister. What is the total quantum of the foreign exchange reserves as on date? What are our obligations up to the 31st of August? Will we be able to meet our requirements from the foreign exchange which we have got at present and from the thousand crores of rupees or so which you are going to get from this gold? There is one sentence in the statement which I am not able to understand; I am unable to understand the real meaning of this sentence. It says that the Reserve Bank of India can borrow for a period of one month at a time a total sum of about dollar 400 million. I would like to know whether every month we will have to get it renewed and whether every month they can also stipulate conditions. What is the meaning of this? I would like to know from the Finance Minister.

One thing I must say. The position is very serious and timely action must be taken. If it is done only for the purpose of increasing our exports, then I personally feel, after seeing the past results, that you are not going to get your aim fulfilled. That is why I say that we have to take action for increasing our exports. I say this because, as far as exports are concerned, quotas have been fixed by the other countries. So, what is the surplus of exports that we have got? On this also, Sir, the Minister should satisfy us. If he can clarify these points, I will be grateful. Thank you, Sir.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. NAGEN SAIKIA): Now, Mr. Ratnakar Pandey. Kindly ask clarifications only.

डा० रत्नाकर पाण्डेय : माननीय उप-सभाध्यक्ष जी, माननीय वित्त मंत्री जी ने स्वर्ण संकट पर जो वक्तव्य दिया है उस पर आने से पूर्व मैं अपने माननीय संसदीय कार्य मंत्री जी से प्रार्थना करूंगा कि कल भी उनकी ओर से गृह मंत्री के रूप में दो वक्तव्य दिये गये थे और हम 8 बजे तक बैठे थे। जब टेलीविजन पर समाचार आते हैं तो कुछ नाम गायब कर दिये जाते हैं

और पाशियलिटी होती है। इसलिए संसदीय कार्य मंत्री जो महत्वपूर्ण मुद्दे होते हैं उन पर ध्यान रखें और इंस्ट्रुक्ट करें क्योंकि इम्फारमेशन मिनिस्ट्री गवर्नमेंट की बाड़ी है। वह अपनी स्वायत्तता तो रखे, लेकिन स्वच्छता न करे, यह मैं उनसे प्रार्थना करूंगा।

देश पर जो यह स्वर्ण संकट आया है उसके संबंध में मैं कुछ कहना चाहूंगा। अभी हमारे विरोधी दल के नेता जो हमारे बड़े आदरणीय और पारंगत संसद हैं, उन्होंने बड़ी अच्छी बातें कही और सारे आरोप हमारे ऊपर लगाये जो हम स्वीकार करने के लिए तैयार नहीं हैं। जो आपने पृष्ठ किया उसका पाप हम ढोयें, यह कैसे हो सकता है। वी.पी. सिंह की सरकार ने जो आर्थिक गड़बड़ियां 15 महीनों के अन्दर की..... (व्यवधान)। राजीव गांधी के सरकार छोड़ने के बाद दो गवर्नमेंट्स बनी।

7.00 P.M.

उसमें एक हजार करोड़ रुपये के एक्ससाइज के घोटाले का मामला था और सेंट किटम बैंक का मामला था, बहुत से मामले थे। लेकिन सरकार ने जो सोना विदेश में भेजा है, मेरे कहने का आशय यह है कि जब राजीव गांधी ने इस सरकार को... (व्यवधान)... दूसरी सरकार को सत्ता सौंपी थी... (व्यवधान)... वह सरकार जो जनता दल की थी, उस समय देश की अर्थ-व्यवस्था क्या थी?

श्री मोहम्मद उर्फ़ मौम अफ़जल : प्वाइंट आफ़ आर्डर।

डा. रत्नाकर पाण्डेय : जी जो तकरीर कर रहे हैं, मैं समझता हूँ कि उनको अपने आपको स्टेटमेंट तक ही सीमित रखना चाहिए। पिछली सरकारों ने क्या किया, अगर इस पर यहां बहस होगी तो वह उसूलों के खिलाफ होगी और फिर अपोजीशन की तरफ से भी जो लोग खड़े होंगे वे भी बहुत तफ़सील में जायेंगे। मैं रत्नाकर पाण्डेय जी से रेक्वेस्ट करूंगा कि जो स्टेटमेंट फाइनेंस मिनिस्टर साहब ने दिया है वे उसी स्टेटमेंट पर अपनी क्लेरीफिकेशन मांगें। अगर वे तफ़सील में जायेंगे तो हम भी पिछली सरकारों की तफ़सील में जायेंगे।

मौलाना अब्दुल्ला खान आज़मी : (उत्तर प्रदेश) : इस वक्त सरकार जो कुछ लाई है वह खुद इतना चिंताजनक है कि आप इतने तक ही रहें तो ज्यादा बेहतर होगा।

डा. रत्नाकर पाण्डेय : मैं मंत्री महोदय से जानना चाहता हूँ कि जब राजीव गांधी ने प्रधानमंत्री का पद छोड़ा था और कांग्रेस की सरकार थी तो उस समय देश की आर्थिक स्थिति क्या थी, विदेशी मुद्रा का कितना कर्जा था भारत सरकार के पास क्योंकि साहित्य में कहा गया है कि (व्यवधान)...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. NAGEN SAIKIA): Please take your seat.

श्री राम अवधेश सिंह : राजीव सरकार का बैलेंस आफ़ पेमेंट क्या था जो फिगरर्स हैं वह दीजिये, ऐसे कौन मानेगा?

डा. रत्नाकर पाण्डेय : मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि राजीव गांधी ने जब सत्ता छोड़ी थी तब देश पर विदेशी धन का कितना कर्जा था, प्रति व्यक्ति और जब विश्वनाथ प्रताप सिंह ने सरकार छोड़ी है तब प्रति व्यक्ति विदेशी मुद्रा का कितना कर्जा था और जब चन्द्रशेखर जी ने सरकार छोड़ी तब कितना विदेशी मुद्रा का कर्जा था ... (व्यवधान) ...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. NAGEN SAIKIA): Pandeji, please ask clarifications.

डा० रत्नाकर पाण्डेय : दूसरा मैं यह पूछना चाहता हूँ, थोड़ी नौक-झोंक वाला वातावरण हो गया है लेकिन कहा गया है कि भूषण बिन न बिराजई, भूषण के मायने होता है सोना, गहना। भूषण बिन न बिराजई कविता, बनिता, मित्र। मित्र, स्त्री और कविता ये तीनों स्वर्ण के बिना, भूषण के बिना सुशोभित नहीं होते। बड़ी दयनीय स्थिति छोड़कर दो दो सरकारें गई हैं। (व्यवधान) 31 मई को हमारी कर्ज की जो विश्वसनीयता थी विदेशों में, उसको अंतर-राष्ट्रीय बाजार में बड़ा धक्का लगा है। स्टैंडर्ड एंड कुवर्स नामक एजेंसी ने उसके ग्रेड को और नीचे सरका दिया। (व्यवधान)

श्री राम बबघोश सिंह : उपसभाध्यक्ष जी, इसका क्या मतलब है, आपने भी यह सब सुना है ।.... (बबघोश)....

डा. रत्नाकर पाण्डेय : पिछले वर्ष तक प्रवासी भारतीयों का 10 अरब डालर भारत में निवेशित था । जो सोना बेचने या गिरवी रखने का निर्णय पिछली सरकारों ने किया है.... पिछली सरकार के वाणिज्य मंत्री ने कहा है कि सोने की बिक्री का फैसला भारतीय रिजर्व बैंक ने किया । मैं सुब्रह्मण्यम जी की बात कोट कर रहा हूँ । भारतीय रिजर्व बैंक एक आटोनोमस बाडी है लेकिन सरकार के आदेश के बिना वह सोना इधर-उधर नहीं कर सकती है । तो व्यापारिक घाटा हुआ है जो विदेश व्यापार में घाटा हुआ है वह वित्तीय वर्ष में प्रति मास पिछले वर्ष 930 करोड़ रुपये हुआ जबकि पहले 355 करोड़ रुपये दर्ज किया गया है । ऐसी स्थिति में हमारी सरकार पर अभी जिसकी छठी बर्ही भी नहीं हुई है इतना बड़ा बोझ आया है जिसको हल करने में जो पिछली सरकार ने दुनिया के फाइनेंशियल इंस्टीट्यूशंस से वायदा किया है हम उसको पूरा कर रहे हैं । यह सारे देश की समस्या है । मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि भविष्य में कितने नान रेजिडेंट इंडियन लोगों को आप आमंत्रित कर रहे हैं और कितने आपके देश में व्यवसाय और उद्योग नियोजित करेंगे जिससे यह कमी पूरी हो सके । आपकी स्थिर फाइनेंशियल पालिसी क्या बनेगी इसके बारे में भी आप प्रकाश जालें जिससे भविष्य में सोना विदेश न भेजना पड़े । अभी पांच सात टन सोना आपके पास है जो रिजर्व बैंक के पास 15 प्रतिशत में से बाकी बचता है जो कि बाहर भेज सकते हैं लेकिन आपने कहा है कि हम नहीं भेजेंगे । मैं यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि कब तक यह सोना लीटायरेने और कितना रिजर्व बैंक के पास इस समय सोने का स्टॉक है और कितना आप अब तक विदेश भेज चुके हैं और कितने समय के लिए आपने उसको गिरवी रखा है तथा उसकी शर्तें क्या हैं । यह सब चीजें आप बताएं । कुलकर्णी जी चले गये हैं, जनरल मानेक्शा

ने भी इस देश में अपील की थी और सारे लोगों ने, स्त्रियों ने मंगलसूत्र तक उतार कर राष्ट्र के लिए दे दिये थे । आज राष्ट्र पर संकट आया है, अगर आवश्यकता पड़े देश को, कुलकर्णी जी ने जो सुझाव दिया है कि अपील होनी चाहिये, अगर मंत्री महोदय अपील करेंगे तो मैं सब से पहले अपनी सोने की अगुठी जो मेरे हाथ में है वह उतार कर देना चाहता हूँ । इसी से शुक्रात करें लेकिन इसमें जो रत्न लगा हुआ है वह किसी संत का दिया हुआ है वह मुझे वापिस कर दें ।

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. NAGEN SAIKIA): Now keep it with you. It is not allowed.

DR. G. VIJAYA MOHAN REDDY: Sir, this is not the forum.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. NAGEN SAIKIA): It is not allowed. It will not go on record. (Interruptions) It is not recorded.

डा. रत्नाकर पाण्डेय : अंत में इस सदन के माध्यम से मैं अपील करना चाहता हूँ कि देश की अर्थ व्यवस्था को सुदृढ़ करने के लिए भारत पर सोने का कर्ज न हो क्योंकि इससे किसी देश की क्रेडिट-वर्देनिस खत्म होती है । राजीव गांधी ने आर्थिक दृष्टि से भारत को छठवें स्थान पर ला दिया था लेकिन आज किस स्थान पर भारत आर्थिक दृष्टि से है यह वित्त मंत्री जी बताएं और देश किस तरह से अपनी आर्थिक मर्यादा हासिल कर सकेगा ? यह भी मैं मंत्री महोदय से जानना चाहता हूँ कि हमारे देश में कितना सोने का स्टॉक है और कितना सोना खानों से निकलने की सम्भावना है क्योंकि इसका आंकड़ा भी रिजर्व बैंक के पास रहता है ।

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA (Rajasthan): Sir, I thank you for giving me this opportunity. I would like to first compliment our Finance Minister for bringing out a very comprehensive and accurate statement, though belated. Sir, why I say belated is because there is a kind of doubt in the minds of the people.

[Shri Santosh Bagrodia]

When this morning you mentioned that on 18th i. e. today some 12 tonnes of gold have been exported, it must have been 1 o'clock, whereas in the morning it has been published in the newspaper and it says:

"The RBI in yet another clandestine operation on Wednesday night exported the third consignment of approximately 12 tonnes of gold."

The hush-hush operation was confirmed by highly-placed RBI officials and first noticed by Indian Express Staff Photographer, who spotted a high security convoy."

What I am trying to say is that if the House or the country had been taken into confidence in a proper way this kind of situation would not have been created. When this kind of attitude is adopted and wrong message is given to the countrymen it becomes very difficult to recover. Whatever kinds of statements you make; if you can take care of it in future, I am sure it will help the economy of the country and the countrymen and yourself. I would also like to mention here what you have said in the first paragraph of your statement. You have said, "Due to the weakening of international confidence in the rupee, international commercial banks have become extremely reluctant to lend us money". With a businessman's background, I say it is the confidence which is more important. It is your credibility which is more important. It is not really important what you have. What happened after Rajiv Gandhi Government, a new Government came to power. The new Finance Minister openly started saying about the empty coffers. Was this the reason that the credibility in the world was lost? Was this the reason that the confidence of the lending countries was lost? Or did it lead to weakening of the economy in a few days? I want a specific reply from you, Mr. Fin-

ance Minister as to why the wrong impression, wrong image, wrong message is sent to the world for political considerations at the cost of the economy of this country.

Sir, you have also mentioned in the second paragraph saying that our balance of payments position will significantly improve and there will be a return of international confidence in currency. We are getting reassured. Thanks a lot for that. But by when? Would you give a time limit for that? This will give us a clearer picture and more confidence in our feelings. I also feel, Sir, you are making efforts to maintain credibility of the country, by sending gold outside the country. It is not being sold. I understand, it is being pledged. As from business acumen, I feel it may not be too bad. For temporarily, if we have to take action like this to maintain our credibility, it should be maintained. But we would like to know your plans. How do you bring back economy into shape so that, we not only get back this gold but we get more gold along with that? This is what we want to know. It is not very important whether 45 tonnes of gold has gone out of the country. Some foreign countries had said that India has got so much gold in the houses that the value of dollar should be 17 rupees and not 26 rupees. The real value of the dollar actually is 17 rupees. From record you can check it. They say, Rs. 50000 crores worth of gold is lying in the country. So 45 tonnes of gold is not important. But I am only worried about our confidence about the confidence of the country and if that is lost then it will be impossible to revive even on a long term basis. Sir, it appears that whatever you have done with gold is based on the decision taken by the previous Government. I am not questioning that because a commitment has been made and you have carried it out. And I will only say what you have done is probably in the right spirit of the country's future and

country's economic situation. When you say that 15 per cent of the reserve you can send abroad, I would like to know as to what is the total gold reserve. If it is not confidential, I would like to know about it. How much more you plan to send abroad? If you have no such plan, I would like to know categorically about it. You have said that no further gold from the Reserve Bank of India will be sent abroad. I would like to know for how much time and on what basis you have made this categorical statement.

Sir, the statement further says: "However, I am confident, that various measures we have now taken will over a period of time..." The expression 'over a period of time' is very vague. We would like to know what is meant by it.

In August 1988, the Congress Government led by Shri Rajiv Gandhi allowed import of gold for re-export with value added, by making jewellery etc. It is a very unfortunate situation now that we have to send our gold out even for a temporary purpose. I would like to know as to what was the foreign exchange reserve at the end of 1989 and again at the end of 1990 and what is it today.

You have mentioned about the NRIs. As far as I understand, the present system is that when an NRI who is maintaining foreign account, comes back here, you allow 50 per cent transfer immediately into this country whether they want it or not and the balance 50 per cent is allowed only for medical purposes and for tours etc. when they go abroad. I feel one of the ways of maintaining foreign exchange account will be to liberalise the system. And I would like to know if you have any plans about it.

श्री रजनी रंजन साहू (बिहार) : मैं डा० रत्नाकर पाण्डेय जी को बधाई और धन्यवाद देता हूँ कि उन्होंने एक रास्ता दिखाया है और उसी के तहत मैं वित्त

मंत्री जी से अनुरोध करना चाहूंगा कि इस तरह से यह सभी माननीय सदस्यों से अपील करें और उसी जैन में मैं भी अपनी एक अंगूठी वित्त मंत्री जी को समर्पित करता हूँ.... (व्यवधान)

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. NAGEN SAIKIA): This is not allowed in the House. This is not proper and it will not go on record.

श्री रजनी रंजन साहू : उपसभाध्यक्ष जी, यह देश एक ऐसा देश है, जहाँ देखा जाता है कि कहीं पर कोई साधु गेरुआ वस्त्र पहन कर, कोई ऐसे महात्मा बन कर औरतों से वह सोने के तमाम गहने बटोर लेता है—इस देश में ऐसी भी संस्थायें हैं—मुझको मालूम है और वित्त मंत्री जी को भी मालूम होगा कि ऐसी संस्थायें हैं जो सारे देश से सोना बटोर कर रखें। ऐसी संस्थाओं से भी वह अपील करें कि वह उनको सोना दें।

वित्त मंत्री जी ने सोना निर्यात को कष्टकर जरूरत समझा और 46.9 मीट्रिक टन सोने को गिरवी रख दिया है। वित्त मंत्री जी ने भुगतान संतुलन के अपूर्व संकट का भी जिक्र किया है। इन्होंने जिस पृष्ठभूमि में वित्तीय मूल्य का समायोजन करने का निर्णय लिया, उसका भी अपने वक्तव्य में जिक्र किया है।

मैं वित्त मंत्री जी से निवेदन करना चाहूंगा कि आर्थिक व्यवस्था की (फाइनेंशल मैनेजमेंट) की उनकी क्या योजना है? फाइनेंस मिनिस्टर का सबसे प्रमुख दायित्व फाइनेंशल मैनेजमेंट होता है और उसके तहत जैसे बागडोरिया जी ने कहा कि पचास हजार करोड़ से ज्यादा सोना यहां घर में औरतों के पास है और इलैर का मूल्य सतरह रुपये होना चाहिए। उसी तरह 58 हजार करोड़ का काला धन जो पैरेलल इकानोमी के रूप में इस कंट्री में चल रहा है, उसको देश की मुख्य धारा में लाने के लिए इनके पास क्या योजना है?

समानांतर इकानोमी देश में चल रही है, इसको कंट्रोल में कैसे लायेंगे, इसके बारे में ये अपना विचार दें।

[श्री रजनी रंजन साहू]

मुझे ऐसा लगता है कि यह सारा निर्णय बहुत ही जल्दी-जल्दी में लिया गया है। डेवैल्यूएशन और एक्सपोर्ट की पालिसी बिना कुछ अधिक सोचे-समझे, यह गिरवी रखता, इस पर कुछ विचार ही किया गया। मैं समझता हूँ कि अगर वित्त मंत्री इस पर गंभीरता से विचार करते तो शायद कोई रास्ता निकलता। मुझे ऐसा लगता है कि जैसे जब जरूरत पड़ने पर किसी घर में लड़की की शादी हो तो वह सोना बेच आता है और कोई ज्यादा बीमार पड़ जाए तो वह सोना बेच देता है। अगर ऐसी परिस्थिति में देश आ गया है तो वह बात अलग है, लेकिन मेरी समझ में अभी ऐसी परिस्थिति इस देश के सामने नहीं आई है। अगर व्यवस्थित तरीके से इसमें व्यवस्था की जाए तो इसका फल, इसका परिणाम अच्छा निकल सकता था।

इस संदर्भ में मैं वित्त मंत्री जी से जानना चाहूंगा कि क्या आपने अन्य उपायों से बी. ओ. पी. की समस्या का समाधान करने की पासिबिलिटी एक्सप्लोर की है? दूसरा, क्या आपने ओ. जी. एल. में इपोर्ट की खुली छूट को बंद करने से सोना नहीं बेचना पड़ता इस पर विचार किया? अर्थ व्यवस्था पर इसका क्या प्रतिकूल प्रभाव पड़ेगा या नहीं पड़ेगा, यह भी आप बताने की कृपा करेंगे। साथ ही, आप यह भी बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि क्या विदेशी पर्यटकों को बाहर से सोना लाने की ऐसी छूट दी जाएगी जिस पर शुल्क लगा कर विदेशी सोना एवं मुद्रा भी प्राप्त हो सके, ऐसा करने का विचार है या नहीं है।

इन बंद सवालों का आप जवाब देंगे। धन्यवाद।

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. NAGEN SAIKIA): To save time, I request the Members not to repeat the same questions already put by other Members.

SHRI KAPIL VERMA (Uttar Pradesh): Sir, I admit that the Finance Minister is facing a very difficult problem and, therefore, he has to take drastic remedies. The other day, after the devaluation, he said on the T.V. that for the present, the problem is solved, the calamity is over and the country has been saved from going in a wrong direction. He made a similar announcement in the House too, two days back. But, suddenly today, he says that he had sold 40 tons of gold that is much more than thought earlier. I admit that our Finance Minister is a great financial expert. But, what has been sadly missed in this episode is the political approach. May I submit with all humility that the public opinion should have been considered before taking such a drastic remedy? I do agree that the decision had to be secret. But some kind of a hint should have been given to the people so that the sale of gold or keeping the gold in a foreign bank would not have caused any psychological setback. As has been pointed out, gold is a part of the ethos of the country. There should have been a marriage between the political approach and the economic reality. The Government is a continuing process. The bureaucracy has been the same in the last nineteen months. Individuals might have changed. But the basic apparatus is the same. Why were steps not taken to avert such a disastrous situation?

Then, the hon. Minister has spoken about the external debt. What is the total external debt today, which has to be paid back? How much has been paid back? How much debt repayment was necessary which forced the Minister to resort to such a drastic measure? What is the position of foreign exchange reserves? How much foreign exchange has been left with us now?

Then, I would like to know,—some questions have been asked and I would not like to repeat them—what is the position in regard to the gold reserve the country has? Have we reached the fifteen per cent level,

upto which the Reserve Bank has the right to part with about which the Finance Minister said the other day? In this connection, I would like to point out that newspapers dealing with economic matters have reported that even certain affluent countries like Japan have kept a part of their gold reserve in the Bank of England. Is it correct?

SHRI JAGESH DESAI: It is there in the statement.

SHRI KAPIL VERMA: Which are the countries which have done it? In our case what are the conditionalities under which this gold has been kept there? When are you going to bring back this gold?

Another thing is, the West Bengal Chief Minister has made certain alternative proposals. He has thrown up some ideas including about the N.R. Is help in averting the crisis. Some colleagues have also mentioned about the N.R.Is. Does the Finance Minister think that these will not solve the crisis or, they are not workable and if so, why? I would like him to clarify this point also.

श्री सुरेश पचौरी (मध्य प्रदेश)

मान्यवर, मैं उन सब प्रश्नों की पुनरावृत्ति नहीं करूंगा जो मेरे साथियों ने पूछे हैं। मंत्री जी ने अपने वक्तव्य में बताया है कि पिछली चन्द्रशेखर की सरकार ने यह निर्णय लिया था कि भारतीय रिजर्व बैंक कानून के तहत रिजर्व बैंक अपने सुरक्षित भंडार में से 15 प्रतिशत सोना विदेश भेज सकता है। आगे मंत्री जी लिखते हैं कि उन्होंने उस निर्णय को बदलना उचित नहीं समझा, लेकिन उसके बाद जो सोना वर्तमान सरकार के आने के बाद 4 जुलाई को और उसके बाद 11 जुलाई को भेजा गया तो मैं मंत्री जी से जानना चाहूंगा कि क्या वह केवल रिजर्व बैंक का निर्णय था या इस सरकार की भी सहमति थी? यद्यपि मंत्री जी ने अपने वक्तव्य में कहा है कि रिजर्व बैंक एक स्वायत्त संगठन है और वह अपनी शक्तियों का प्रयोग कर सकती है। लेकिन वह अपनी शक्तियों का प्रयोग कर मतानुसार ढंग से निर्णय ले, तो सरकार

अपनी जवाबदारी से मुक्त नहीं हो सकती है। रिजर्व बैंक की स्वायत्तता या भुगतान संतुलन के संकट को दिखाकर भारतीय सोने को बाहर गिरवी रखा जाए, राष्ट्रीय हित में यह बिल्कुल उचित नहीं है। मैं मंत्री जी से जानना चाहूंगा कि क्या वे यह आश्वासन देंगे कि अब भविष्य में और सोना गिरवी नहीं रखा जाएगा? दूसरे, पिछली चन्द्रशेखर जी की सरकार ने सोना गिरवी रखा था और उस समय 6 माह के अंदर उसे वापिस लेने का जो उन्होंने आश्वासन दिया था तो अगली सरकार आती है, उसकी यह जवाबदारी बन जाती है कि पिछली कोई भी सरकार रही हो ताकि हमारे देश की बात का वजन अंतर्राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर रहे। क्या उस आश्वासन को महेनजर रखते हुए सरकार की तरफ से यह पहल की जाएगी कि पहले जो सरकार रही है, उसने जो छह महीने का आश्वासन दिया था सोना वापिस लेने के लिए, उस आश्वासन को पूरा किया जाए?

दूसरा, बैंक आफ इंग्लैंड में यह सोना गिरवी रखा गया है। क्या अन्य और भी कोई बैंक थे, जिनसे इस सरकार ने वार्तालाप किया हो सोना गिरवी रखने के लिए, जैसे बैंक आफ जापान है या दूसरा बैंक है? यदि हां, तो वह कौन-कौन से बैंक थे और यदि नहीं, तो अन्य बैंकों से वार्तालाप क्यों नहीं किया गया? संभव है उनकी ब्याज-दर कम रहती। उनसे ब्याजदर कितनी तय की गई है? यह मैं मंत्री जी से जानना चाहूंगा।

फिर, इसमें यह कहा गया है कि नार्मल प्रोसेस आफ एडजस्टमेंट के लिए यह सब किया गया है, लेकिन यह नार्मल प्रोसेस नहीं है, एक शार्टली प्रोसेस है। कुछ समाचार पत्रों में यह भी छपा था, मैं मंत्री जी से इस बारे में स्पष्टीकरण चाहूंगा, कि इस सोने को गिरवी रखने से पहले चांदी बेचने की, चांदी को गिरवी रखने की योजना बनाई गई। क्या यह सही है? यदि यह सही है तो फिर वह चांदी गिरवी क्यों नहीं रखी गई?

[श्री सुरेश पचौरी]

मान्यवर, सोने के बजाय यदि आभूषण रखते तो हमको ज्यादा कीमत मिलती और हमारे जो सुनार भाई हैं, उनको भी उसकी कीमत मिलती, उनको रोजगार के अवसर मिलते, तो क्या कोई ऐसा प्रावधान है आपकी शर्तों के तहत ? जो आई० एम एफ, और वर्ल्ड बैंक से लोन लिया है, उसकी शर्तों के मुताबिक क्या यह सब सोना बेच रहे हैं ? यह भी स्पष्ट करने की बात है । जैसा कि बराबर प्रचारित किया जा रहा है कि पिछली चन्द्रशेखर जी की सरकार को यह सारे पेपर देखने को नहीं मिले, जिनमें आई० एम एफ, लोन की शर्तें हैं और वह रिजर्व बैंक का अपना निर्णय था । क्या इस सरकार को वह सारे पेपर देखने को मिले हैं ? यदि सारे पेपर देखने को मिले हैं तो उनकी शर्तें क्या हैं ? और, क्या उन शर्तों में यह भी शामिल है कि इतना सोना गिरवी रखा जाए ?

मान्यवर, हमारे यहां जो विदेशी पर्यटक आते हैं या जो हमारे यहां आई० एन आर, आते हैं, वह अपने साथ सोना लेकर आ सकते हैं । उसमें टैक्स लगा सकते हैं । ऐसी कोई नीति बना लीजिए । इस मामले में तो वित्त मंत्री जी खुद ही फैसला ले सकते हैं । इससे हमारे देश में जो सोने की कमी हो रही है, उससे हम लोग निपट सकते हैं । क्या मंत्री जी इस बारे में विचार करेंगे ? मैं उनसे यह भी जानना चाहूंगा ।

मान्यवर, हमारे यहां रुपए का अवमूल्यन यह तीसरी बार हुआ । पहली बार हुआ था 18 सितंबर, 1949 को, दूसरी बार हुआ 5 जून, 1966 को और तीसरी बार अब हुआ है । मंत्री जी ने यह घोषणा की है कि अब अवमूल्यन नहीं होगा । लेकिन, बराबर सोना गिरवी रखने से अब और रुपए का अवमूल्यन क्या नहीं होगा । इस अवमूल्यन के न होने से बचाने के लिए क्या यह जरूरी है कि अब और सोना गिरवी न रखा जाए ? इस संबंध में भी मंत्री जी जरा

अपना स्पष्टीकरण दें । ऐसा मेरा आग्रह है ।

DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, I hope the hon. Finance Minister is aware of the Sanskrit sloka: "कांता ननकं वित्तं पुस्तकं । पर हस्ते गतः ।" which means, whether it is lady, or gold or money or book, if it is transferred to somebody else it is very difficult to get it back. That is the meaning of the Sanskrit sloka. And it reminds me of the plight of the cotton growers of Guntur and Prakasam districts. The existing plight of the Indian Government is on the same footing as that of the cotton growers in these two districts. It was way back, during 1985-86, the cotton growers of those two districts pledged their gold in nationalised banks and after repeated failure of the cotton crop the poor farmers could not get back their gold from the banks. The womenfolk insisted on the farmers to get back their gold and jewellery so that they could attend social functions and functions in their families. The farmers could not fulfil their obligations and so they committed suicide. More than 45 cotton growers committed suicide, successfully, in those two districts. This aptly illustrates the position of the Indian Government now. And what happened later? During March 1990, when Prof. Madhu Dandavate presented the budget proposals for 1990-91, the Agricultural and Rural Debt Relief Scheme was announced and fortunately, Prof. Dandavate, during May or June, later, included under that scheme, coverage of agricultural gold loans also. Thanks to the performance of the National Front Government, some of that gold was recovered from the banks. Likewise, unless a new Government comes into existence, after some time, I think it is very doubtful to get back the gold from the Bank of England.

When the Chandra Shekhar Government took a decision on the gold deal, the Congress, as a party, criticized the deal like anything. But when they came to power they resorted to the same philosophy of transferring gold to the Bank of England and somewhere else. I would like to know from the honourable Finance Minister why, when pledge is allowed, the previous Government was allowed to resort to outright sale of the gold. When they could get money, as now, by pledging gold, how is it that the Reserve Bank of India allowed outright sale during the last regime?

Now, the honourable Finance Minister has said that the gold was transported piecemeal to the Bank of England. Why this piecemeal business? This piecemeal business reminds one of unsteady attitude. We are giving signals that India is not sound and so the process will continue. Instead of that, they can as well send it on a large scale in a one-time deal by ship or by chartering a plane. If there is some security problem, you can charter a plane, fill it with security guns, this and that and transfer the entire gold at one time and not piecemeal. You can also send Dr. Ratnakar Pandey and Mr. Ahluwalia to safeguard the gold.

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY: Is it part of the clarification?

DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: Yes, Sir, the honourable Finance Minister has said that it is the last deal and no longer would gold be allowed to be transferred to other countries. How can Dr. Manmohan Singh ensure that they would resist the temptation once the Government, like a man-eater, found it jolly well easy to transfer the gold, pledge it, to get money? So, once the Government is accustomed to that practice, how can Dr. Manmohan Singh ensure that it is the last time and they are not going to do it again? So, once the Government has yielded to the temptation, I don't think it is so easy

for them to resist the temptation. So, inspite of the repeated assurances from the Treasury Benches or the Minister, I suppose, it is no longer tenable.

Sir, I would like to know from the honourable Minister as to how much gold is still left in the Reserve Bank of India or in the coffers of the Government and how much the Government can pledge? Is it up to the limit of 15 per cent or can we pledge much more? About the paper also mentions about the balance of payments and other things. My friend, Mr. Jagesh Desai also has mentioned that there is no relation between the depreciation of the rupee and the boosting of the exports. I am quoting some figures. Between 1980 and 1985 the rupee was devalued by one-third at least.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. NAGEN SAIKIA): There is no need of quoting figures. You seek only clarifications.

DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: But during that period the exports improved only to the tune of 9 per cent. During 1987 when the depreciation was only 1.3 per cent, the exports boosted up by 28.3 per cent. These figures prove that there is no relation between depreciation of the rupee and boosting of export of commodities. So, there is something basically wrong with this proposition.

There is a wide gap between exports and imports, and we are importing more than what we are exporting. So, the rupee has been devalued and the CCS has been withdrawn. In place of the CCS the REP has been enhanced to 30 per cent. Even the replenishable export permit has been let loose in the open market. It creates black money. It creates smuggling. The Government is not capable of monitoring the journey of the dollar in the country, where it goes, what commodities are going to be imported and where it ends? The Government cannot moni-

[Dr. Yellamanchili Sivaji]

for this. So, it creates a spiral. It creates further black money. It creates smuggling. It creates an umpteen number of problems to the Government as well as to the society.

Another thing I would like to know from the Minister. All right, if it is some manufactured goods or engineering goods which are exported. I can understand that you are giving some relief in the form of the REP or EXIM scrip or C.C.S. or something else. But if it is a raw material like tobacco, cotton, jute, tea, coffee or spices or some other agricultural produce if there is no primary processing involved in it prior to export and if you are allowing some relief to the exporter, I don't think it is seasonable. If at all any relief is given, that relief should belong to the grower, and that relief should go to the primary producer because there is no value addition to the produce prior to export. So, I would like to make sure from the hon. Finance Minister as far as these reliefs are concerned that they should go to the farmer, not to the middlemen as far as the agricultural raw materials are concerned when they are exported.

So, I would like to seek these clarifications from the hon. Minister.

SHRI DINESHBHAI TRIVEDI (Gujarat): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, after seeing the generosity of two hon. Members in the House, I feel that the hon. Finance Minister has perhaps under-estimated the generosity of Indian public at large. You see that on a drop of just a statement which does not even appeal for any kind of donation, two hon. Members come forward and donated their. So, I feel that these steps were taken in a haste.

There are two aspects of it. One is the mortgage. You know, the hon. Finance Minister used the phrase

"safe custody." But I use the word "mortgage."

SHRI JAGESH DESAI: It is not mortgage; it is pledge.

SHRI DINESHBHAI TRIVEDI: Okay, it is pledge. I think it is pledge of gold.

The other is "adjustment" which the hon. Finance Minister used. The whole world and India also uses the word "devaluation." So, I will stick to the word "devaluation". These are two different areas.

I am fully with the hon. Finance Minister that at no cost have we to default in our payments because commitment and credibility go hand in hand. But as far as this so-called "adjustment" as concerned, the first clarification I want to ask from the hon. Finance Minister is: Why this jugglery of words when even the media, even the Government-controlled media and hon. Members here have used the word "devaluation"? I do not know why we are using the word "adjustment." When we talk in terms of "adjustment," it may be half a per cent or one per cent or at the most may be 2 per cent. This is to the extent of almost 20 per cent. So, why is this jugglery of words? Why don't you call a spade a spade?

Secondly, are we also getting an assurance from the hon. Finance Minister — like he has assured on other things — that there is not going to be any further pledge or export for safe custody of gold? Is he also going to give us the assurance that no further adjustment or devaluation of the Rupee is going to take place? One of the reasons cited was export of illegal capital. Are we now to understand that after having these steps there is not going to be any further flight of illegal capital from India? Another point in this I would like to raise is what are our agencies

doing? When we know there is illegal activity going around, what is DIR for and what other people who are supposed to monitor the FERA laws doing? After all it is the taxpayer's money on which we are having these institutions. So, I am sure the hon. Finance Minister will tighten those areas as well and let us know what he plans to do in this direction.

We have been talking in terms of positive things. I am very happy that the Finance Minister is showing all confidence that from now onwards we have to look forward to greener pastures and that we can forget about the drought altogether. I would also like to share the optimism with the Finance Minister, but there is always a 'but'. Supposing God forbid all these schemes, for some reasons or the other fail, because we have devalued the Rupee without creating any infrastructure. It was only within a fortnight of the new Government taking over that the devaluation was announced. I don't know whether we have the infrastructure for the exports or not. Just to give you one small example; which will help me in getting the clarification, in our port for export -- whether it is the airport or the seaport -- we have got tremendous amount of red tape. You know the kind of corruption we have there. A small little clerk, just because he did not get his instalment of Five rupees, can sit on a shipment maybe for five months. So, are we going to tighten those areas? If so, how?

I was on the plans. In case these plans and steps which you have taken or you propose to take, fail—I hope they do not and I pray they do not, but supposing they fail -- do we have any contingency plan or again we will have to refer to some kind of gold or silver or God knows what type of pledging? I am very much worried on that. I hope that the Finance Minister gives us and the country a full assurance

that from now onwards there is no further devaluation, no further pledge of gold and there is only one way to look and that is going upwards.

DR. G. VIJAYA MOHAN REDDY (Andhra Pradesh): I want to ask the Finance Minister on some of the parts which he has mentioned in his statement. He says: this has resulted in Indian exporters to delay the remission of export proceeds to India. This is an apology in the statement. We give the exports all encouragements, incentives and everything that they want and finally they do not repatriate the sale proceeds. There are so many estimates, but the Reserve Bank of India fails to take any action against those exporters who have become defaulters. You don't cancel their licences. You don't take action. The Directorate of Enforcement has also got some estimates about all these failures. There are estimates which vary so much from Rs. 1,200 crores to Rs. 12,000 crores. The Enforcement agencies say that remittances amounting to Rs. 12,000 crores have not come back to our country. This is again a gross failure on the part of the Government. The vested interests play a big role. But without hitting the vested interests, common man is being hit by the policies of the Government. I think it is not fair no the part of the Finance Minister to impose these very, very severe measures like devaluation.

The World Bank has come out with figures. It has been discussed in Parliament also. Every year Rs. 2000 to Rs. 3000 crores of foreign exchange is stashed away in foreign banks. There are estimates that the stashed-away money in foreign banks is between Rs. 20,000 and Rs. 30,000 crores. Why cannot we get back this money? Who is responsible for all this? Is the poor man of this country who is suffering, responsible for the stashing away of Indian money in foreign banks?

[Dr. Vijaya Mohan Reddy]

What about joint ventures? May I know from the Minister whether joint ventures have remitted back their profits? We are encouraging joint ventures. We are sending missions abroad. We are trying to see that our Indian businessmen take part in the joint ventures. We give them full encouragement. May I know from the Minister how many of them have repatriated their profits? I think this amount comes to thousands of crores. I think if we can solve this problem, then, easily we can solve the balance of payments crisis. I think we can also solve this problem if we unearth black money. According to a series of Finance Ministers, Rs. 40,000 crores of black money is being generated in this country every year. May I know from the Minister what action his Ministry has taken to unearth black money? Who has to pay for all these faults? Is the worker to pay who works in the factory? Is the agriculturist to pay who works in his field? They have to suffer because of your wrong policies.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. NAGEN SAIKIA): Please seek clarifications on the basis of the statement.

DR. G. VIJAYA MOHAN REDDY: I want the Minister to reply to my points.

Now, I will come to another thing. The Government headed by Mr. Chandra Shekhar sold away confiscated gold. We had a great difference on this.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. NAGEN SAIKIA): Please seek clarifications on the basis of the statement.

DR. G. VIJAYA MOHAN REDDY: People of this country think that the Government has a right to dispose of confiscated gold like this. May I know from the Minister what is the quantity of confiscated gold in his Ministry's possession? There are some estimates that 200 to 300 tonnes

of confiscated gold is there. The Government does not give correct figures. Why don't we exhaust confiscated gold before we touch the Reserve Bank of India's gold? You know that the Reserve Bank of India is a guarantor for our economic system. This confiscated gold or smuggled gold can be sold away as a right of the Government. The previous Government has done a good job. May I know from the Minister what they are going to do with the confiscated gold?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. NAGEN SAIKIA): Please be brief.

DR. G. VIJAYA MOHAN REDDY: I am trying to be brief. I want the hon. Finance Minister to throw light on the points which I have raised. I want the Finance Minister to create confidence in the general public of our country, in the vast masses of our country who are the real producers of our wealth.

श्रीमती सुवमा स्वराज (हरियाणा) :
उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, इतनी देर के बाद आपने किसी महिला को समय दिया इसके लिए बहुत-बहुत धन्यवाद। सोने का मसला तो सबसे ज्यादा महिलाओं से संबंधित है।

उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं आपके माध्यम से वित्त मंत्री जी से दो बातें जानना चाहती हूँ। सोना बेचने या सोना गिरवी रखने से संबंधित दो सवाल पैदा होते हैं। पहला सवाल यह है कि क्या यह निर्णय, यह फैसला, अपने आप में बुद्धिमत्तापूर्ण फैसला है, सही फैसला है, सामयिक फैसला है? दूसरी बात यह है कि जिस तरीके से इस फसले को अमली जामा पहनाया गया है क्या वह तरीका सही है, क्या वह तरीका उचित है? जहाँ तक पहले साल का ताल्लुक है, यदि वित्त मंत्री इस देश को कबिन्द कर सकें कि इस आर्थिक संकट से, जिससे देश आज गुजर रहा है, उस संकट से उबारने का काम सोना बेच कर या सोना गिरवी रखकर किया जा सकता

है तो देश उनकी मजबूरी को समझें। क्योंकि सोने का यही सिद्धांत घर-परिवार में भी चलता है। घर में सोने सेक्योरिटी के तौर पर रखा जाता है। अगर घर-परिवार किसी प्राणिक आपदा या विपत्ति में फंसा जाता है तो घर को सहित यों जो सबसे ज्यादा सोने से मोह रखती हैं वे भी अपने सोने को बेचकर या गिरवी रखकर अपने संतानों की निवृत्ति लेती हैं। अगर देश की नौ विदेशों में गिर रही हो, देश की प्रगति, देश की साख, विदेशों में गिर रही हो और ऐसी स्थिति में हम देश के सोने के भण्डार को देख-देख कर जीते रहे, यह कोई नहीं चाहेगा। सोने गिरवी रखकर या बेचकर आप देश की अर्थी संत से उबर सकें और देश की प्रगति विदेशों में बचा सकें तो आपको मजबूरी को देश जरूर समझें। लेकिन दूसरा सवाल ज्यादा ग्रहण है। जब सदन का सत्र चल रहा हो तो क्या सदन को विश्वास में लेकर यह काम नहीं लिया जा सकता था? दो दिन पहले वित्त मंत्री जी ने राज्य सभा में इस संबंध में सवाल का जवाब दिया था। श्री ए० जी० कुलकर्णी जी ने अभी सवाल किया कि क्या पंद्रह दिन इस संबंध में नहीं बताया जा सकता था? क्षमा करें, अभी वित्त मंत्री जी ने खड़े होकर जो जवाब दिया उनके सवाल का वह कतई संतोषजनक नहीं था। उन्होंने कहा कि इसकी गोपनीयता रखना जरूरी था। मैं यह कहना चाहती हूँ कि हमने यह कभी नहीं चाहेगा कि वे हमें यह बता दें कि यह खेप किस जहज से जा रही है या किस तरीके को भेजी जा रही है। लेकिन आज जब वे इस बात को स्वीकार करते हैं कि जो मूल योजना वह 46.9 मीट्रिक टन सोना भेजने की थी तो क्या वह इन सदन को नहीं बता सकते थे कि यह जो सोना भेजा गया है वह अखिरी नहीं है, मूल योजना 46.9 मीट्रिक टन की है। क्या इतनी जानकारी देने में भी कोई एतराज था और एतराज था तो मैं पूछना चाहती हूँ कि क्या यह गोपनीयता बनाये रखी गई? या इसमें सच्चाई नहीं है कि जो रिसोर्सफुल जर्नेलिस्ट्स हैं, जो खोजी पत्रकार हैं, उन्होंने इस गोपनीयता के दुर्ग को फाट

कर वो जानकारी हथिल कर ली जिसको आप सदन से और देश से छिपना चाहते थे। पहली खेप सोने की गई तो अगले दिन इंडियन एक्सप्रेस और जनसत्ता में छपा कि इन्होंने टन सोना विदेश भेजा गया है। इंडियन एक्सप्रेस और जनसत्ता में छपने के बाद सदन को स्वीकार करना पड़ा कि सोने की खेप भेजी गई है। रिजर्व बैंक के गवर्नर को इसको मानना पड़ा। आज भी वही हुआ मैं आपके मध्यम से यह कहना चाहती हूँ कि यह लूका-छिपा का खेल करके सरकार ने संसद के विशेषाधिकारों का हनन किया है और संसद के प्रति अपराध किया है। मैं चाहूंगी कि जब वित्त मंत्री इस संबंध में कुछ कहें तो इस अपराध के लिए सदन से खेद जरूर प्रकट करें।

दूसरी बात मैं यह कहना चाहती हूँ कि पैरा 8 स्थिति को स्पष्ट नहीं कर रहा है। उन्होंने कहा है कि एक महीने में एक बार लगभग चार सौ मिलियन डॉलर की कुल राशि इस सोने के बदले में मिल सकती है। एक महीने में एक बार के क्या मयने हैं? क्या हर महीने में एक बार इस सोने के एवज में चार सौ मिलियन डॉलर मिलेंगे या केवल एक महीने में मिलेंगे। अगर केवल एक महीने में मिलेंगे तो क्या यह सोना केवल एक महीने के लिए गिरवी रखा गया है और अगर एक महीने के लिए गिरवी रखा गया है तो इसके मयने क्या है? क्या एक महीने के बाद यह ऋण लौटना होगा और अगर लौटा नहीं पाएंगे तो क्या यह सोना जब्त कर लिया जाएगा? क्या हम इस स्थिति में हैं कि एक महीने के बाद हम यह ऋण लौटा सकेंगे? अगर हम यह मानते हैं कि एक महीने के बाद हम यह ऋण नहीं लौटा पाएंगे और इस सोने का जबा होना एक अखिरी निष्कर्ष है तो गिरवी शब्द का भ्रम जल क्यों फैलाया जा रहा है और यह क्यों नहीं कहा जा रहा है कि यह सोना देकर हम बैंक ऑफ इंग्लैंड से यह राशि ले रहे हैं और अगर यही अखिरी निष्कर्ष है तो क्या इस सोने को बेचना ज्यादा लाभप्रद नहीं होता?

[श्रीमती सुषमा स्वराज]

8.00 P.M.

पहली सरकार ने सोना बेचने का निर्णय किया और आपने सोना गिरवी रखने का निर्णय किया। तो क्या वह ज्यादा लाभकारी ट्रांजक्शन था या यह ज्यादा लाभकारी ट्रांजक्शन है? इसके बारे में वित्त मंत्री जी सदन में विस्तारपूर्वक कहें।

श्री अनन्त राम जायसवाल (उत्तर प्रदेश) : उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, समय बहुत ज्यादा हो गया है, इसलिये मैं भाषण न देकर खाली सवाल पूछना चाहूँ।

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. NAGEN SAIKIA): I also want that academic discipline should be maintained in such discussions.

श्री अनन्त राम जायसवाल : मैं माननीय मंत्री जी! यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि मई 91 में चन्द्रशेखर जी की सरकार ने सोना गिरवी रखा था या बेचा था, तो क्या आप उसको सही दिशा में लिया गया सही कदम समझते हैं और उसकी पराहना करते हैं जो आपने उस निर्णय को बदला नहीं और बाद में उसको फाली किया? पहला मेरा सवाल यह है कि चन्द्रशेखर जी की सरकार ने सोना गिरवी रखने या बेचने का जो निर्णय लिया था उसको सही दिशा में सही कदम समझकर मौजूदा वित्त मंत्री ने उसको नहीं बदला बल्कि उसका अनुकरण किया और चार थोक सोने की बाहर भेजी?

दूसरा सवाल मेरा यह है कि जो सोना बाहर भेजा गया यह रिजर्व बैंक की आइट का है या यह कानफेस्केटेड गोल्ड है? स्मगलर्स से जन्त किया गया सोना है?

तीसरा सवाल मेरा यह है कि क्या इस तरह से सोना बेचने की प्रथा अंतर-राष्ट्रीय है? दूसरे देश भी इसका सहारा लेते रहे हैं और लेते हैं।

चौथा सवाल मेरा यह है कि क्या इस सोन को बेचने की जरूरत इसलिये

पड़ी क्योंकि विदेशी ऋण का भुगतान ड्यू हो गया था, अग्रेज में और फिर जन में? और आखिरी सवाल मेरा यह है कि जो यह 400 मिलियन डालर आपको मिल रहा है, इस सोने के बदले में, इसका आप कितने दिन कामों में उपयोग करेंगे? विदेशी भुगतान के लिये, आयात के लिये, बजट डेफिसिट को पूरा करने के लिये या किसी और निश्चित काम में इसका इस्तेमाल करेंगे? मेरे आपसे ये पांच सवाल हैं और आप मुझे इन पांचों सवालों का जवाब दें।

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. NAGEN SAIKIA): Hon. Members, there is a long list of speakers. Again, I shall request the Members to be brief and only to put the questions pointedly.

श्री मोहम्मद उर्फ मोम अफजल (उत्तर प्रदेश) : मोहतरम वजीरे खजाना साहब ने आज जो स्टेटमेंट दिया है, मैं इस विषय में यहाँ तर्क करूँगा कि मुल्क पर अगर कोई संकट आता है, बहुत ज्यादा परेशानी आती है, कोई एकानामिक क्राइस आती है तो उसके लिये कोई भी हुक्मत कोई न कोई तरिका अख्तियार करते हैं। सोना बेचा भी जा सकता है और गिरवी भी रखा जा सकता है। लेकिन जैसा कि अभी हमारी एक मोमज्जिज मबर ने कहा कि हमारे यहाँ रिवाज है, हमारे समाज में सोना बिल्कुल आखिर में बेचा जाता है। इसको केवल उसी वक्त बेचते हैं जब घर में कोई और चीज न बचती हो। क्राइसिस से निकलने के लिये इसका इस्तेमाल किया जाता है। मेरा पूछना यह है वजीरे खजाना से कि क्या सोना गिरवी रखने या बेचने के अलावा हमारे पास कोई दूसरा रास्ता नहीं था जिसके मार्फत हम इस क्राइसिस से निकल सकते थे? दूसरी अहम बात यह है कि इसकी तफसिलात बिल्कुल नहीं है कि इस सोने के बदले में हमने जो कुछ हासिल किया है या करेंगे इसकी तफसिल इस स्टेटमेंट में आनी चाहिये कि उसका हम किस तरीके से इस्तेमाल करेंगे। जायसवाल जी ने भी इस पर सवाल

किया है कि आने वाले वक्त में हम इसको किस तरह खर्च करेंगे और इन पैसों को वापिस करने के लिये हमारे पास क्या तरीका है, क्या रिसोर्स हैं, यह बात भी मदन को बताई जानी चाहिए।

दूसरी बात यह है कि इससे कोई इतेफाक नहीं कर सकता, हकूमत ने सोने को बेचने के लिए जो तरीका अपनाया है उस पर सब को चिंता है, सब को उस पर शुक्रशुबाह है। आपको याद होगा कि चन्द्रशेखर की सरकार के दौरान अमरीका जहाजों में पेट्रोल भी इसी तरह से भरा गया था। मैं मुबारकबाद देता हूँ मुल्क के उन जर्नलिस्टों को और अखबारों को जिन्होंने उस वक्त भी एक ऐसे कदम को आवाम के सामने पेश किया था जो हकूमत ने आवाम से छिपाया था और वगैर आवाम और पार्लियामेंट को विश्वास में लिये उन्होंने नेल अमरीका जहाजों में भरा था।

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. NAGEN SAIKIA): Please confine to the statement only.

श्री मोहम्मद अफजल उर्फ मौम अफजल : इसी अंदाज में अभी हमारे मंत्री जी ने फरमाया कि इससे हमारे पेमेंट्स को खतरा हो सकता था इसलिए बताया नहीं गया। सब से अहम बात यह है कि तमाम अखबारों में यह बात छपी है कि स्पेशल कारगो लेन से यह सोना गया है। क्या मंत्री जी यह सफाई पेश करेंगे कि जो जहाज सोना ले जाने के लिए इस्तेमाल हुआ वह कारगो जहाज था या पेमेंजर लेन के जरिये से भेजा गया? आखिरी और अहम बात इस मुल्क के आवाम से जुड़ी हुई है। इंटरनेशनल मार्केट में हिन्दुस्तानी रुपये की कीमत जिस तरह से गिरी है उसका असर हिन्दुस्तान के आवाम पर भी पड़ रहा है। मैं बहुत स्पष्ट रूप से मंत्री जी से जानना चाहूंगा कि आने के सोना गिरवी रखने के बाद या सोना बेचने से मुल्क में जो जरूरी चीजों की कीमतें हैं क्या वह डायरेक्टरी या इन्डायरेक्टरी बढ़ेंगी या नहीं बढ़ेंगी। अगर बढ़ेंगी तो कितने परसेंट ऊपर जा सकती हैं, इसका पूरी तरह से क्लेरीफिकेशन होना चाहिये ताकि आवाम

को पता लगे कि सोना गिरवी रखने से हम को कोई लाभ हो रहा है या हम मजबूर इसी और काइज की तरफ जा रहे हैं। बहुत बहुत शुक्रिया।

†[عربی مستند افضل عرف م]

افضل (اتر پردیہ): مستحکم وزیر

خزانہ صاحب نے آج جو استہتملت دیا ہے - میں اس سلسلہ میں یہی کہونگا کہ ملک پر اگر کوئی سلکت آتا ہے - بہت زیادہ پریشانی آتی ہے - کوئی اکانامک کرائس آتی ہے تو اسکے لئے کوئی بھی حکومت کوئی نہ کوئی طریقہ اختیار کرتی ہے - سونا بیچنا بھی جا سکتا ہے - اور گروی بھی رکھا جا سکتا ہے - لیکن جیسا کہ ابھی ہماری ایک معزز میمبر نے کہا کہ ہمارے یہاں روایت ہے - ہمارے سماج میں سونا بالکل آخر میں بیچنا جاتا ہے - اسکو کھول اسی وقت بیچتے ہیں جب گھر میں کوئی اور چیز نہ بچتی ہو کرائیسس سے نکلے کیلئے اسکا استعمال کیا جاتا ہے - میرا پوچھنا یہ ہے کہ وزیر خزانہ سے کہ کیا سونا گروی رکھنے یا بیچنے کے علاوہ ہمارے پاس کوئی دوسرا واسطہ نہیں تھا جسکے معرفت ہم اس کرائس سے نکل سکتے تھے - دوسری اہم بات یہ ہے کہ اسکی تفصیلات بالکل نہیں ہیں کہ اس سونے کے بدلے ہم نے جو کچھ حاصل کیا ہے - یا کریپٹے - اسی تفصیل اس استہتملت

†[] Transliterations in Arabic Script.

میں آئی چاہتے تھیں کہ ہم کس طریقے سے استعمال کریں گے - جانسوا جی نے بھی اس پر سوال کیا ہے کہ اُنے والے وقت میں ہم اسکو کس طرح خدج کیلئے اس پیسے کو واپس کرنے کیلئے ہمارے پاس کیا طریقہ ہے - کہا دوسری بات - یہ بات بھی سدن کو بتائی جانی چاہئے -

دوسری بات یہ کہ اس سے کوئی اتفاق نہیں کر سکتا - حکومت نے اس سونے کو بیچنے کیلئے جو طریقہ اپلایا ہے اس پر سب کو چننا ہے - سب کو اس پر شک و شبہ ہے - آپ کو یاد ہوگا کہ چندر شیکھر کی سرکار کے دوران امریکی جہازوں کو پٹرول بھی اسی طرح سے بھرا گیا تھا - ہمیں مبارکباد دیتا ہوں ملک کے ان جرنلسٹوں کو اور اخباروں کو جنہوں نے اسوقت بھی ایک ایسے قوم کو عوام کے سامنے پیش کیا تھا جو حکومت نے عوام سے چھپایا تھا اور بغیر عوام اور پارلیمنٹ کو اعتماد میں لئے انہوں نے تھل امریکی جہازوں میں بھرا تھا -

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. NAGEN SAIKIA): Please confine to the statement only.

شری محمد افضل عوف م افضل:

اسی انداز میں ابھی ہمارے ملتوی جی نے فرمایا کہ اس سے ہمارے پسندیدہ کو خطرہ ہو سکتا تھا - اسلئے بنایا نہیں گیا - سب سے اہم بات یہ ہے کہ تمام اخباروں میں

یہ بات چھپی ہے کہ اسپیشل کارگو پلین سے یہ سونا گیا ہے - کہا مندری جی یہ صدائی پیش کریں گے کہ جو جہاز سونا لے جائے کیلئے استعمال ہوا - وہ کارگو جہاز تھا یا پسندیدہ پلین کے ذریعے سے پہنچا گیا - آخری اور اہم بات اس ملک کے عوام سے جو ہوئی ہے - انٹرنیشنل مارکیٹ میں ہندوستانی روپے کی قیمت جس طرح طے سے گری ہے اسکا اثر ہندوستان کے عوام پر بھی پڑ رہا ہے - میں بہت سہشت روپ سے مندری جی سے جاننا چاہوں گا کہ آپ کے سونا کروی رکھنے کے بعد یہ سونا بھجئے سے ملک میں جو ضروری چیزوں کی قیمتیں ہیں کہا وہ ڈائریکٹی یا انڈائریکٹی پڑھیں گی یا نہیں پڑھیں گی - اگر پڑھیں گی تو کتنے پریسنت اور اوپر جا سکتی ہیں - اسکا پوری طرح سے کلیری فکیشن آنا چاہئے تاکہ عوام کو پتہ لگے کہ سونا کروی رکھنے سے ہم کو کوئی "بہ ہو رہا ہے یا ہم مزید کسی اور کرائیسز کی طرف جا رہے ہیں - بہت بہت شکریہ -

श्री भंवर लाल पवार (राजस्थान) :
उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, वित्त मंत्री जी के वक्तव्य के संबंध में स्पष्टीकरण जो अब तक पूछे जा चुके हैं मैं उसकी पुनरावृत्ति

न करते हुए की। वस्तु के पद-6 के संबंध में स्पष्टीकरण चाहेंगे। इसके पूर्व माननीय रत्नाकर पांडे जी और श्री० श्री० साहू जी ने अपनी अंगूठें भेंट की है। मैं समझता हूँ कि भादों के अवसर पर मिली हुई अंगूठें में मोह भंग होने दे दो होंगे लेकिन मैं अपनी निजी कमाई में 3 जुलाई माह का वेतन 1500 रुपए इस आर्थिक संकट के निवारण के लिए भारत सरकार को डोनेट करता हूँ।

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. NAGEN SAIKIA): I think with the permission of the family Home Minister?

SHRI B. L. PANWAR: No, it is my own decision.

मान्यवर, सोना बेचने का काम भारत की आजादी के बाद केवल नाम कांग्रेस गवर्नमेंट ने ही किया है। यह रिपोर्ट और तथ्यों पर आधारित है कि नान कांग्रेस गवर्नमेंट की न तो मत्ता सम्भालने और न शासन चलाने का तजुर्बा है और न पट्स हैं। 1971 में बंगलादेश की लड़ाई के समय में श्रीगोपी ने अपने मालमूल्य दे दिए थे। वह पत् 1977 से 1979 के दौरान जनता शासन ने वन 700 रुपए के भाव पे बेचे थे। नान कांग्रेस गवर्नमेंट ने अभी यह जो सोना बेचने का निर्णय लिया 6 मास की अवधि में वापस खरीदने का यह निर्णय जो पद 6 में बनाया गया है इस में वित्त मंत्री जी यह बनाने का कष्ट करेंगे कि पनः खरीदने का विकल्प रखा गया है किम भाव से बेचने का कांट्रिब्यूशन। श्री 6 माह की अवधि में वापस खरीदने की क्या दर निश्चित की है, या नहीं की और की है तो किस रेट पर की है। यह वित्त मंत्री जी बतायें ताकि देश को और जनता का यह पता लगे कि कितना रेट आफ इंटररेस्ट उस खरीद करने की दर पे निकलेगा।

वित्त मंत्री महोदय ने मैं अन्य पदस्थों ने मित्र राय रखत हुए एक बात का निवेदन करना चाहेंगे कि कांग्रेस गवर्नमेंट की यह नीति रही है कि सोना बेचना न होगा बल्कि नान। विदेशों में अभी देशों की यह धारणा है कि हिंदुस्तान और हिंदुस्तानी

बहुत धनी हैं और यहां बहुत सोना है। यह तथ्य है और रिपोर्ट चीज है। सब मैगजिन वगैरह में देख सकते हैं। यह जो कांग्रेस गवर्नमेंट ने केवल वहां सोना भेजने का निर्णय कंट्रैन्सू किया है, वित्त मंत्री महोदय, मैं तो इनको इस तरह पे लेता हूँ कि भारतवासियों का वर्तमान में ज्यादा खर्चीला स्वभाव हो रहा है, एकट्रावेगेट हो रहे हैं। इसको ऐसी एकगन में लेते जिसे जनता को यह महसूस हो कि बाकी आर्थिक स्थिति सम्भर है और भारत को इम्पोर्ट करने के लिए ज्यादा विदेशी मुद्रा खर्च न करने पड़े। आप यह स्पष्टीकरण न दें कि भारत के पास कितने दिन के लिए विदेशी मुद्रा है। यह मैं अपने मत पे कहता हूँ। विदेशी में यह बात नहीं जानने चाहिए कि भारत की स्थिति इस प्रकार है। गोपनीयता के तौर पर इस मस्य को रखें। दूसरा यह रेट जो चन्द्रशेखर गवर्नमेंट ने तय किया बेचने का और वापस खरीदने का वह बतायें।

श्री राम अवधेश सिंह: उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं बिल्कुल संक्षेप में इस ब्यान की जो अंतिम पंक्ति है उसे पे शुरु करना चाहता हूँ। यह मैं पढ़ देता हूँ। इसकी लास्ट पंक्ति में भावना व्यक्त की गयी है कि मेरे ईमानदार कोशिश यह रहेगी कि जो सोना हमने भेजा है उसको तुरंत विदेशों पे वापस मंगा सकें। काश वित्त मंत्री जी की इस पुनित भावना को सफल होते हम देखते। मेरे तो कामना यह भी है कि न केवल जितना सोना हमें बाहर गिरवी रखा गये हैं वही वापस आए बल्कि ऐसी आर्थिक परिस्थितियां वित्त मंत्री जी पैदा कर दें कि हमारे देश में खुद बाहर : सोना आये, जितना गिरवी रखा गया है उस : दम गुना ही नहीं मी गुना आ जाए। मैं उस दिन का इंतजार करूंगा और इनको बहुत बधाई दूंगा। लेकिन जिस तरह की बात इस पुने स्टेटमेंट में कही गयी है, इतना हापलैम स्टेटमेंट मैंने कभी आज तक नहीं देखा क्योंकि मारे बातें परम्पर विरोधी हैं और कोई तथ्यों पर आधारित नहीं है।

[Shri B. L. Panwar]

एक माननीय सदस्य : आपकी सम्झ से परे है ।

श्री राम अवधेश सिंह : आपको मैं बता दूंगा । आप स्वयं चुप हो जाएंगे ।

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. NAGEN SAIKIA): You cannot make a speech. You will confine to the clarifications.

श्री राम अवधेश सिंह : स्पीच नहीं है । मैं इतनी भूमिका के बाद सवाल कर रहा हूँ कांग्रेस सरकार के बारे में हमारी एक कहानी है नकबुल्की की सरकार । नकबुल्की की सरकार एक मिनट में मैं बताता हूँ कि क्या है ।

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. NAGEN SAIKIA): You need not explain those things. You only put your questions to the Minister.

श्री राम अवधेश सिंह : यह सफाई हो जानी चाहिए जो बात मैं कहने जा रहा हूँ जो कवैश्चन पूछ रहा हूँ उसके लिए बहुत उपयुक्त है । दो किसान थे दोनों ने चार-चार हजार रुपया कर्ज लिया ।

...तो दोनों की पत्नियों ने कहा... (व्यवधान)

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. NAGEN SAIKIA): You will get enough time to speak when the Budget is placed. You ask for clarifications now.

श्री राम अवधेश सिंह : इतने में तो मैं बोल देता । एक की पत्नी ने कहा कि हे साजन, हमको नकबुल्की खरीद दीजिए । ऐसा ही दूसरे की पत्नी ने भी कहा । पर उसने कहा कि नहीं, मैं सिचाई का साधन लगाऊंगा और नकबुल्की बाद में खरीदूंगा ।

दूसरे ने नकबुल्की खरीद ली और फिर उसकी खेती बिगड़ गई । नतीजा यह हुआ कि उनकी नकबुल्की भी बिक

गई और खेती भी बिक गई और जिसने नकबुल्की नहीं खरीदी थी, सिचाई का साधन लगाया था, उसकी पैदावार बढ़ गई । फिर उसने नकबुल्की भी खरीदी ।

जो भारत की सरकार आज तक चालीस वर्षों तक नकबुल्की भी सरकार रही है । कर्ज देकर नकबुल्की खरीद देते हैं और कर्ज में फंस जाती है और कर्ज का सुद देते-देते तबाह हो जाती है ।

अब मैं सावल पूछ रहा हूँ । मान्यवर, 69 विलियन डालर विदेशी कर्ज है । उसका सुद करीब-करीब भारतीय सिक्के से साढ़े छह हजार करोड़ पड़ता है, अगर 5 प्रतिशत सुद पर मिलता हो तब ।

श्रीमती सुषमा स्वराज : नहीं माढे, सात हजार करोड़ से भी ज्यादा ।

श्री राम अवधेश सिंह : अच्छा, तो इतना सुद है । भारत के बजट का 18 प्रतिशत केवल सुद पर जाता है ।

मैं वह जानना चाहता हूँ, मान्यवर, कि जो सोना बेचने से, सोना गिरवी रखने से जितने पैसे मिले हैं, उस से क्या हमारा पूरा पैसा सुद का भी वापिस हो जाएगा ?

मैं यह कहना चाहता हूँ कि तीन चीजों को एक साथ मिला करके नहीं देखने से, यह बात हमारे सामने आती है । वित्त मंत्री जी ने देश को और इस सदन को गुमराह करने की कोशिश की है कि तीन कदमों का देश की अर्थ-व्यवस्था पर एक साथ असर पड़ता है, कम्युलेटिव इफ़ेक्ट पड़ता है—पहले है डिवेल्यूएशन, सोना बेचा जाना, कनफिस्केटिड गोल्ड को बेचा, फिर डिवेल्यूएशन किया और फिर सोना गिरवी रखा । यह तीन कदम एक साथ किए ।

अगर तीनों को आप एक साथ मिलाकर नहीं देखेंगे, तब तक आपकी अर्थ-व्यवस्था के बारे में सही जानकारी नहीं होगी ।

अब विदेशी शक्तियों के दबाव में आकर पता नहीं कि जो डिवैल्यूएशन, जिस दबाव में आई एम०एफ० ने करवाया है, वह कमिटमेंट पूरा करेगा या नहीं।

अगर डिवैल्यूएशन के बाद मान लिया कि तीन-साढ़े तीन हजार करोड़ दे दिया, किन्तु मैं एक सवाल पूछना चाहता हूँ कि जो डिवैल्यूएशन से, जैसा देसाई जी ने कहा कि जनवरी से लेकर जुलाई तक रुपए का जो टोटल डिवैल्यूएशन 43 प्रतिशत हो गया, तो जो सामान हमको सौ डालर के लिए देना पड़ता था, उससे 43 प्रतिशत ज्यादा देना पड़ेगा। तो क्या 43 प्रतिशत ज्यादा उत्पादन क्षमता हमारी अर्थ-व्यवस्था में है ?

फर्ज कर लीजिए कि हमको दो टन सिला हुआ कपड़ा देना पड़ता था सौ डालर के लिए, तो आज सौ डालर के लिए हमको करीब-करीब पैंने तीन टन या तीन टन कपड़ा देना पड़ेगा। या हमको घी देना पड़ता था जितने डालर के लिए... (व्यवधान)

अब इससे बड़ा सवाल क्या हो सकता है। मैं यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या वित्त मंत्री जी सदन को और देश की जनता को बतायेंगे कि जो इन्होंने बहुत साहसिक ढंग से कहा है कि हम सोना वापिस तुरंत आधार पर ले लेंगे, तो यह किस आधार पर कहा ?

फिर एक महीने की बात कही गई है कि 400 मिलियन जो डालर मिल रहा है वह एक महीने के हिमाव से है। किस आधार पर, यह देश को गुमराह कर रहे हैं जबकि इनकी उत्पादन क्षमता नहीं है, इन्फ्लेक्शन नहीं है कि यह जितना अभी इनका व्यापार है उसको मैनटेन करें। तो हम तो जब 43 फीसदी हमारा एक्सपोर्ट बढ़ जाएगा तब हम उस स्थान पर रहेंगे जिस स्थान पर डिवैल्यूएशन हुआ था। 43 फीसदी कहाँ से लायेंगे, यह आप बता दें ? यह कह रहे हैं कि वापस लायेंगे सात जन्म में वापस नहीं होगा। मैं यह कहना चाहता हूँ कि जो सोना गिरवी रखा गया है वह

बेचा गया है। यह गिरवी तो धोखे बाजी के लिए कहा गया है। क्योंकि यह लोग बन्धुशेखर सरकार ने बेचा तो डके की चोट पर कहा कि यह कंफिस्केड गोल्ड है हम बेचेंगे। कांग्रेस के लोगों ने चुनाव में प्रचार किया कि सोना बेच दिया, सोना बेच दिया। उस लाज को बचाने के लिए यह कह रहे हैं कि यह बेच नहीं रहे हैं, गिरवी रख रहे हैं और हम वापस ले लेंगे। आप कैसे वापस ले लेंगे ? आपके पास एक्सपोर्ट बढ़ाने की क्षमता कहाँ है ? जब तक एक्सपोर्ट नहीं बढ़ेगा तब तक क्षमता नहीं बढ़ेगी और आपका सोना वापस नहीं आएगा। सीधे कहिए कि हम बेच रहे हैं। जो हमको यह बता दें। दूसरा सवाल... (व्यवधान) मैं यह कहना चाहता हूँ कि असल बात हमारे वित्त मंत्री जी को समझनी चाहिए, न्यू वर्ल्ड आर्डर का डिमांड क्या है। न्यू वर्ल्ड आर्डर जो कह रहा है इसको समझना होगा। इसको समझने के लिए डा० लोहिया की एक किताब है "इकोनोमिक्स आफ्टर मार्क्स" उसको पाढ़िए। इसके बाद आप अपना बजट बनाइये तब आपको पता चलेगा कि हम कहाँ हैं। आज तो यह दुनिया को लूटने के लिए यह जो साम्राज्यवादी मुल्क हैं। उन्होंने पहले बनाया यूरोपियन इकोनोमिक कम्यूनिटी, अब जी-7 बना रहे हैं। अब यह क्या कह रहे हैं रूस जैसे महान देश को वह बुला-बुला कर... (व्यवधान) तो आप किस हैसियत के हैं, आप किस खेत की मूली हैं ?

श्री जगेश बेसाई : आप तो देश का नीचापन कर रहे हैं। आप यह क्या बात कर रहे हैं ?

श्री राम अवधेश सिंह : नीचापन तो आप कर रहे हैं। हमारी स्थिति ऐसी नहीं है। किन्तु आप सीधे कहते कि हमारी अर्थ व्यवस्था ऐसी नहीं है। हमने सोना बेच दिया, वापस नहीं आया। मेरा कहना है कि क्या वित्त मंत्री जी जो बजट बनाने जा रहे हैं इस बात का ख्याल रखेंगे, हमको बतायेंगे कि इन्फ्लेक्शन ऐसा हो कि जो एक्सपोर्ट हमारा बढ़े और हम अपनी क्षमता पर भरोसा

[श्री म अवधेश सिंह]

रखें ? यह बाहर से कर्ज लेले कर और सूद चुकाने का काम करेंगे, हर साल, क्या यह सरकार अग्रे साल के सूद चुकायेगी, न इसके पास कोई हैमियत है, इस साल को तो छोड़ दीजिए, अगले साल के सूद चुकाया जाएगा यह मैं जानना चाहता हूँ ? कितना आपका एक्सपोर्ट बढ़ेगा, किस चीज को आप बढ़ायेंगे कि आपको सूद चुकाने के बाद इतना पैसा था डालर मिलेगा कि अधिक विकास के लिए परियोजनाओं को चालू रखने के लिए, नई टेक्नोलॉजी लाने के लिए आप पूरा कर सकते हैं, यह मैं जानना चाहता हूँ ?

श्रीमती कमला सिन्हा (बिहार) : उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, बहुत-बहुत शुक्रिया आपने अंत में मेरा नाम पुकारा मैं आभार नहीं, केवल प्रश्न ही पूछना चाहूंगी। वित्त मंत्री जी मे मैं सीधा-सीधा प्रश्न पूछना चाहूंगी कि एक तो इनका बयान बहुत ही कम्प्यूटिंग है, कम्प्यूटिंग एंड सैल्फ-कंट्रोलिङ है। आप पैरा 6 को अगर देखेंगे तो उसमें इन्होंने कहा है कि चन्द्रशेखर की सरकार ने यह निर्णय लिया और उसके तुरंत बाद जब ये सोना बेचने के काम के बारे में अखबारों में खबर आई तो चन्द्रशेखर सरकार ने उसे रिप्यूट किया और चैलेंज कर कहा कि हमने बेचा नहीं है बल्कि स्विज बैंक में गिरवी रखा है। तो मैं जानना चाहती हूँ कि चन्द्रशेखर ने जा बान कही वह सत्य है या वित्त मंत्री ने जो कहा वह सत्य है ? कौनसी बात सत्य है ?

दूसरी बात मैं यह जानना चाहती हूँ कि जब देश में चुनी हुई सरकार हो तो सोना बेचने जैसा एक इम्पोर्टेड डिमोन्स्ट्रेशन पॉलिटिकल मूवमेंट लेती है, या रिजर्व बैंक को है ? यह मैं जानना चाहती हूँ। रिजर्व बैंक का यह कानूनन अधिकार है कि हमारे देश का जो रिजर्व सोना है उसे बच दे पर चुनी हुई सरकार रहते यह अधिकार कहाँ से आया कसने बिना यह अधिकार और इसके

लिए किसकी जवाबदेही है ? यह मैं जानना चाहती हूँ।

उसके बाद लिखा हुआ है "कि चन्द्रशेखर सरकार ने यह फैसला किया और हमने उसके साथ सहमति व्यक्त की और रिजर्व बैंक को यह राइट है।" तो रिजर्व बैंक ने अब तक यह काम क्यों नहीं किया ? इस बार ही क्यों किया गया ? चुनी हुई सरकार को यह निर्णय करना चाहिए था कि सोना बेचना है या नहीं और यह बेचने की जरूरत क्यों पड़ो ? मंत्री जी ने कहा कि वॉलेंस ग्राफ पेमेंट देना था, दुनिया में हमारी साख गिर रही थी, इसलिए हमको बेचना पड़ा आइ एम एफ ने आपको 220 मिलियन डालर वॉलेंस ग्राफ पेमेंट पे करने के लिए दिया है, वर्ल्ड बैंक ने डेढ़ सौ मिलियन डालर दिया है, जापान ने भी सौ मिलियन डालर दिया है, तो फिर आपने हमारे देश के सोने को विदेश में क्यों भेजा, क्यों बेचा और कब तक आप इसको वापस लायेंगे ? यह आप साफ-साफ बनाने का कष्ट करें।

SHRI ASHIS SEN (West Bengal): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I do appreciate your anxiety that we must ask specific questions. Though the subject-matter is export of gold or transfer of gold from our country, it cannot be discussed in isolation from the other economic factors. So, I will seek your indulgence to make a reference to some of them.

Sir, I fully sympathise with the current Finance Minister that certain things have been done by the just preceding Government which had set about 20 tonnes of gold abroad by way of sale or pledge to get money. Whatever may be the public posture, gold has gone out of the country and that is the position now. Two days back the Finance Minister said that this was the final transshipment and no further transfer would be undertaken. But, today in the newspapers we find that another transfer of gold has been effected

and the gold has been sent to the Bank of England. Why should this matter be shrouded in mystery and secrecy? Why are we not in a position to tell facts as facts and to call a spade a spade? I would like to ask the Finance Minister whether he would avoid making any further roundabout way of making statements. We are the representatives of the people and we have a right to know and the people have a right to know what the things are and what the position is. Now, gold has been sent to get one thousand crores of rupees. Somebody said that we are nearer a debt trap. I am not sure. I would like to have a clear statement from the Finance Minister. Is it now simply a shadow of the debt trap or have the tentacles been spread by the international forces of imperialism? Whether it is the IMF or the World Bank, they have already laid the trap in such a manner that India has no scope or opportunity to get out of it. Whatever verbiage may be there they say they want to retrieve our economy from its present state of affairs. But how has this state of affairs come about? I hope the Finance Minister will enlighten the House on this. This has not come about overnight. This has come over a period of years and there is no use blaming the previous Governments, whether it is the V. P. Singh Government or the Government of Mr. Chandra Shekhar and all that. Who has conducted the economy and politics of our country over the decades? Such a state of affairs cannot happen that just on the 17th July something happens and on the 18th we have got to send abroad 20 tonnes of gold. It cannot happen like that. I would like to have a clear understanding from the Finance Minister what has led this country to this position.

I cannot say whether this policy of unrestricted liberalisation of imports of all kinds the country needs or not. This policy has been pursued for the last 7, 8 or 10 years, if not more.

Why the gates have been opened to foreign investors and multinationals? Whether this has caused this position or not we would like to have from the Finance Minister a specific answer. If that be so, then what steps does he propose to take to put an end or check this process of devaluation or country's prestige, of not the economy alone. You may call it devaluation or the so called exchange rate adjustment to hoodwink the public, but the fact is that the rupee is going down in its value in the market and then drastically it has been brought down. It is one thousand crores of rupees. Now the fond expectation is that exports will pick up. It cannot happen overnight that exports will get picked up. It will take at least three or four years for the new policy of exports to fructify or come up and bring about a position of improvement of our economy. How is one thousand crores of rupees going to bridge the gap between exports and imports? It cannot be less than four years. Naturally you have got to borrow further and further borrowing means deep inside the debt trap we are dragging our country into.

Now the optimum limit of 15 per cent of gold reserves held by the Reserve Bank has been transhipped to the Bank of England for pledge, mortgage, or safe keeping. Whatever term we may use, the money has gone over there. Now if these one thousand crores of rupees are spent away, what next? What will happen after one month or three weeks? The Finance Minister says that it is the final thing that has been done, he says, "With the transfer abroad of the final instalment of gold on 8th July the whole operation has been completed as originally planned." Now, new planning will be there for further shipment of reserved gold to the Bank of England or abroad anywhere else. That will necessarily mean an amendment to that Act which permits the Reserve Bank this limit of 15 per cent. Can you

[Shri Ashis Sen]

give a guarantee that you will not come to this position? So what hereafter are we going to do? (*Time Bell rings*)

Then, you say that the Government has taken a firm decision to honour its commitments. To honour its commitments for how long and to what extent? The IMF in a systematic manner are forcing the Government of this country to borrow more and more from them to pay our interest commitments. Where is our country being led to win credibility in the market? What is the credibility in the international market that you have got now? Devalued rupee? To tranship our reserves of gold elsewhere? Even the Bank of England cannot rely on the Reserve Bank of India that the gold can be kept in our country. Is it not a reality then that without shipment, money could not be given? I want an answer to that because otherwise the entire reserve of the Reserve Bank of India gold will be drained out of this country. I would not have raised this question, Mr. Vice-Chairman. Permit me just two minutes or one-and-a-half minute more. An environment is being created by the vested interests, and the vested interests have got a direct link with the international money managers who want all the developing countries to be brought into the ambit of that trap. They say that borrowing like this is an inevitability. The public mind is being conditioned to the way that there is no other alternative before the country but to have an abject surrender to the conditionalities of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Who are these people? They should be pin-pointed and the country should be told that within our system, there are people who have got links with the external forces. That has got to be unearthed. Simply saying that we will be able to tide over these difficulties in this manner, I hope, will not create that confidence in the minds of the peo-

ple. Now one thing comes. One of the major factors is the price that we are paying for oil. Could there not be any restriction for oil consumption in our country, i.e. petrol? Is it not a fact—I want an answer because it is not related to gold alone—that oil producing countries led by the Big Brother in the USA and the other friends of theirs...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. NAGEN SAIKIA): If you bring all this, then there will no end to it.

SHRI ASHIS SEN:...stalled further production of oil in our country? The full capacity utilisation of our oil producing units is being stalled. They are not being allowed. And that is why our liability on account of oil is becoming more and more. I wish I could have shared the optimism of the Finance Minister that we will get over this position very quickly. But reality is not so. People are being led to a point of fatality. Now you have been saying that what is going to be your next position is to recover. It is going to be an attack on the working class, the producer. Can there be any guarantee that by this Rs. 1000 crores of loan or by the further shipment of gold, it will lead to more production in our country for consumption? If that is not there, then again as it happened from 1950s onwards, workers would be called upon to tighten their belt, and then it will be feared that there would be freezing of wages and dearness allowance. These things are likely to come. Is it not so? I would request a clear statement from the Finance Minister that the working class of this country will not be called upon to bear the burden of all these policies that have been made by the Government. (*Time bell rings*) I wanted to know these specific points though I had something more. I obey your order and I am sitting down. Thank you Sir for the time given. I would expect some positive answers from the Finance Minister. I hope, with his dexterity, he will be giving the answer.

SHRI PRAKASH YASHWANT AMBEDKAR (Nominated): Sir, I would deal with only two aspects. I would not repeat what has already been said over here. In the last page, there is an assurance given by the hon. Minister that gold will not be sent out henceforth. At page Nos. 2 and 3, referring to the previous Government, the Chandra Shekhar Government sent 20 tonnes of gold out of Government stocks was mentioned. May I ask the hon. Minister whether the assurance given is over two kind of gold transactions, one of gold from the Reserve Bank of India and the other is from the stock of the Government? Is the assurance restricted only to the Reserve Bank of India or is it connected even to the gold stock which is held by the Government of India? Secondly, whatever assurance is coming from the hon. Minister that we will improve our balance of payments position, I do not believe it. In 1986, we had devaluation. And even at that time it was said that our exports would increase. But may I point out that we are mainly the exporters of those items which are known as primary or preliminary items which are insensitive to the price rise in the international market? So, what are the specific plans of the Government to see that these items which are exported become sensitive to the price rise in the international market? That is one. Secondly, the hon. Minister has said that there are positive signs that the economy is improving. I would not ask the hon. Minister for all the signs. But at least he can point out one sign as to where the economy is picking up. With this, Sir, I thank you.

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI (Tamil Nadu): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I thank you for having given me the opportunity to elicit information on the statement submitted by the hon. Finance Minister. When in the morning it was announced that they are going to give a statement, we thought that we will get further in-

formation. But the information we have got from the statement, I can say only, is what we had through the newspapers. Four instalments of gold are sent abroad. That is the only information we got. But anyhow time is very short and I confine myself to the main points. We have come to a stage where other countries have started losing faith in our fiscal situation and economic conditions because our mixed economy actually started by the great leader Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has been converted into adulterated economy. That is the main issue. I do not want to politicise the issue. But I want to tell that in February 1986 Dr. Sukhmoy Chakravarty prepared a confidential note consisting of 16 pages for the late Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi. That was again summarised to one page by Secretaries and submitted to Shri Rajiv Gandhi. Now, it is an open secret. When it was given to Shri Gandhi it was a secret document. It was prepared in February 1986 and submitted to Mr. Rajiv Gandhi. Dr. Sukhmoy Chakravarty had argued that the strategy of high growth would generate tremendous pressures on the balance of payments. Without a clear-cut policy to contain the situation during the transitional phase, the Government would have to either approach the IMF for a loan or go in for large commercial borrowings. "Both these alternatives had to be avoided as these would conflict with our long-term national interest". It was actually professed by late Dr. Sukhmoy Chakravarty in February 1986. Had the then Government abided by the advice given by this great economist, this situation would not have arisen at all.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. NAGEN SAIKIA): Please put the questions.

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI: Sir, I am coming to the point. Sir, in January 1989*, the then Finance Secretary, who is now the Reserve

*Not recorded.

[Shri S. Viduthalai Virumbi]

Bank Governor had advised the Government to seek IMF loan to avoid further commercial borrowings.

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI MANMOHAN SINGH): I don't think it is in the interest of the country to make reference by name of any official, least of all, the Governor of the Reserve Bank. I object to it.

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI: This is only complimentary. You can remove the name from the record. It is only in the complimentary form and not derogatory. He suggested to seek IMF loan to avoid further commercial borrowing. Has it yielded any result? Why I say all this is, somebody said that this situation arose only during the time of the National Front Government...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. NAGEN SAIKIA): Please ask questions.

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI: I am coming to that. I do not refer to a thing unless I feel it is really necessary.

Along with this balance of payment problem, Mr. Chakravarty said, secondly, the Government had launched a liberalised import regime without a strategy for transition. Third, exports still consisted of traditional items and the share of manufacturers in total exports was low. Fourth, the public sector was inefficient and was not generating adequate resources. And finally, agriculture economy was weak, marked by both low productivity and regional imbalance.

These five points were raised by Mr. Chakravarty with the then Government. But we do not know what happened.

According to economist, Mr. Sharma....

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. NAGEN SAIKIA): Is it something else you want to read? When the Budget debate is there, then you can speak about it.

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI: I am not going to speak on the Budget; somebody else will speak.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. NAGEN SAIKIA): You put your questions only.

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI: This is a very important issue. It is cutting across party lines.

Mr. Sharma said: Trade and current account deficits have been sizeable and persistent throughout the eighties, and have worsened since 1985. This is what he said. Anyway, I leave it at that. Now, the position is very clear. In the statement he said: We have large external debt service payment falling due. It did not say what is the actual amount of external debt falling due. Then, after the Government was formed, some important decisions have been taken like devaluation and sending gold abroad.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. NAGEN SAIKIA): If you don't seek clarifications, I shall ask the Minister to reply.

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI: My question is, they did not take the Opposition leaders into confidence. I do not know why. It is a national issue; it is not a party issue. Two important decisions have been taken, one on devaluation and the other of sending gold abroad. It never happened in independent India. That is why I say they should have consulted the Opposition leaders. Secondly, previously confiscated gold was sent abroad. Now Reserve Bank gold has been sent. How much of confiscated gold is still lying with the Government and why did they send Reserve Bank gold now and not the confiscated gold? That is my second question. The third question is, in

this hour of crisis, what special steps are being taken by the Government of India to expedite collection of dues like income-tax, corporate tax and estate duty etc. to tide over the present economic crisis.

My next point is, because of the decision taken by the Government, the price of gold in India has gone up. What action is proposed to be taken by the Government to reduce market price of gold in India.

These are the questions I want to ask.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. NAGEN SAIKIA): Hon. Minister. Please don't interrupt the Minister.

SHRI JAGESH DESAI: Only after he replies, we shall ask clarifications.

SHRI MANMOHAN SINGH: I think the standard of debate that I have witnessed today makes me feel very proud of our country. I am an economist with some reputation to defend. But from the high standard of debate that I have seen and witnessed in this House, I have learnt a great deal in the process. If we can maintain that high level of debate in the days and months to come, then I have no doubt that most of India's problems will be resolved. I, therefore, compliment the hon. Members on all sides of the House for the high quality of debate that has taken place in this House. This has been a debate in the highest traditions of Parliament and I thank all the Members who have taken part, asked questions and made suggestions. Let me say that our country is passing through unusual difficulties and, I don't think, any good purpose will be served by going over the past history. I think, it was Karl Marx who said: "The philosophers had spent too much time writing about history. The time has come to do something to change history". So, I think, we have to use the collective wisdom of this House and the collective will of the

people of this great country—this ancient civilisation—to get out of this crisis. I think, India has the will. India has the resources and the Government has the will and the resources and it will perform its duty in this hour of crisis in a manner which would do our people proud. I want to say one thing. Let us not do anything which comes in the way of the people of India being mobilised for that great effort which is needed to get this country moving ahead. Let us not take a too pessimistic or a tragic view or say that the situation is entirely hopeless. Let us not destroy the self-confidence of the people of India. I honestly say to this House that we are faced with unusually severe difficulties. But this country will come out of this crisis as a stronger nation, a more vibrant economy, a humane polity and an open polity. That is the goal towards which we are working. We are not in the game of mortgaging our country to the IMF or to the international institutions. We do need help from our friends abroad and we are not friendless. But the purpose of that help is not to mortgage the future of this country. After all, people have been quoting Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. I recall, in the Second Five Year Plan, some similar situations arose. The planners' calculations all went wrong and the whole economy of the country was threatened. The balance of payments came under severe pressure. What did Panditji do? Panditji had the courage to say that we would set in motion the process of structural change. He said, in the short-term, we did need a system, and, although Panditji's commitment to self-reliance was never in doubt at that time, he felt that we needed some assistance to buy some time to set in motion those processes, which would in the long-run, make us stand on our own feet. That is why the International Development Association was created in 1958. If you look at the 50's and the 60's, India had been doing business with the IMF and with

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the World Bank. If you were to tell me that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru would have done anything to dishonour this country, if you were to tell me that Smt. Indira Gandhi would have done anything to dishonour this country then, I think, you are insulting the memories of those great leaders who had served this country with the greatest devotion and with the greatest sincerity. Therefore, let us not create an unnecessary scare in the country. I am being very honest with you. In the situation in which this country is placed today, there was no other alternative but to do this painful transaction. But I am not going to tell you, nor do I believe, that this provides a solution to our problem. We have bought some temporary respite, may be, a month. But if this country does not accept the logic of fiscal discipline, if it does not accept the necessity of strict austerity, whether in domestic consumption, or, in its import regime, I am really very honest with you that neither myself nor anybody else, for that matter, has the magic wand. If we continue to go the way we have been going, if we continue to give subsidies the way we like, if we continue to spend the way we like, if we continue to waive loans of the banking system in any manner we like, if we continue to import the way we like, and yet hope and expect that there is some magic formula which will see the country through this crisis, let me say that that is not

going to happen. And the moral of the story is that we must draw correct conclusions and, I assure you, this Government is drawing correct conclusions. We have an approach. We have a programme. But I would request all hon. Members through you, Sir, not to ask me as to how I propose to meet these challenges.

I am only six days away from the presentation of the Budget. I should be in *purda* during this time. Normally, Finance Ministers are not to do any speaking at least a month before the presentation of the Budget. But I have been trying to convince public opinion in the country that we cannot go on the way we have been going and that the time has come to change our thinking. That is why I am requesting Members...

SHRI JAGESH DESAI: Change our thinking? Is there something wrong with our thinking that you want to correct it?

DR. MANMOHAN SINGH: Dr. would take some time to be known to you. I should have been spending all my time in the making of the Budget. But I spent half my time trying to convince international opinion that there is nothing wrong with India. Give us a few weeks and we will show to the world that a new India is going to be born, that India has the capacity and the willingness and the courage to help itself out of the crisis. Whatever may have been said in this House today, that we are going downhill day by day, I would

say that as a result of the steps we have taken during the last three weeks, international public opinion has got the right message. They have got the message that 'Here is a Government which means business, which will set its house in order', and all the messages we are having are very encouraging. But if the Parliament of India, if the sovereign instrument of the will of the people of India, were to tell the rest of the world that India is a hopeless case, that India is a basket case, I am afraid—I am a newcomer to this House and you will forgive me if I am not very familiar with Parliamentary procedures and expressions—we would not be serving the larger cause which the Parliament in our country has the responsibility and the duty to serve.

Sir, a lot of things have been said here. First of all, I do want to say this about the Reserve Bank of India. Let me say that the Reserve Bank of India is a great national institution. I have been the Governor of the Reserve Bank of India myself. I know how onerous is the task of the Governor of the Reserve Bank of India. I think the House should send a message to the Governor and his colleagues that they are doing a very difficult job very well and that they have the full confidence of this House.

9.00 P.M.

Without that sort of confidence I can tell you, it would be difficult in this present situation for us to maintain that sense of self-confidence which alone can see this country through this crisis. I recognise that we are faced with great difficulties, but I am not deterred by that fact, that we should create a feeling that the situation is hopeless. It is not hopeless, and I assure you, Sir, that we are determined to see this country through this struggle and out of this will emerge a new India. I am proud to be an Indian. On an occasion like this, I would also like to say that I am proud to be a Sikh and our tenth Guru, when call came to duty, he

sacrificed his father. He sacrificed his mother and he sacrificed all his four sons, but he did not give in. And what did he ask, and I repeat to this House the prayer that our tenth Guru said? What did he ask from God? He said:

“बेहि शिवा वर मोहे इहे शुभ कर्मन
ने कबहुँ न डरौं,

न डरौं अरि सों जव जाइ लरौं
निश्चय करि अपनी जीत करौं”

So, you have my assurance that as Finance Minister I will perform my duties with firmness, with determination and I am confident that in this long struggle that lies ahead of us, the people of India will support us.

I think an hon. Member interrupted me and asked: “Are you saying that there has to be a change in our thinking?” Let me be honest with you, Sir, I do believe that there has to be a change in our thinking. After all, if you believe that you can go on printing money, if you believe that you go on giving subsidies, if you believe that you can spend your way into prosperity, that the working hours in this country can be lower than they are even in Japan or even in South Korea, that, therefore, we can compete with the rest of the world, in all these matters there is a need to think afresh if you want to get this country moving ahead. I think all of us have made mistakes. The Prime Minister has been telling the nation that this is no time for recrimination we have to put all our heads together to find a way out. That is the determination of this Government and in this we seek the support of this House.

Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, a question was asked, “Did Reserve Bank take the decisions on its own or did the Government take the decision?” I think I have said to this very House some days ago—at least forgive me because at this fag end of the day

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my memory may fail me—but I did tell the House that as far as the first transaction was concerned, that is, the sale of Government's gold, that was a decision of the then Government presided over by Shri Chandra Shekhar. That transaction took place when that Government was in power. I have also said in this very House and I have said elsewhere that I am convinced that in the situation in which that Government was placed, at that particular time they had no other option. Therefore, I am not playing partisan politics. I am giving credit where it is due because nothing is served by playing partisan politics in dealing with issues which have such vital effect on the future of India, on the future of our children and on the future of our grand children. And we are dealing with issues which are no less important than the issues of the future of India, the future of our children, the future of our grandchildren and what kind of India we are going to build upon. Therefore, the first transaction, I think, was the result of a conscious decision, regrettable but unavoidable in the circumstances, taken by the previous Government. The previous Government also took the decision—the Reserve Bank proposed and the previous Government concurred—that if need arises, the Reserve Bank can ship abroad 15 per cent of its monetary gold and take some temporary loan. This decision was also taken by the Reserve Bank with the full concurrence of the previous Government. No actual gold was shipped, however, during the life of the previous Government. When I came on the scene the Reserve Bank Governor told me that this decision exists, and I consciously decided not to countermand that decision. I accept full responsibility for what has been done by the Reserve Bank even though the Reserve Bank has the statutory authority to act in a particular way. I am convinced, Sir, that in the

circumstances in which our country was placed and is placed, there was no other option. Imagine, Sir, a Government comes into....

SHRI PRAKASH YASHWANT AMBEDKAR: Will the honourable Minister yield for a minute?

DR. MANMOHAN SINGH: It will affect my chain of thought. When I finish, you can ask me any questions.

I am saying, Sir, imagine, a Government is voted to power, it takes oath of office on the 21st of last month, portfolios are distributed on the 23rd or 24th of last month, there is an unprecedented situation, there are rumours all around the world that the rupee is going to collapse, there are expectations all over—among our exporters, among international bankers—that this situation is absolutely such that there is going to be a run on the rupee. It is in that background that this Government took office.

About non-residents, lots of things have been said, "Why don't you go to the non-residents?" Let me say that it is my intention to take maximum advantage of the facilities and the support that we can get from our non-resident Indians. In the three weeks that we have been in office, I have been discussing with several non-resident groups as to how they can help us in tiding over these difficulties. I have not been sitting idle. I spend 20 hours a day doing this thing, apart from the preparation of the budget. So, we will do that. Various suggestions have been made about what non-residents can do and what we should do to encourage them. We will explore all those suggestions. We will act on those which we consider viable. But, let me be honest, Sir. Non-residents love India. I know, many of them are very patriotic. But many of them also want to make money. After all, why then is this crisis of confidence, why is it that,

when this country is faced with such a crisis, non-resident deposits are going out of India? I don't blame them. Let us not blame them. Normal economic motivation, I think, has to be respected. We are not in a morality play. I think somebody referred to the new world order. And let me say that I have read a great deal of what Dr. Lohia has written, what Jayaprakashji has written. I had the privilege also of meeting with them on two or three occasions. I think they were great leaders. Our country can be proud of them as it can be proud of Panditji, Indiraji, Rajivji. In their own way they have served their country to the best of their ability. But the new world order that Dr. Lohia talked about is not the world order in which we have to live, in which we have to survive. The world today is a very different place. You had some manoeuvrability. When there were rival power blocks, there was the Soviet Union, there was the NATO force, the developing countries acquired some manoeuvrability. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, with China taking a stand to maximise the gain that it can in relation to its dealings with the United States, I think, you have now a very different situation. Whether you like it or not, there is today only one super power in the world. We have been the leaders of the non-aligned though it was never our intention. Panditji never sought leadership of the non-aligned. We articulated their urges we articulated their feelings, and, therefore, some people thought that we had become leaders. We want to work with the countries of the third world. But what is the reality today? The reality of the situation today is that many developing countries have been in the 1980s faced with this crisis situation and acute pressure on their balance of payments. They had two options: either to stand firm, be determined that come what may, we will not go the route of default, or, the other, I think, is an easy route, a lazy route. The other option is "No, we will accept the ob-

ligations that go with honouring of our commitments; we will do all that is necessary to honour our commitments." I believe that the second course is the right course, and the history of the last decade, the history of Latin America, the history of Africa provide you a convincing proof that if you go the default route, then, it is not easy to come out of it. In common parlance it is said that the decade of 1980s has become the last decade for most countries of Latin America and most countries of Africa. The per-capita incomes in Africa today are lower than what they were in the 1960s. Therefore, in a situation in which we are placed, I think, our Government has taken the right decision that we will not go the lazy, the easy way, that we would meet all our obligations, that we will do all those difficult things which are necessary to honour the country's commitment.

But all these things take time. This Government is only three weeks old. A reference was made that, well, instead of selling gold you could have come with an appeal to the people of India. Let me say that I have great faith in the patriotism of the people of India. I do hope that when I present my budget the people of India would get the proper message that here is a Government that works, here is a Government that takes its task seriously. But, even if I had launched that appeal, in the meanwhile I had a daily crisis. In the last three weeks I had a daily crises. I had to arrange to pay for essential goods like petroleum, like fertilizers. I have these debt obligations to meet. Dr. Pandey, I think, was magnanimous enough to offer me rings. I think I respect that sentiment. But I respectfully submit that whatever that mobilisation of gold may do in the medium term, it could not have provided a solution to our problem in the three weeks that we have been through. Therefore, I do want to submit to the House that in the situation in which we were placed, there really was no option before us.

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Hon. Members have raised several issues. I can take up one by one and provide answers to all of them. But, Sir, I am, as I said, only six days away from the presentation of the budget. At this time of the year the Finance Minister should be busy giving finishing touches to his budget. But, I am the servant of the House and if the House so wishes I can take one by one all the points that have been raised.

One particular point was raised that what I have done may be right economically, but politically probably is native. I have not been in politics, but I have been in association with politicians, who in their own times were great men. So, I have some understanding of the political processes in the country. And if I do understand the political processes of this country, I think whatever the politics you may have, whatever party you may belong to, nothing is achieved by weakening the self-confidence of the people of India. That is what I have been trying to emphasise I do not want to tell the people of India there is no option. Well, it has been said that I could have come to this House and told them. If I remember correctly I did say to this very House a few days ago that the Reserve Bank of India has the power to send abroad 15 per cent of gold. If you look up the records of this House, I think you would recall that I did say that. Now, I think that is all the information that you needed. Why did I say this? The hon. Members are intelligent enough and I think what has been said today gives me a great confidence in the future of India that this high quality debate can take place in this House. What I said was essentially to tell you that we are in a situation where up to 15 per cent of gold can go out. What did I do? It was my intention that when the transaction was completed to come clean and share with you what has been done. And exactly today is

the day when the transaction has been completed. I recognise that there has been a leak. We are a country in which we have a free press. We are proud of that tradition. I hope this country will have the courage to maintain a free press regardless of what handicaps that arise in doing the Government work. Now, somebody has leaked that thing. It is regrettable, but it was my intention that when the transmission was complete I should come before this House and share with you what has been done.

A question has been asked why did I do it in droplets? Why did I not do it in one go? Let me say I am not an expert on security arrangements. Considering what has been happening all over the world, whether it is the cargo planes or other planes, hijacking has become now a much more prevalent practice. Therefore, we were advised that it is better to do it in small doses. Otherwise the insurance premia that we might have to pay might have gone up further. Therefore, it was considered view that one or two transactions is not the right course, but this thing should be spread. But as I said, it was my intention that as soon as this transaction was completed, I should share this information with the House. There was no attempt to mislead the House.

An hon. Member has said that this was an act of deception. I don't plead guilty to that charge. I may make mistakes, If I make mistakes, I will come before this House and beg pardon of this House. But, Sir, I pray to God that he should give me strength that I should never think of deceiving this august House. I will never do that consciously. As I said if I make mistakes, I will come and seek your pardon. I will seek pardon from the people of this country, but I would not resort to deception. I think the people of India expect the Government and the Ministers to have that sense of integrity and I am

a small man drawn into a big chair. I know my weakness. I am an ordinary man. I am subject to all the normal temptations of life. I don't claim any status of infallibility. Therefore, it is possible that I may make mistakes. In that situation I will come before you, and ask for your pardon but I feel sad that an hon. Member should have used the word that I was deceiving the country or I was deceiving this House.

Now a question has been raised that I should have adopted the political approach. I think I have already answered this question I believe what I have done is economically wise and politically right. I think it was Shri Sukomal Sen who said that the Parliament is sovereign and asked why did you not give indications? I have already answered that that I came before this House and informed the House that the Reserve Bank of India has the power to send 15 per cent of gold abroad. He also asked a question: "You are thereby creating a panic situation in the country." Let me say, Sir, that is not my intention and it is not, I think, the country that is in panic. I think I am being very honest; in the last three weeks that I had been in office, the number of letters, telegrams and other communications that I have received from the ordinary people of this country from Assam on the one hand to Kanyakumari on the other, I think it is simply phenomenal. I think that gives me the confidence that India is on the move and I am not creating panic. I believe I have succeeded in creating, with the blessing of our Prime Minister, a new mood of self-confidence that India cannot be taken for granted, that India is awake. I must tell you there are lots of people outside India who do not like this thing. Already they are up to some tricks that this massive potential of India to be a super power, to be a great economic power, that somehow this potential should never be fully utilised. Now, I think this Government has

a strategy and a credible programme to realise that potential. It has been said: "Can you give an assurance that the working class would not be the sufferers?" I can assure you that whatever we may do, we have not given up our commitment to the pursuit of either of self-reliance or the pursuit of equity. In today's situation self-reliance or the equity cause can best be helped only if we have a dynamic and vibrant economy. Therefore, there is no conflict in the present situation between what we are doing to stipulate growth and the cause of self-reliance and the cause of equity. We have not reneged on any of our objectives like self-reliance, like commitment to equity which was dear to the heart of Panditji, which was dear to Indiraji or dear to the heart of Rajivji. Well, as Panditji used to say and I remember him saying then as a child: "We live in a dynamic world. If you are in a dynamic world and if you become a prisoner of words that something that may have been true 40 years ago, that, regardless of changing situation remains valid. I think that is not the spirit." I think that characterised that great personality that Panditji was. Panditji talked about imparting a scientific temper to the national life of this country. What is the scientific temper? That being rational, emotions have a place in the life of a nation. Therefore, I do respect this emotion not only among our women-folk but among others in the rest of the country. "Why did you do this thing? Why is it necessary?" Now I respect that and that is why I have been saying that it was a painful necessity. I only ask the House to consider the alternative. If I had not done this, if on the third or the fourth day in office or during the last two weeks I had presided over this country becoming a defaulter, what would have been the consequences? That would be a complete breakdown of the social, economic and financial systems of this country. And even if I do not understand politics, I do recognise that if you have a

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breakdown of your social and economic systems, then you cannot have a political system remaining healthy. And I would respectfully submit to this House to accept my word that if we had not acted the way we acted, there would have been a default situation. Then, we have no money to import even essential goods and if the flow of non-resident monies had really become a flood, I do not know how I would have handled that situation. I have prevented that situation now. International lenders believe us. Non-resident outflow has nearly stopped. So we have bought a month or two. In this time, we can set in motion those processes which would see this country through this crisis and also ensure that out of this crisis, we emerge a stronger, vibrant nation. Now, people ask, if you borrow from the IMF, is it a solution? It is not a solution. I have bought only a month or two. There is no solution to our balance of payments problems. There is no solution to the problems of this country, whether you talk of unemployment or social justice or growth. If we continue to spend money the way we have been spending, if the profitability of the public sector remains as low as it is, if the subsidies burden continues to grow on this, I honestly submit to you that the working class will be the worst sufferers of that. (*Inter-rptions*).

Now, a question has been asked about the terms and conditions of this transaction. This transaction is between the Reserve Bank of India and the Bank of England and the Bank of Japan. So, two central banks, that is, the Bank of England and the Bank of Japan have agreed to give us some temporary accommodation. Under the rules, under the Reserve Bank of India Act, the Reserve Bank of India can borrow for a period of one month at a time and therefore, we have, I think, taken this loan from the Bank of England and the Bank of Japan at very favo-

urable terms; that is, LIBOR rate, which is the standard interbank rate, plus 0.2 per cent above the LIBOR rate. If we were to go abroad to the commercial markets, today, we cannot borrow any money. Nobody is willing to lend us. Even in the past, we had been borrowing at much higher rates of interest. So the transaction that has taken place, I think, in the circumstances, has got the best possible terms.

SHRI JAGESH DESAI: It is less than commercial rates?

DR. MANMOHAN SINGH: It is less than commercial rates.

SHRI JAGESH DESAI: Has it to be renewed every month?

DR. MANMOHAN SINGH: If our situation improves, if the capital flight is reversed, if exporters start bringing their money into India faster, then, I do feel, that it is quite possible that I may not have to renew. But I cannot give you that assurance today. It can be rolled over from month to month. But it is my hope that within a few months we would be out of that business. We can bring back that gold. But I cannot give any firm assurance. We live in a very uncertain world and it would be wrong on my part to mislead this House by saying that I have some magic wand and that I can deal with these problems that have accumulated over a period of time. Now I think, it was Mr. Gurupadaswamy, who raised certain issues as to what the Finance Ministry has been doing. I think that is past history. Let us not apportion the blame. Let us look to the future with courage, with hope and let us go forward. That is the strategy that our Government has in dealing with this crisis.

Now another hon. Member asked how large our reserves are. I have those figures here. Our reserves today are not very large. I have somewhere some figures here. On the 17th

of July, our reserves were Rs. 2,695 crores. This is exclusive of gold reserves. These are not very large and if I manage to get any help from outside, whether it is IMF or outside, let me be very frank and candid, it is not my intention to use that money to raise current consumption in this country. I want this money if it becomes available. I do not know if it becomes available. If for example, we create in our country a mood of pessimism—I have succeeded in changing the mood abroad—but if we continue to create this mood of pessimism, the foreign creditors may also get the wrong signal that somehow, this country does not have the will to help itself out of the crisis. Today, I believe, I have convinced them and I believe, we can do business with the IMF on terms and conditions which are honourable, which would protect all our essential interests. I therefore, do not share this great fear that has been expressed about the IMF, the World Bank. We have been doing business with them in the past. We are a member of these institutions. We have been doing business with them in the fifties, in the sixties, in the seventies and in the eighties. If it was not anti-national then, if it was not dishonourable then, I think, it is not dishonourable now and you can rest assured. I will do nothing to dishonour this country. I think, this country has done me a great favour. From a small man, I have been lifted to this big position. I think, I will be unworthy of that confidence that you and through you, our people have reposed in me. Now, therefore, our reserves are not very large but gold is outside. Some hon. Members wanted to know as to how large gold stock we have. I am now speaking from memory and you will forgive me if I am wrong. About 332 tonnes is the gold stock with the Reserve Bank of India and 15 per cent of that can go out. What has gone out of the country is slightly one or two tonnes short of that 15 per cent limit. But as I said, this transaction

is now over and therefore, we have no intention to send any more gold. As the hon. Members pointed out, even the Reserve Bank does not have that power. The Reserve Bank Act does not permit the Reserve Bank to do so. The Reserve Bank does not permit me that we should send any more gold out of this country. *(Interruptions)*.

SHRI JAGESH DESAI: is this including the confiscated gold?

DR. MANMOHAN SINGH: Confiscated gold is the Government gold. 20 tonnes of that was sent before. Now you are asking me to divulge things which I thought was not good for our country to know. But it is not very large. Therefore, confiscated gold is additional. Now, I have already mentioned that what we do through the NRIs, what our intentions are. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI JAGESH DESAI: I was under this impression that the IMF loan may come in the month of September. So I had asked the question what are our obligations towards debt up to 31st August.

DR. MANMOHAN SINGH: Well, I can assure you that we have made all possible arrangements to meet all our obligations till the end of August. You have my assurance. I do not want to divulge all those things and beyond that, I request you not to ask me to explain any more. Now, I have answered the questions relating to the role of the non-resident Indians. Well several Members have asked whether these one thousand crores are going to solve our problem. That I think I have already answered.

A question has been raised about the depreciation of the rupee. Several hon. Members have asked: Will it lead to an increase in our exports? One hon. Member said about the primary commodities that a change in exchange rate does not help the primary commodities. I think this

is a myth perpetuated by the colonial masters that the peasants of the poor countries are irrational people, that they are children and, therefore, they need white men to rule over them, it is the whitemen alone who understood the law of economic rationality and that is how we were ruled by the Britishers. For how many hundreds of years, I do not know. I believe the farmers of this country, if given proper incentives, can do a lot. Some time ago it used to be said: "Farmers do not respond to price incentive." What has happened to agriculture in our country, in Punjab, in Andhra Pradesh, in Haryana, in Western U.P.? Even now it is happening in some parts of Bihar also. Our farmers, if given proper environment, if given proper infrastructure, I think, are capable of taking advantage of the price incentive. Therefore, what we have done by way of an exchange rate adjustment rather than trying to discriminate all the time against the farmers, is, I think, a pro-peasant policy, a pro-agriculture policy, not a policy of reckless protection of industry, trying to subsidise the industry. But subsidy for one is at the cost of somebody else. And this policy which has been pursued is a policy which has subsidised industry at the cost of agriculture. People have been talking about widening of urban-rural gap and if you reflect, I think a part of the problem is that we have never believed that our peasants are capable of taking rational decisions. Therefore, all the efforts were aimed at giving incentives to a few chosen people. But this is not the philosophy of this Government and, therefore, we want a more channelled measure which would send signals to all our people that if exports are profitable, well, think big and I am confident, the farmers of Punjab, the farmers of Andhra Pradesh and elsewhere, if we tell them tomorrow that more raw cotton can go out, that it is more profitable to send out more cotton, are capable of producing more cotton, they will do it and if they do it, then this talk of widening rural-urban

disparity, I think, will not be there. Over a period of time we are going to reverse this situation. If this gap becomes wider, that is a dangerous thing. We must prevent that. And, therefore, we have done this by way of an exchange rate adjustment. It is a part of the process of reversing the discrimination against agriculture, and that, I think, is a step in the right direction.

One hon. Member asked me this question: What has been the depreciation of the rupee? I have put the figures when our Government came into office. We all know there are two ways of measuring depreciation. One is depreciation of the rupee and the other is appreciation of the foreign currency *vis-a-vis* rupee. I think both these estimates are within the range of about 19 to 22 per cent, but it is not 43 per cent. I understand he was referring to some previous figures of January, 1991. I don't have those figures. ... (Interruption) ... I don't have those figures, but let me say that I don't know why this word "devluation" is considered a dirty one. I am not afraid of using the word "devaluation" but "devaluation" has lost its meaning in a world of floating currencies. Now the United States is the Super Power. It is the only super-power in the world. But look at what has been happening to the dollar in the last twenty years. For many years the dollar is going down. The U.S. imports go up, then the dollar depreciates. But no President of the United States, no Congressman in the United States, I think, takes the view that this is something which is dishonourable, which is immoral and they ought to be depressed about it. In fact, all these years, the United States has used an aggressive exchange rate policy to deal with its balance of payments problem. It has depreciated its currencies. It has nevertheless remained a super-power. The very fact that we are using the exchange rate mechanism should not create any panic in our country. I

think what we have done will make our country stronger, will make our industrial progress faster and will give our people a new message that we must stand on our own feet. (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI MENTAY PADMANABHAM: What is its impact on inflation?

DR. MANMOHAN SINGH: Let me say that there is no relation between the exchange rate changes and the rate of inflation in a country of India's size. India is like the United States. Foreign trade is a very small part of the total national income of our country. Our exports are only about 5 to 6 per cent. Imports are about 7 to 8 per cent. Now you have a total national basket of goods and services. In that the prices of goods in a small basket might go up, even though it is not inevitable that those prices must go up. When the prices of things in a small basket are going up, the rest of the basket remaining what it is, there may be a small reaction. But I am confident that if I pursue sound fiscal and monetary policies, if the fiscal policy of the Government does not generate and does not sustain inflationary expectations—to be honest with you—if the rain-gods are a little kinder, I think, we can contain the inflationary spectre and I do believe that we shall be able to overcome that particular problem also.

Now, I want to use this occasion to say that some unscrupulous elements, unscrupulous traders are using this occasion of the exchange rate change to rig up prices of essential commodities. I think, there is absolutely no basis for them to do any of these things. I have written to all the Chief Ministers. I wrote to them last week. I repeated by telegram again yesterday that they must act firmly to check these anti-social elements. There is no correlation whatsoever between the exchange rates and the price of wheat, the price of rice. All these things are produced at home. The cost of production of

none of these things that go into their production has gone up and, therefore, there is no basis, I think, for the fear that what we have done will unleash a massive inflationary spiral. If we have correct fiscal and monetary policies, which, I believe, we will have, I think, that will not happen.

Now, Dr. Ratnakar Pandey has raised a question. He has gone. So, I think, I need not answer that question. Now, I think, a reference was made to the appeal to the people. Some reference was made to General Maneckshaw. Let me say that General Maneckshaw is a very dear friend of mine. He and I went to the same college, though he is much older than myself. But, as I have explained, in the situation in which we are placed, I think, even if we have appealed, I am sure the people of India would have responded to that appeal, but we have to act at a very short notice and whatever the consequences of that appeal, I am sure, that would have been favourable. We did not have the time and, therefore, we had to do what we did.

Now, I have already mentioned the figures of foreign exchange reserves. Another question was what more amenities we are going to give to the NRIs. That is a suggestion for action. We are considering various things. We do want to involve the NRIs in our process of development and, therefore we will come before the House when we are ready with...

SHRI JAGESH DESAI: I made a point about those who come on Transfer of Residence. That will also help in our foreign exchange position. What about that?

DR. MANMOHAN SINGH: I take note of that suggestion. We are considering several other suggestions. I think what the honourable Member has mentioned is also a suggestion worth considering and we would certainly take that on board.

Another honourable Member, Shri Verma, said, what we have done may

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be economically right but a political touch has been given. I have answered that problem. He also said, well, if we had acted differently, the psychological setback could have been avoided. I don't believe that the people of India are psychologically depressed by what our Government has been doing in the last three weeks. I think you will forgive me if I say that the Members of this House in this particular case are not in touch with the public opinion. You will forgive me if I say this. (*Interruption*). The number of letters I have been getting day after day convinces me that the people of India want to know the truth, that they want a Government which would give the correct lead and, therefore, I believe that what we have done is economically sound, politically sound, psychologically sound. Let us not depress the animal spirits of our people. Let us not create a sense of panic. Let us give our people a feeling of self-confidence.

Another honourable Member, Shri Pachouri, asked whether the Reserve Bank of India took the decision or the Government took the decision. I have already explained the position, I have already stated it. Then a question was asked: Will you mortgage or pledge further gold? I have already answered that question. Then a question was asked whether the Bank of Japan was involved. Yes, the Bank of Japan was involved together with the Bank of England in providing this temporary accommodation that we have got. Another question was asked: Are we selling the gold under the pressure of the IMF? Let me be very candid with you. Quite honestly, the impression that some honourable Members have that the World Bank and the IMF are very eager to lend money to India or to any country, I think, is a false impression. Today you are in a situation where capital is very scarce all over the world and all countries are competing for that scarce capital. Look at what China is

doing to attract capital. Look at what China has done to enter into the IMF. Look at what China has done to share in this soft IDA money the bulk of which until the 80s used to come to us. Therefore, this general feeling that the IMF and the World Bank are out to devour this country, that they are eager to lend to this country, I can assure you, is not correct. I think they would be quite happy if we can solve our problem our own way. On taking office I invited several economists of the left—I do not want to name them because they were private consultations—to come and look at the situation. I said, "I will share with you all the facts", and I said this to the honourable leaders of the Opposition whom the Prime Minister had the honour to invite for a discussion. I spoke at length to them about the dire situation. All the facts which I am mentioning, I placed them before the honourable leaders of the Opposition. Short of saying that I am going to devalue, I told them everything. And I think, as the Prime Minister said somewhere, it is not fair to ask that I should tell people in advance that I am going to devalue. Short of that, I said everything to the honourable leaders of the Opposition, the state of our economy, the state of our balance of payments, everything. Now, therefore, I think it is not correct to say that we have been trying to do things stealthily. That charge I simply repudiate. There was a question raised that devaluation was done in 1949, 1969 and 1991. As I have already stated let us not create an unnecessary fear about the effects of changes in the exchange rate. If you look at the history of pre-Independence India, you will find that all our nationalist-minded economists and the political leaders used to quarrel with the Britishers for keeping the exchange value of the rupee artificially high as the Britishers wanted this country to remain an exporter of the many products. They argued that the Britishers did not want the coun-

country to industrialise. The economists used to plead with the Britishers to give up this policy and to let the rupee have a realistic value so that the Indian industry can expand and grow. If you look at the history of Japan, how did Japan become such a great power. What kind of exchange rate policy did Japan follow? In this country, I am sorry to say, under some baneful influence, a strange sort of conspiracy exists. Our friends on the extreme right and our friends on the extreme left, I am afraid, think in a manner which, I respectfully submit, is not conducive to the industrialisation of this country. We must pursue a realistic exchange rate policy, an aggressive exchange rate policy to industrialise our country. That is what most of the other countries have done. If we do not pursue a realistic exchange rate policy, we would be doing something which I think is not in the long-term interests of the country. Our party election manifesto commits this Government to pursuing a realistic exchange rate policy and I will be honouring that commitment. Dr Sivaji had said that it has been the past experience that it is one Government that sends gold and only a change of Government would bring back that gold. I would like to assure him that it is something which would not happen this time. You would continue to remain where you are and we would continue to remain where we are. The gold that had been sent will be brought back, it would be wrong on my part to say that I am 100 per cent confident that I can bring back the gold tomorrow. But, I do believe, and I think an observer of the Indian economic scene would realise, that we have set the economy in motion and in a reasonably short period of time, I can rise in this very House and give you the good news. I am not making a firm commitment. But it is my hope and it will be my endeavour to bring back that gold. I need your help and the only way you can help me is by not creating a sense of despair.

The only way in which you can help me is by telling the world that we are united and that you stand behind me so that I can negotiate with the International Monetary Fund, so that I can negotiate with India's creditors from a position of strength and not from a weak position. We have to show to them that the whole Indian nation is united. This country of 800 million people, what is it that it cannot achieve? I do not know who said it, but it has been said that the greatest thing to fear is fear itself. If this country is united, if this country can make up its mind, I can assure you, no power on earth whosoever it may be, can do us down. Therefore, if you want me to bring back the gold to this country, you must strengthen my hands. Do not create a feeling that this country is helpless and that it is going from bad to worse. It has taken a certain direction in the past and we are determined to reverse that direction, and we have already set it in motion.

Now, some question was raised about the REP scheme and some hon. Member also said that it will lead to corruption. I think it is precisely the opposite that is going to happen. I think in one stroke we have removed thousands of crores of rupees of subsidy. Whoever was getting the benefit a small segment of our industry only was getting—we have removed that. I don't say that it was not deserved. But great majority of our people, particularly the primary producers, farmers and other were not the ones who were getting the benefit of the export subsidies. And let me also be very candid with you that the case-by-case fixation of subsidy has given rise to a lot of functionless bureaucracy. There was a lot of corruption and by one stroke we have eliminated this scope for corruption. Now, this does not mean that the people can bring in whatever they want. The principle that we have set is that if you want to import, you must export

[Dr. Manmohan Singh]

and also we have said that you cannot use this REP scheme to import a lot of non-essential things. So, due care has been taken to see that while framing the system, while reducing the scope for corruption, this does not become a mechanism for promoting what may be called luxury consumption. That is not the intention and that is not what is going to happen.

I think it was Mr. Dineshbhai Trivedi who said—he is not here; he has gone—that we have taken a hasty step to pledge this gold, that we should have waited. I explained to you the background in which we had to take decisions and I think we did the right thing. If we had done nothing, if we had declared default, I think the consequences for this country would have been far more serious. He asked why this jugglery with the word “devaluation” was there. If he wants to use the word “devaluation” or “adjustment”, he is welcome to do so. I am not afraid of owning up what I have done, whatever the name or label you may give.

SHRI JAGESH DESAI: Just a minute. I would like to clarify one thing. The Reserve Bank of India daily announces... (*Interruptions*)... the exchange rates. I do not know why they did not do it properly. I think that is the reason why this has happened and this has been done in one stroke. Will you kindly assure us that in future you will take care to see that the Reserve Bank of India announces the realistic rates daily?

DR. MANMOHAN SINGH: I am sure the Reserve Bank of India in this case is not to be blamed. I do not want to go into what has happened in the last few months. I do not want to apportion blame and nothing is achieved by that, I think. But I can assure you that it was not the fault of the Reserve Bank.

Another honourable Member asked, “Well, if you are talking about the illegal flight of capital, then what are your agencies doing?” I must con-

less to you that I have been in office only for the last few days and I have not familiarised myself with all the details of this vast Ministry that the Ministry of Finance is. We have, I think, a lot of efficient officers. I do agree that we should look at the working of all the other agencies to see that they are properly equipped, that they are properly motivated to handle these massive problems that our country has. I promise to do precisely that in due course of time.

Another honourable Member asked me, “you have done all this. What happens after these things that you have done?” I do not regard the sale of gold as a panacea or solution. I have only bought some time, a month or two. He also said, “You have devalued and devaluation takes time. Supposing it does not work, do you have contingency plans?” I think you will not expect me, Sir, to share with this House. But I do assure the House, Sir, that I have thought of all possible options and this Government will be ready to take appropriate decisions commensurate with the needs of the situation. I do not believe that it will be necessary to plan for those contingencies. I think the House should think big. India is on the move. All these things which we have done would lead to greater and greener pastures, away from the drought
10.00 P.M. as some honourable Member put it.

Another hon Member mentioned about people keeping money abroad, about joint ventures and about people not remitting profits. Well, we are now creating a system where the people have no incentive to be dishonest. If in spite of all that they are dishonest, you can rest assure that we will come down very firmly on those who violate the laws of this country.

A question was asked, what are you going to do with black money? I am aware of the menace of black money. We will act firmly, but beyond that I would not like to say more on this.

My sister, Shrimati Sushma Swaraj, asked whether this decision that we took was wise and whether it was rightly implemented. I have already answered that question that in the circumstances in which we were placed this was the right thing to do and that what has been done was also the right thing to do. I would like to compliment through this House the Reserve Bank who have performed an onerous task rather very well.

She also asked: When the Parliament was in session, could you not take the House into confidence? I have already answered that. She also asked: What are you going to do with this 400 million dollars? That question also I have answered.

Now, a question was asked—I think it was Shri Jaiswal—whether it was normal for the Central banks to send gold abroad. I think many Central banks of the world are keeping their gold with the Bank of England. I have been assured that it is the normal practice of many Central banks, though I do not have just now the details of it.

Shri Mohammed Afzal asked: Did you have any options, why did you send gold and how are we going to utilize this money? I have also answered the same. I do share the sentiments of the House. I do share the sentiments of our women and all our countrymen. But let us not be unnecessarily panicky. The U.S. has remained a super power. If you look at the history of the U.S. under President Kennedy and under President Johnson, how much gold did the U.S. lose? And yet they have remained a super power. Therefore, do not spread this feeling of despondency. What has the USSR been doing all these years? Japan has taken gold from the U.S. France has taken gold. Still they are super powers in the world. Let us not spread this feeling of despondency that since we have sold small quantities of gold. India has no future. No I think we are

going to work together and write a new chapter in history and I can say that the coming generations will be legitimately proud of it. (*Interruptions*)

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. NAGEN SAIKIA): Please do not interrupt. It is already ten. Let him complete. I am not going to allow anybody now.

SHRI MANMOHAN SINGH: Mr. Vice-Chairman, I have tried to answer all the questions. It is quite possible that at this late hour of the day I may have missed some questions. I apologize to the hon. Members if I have not been able to answer all their questions. But I am open to discussion in my chamber, in this House and outside this House. I am willing to satisfy each and every hon. Member that in the circumstances in which we are placed what we have done is economically right, politically right and psychologically right. What we have done has avoided a serious and disastrous situation of default, and hereafter, what we have done will enable this country to look forward to the future with courage, confidence and hope.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. NAGEN SAIKIA): Hon. Members. ... (*Interruptions*)... Wait a bit. We have already spent more than four hours on this subject and I think the hon. Minister has made a sincere submission late at night with all confidence. But still I think the Members have some queries or they have some views to express. But, I think, when the Budget will be placed, they will get enough of time to express their views and to make their queries.

Therefore, I declared that the House stands adjourned till 11 a.m. tomorrow.

The House then adjourned at six minutes past ten of the clock till eleven of the clock on Friday, the 19th July, 1991.