

[Dr. Yalamanchili Sivaji]

dress rehearsal to impose all these draconian laws.

I bring to the notice of this august House, through you, to see that freedom of the press existed in this country and no effort should be made to thwart that freedom. Thank you.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA): Mr. B. Satyanarayan Reddy will associate himself with this.

SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY (Andhra Pradesh): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I associate myself with the special mention made by my colleague, Mr. Shivaji Yalamanchili, with regard to the harassment of the journalists by the ruling party especially in Orissa and other parts of the country. As you know, Sir, we have the highest regard for our pressmen because they ventilate the views of the people. We should not do anything to suppress the freedom movement. We have highest regard for them. I hope that the Central Government and the Government of Orissa will take all necessary steps to see that no such harassment take place. It is really horrifying to note that pressmen have been harassed, beaten up and handcuffed. I once again appeal to the authorities to do away with this kind of harassment; otherwise people will themselves rise in revolt and see that the Government is brought to its senses.

FOOD CORPORATIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1988.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA): Now, we will take up the Food Corporations (Amendment) Bill, 1988.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI SUKH RAM): Sir, I move:

"That the Bill further to amend the Food Corporations Act, 1964, as passed by the Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration."

Under Section 27 of the Food Corporations Act, 1964, a Food Corporation can take advance or borrow money from the Central Government or from any scheduled bank or from any other bank or financial institution approved by the Central Government. The provisions of the Act do not permit FCI to borrow funds from other sources or to issue and sell bonds and debentures.

Clause 2 of the Food Corporations (Amendment) Bill, 1988 proposes to amend Section 27 of the Food Corporations Act, 1964 so as to enable the Food Corporation to raise funds by issue of bonds and debentures and also by borrowing from Central Government and State Governments or from other organisations, institutions or from public on such terms and conditions as may be approved by the Central Government.

The question was proposed.

SHRI KAMAL MORARKA (Rajasthan): Sir, the Food Corporations (Amendment) Bill, 1988 which is before us is on a limited issue of providing more resources to the Food Corporation for its functioning. Sir, the manner of raising resources raises a crucial issue as to the cost of capital. If we see the Food Corporation's working for the last 6-7 years, we observe that the sales turnover as a total turnover of operation has gone up from Rs. 2800 crores in 1981-82 to Rs. 5200 crores in 1986-87. It is a stupendous increase, almost double in six years. The alarming feature is the expenses of operation. The operational expenses as a percentage of sale, it is understood, when sales go up, will also go up. Normally, in a commercial enterprise, the percentage of expenses would come down because there is an element of fixed costs which does not go up in direct proportion to the turnover. The unfortunate feature of the Food Corporation is that the expenses ratio has gone up from Rs. 27.86 to 35 per cent in this period, that is from 1981-82 to 1986-87. In fact, in the year 1984-85, the percentage was 38.9 and probably, the alarming bell must have rung and the department of Food and Civil Supplies took a serious view. In the 1986-87 annual report it is mentioned that a

programme for reduction expenses was undertaken, and in fact, what they have mentioned is that they have a target of reducing the expenses. During 1986-87 the target of Rs. 195 crores reduction in expenses was there and they have been able to reduce much more, Rs. 238 crores. For 1987-88, the target is Rs- 232 crores reduction in expenses but the figures have not yet come. What I want to point out is that in an organisation like the Food Corporation of India which does not have any manufacturing unit of its own, which is largely a trading organisation, the whole purpose of this organisation is to see that the farmer gets a fair price for his produce. At the same time the produce is channelled to the consumer at a fair price. Now, Sir, the whole purpose of this exercise would be lost if the operations of the corporation itself become heavy as far as expenses are concerned because this corporation is supposed to replace the private trading infrastructure. The premise on which this corporation was formed or state trading in foodgrains was started is that the wholesale dealers in foodgrains, the retail dealers in foodgrains are charging a fat profit and the consumer is made to pay much more. Now, Sir, if we are procuring wheat and rice which are the two main items dealt with by this commission if we are procuring that at a certain price fixed by the Government and we are selling through the public distribution system, again the price is fixed by the Government. Sir, what will happen? Two things will happen. If the expenses are more, then the corporation will make a loss and in the annual report, they say that this corporation is supposed to function on a no profit no loss basis. What does this mean? From where will the expenses come? You will charge more from the consumers or you will try to pay less to the producer. Ultimately, the burden falls on the common man. Since the Food Corporation reports do not show a loss, it means that the excess expense burden is being borne by the consumer. Now, Sir before the House allows the Food Corporation of India to issue debentures or bonds for which this Bill is being introduced and passed by Lok Sabha, we should very carefully examine whether the utilisation of funds

is proper because in a situation of monopoly in which we are—not strictly monopoly but oligopoly because they are controlling more than 25 per cent of the total procurement of foodgrains—it will be very dangerous if the expenses of the Corporation are unbridled. What happens is when we introduce a Corporation like this, on ideological grounds, we do not feel like criticising it. After all, we feel we are doing a good turn to the farmer. The Corporation is required to do a good turn to the consumer without realising the inherent, inbuilt, inefficiency in our own machinery that we have set up. The figures are really alarming. That from 1981-82 to 1985-86 the percentage expenditure has gone up from 28 per cent to 35 per cent is a very very serious matter. I would like the Minister himself to look into it personally because cutting expenditure is a very difficult task, specially in a public sector organisation. There would be employees, there would be overhead expenditure and the cycle of increase would be going on. But in spite of all these, it must be our attempt that with the increasing scale of operations, the percentage of expenses must come down. Only then we will be able to give real service to the consumer. Specially on the interest, we find, in 1981-82, on the operational scale of Rs. 2800 crores, the total interest paid by the Corporation was Rs. 262 crores. In 1986-87 on double the operations, the interest paid was about three times the earlier figure that is Rs. 650 crores. Last year it was Rs. 709 crores. This could be due to the increased lending rates of banks. It could be. But when we discuss commercial bank, we always come up with the theory that their operations are not economical because they are leading to the Food Corporation of India and the agricultural sector at subsidised rates of interest. Sir, if our banking system is lending to the Food Corporation at subsidised rates and the Food Corporation's interest payment is going up disproportionate to the increase in its sales turn-over and its total operations, it is a red signal. Either the inventory levels are not correct, either they are having too much of stock or the stocks are not rotated correctly or they are operating at rates higher than what are prescribed. I do

[Shri Kamal Morarka]

not know how they will be empowered by this Bill. Will they go in for public funds? Will they go in for Unit Trust's funds? Or will they go in for bond- at cheaper rate of interest? Whatever it may be, as for the interest on the total borrowing, the average interest rate should be fixed by the Government, by the Department of Food. I see from the latest report that the debt-equity ratio is 1:6. I do not know whether the Government thought it prudent to do so. Only two years ago, their capital has been increased. Till 1984-85, the debt-equity ratio was really adverse. The Government has increased the capital. Now the debt-equity ratio is 1:6. The question is whether for trading companies, such a heavy burden, the ratio of 1:6, is justified because interest is a major component of their expenditure. This aspect should be examined before we give the Food Corporation the power to borrow funds. As I told you, it is in the nature of a monopoly organisation. Once the Government gives permission, it will go ahead borrowing more money. So it will pay more interest. The more dangerous part of it is, since it is supposed to operate on a no-profit no-loss basis, the loss will be passed on to the consumer. So, who is going to pay for this inefficiency? It will be the consumer. Therefore, on the expenditure, especially the interest, the Department of Food must come out with standard costs which should be strictly adhered to. It should not be that in 1985 we wake up and say, "In the next two years, please reduce the expenditure. Our target of reduction is Rs. 232 crores." This is not proper because that means, over the years, a lot of extra expenditure is built in and a stage has come when we have to make efforts to reduce the expenditure. An organization like the Food Corporation of India which has no production facility, which is only trading and which has got the added advantage of trading with a monopoly position of strength can definitely assure us of this. We have examples like the Amul Dairy which is a cooperative. They have been able to maintain this balance between what they pay to the farmer and more precisely, what they are charging from the consumer. I am not sug-

gesting that the Food Corporation should be abolished and handed over to the cooperatives. But we feel that, in any case, the functioning of the Food Corporation should not be at an efficiency level which is lower than that of the co-operatives. do not want to talk of the private sector efficiency because it is not possible to ascertain at what margin levels they work since it is an unorganized sort of trade. But, the Food Corporation being in a commanding position, this is the elementary thing that should be done before we give them the *carte blanche*.

Having said that, I want now to come to a specific issue which has become a major issue in the newspapers, and it is about the Korean rice deal. The "Business Standard" of Calcutta dated the 13th June—I am sure the Minister must have read it—came out with this big headline, "MMTC forces acceptance of North Korean rice deal", and I am sorry to say that, from the reply given by the MMTC's Senior General Manager to the Press against which the Press has again retaliated, things do not appear to be straight, because it appears that the whole thing was handed over to the MMTC. I find that there is a countertrade involved in it. On the price. Sir, very easily by a simple telex or telegram, the FOB and the CIF prices have been interchanged. Anybody familiar with international trade knows that there can be a difference running into crores of rupees if the price is changed from CIF to FOB and FOB to CIF. It is also not known to the people who are not familiar with this or the average newspaper reader does not know unless the newspaper itself points it out and until then one does not realise. But the country has been put to a loss and, I am sure, loss running into several crores of rupees. Because of this deal and the way it has been handled, I would request the honourable Minister concerned to order a full-scale inquiry into this particular deal in the light of these facts which the newspaper itself persists in giving by giving the photocopy of the documents of the various transactions which have not been refuted. So in the interests of the functions of the Food Corporation, in the interest of removing all the doubts, this should be done. We are losing money even on what we are purchasing.

ing or importing in the field of foodgrains. Therefore, I demand a full-scale inquiry which is the minimum which is required to get at the bottom of the rice deal with North Korea which is handled by the MMTC. Normally, the MMTC should not handle this and basically, this should be handled by the Food Corporation. This is the first objection of mine. But I see from the papers an explanation that countertrade is involved in this and so, the JVIMTC is handling it.

Then, in Rajasthan, the Food Corporation asked a number of people to construct open godowns for them. For increasing their storage capacity, the FCI has been having this policy that instead of investing their own funds, they are asking a lot of private parties to construct the godowns to construct which they will take some time. In Rajasthan, the Vyapari Singh has complained to the State Government that even though they have made their investments, the FCI now does not want them any longer; I do not know these people and I do not make any advocacy for them. But I must say that a public sector corporation is a part of the Government. There are several court judgments saying that they are a wing of the Government so that the promises that they make should be strictly followed or fulfilled. A trader or a person who has built godowns for you should not be suddenly told that you do not need them. He cannot use it for anything else because basically these are meant for food-grains. But this is what has happened.

Finally, I want to say that the total management and operations of the Food Corporation of India leave much to be desired. Organizations like the Food Corporation of India, State Trading Corporation of India, MMTC, etc., all these came into existence in the '60s and '70s as a result of a definite and deliberate policy and political decision of 'taking over the wholesale trade in the hands of the Government' it, at no point of time it was the policy of the Congress Party or of Jawaharlal Nehru or of Mrs. Indira Gandhi that 'Twine taken over everything the consumer should be put to a loss or the producer should be put to a loss and only the top-heavy management should eat away

whatever little margin is there or, ultimately, they should run into losses for which the Government was never prepared and is not prepared. Thank you, Sir.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI H HANUMANTHAPPA) Now, Mr. Vikal.

श्री राम चन्द्र विकल (उत्तर प्रदेश) :
उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं खाद्य निगम संशोधन विधेयक जो खाद्य मंत्री जी ने प्रस्तुत किया है, उसका समर्थन करने के लिये खड़ा हुआ हूँ। मैं इसके बारे में दो तीन बातें कहना चाहता हूँ। जैसे कि पूर्व वक्ता ने भी कहा कि खाद्य निगम मध्यस्थता करता है, उपभोक्ता और उत्पादक के बीच में, लेकिन उनके बीच में सही सामंजस्य नहीं हो पा रहा है और खाद्य निगम काफ़ी घाटे में जा रहा है। इसका कार्य पद्धति में संशोधन और सुधार करने की आवश्यकता है। बैंको के अलावा खाद्य निगम राज्य सरकारों से या प्राइवेट संगठनों से भी कुछ कर्जा ले सके, इसमें कोई दो राय नहीं है कि कर्जा जहाँ से भी मिल सके, खाद्य निगम को इसकी इजाजत होनी चाहिये। परन्तु जो खाद्य निगम है, उसकी कार्यपद्धति और संगठन का जो ढंग है, उसमें काफी शिकायतें हैं, उसमें सुधार होना चाहिये। खाद्य निगम एक बहुत बड़ा संगठन है और यह उपभोक्ता और उत्पादक के बीच में काम कर रहा है। यह जो क्रय करता है और देते वक्त इसका जो घाटा है, उसमें बहुत कुछ सुधार हो सकता है। एक बात तो यह है कि हमारे जो कर्मचारी हैं उनकी नियत भी कुछ सफ़ हो। बहुत कुछ जो कर्मचारी हैं, खाद्य निगम के अन्दर वह नौकरों के साथ-साथ कुछ बिजनेस भी करते रहते हैं और नफ़ा नुक़सान में शरीक होते हैं। जिसे नफ़ा पहुँचाये जिसे नुक़सान पहुँचाये, यह इनके हाथ में चला जाता है। इसीलिए इनको दिये गये अधिकारों में कुछ कमी की जानी चाहिये, क्योंकि व्यक्तिगत लोग मुताफ़ा बनाते हैं और किसानों को तथा उपभोक्ताओं को दोनों को नुक़सान

[श्री राम चन्द्र बिकल]

पहुंचाते हैं। साथ ही साथ इसमें बहुत उपेक्षा होती रहती है। खाद्य निगम के बाद में में अनेक कर्मचारी इतने खराब पड़ रहे हैं, क्योंकि उनका सही देखरेख नहीं होता है। दुर्लभ में भी अवस्था होती है और जा विचारण का काम है उसमें भी अवस्था होता है। मैं इस सदन के माध्यम से माननीय खाद्य मंत्री को कहना चाहूँ कि खाद्य निगम के कर्मचारियों के इतने की जहाँ तक साल है, वह जब वह बढ़ता रहता है और कुछ संतुष्टि होना चाहिये, हमारे कर्मचारियों के वेतन में भी विशेषकर जो किसानों से हम खराब करते हैं, उनका उचित दाम दिया जाना चाहिये, और जो घाटे का रास्ता है, उनका बन्द किया जाना चाहिये खाद्य निगमों में बहुत कर्षण है, इसलिये अधिक आवधान का आवश्यकता है। क्योंकि करोड़ों रुपयों का घाटा खाद्य निगम का हो रहा है। मेरा तो यह सुझाव है कि जो ईमानदार कर्मचारी हैं और जो अच्छा काम करने वाले कर्मचारी हैं, उनको प्रोत्साहन दिया जाना चाहिये और जो दण्डित होने के लायक लोग हैं, उनके खिलाफ शिकायतें हैं, उनको दण्डित किया जाना चाहिये। इसमें लोगों में थोड़ा सा भय पैदा होता है और अच्छे और ईमानदारों से काम करने वाले कर्मचारियों को प्रोत्साहन भी मिलता है, जो खराब कार्य करने वाले कर्मचारी हैं, वे कुछ भयभीत होते हैं। आज यह दोनों तरफ थोड़ा सा उपेक्षा है। न तो अच्छे और ईमानदार लोगों का सम्मान होता है, न उनको प्रोत्साहित दो जाती है न उनको कोई इनाम दिया जाता है और जो खराब लोग हैं, उनको दण्डित भी नहीं किया जाता है। इस घाटे को पूरा कर सकते हैं, क्योंकि यह बिचौलिया वाला एक अच्छा संगठन है, इसमें कोई दो राय नहीं है। लेकिन प्राइवेट व्यापारी या व्यापारी तो करोड़ों रुपये लाभ कमा लेता है और इस निगम को करोड़ों का घाटा हो जाता है। इसमें मुनाफा कमाने के लिये जितने तरीके हो सकते हैं, सावधानी के लिये कितने तरीके

हो सकते हैं और अच्छी व्यवस्था के जो तरीके हो सकते हैं, उनका और विशेष ध्यान दिया जाना चाहिये। इन शब्दों के साथ मैं इस विषयक का समर्थन करता हूँ।

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH (West Bengal): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, this Bill has been piloted by the Minister of State for Food and Civil Supplies to enable the FCI to raise funds as and when required for its operational as well as investment requirements by the issue of bonds and debentures and also by borrowings from the Central and State financial institutions and public sector financial institutions. But, Sir, from the performance report of FCI it is seen that the bank borrowing of FCI have gone down from Rs. 4500.73 crores in 1985-86 to Rs. 3521.15 crores in 1986-87. The operational activities have increased in the meantime. The turn-over has also increased. Apparently, it is not a fact that the F.C.I. is not able to perform its functions properly because of shortage of resources. It appears to me to be a little confusing that when the bank borrowings of the F.C.I. are going down and the operational activities are also going up. what makes the Minister to bring forward this Bill to enable the F.C.I. to increase their borrowings. I would like the hon. Minister to kindly throw light on this particular point.

Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, one of the reasons for establishing the Food Corporation of India was to countervail the speculative activities in the foodgrain trade. But two things have to be assured for countervailing the speculative activities. One is the remunerative price to the farmer and the other is a fair price for the consumer. As we see, because of the failure of the Government of India to fix a remunerative price to the farmer, the private operators in foodgrain trade are being encouraged to conduct their speculative activities. The price which is being fixed by the Government is not remunerative. So, the peasants and farmers are still falling a prey to the speculative activities of the private traders in foodgrains. So, I would like to know what steps the Government of India is proposing to take in order to fix a remunera-

tive price. Rs. 173/ per quintal for wheat is no. considered to be a remunerative price by the farmers. It is the experience of the F.C.I. also. Where the F.C.I. is operating to buy wheat or paddy, the farmers do not sell to the F.C.I. direct. The F.C.I. have to procure rice or wheat *via* private agencies. So, I would like to know what steps exactly they are going to take to countervail the speculative activities in foodgrains and whether they are going to raise the support price for the farmers.

Thirdly as my colleague, Mr. Kamal Morarka has pointed out, although the turnover has gone up and the operational activities have gone up, the expense ratio has also gone up. The overhead expenditure of the F.C.I. is increasing. He has urged that there should be reduction in operational costs. But the loss which the F.C.I. is sustaining is not only due to extra cost on the employees. It is not on account of employees. There is loss on account of increasing theft and pilferage in the F.C.I. godowns.

SHRI RAM AWADHESH SINGH (Bihar): What is the total amount of loss in transit?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA): You are speaking on this, Mr. Ram Awadhesh Singh. You cover that point when you speak.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: Sir, there has been an increase in the incidence of theft, pilferage in the godowns and loss in transit also. What steps the Government or the FCI for that matter have taken to prevent loss in transit to prevent loss due to theft and pilferage in godowns and while in movement

Fourthly, Sir, even the Comptroller and Auditor-General had also made certain remarks and observations about the supply of insect-infected foodgrains by the FCI and the incurring of expenditure on freight for the movement of such insect-infected foodgrains from Uttar Pradesh to Kerala and Karnataka and again for transportation and for cleaning of these foodgrains. This way, Sir, crores of rupees were spent on freight for the movement of substandard wheat. Sir, I do not know what steps the Government have taken or for that matter the FCI has taken and whether any res-

ponsibility has been fixed. Sir, this is also a loss. This also contributes to the rise in expense ratio as Mr. Kamal Morarka was pointing out. So, I would like to know as to what steps the Government of India have taken first of all about the observations made by the Comptroller and Auditor-General in respect of certain specific cases of supply of substandard food-grains and incurring expenditure thereby. I want to know as to what steps the Government have taken to prevent such things because every time we have seen that in godowns because of bad storage management, foodgrains are allowed to be damaged. (*Time bell rings*) I want to know what steps they have taken.

Fifthly, Sir, there is another aspect for which the FCI was established, and that was that the FCI would procure food-grains from the food-surplus States and distribute them and supply them to the deficit States. And very often, complaints are being made by certain State Governments, particularly the deficit State Government; that whatever is being allotted for those States, that is not being supplied. Among them were the States of West Bengal, Kerala, Orissa and certain others. As regards West Bengal, I can say. I know the Minister of Food and Civil Supplies has stated the other day that though the foodgrains were allotted, the off-take was not there, the foodgrains were not lifted. Sir, it is not a question of not lifting. It is not that simple. On paper, it may have been allotted. But the rakes for the release of which the instructions have been issued, are actually not made available. Actually those rakes are not made available. If the Minister wants, I can give him the figures. And if you allow me, Sir, I may say that the State of West Bengal needs at least 1,50,000 metric tonnes of rice 1,30,000 metric tonnes of wheat, and 40,000 metric tonnes of sugar per month. But actually, you will see, Sir, that in February 1988 the quota for rice was suddenly reduced by 15,000 metric tonnes. In March 1988 that for rice was reduced by 20,000 metric tonnes and for wheat by 26,000 metric tonnes. And in April 1988, the quota was reduced in case of rice by 40,000 metric tonnes and in case of wheat by 46,000 metric tonnes. There has been further cut in allotment in June.

[Shri Dipen Ghosh]

Sir, about the rakes, if you consider, I can give you the figures. The arrivals of foodgrain rakes as compared to despatch instruction, here I would like the Minister to kindly take note of it, despatch instructions have always been less. During the period from April 1987 to April 1988, 526 rice rakes and 616 wheat rakes were received in the State, against despatch instruction for 614 and 928 rakes respectively. So, per rake, if we go by (he contents of per rake, it will be concluded that this supply was less than that was allotted. *(Time Bell rings)*. I am concluding, Sir. For May 1988, against despatch instructions for 31 rakes for rice and 72 rakes for wheat, the arrivals were 28 and 70 respectively. And for June 1988, 23 rice rakes against despatch instructions for 27, and for wheat it was 55 against despatch instructions for 69. So, Sir, I would like to know from the Minister what steps the Government has taken to ensure that the rakes are made available as per the despatch, instructions so that there may not be any reduction or cut in the allotment. And one last point. Sir. I do not know whether it has been taken note of by the Minister in the mean time, namely, that Uttar Pradesh Government, it has come to our knowledge that the Uttar Pradesh Government has issued a circular dated 7th May, 1988, restricting movement of wheat outside the State without special permit. This has been done even though as per the national policy there cannot be any restriction on the movement of wheat from one part of the country to another. What steps the Government of India has taken in this regard, I would like to know.

Sir, another point I would like to know is as regards Kerala. In Kerala also, I am told that the rice allotted for Kerala, normally which is required by Kerala, it has been reduced. The monthly allotment of rice for public distribution system in Kerala was 1.45 lakh metric tonnes up to January 1988. But this quantity has been reduced to 1.35 lakh metric tonnes in February 1988, and it was further reduced to 1.25 lakh metric tonnes from March 1988 onwards. So Sir, I would also like to know what the Government is going to

take to ensure full supply of required quantity of rice to Kerala. Thank you.

DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI (Andhra Pradesh): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, the Food Corporation of India was incorporated during 1964. It appears that the Government is spending more on the foodgrains by storing them. Security is measured in terms of stocks in godowns and I feel it is the most expensive food security system in the entire world would evolve so far. Every day, about 55,000 metric tonnes of food-grains are transported throughout the country from one end to the other by the Food Corporation of India either by rail or road. A colossal waste of coal and fuel for rail and road traffic is involved, and at the same time, a large-scale corruption is also involved. I feel it is desirable that with such huge investments we should encourage our enterprising farmers to produce more and more to give food security to the country. There are deficit States in the country in the matter of food-grains production, like Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Tripura and West Bengal, and among all these States, the situation in Kerala is different because of small holding but they are wise enough to switch over to other commercial crops. So, in all the other food deficit States, except Kerala, with a little effort, I feel there is a great potential and expertise among the farmers to produce more. It is also a coincidence that all food deficit States, except Kerala, are generally weak and backward in the availability of power, road mileage, scientific water management and literacy rate. For the last 25 years, instead of squandering away public money in transporting food-grains from Punjab and Haryana to Kerala and far-eastern States had this money been utilised for developing infrastructural facilities, each deficit State could have been a surplus State in foodgrain. It is the irony of fate that even now, more money is being spent on storing foodgrains than on production of foodgrains even in the Seventh Plan. Instead of evolving ourselves into one of the best agricultural power in the world, we are looking for aid from small countries, as small as Holland, Denmark and Japan, even in the years of

decline of only 7 to 10 per cent in production.

Sir, the Food Corporation of India was set up or during 1964 to check private trade. While piloting the Bill, the then Food Minister stated in the House: "The trade is not satisfied with 5 per cent or 6 per cent margin; they want 20 to 25 per cent. But I am going to prove and, I think, the Food Corporation of India is going to prove to the trade that even . . . this margin of 5 to 6 per cent, we can make adequate profit." But what happened all though? Then, Mr. Venkataraman as Finance Minister, and the present Rashtra-pati, on 16 March 1981, in the same House, said: "If I remove all subsidies, I have to raise the issue price of wheat by 74 paise per kg." And from these figures, it is apparent that with the economic price as well as the subsidy paid, put together the Food Corporation of India's activity is neither beneficial to the producer of foodgrains nor the consumer. Heavy loss incurred by Food Corporation of India is due to storage and transit loss. From 1971-72 to 1986-87, the storage loss of Food Corporation of India is as high, as Rs. 1032 crores and during 1986-87 itself, the storage loss was Rs. 151.60 crores. The Public Accounts Committee also during 1980-8] said that 40 to 50 per cent of wheat is supplied to the flour mills from the Central pool by the Food Corporation of India. But they do not have any control over the end-products of the flour mills, whether it is atta or maida or suji or any other thing. I would suggest to the Government to have a better control over the end-products of these flour mills while supplying wheat from the Central pool to these mills.

In Punjab, Haryana and other places, for the purpose of procurement, the Central Government is mainly depending on the rice millers instead of purchasing paddy directly from the growers. The subsidy from 1980-81 to 1986-87 is as high as Rs. 7,640 crores. In spite of the fact that the issue prices have risen at a faster rate than the procurement prices, the Food Corporation of India has come with a begging bowl to the Government to have more funds, more subsidy, more loans

from the, banks and other financial institution. (Time-bell rings) Just two minutes Sir, instead of having this white elephant in the form of the Food Corporation of India, I would advise the Government to have a system of foodgrain coupons. The Government is supplying foodgrains through the public distribution system to a population of less than 10 crores. On an average, a person requires about 165 kg. per annum. Let the Government distribute to these ten crore people foodgrain coupons worth Rs. 165 each so that a person can go to a grocer shop or a food grains shop and in exchange for the coupon get a kg. of wheat or rice at a lesser rate than the market rate. The shopkeeper can go to the revenue office or to the concerned Central Government office in turn and get money in return to the coupons. By this system, there will be less corruption, we can wind up the Food Corporation of India and, at the same time, we can give a higher price to the grower and a better service to consumers. Therefore, I would advise the Government to give a serious thought to this and to examine the matter; so that we will be able to give a better deal to the farmer and, at the same time the consumer will also be benefited by getting rice or wheat at a lesser price of one rupee a kg. Thank you.

श्री दरबारा सिंह (पंजाब) : बाइस चैयरमैन साहब, मैं आपका बहुत धन्यवाद नहीं लूंगा, लेकिन मैं कुछ सजेशन देना चाहता हूँ। मुझे यह काम करने का मौका मिला था, जब मैं चैयरमैन था, इस पब्लिक अण्डरटेकिंग का। पुरानी बात मैं नहीं करना चाहता क्योंकि जिन सुबों में मैं गया, वहाँ मैंने देखा कि जहाँ चावल चाहिये था, वहाँ गन्धम पड़ा था और जहाँ गन्धम चाहिये था, वहाँ चावल पड़ा था। तो वह अवस्था काफी हद तक हुई है, इस बात मैं क्योंकि ट्रान्सपोर्टेशन वहाँ होनी चाहिये, जहाँ इसकी जरूरत है। तो इसकी काफी जरूरत है, मैं इसकी इसलिये सपोर्ट करता हूँ कि एम्प्लॉयमेंट की, क्योंकि उनके रास्ते में काफी मुश्किलें रही हैं—पैसा लेने के लिये, काम चलाने के लिये। लेकिन इसके साथ मैं यह कहना चाहता

[श्री दरबारा सिंह]

हैं कि यह एफ०सी०आई० की बुनियाद क्यों डाली गई? इसकी इम्पोर्टन्स को समझने की जरूरत है। ताकि हम आग के लिये अपनी से राय बना सकें। यह इसलिये हुआ कि देशभर में तमाम ट्रेडर्स जो थे एक जगह से ल जाकर के बम्बई वाली जगह में चार-चर गुना प्राइस लेते थे और गरीब लोगों को नहीं मिलता था। ब्लैक में वे लोग लेते थे, जिनकी ताकत थी, लेकिन जिनको नहीं मिलता था, उनके लिये कोई इन्तजाम नहीं था। वे ट्रेडर्स के ऊपर ही मुनहसर रहत थे कि व वहां से लें। अपने दिन की जो मेहनत की हुई होती थी, वह सारी फूड लेने में हो खर्च हो जाती थी बाकी उसके पास पढ़ाई-लिखाई और दूसरी चीजों के लिये कुछ नहीं रह जाता था। एक तो यह बात थी कि कैसे इन्तजाम किया जाये कि फूड जो है, वह सब तक पहुंच सके। क्योंकि खुराक एक ऐसी चीज है, जिसके बिना किसी का गुजरा नहीं हो सकता। इसलिये यह समझ गया कि इसका इन्तजाम इस ढंग से करना चाहिये, ताकि लोगों को यह सारी मिल सके। तो गवर्नमेंट ने एफ० सी० आई० की बुनियाद डाली ताकि जिसके पास सरप्लस है वह मार्केट में आए और अपना माल लाए, लेकिन मैं एक बात साफ करना चाहता हूँ सरप्लस बही लाता है मार्केट में जो जरूरतमंद होता है सबसे छोटा जो फार्मर है जो माजिनल फार्मर है, वह पहले बाजार में आता है क्योंकि उसको अपनी जरूरियात पूरी करनी होती है। एफ० सी० आई० को वक्त से पहले अपना इंतजाम करना चाहिए ताकि जो मार्केट में पहले आए उसका माल खरीदा जा सके। और सही दाम पर खरीदा जा सके। होता यह कि हम लेट परचेज करते हैं जिसका नतीजा यह होता है कि उस समय में जो ट्रेडर्स हैं वे कम कीमत पर सारी चीजें किसान की ले लेते हैं और उसको अपनी मुश्किलें पूरी करने के लिए बेचनी पड़ती हैं। इसलिए मेरा सुझाव यह है कि समय से पहले इंतजाम होना चाहिए ताकि जो किसान पहले आता है बाजार में उसका माल खरीदा जा सके।

दूसरी बात यह है कि हम रिजर्व अगर उसको रखें तो उसको केवल सेंट्रल गवर्नमेंट रख सकती है क्योंकि उसकी ड्यूटी है कि तमाम हिन्दुस्तान के लोगों को जहां कमी है उसको पूरा करे। तो यह जो इंस्टीट्यूशन है एफ० सी० आई० की इसको रिजर्व करने में कुछ कठिनाइयां आ रही थी और इसकी हमको जरूरत है, हम यह बात समझते कि इसका अग्रे के लिए जरूरत नहीं है, इसलिए इसको पूरा करना चाहिए।

जहां तक परचेज का सवाल है एफ० सी० आई० के लोगों को उसको पूरा इंतजाम करना चाहिए। उसमें नमी इतनी निकाल देते हैं कि जो छूट दी गई है उससे ज्यादा निकाल देते हैं ताकि उसकी परचेज कम प्राइस पर हो। यह बात देखने में आई है कि जो परसेटेंज वेटनेस की रखी गई है उसको बढ़ाकर किसान को कम पैसे देने की कोशिश न की जाए। उसके साथ इंसाफ होना चाहिए।

इस के साथ ही जो ओवरहेड चार्ज एफ० सी० आई० के हैं वे बहुत बढ़ गए हैं। एक जगह से दूसरी जगह ट्रांसपोर्ट करने में बहुत चाजज लगते हैं। इसलिए उसको नजदीक से नजदीक स्टोर करना चाहिए। यह नहीं होना चाहिए कि पहले 10 जगहों से एक जगह इकट्ठा किया फिर उसको दूसरी जगह ले गए। इससे ओवरहेड चार्ज बढ़ जाते हैं। उनको कम करना चाहिए। जो बड़ा किसान है वह तो उसको उसको रिटैन कर सकते हैं ताकि उस दिन का इंतजार कर सके कि जब कीमत बढ़ेगी तो उसको बेचे, लेकिन छोटा किसान ऐसा नहीं कर पाता। इसलिए हमको ऐसा इंतजाम करना चाहिए कि हर सूबे वाले अपनी जरूरत का इंतजाम करें। अब तो आसाम में भी व्हीट होने लगा है। यू० पी० में भी अब ज्यादा होने लगी है पैदावार। इसलिए हर सूबे को चाहिए कि वह अपना रिजर्व साल भर के लिए रखे और किसी ट्रेडर को यह इजाजत न हो कि वह ज्यादा से ज्यादा स्टोर करे। इसलिए एफ० सी० आई० को इसके

लिफ्ट कैपिटल चाहिए ताकि वह इसमें कैपिटल लगा सके और लोगों को अनाज सही दाम पर मिल सके, इस ओर ज्यादा ध्यान देने की जरूरत है।

जैसा कि मैंने पहले कहा, हो सकता है एफ० सी० आई० में बहुत खराबियां हों, मैं उनका इस समय जिक्र नहीं करना चाहता हूं, जब कभी इस पर बहस होगी तो उस समय में अपनी बात कहूंगा, लेकिन आज केवल यही कहना चाहता हूं कि यह अमेंडमेंट जरूरी है क्योंकि एफ० सी० आई० को पैसे की जरूरत है। एफ० सी० आई० को इतना ज्यादा बाहर से फंड लाने की जरूरत हो सकती है या वह इसके लिए कोशिश करे, ऐसी मजबूरी आ सकती है, तो उसके लिए उसके पास पैसे का इंतजाम होना चाहिए। इस बार फसल बहुत अच्छी हुई है क्योंकि सारे हिन्दुस्तान में बारिश हुई है।

राजस्थान में जहां कभी बारिश नहीं 3.00 P.M. होती थी वहां भी चना और दूसरी फसलें पैदा हुई हैं। अच्छा है। मौसम अच्छा आया है। सब जगह बरसात हो गयी है लेकिन हमें उसका फायदा उठाना चाहिए। हमें ऐसा इंतजाम करना चाहिए कि हम अनाज रिजर्व करके रख सकें इमरजेंसी के लिए। हमारे इसके लिए सारे इकदामाद होने चाहिए ताकि हम रिजर्व में रख सकें। कहीं डाउट पड़ता है, कहीं फ्लड आता है अगर रिजर्व में रखेंगे तो वहां पर इन्हे पहुंचाया जा सकता है।

जो प्राइस किसान को मिलते हैं वे रेग्युलरेयिव होने चाहिए इसमें दो राय नहीं है। बोनस की बात भी है एफ० सी० आई० के कर्मचारियों को अच्छा मिलना चाहिए। 40 परसेंट से ज्यादा लोग मरीबी की रेखा के नीचे हैं। आपने जो फिगर्स दी है वह कम है। इससे कुछ ज्यादा ही है। जो भी है उनके लिए बंदोबस्त करना चाहिए। उनको रीजेनेबल प्राइस पर, सस्ते प्राइस पर अनाज मिलना चाहिए ताकि वे लोग अनाज खरीद कर अपना पेट पाल सकें। इसलिए एफ० सी० आई० को इसके लिए इंतजाम करना जरूरी है और उसके लिए आपकी मदद जरूरी है।

श्री शंकर सिंह वाघेला (गुजरात) :
उपसभाध्यक्ष जी, सरदार साहब ने अच्छा बताया लेकिन किसान के लिए न एफ० सी० आई०; कोटन पंचेज के लिए सी० सी० आई० आता है और न गवर्नमेंट की सपोर्ट प्राइस बीच में आती है। ऐसी बातें कहने के लिए अच्छी हैं लेकिन एक्सीक्यूशन नहीं होता है। यह किस के दिमाग की पैदाइश है मैं समझ नहीं पाया। मंत्री महोदय ने भ्रमण किया है।

'A Food Corporation may, for the purpose of carrying out its functions...'

कौन से फंक्शन्स हैं आपके? यह कोई फैक्टरी है। मैं तो यह समझता हूं इसमें फंक्शन जैसा कुछ है नहीं। बीच में एक एजेंसी है एजेंसी के लिए आप के बैंक, या कोई फाइनेन्शियल इस्टीमेटेशन जितना जितना कर्जा चाहिए, दे सकते हैं। प्र इवेट किसान अगर बैंक से लोन लेता है तो कुएं के नाम से, बोगस कुएं के नाम से रातों-रात वह कुआं भाग जाता है, बैल के लिए एल० आई० सी० में इश्योरेंस कराके लेता है या तो वह बैल मर जाता है या कहीं चला जाता है। पूरा कुआं दूर भाग जाता है, बैल भाग जाता है, मर जाता है। आपने कहा है स्टॉक देख कर बतायेंगे कि इतने से इतना लोन मिल सकता है। बोगस स्टॉक दिखाने का काम क्या हमारे देश में कम है? यही स्टॉक दिखायेंगे या नहीं दिखायेंगे? कौन किस को दिखायेगा? आपने खामखां लोन लेने की बात जोड़ी है। आपके पास फाइनेन्शियल इस्टीमेटेशन कम है क्या? इससे आगे बढ़ कर आपने कहा कि :

"issue and sell bonds and debentures carrying interest..."

कौन लेगा आपके बांड और डिबेन्चर। आजकल रिलायन्स वाले, वाम्बे डाइंग वाले शेयर के मालिक बन कर बैठे हैं पब्लिक के बीच में। आपको यह घंघा नहीं करना चाहिए। गवर्नमेंट को अपने लिमिट में रहना चाहिए। बांड और डिबेन्चर नहीं देने चाहिए। मेरी आपसे प्रार्थना है कि मेहरबानी करके बांड और डिबेन्चर वाली बात छोड़ दीजिए। वैसे ती लोग लेते नहीं और गलती से आपने ज्यादा इंटरेस्ट का लालच दिया और उस लालच में ले भी लिये तो वे कहां रहेंगे

[श्री शंकर सिंह वाघेला]

वैसे भी आप एक जगह से पैसा लेकर दूसरी जगह देने वाले हैं। यह प्रक्रिया भी कोई अच्छी नहीं है।

एफ०सी० आई० के गोदाम की बात कहा हूँ वह तो पूरा एक कष्ट कारपोरेशन बन गया है। एफ०सी०आई० में भी दो किस्म के गोदाम चल रहे हैं। एक तो बंद है जो कवर है और दूसरे आपन हैं यानी खुले हुए। आपन गोदामों को आपने क्यों अनुमति दी है? अगर खुले गोदाम में चावल, गेहूं पड़ा है तो वह खराब हो जाता है। ऊपर से बारिश होती है। पक्षी होते हैं वह खाते रहते हैं। गाय आ गयी, दूसरे जानवर आ गये वे सब खा जाते हैं जैसे कहते हैं राम की चिड़िया राम का खेत खाओ रे चिड़िया भरपेट जितना भी चाहे खाओ। इसमें कंट्रोल की बात नहीं। इसलिए मेरा कहना है कि किसी की एकाउटेबिलिटी होनी चाहिए खुले गोदाम की बात छोड़ देनी चाहिए। बंद गोदाम होते हैं वही होने चाहिए और उनका मैटेनेंस भी ठीक से होना चाहिए। सरदार साहब के साथ मैं कहना चाहता हूँ कि जब मैं भी पी०यू०सी० में था तो हमने देखा था कि गोदामों का मैटेनेंस बिल्कुल नहीं होता है।

इनका मैटेनेंस बिल्कुल नहीं होता है। कोई विजिट करता है तो ये लोग कुछ काम कर लेते हैं, अन्यथा मैटेनेंस नहीं होता है। मैं यह भी जानना चाहता हूँ कि हर साल कितना परसेंट गेहूं, चावल या दूसरा अनाज बेकार चला जाता है, क्या आपने इस बारे में कोई जानकारी की है? कितना अनाज हमारा सड़ जाता है। इसकी वजह से कितना ही अनाज बाहर फेंकना पड़ता है। कभी कभी ऐसा भी होता है कि यह बाहर फेंका हुआ अनाज अनुष्यों के हाथ लग जाता है और कभी कभी कैटल भी इसको खा जाते हैं और वे मर जाते हैं। इसकी कोई चिन्ता नहीं करता है। इसलिए आपको इनकी मैटेनेंस की तरफ ध्यान देना चाहिए। अगर आपका मैटेनेंस अच्छा होगा तो स्टॉक का लोस भी नहीं होगा। मैं चाहता हूँ कि इन बातों के लिए आपको एकाउटेबिलिटी फिक्स करनी चाहिए, इसके लिए जिम्मेदारी तय करनी चाहिए। इस

साल वर्षा अच्छी हुई है। अनाज भी अच्छा आया। अगर आप इस अनाज को खुले पर रखेंगे और उसका मैटेनेंस अच्छा नहीं करेंगे तो नुकसान उठाना पड़ेगा। देखने में यह आता है कि कई बार आपके गोदाम खाली भी पड़े रहते हैं। इसलिए अच्छा यह होगा कि आप इन गोदामों को किराये पर दे दें। छोटे किसान या बड़े किसान जो अपना अनाज वहां रखना चाहते हैं, उनको आप किराये पर इन गोदामों को दे दीजिए। जैसा अभी श्री कमल मोरारका राजस्थान की बात बता रहे थे, एफ० सी० आई० के गोदामों की हालत अच्छी नहीं है। अगर किसान बैंक से लोन लेकर अपना गोदाम बनाना चाहते हैं और आप उनको कुछ समय बाद गोदाम लेना मना करते हैं तो पालिसी तय करनी चाहिए। कोओपरेटिव सोसाइटीज को भी इस में लिया जा सकता है। आप इनमें गोदाम ले सकते हैं। प्राइवेट लोगों के साथ नेगोशिएट करके भी काम किया जाना चाहिए और हमारे मार्किटिंग यार्ड पूरे देश में हैं गोदाम होते हैं उपयोग करिये। मैं चाहता हूँ कि आप अपनी इस पालिसी की तरफ भी ध्यान दें। जिसमें गोदाम को किराये पर लेना और सहकारी या मार्किटिंग यार्ड से गोदाम किराये पर लेना।

आखिरी बात मैं यह कहना चाहता हूँ कि इस संबंध में एम० एम० टी० सी० की बात भी आई है। मेरी समझ में यह बात नहीं आती है कि लोहे का काम करने वाली यह संस्था चावल के व्यापार में कैसे आ गई? नार्थ कोरिया के साथ वार्टर मिस्टम से यह काम किया जाता है। रुपये में पेमेंट करने के बजाय चावल के रूप में यह काम किया जाता है। मैं चाहता हूँ कि आप इस मामले की इन्क्वारी करावाइये। इस एम० एम० टी० सी० ने लोहे का व्यापार करने के बजाय यह चावल का व्यापार क्यों किया यह चावल बर्मा से आया या मलेशिया से आया, इस सारे मामले की जांच होनी चाहिए। अगर यह काम एम० टी० सी० करता है तो बात समझ में आ सकती थी, लेकिन, एम० एम० टी० सी० इसमें कैसे आ गई, यह बात समझ में नहीं आती है, आप इसकी इन्क्वायरी करिये, इसमें बहुत बड़ा

घपला है, इसमें नार्थ कोरिया और एम. एम. टी. सी. के अफसरों के बीच घपला हुआ है।

अन्त में मैं यह भी कहना चाहता हूँ कि एफ० सी० आई० सेंट्रल गवर्नमेंट का डिपार्टमेंट है और आपके पास वेयर हाउस कारपोरेशन भी है। मेरा कहना यह है कि आप राज्यों को कहिए कि हमारे पास इतना अनाज है, आप इसको ले जाइए। अगर केरल को चावल की जरूरत है तो आप केरल को कहिए कि हमारे पास इतना चावल एवलेवल है, आप इसको ले जाइए। इसी तरह से अगर किसी स्टेट को गेहूँ की जरूरत है तो उसको कहिए कि आप गेहूँ ले जाओ। यह एफ० सी० आई० बीच में नहीं आना चाहिए। सेंट्रल गवर्नमेंट को सीधे व्यवस्था करनी चाहिए। आपके पास एस० टी० सी० है और अन्य कई कारपोरेशन्स हैं, उनके माध्यम से यह काम आप कर सकते हैं। यह सारी जिम्मेदारी सेंट्रल गवर्नमेंट को अपने ऊपर लेनी चाहिए। इसके अलावा मैं अन्य बातों में नहीं आना चाहता हूँ, सिर्फ इतना कहना चाहता हूँ कि एफ० सी० आई० के विसनमेन पर भी कम्प्लेन के चाँजेज हैं। इन सारी बातों पर कौन कंट्रोल करेगा। पी० यू० सी० की रिपोर्ट पार्लियामेंट में पेश हो जाती है, लेकिन जरूरत इस बात की है कि इन सारी बातों को देखा जाय। आखिर में मैं यह कहना चाहता हूँ कि आप बे बोण्ड्स और डिबेंचर जारी करना छोड़ दें और जो बैंकों की बात मैंने कही है, किसानों को आप लोन दें। एफ० सी० आई० को बांड-डिबेंचर वाली बात में बीच में आने की जरूरत नहीं है।

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA (Rajasthan); I rise to support the Food Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 1988. After listening to my colleague, Mr. Vaghela, it seems even before going through the merits of this Amendment, he is bent upon criticising the Government Bill rightly or wrongly. I will go into those details a little later.

Food Corporation is basically a service-oriented organisation. As we all know the poor farmers of India are not able to

reach all corners of the country. They are not able to store the goods when there is surplus. They do not have godowns. For all these facilities the service is provided by the Food Corporation of India. In fact, since its inception in 1965, it has done a very commendable job. I must congratulate. At least the job done by the FCI has been very good. We may definitely have an argument about its job about corruption, but the overall job has been very well done by it. When we talk about—as Vaghela Ji has said—what the Cotton Corporation or the FCI has done for the support price, I think he knows even for cotton or for that matter jute or for cereals there is a support price fixed by the Government. At that price any quantity can be offered to them and they will take all the quantity. In case you just say they do not take it, well he is at liberty to have his opinion, but to the best of my information, these Corporation are doing a very good job, especially when the support prices are required by the agriculturists.

Foodgrains are required all over the country. In some parts of the country we have surplus, in some parts of the country we have drought situation or even floods, when we do not have enough food—it is the FCI which transports the goods all over the country in time so that our rationing system can operate effectively so that no Indian can go without food any day of the year. This is not a small job. 800 million people are fed. Food is sent from one corner to the other. M is sent from Punjab to Kanyakumari or from Haryana to Bengal or to Kashmir. Everywhere it goes and it reaches in time. I must compliment the Food Corporation for this.

But there is a commercial aspect also. We must see at what cost it is being transported and at what cost it is being handled. In this respect I will request the Minister the cost factor has to be gone into in detail. Are we really handling at the best efficiency or not? I strongly feel that there is a great scope in deducing the cost of transportation; there is a great scope in reducing the cost of handling at every level.

[Shri Santosh Bagrodia]

For all these things finances *dr's* a must. Vaghela Ji feels that the organisation has got enough money, because the Government is providing them money. No doubt the Government is responsible and it is providing money, but I cannot find any reason for any objection for the FCI to raise funds by bonds or debentures. If they are not successful, let them not be successful, but what objection has he got if somebody wants to subscribe to the debentures of the FCI? If a private organisation like the Reliance Company can do it, why not the FCI?

SHRI SHANKER SDHM VAGHELA: There is no rationale for a concern doing simply trading and not doing any productive business. In that case only the puttee will suffer.

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: There is no question of public having to suffer. Money is coming from some source— either through debentures or from Government source or from the public. Instead of Government, if they can get it from the public, we should rather feel happy. We should feel happy that the Government resources are not being strained and they are raising the funds from their own. And there will be a complete trust if the debentures are issued by the FCI, because we know that they are not going to be bankrupt.

On one point I agree with Shri Vaghela that there should be accountability on this; there should be some body in the F.C.I., may be the Chairman or the entire organisation, but there should be accountability. I would like to mention that FCI has become too large for the country. Can we think reducing it or separating it into four or five division in accordance with the requirements of for different regions of the country so that there can be some kind of competition? Then, _____

श्री राम अवधेश सिंह : माननीय सदस्य
कम राजस्वान से है ? कहाँ से है ?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA): You please continue. You ignore the interruptions of Mr. Ram Awadhesh Singh.

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: I am not an expert orator. If he interrupts like

this, I will sit down. When you give me an opportunity then, I will speak.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA): You ignore his interruptions.

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA.- Please ask him to keep quiet so that I can speak. I understand what is my language and I also understand what right I have got to speak in any language. Mr. Ram Awadhesh Singh also got his right to speak in any language he likes. I think, he also understand; our privileges.

श्री राम अवधेश सिंह : जिस भाषा में
वोट मांगते हैं। उस भाषा में क्यों नहीं
बोलते हैं। शर्म लगती है ?

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: But at the moment, I want to have the privilege to speak in any language I like. Some day outside the House, I would speak to him in the language he likes.

Mr. Vaghelaji also mentioned about the concept of two types of godowns. I fully agree with him on this. At present FCI maintains open godown and closed godowns. Definitely the condition of godowns is not worth mentioning. It requires immense changes at the level of godowns, management and repairs to make sure that the foodgrains which are stored there remain safe. There are human as well as natural problems. Natural problems are rains and wear and tear of the godowns. Human problems are how much food-grains are being stolen or how much adulteration is there? This has to be seen very seriously and open godowns must be stopped, if possible. I know that in some areas when we have more foodgrains, we do not know how to store it. We have open godowns. But this should be reduced to the minimum as far as possible. If that is so. I cannot understand why there should be the question of renting godowns.

There are no surplus godowns in our country as such.

Now, I will come back to the point which I left when my friend disturbed me. The FCI has become too big. Can we reduce it? Can we make this organisation

smaller so that there is an element of competition from different regions! Then, we can also compare the costs as to which region is spending how much on a particular job. Here, I would like to mention a very important factor. There is a Jear-cut policy of the Government with regard to machine stitching of bags. In the case of fertilisers, it has been decided to have hundred per cent machine stitching of bags. In the case of foodgrains also the bags should be machine-stitched.

It has been noticed that either while the foodgrains are in transit or are in storage in private or Government godowns, too much of adulteration takes place. For example, 100 kg bag or 75 kg bag or 50 kg bag does not really contain the correct quantity. If the bags are machine-stitched, then, this problem of adulteration can be removed. I understand that this machine stitching is being tried in two ways. Mostly it is tried departmentally. I request the Minister to appreciate the situation that this is like a cycle, from procurement till it is delivered to the consumer. In this chain, if one link is missing the whole chain will be disturbed. If this machine stitching is done departmentally then, it is a very very small portion of the total handling. If the machines are not in order and if there are no proper operators available, the result is that cycle will be disturbed. In a hurry it just goes and when it goes in the process, either the truck owners or the truck operators or anybody who handles either in the Government or any place, they would like to adulterate the foodgrains. This adulteration of foodgrains can be stopped completely if there is hundred per cent machine stitching of bags all over the country. I am sure that if the Minister takes personal interest, it should be physically possible. We must have some target for implementation of the machine stitching job. Sir, when we talk of corruption, I do not dispute that there is some corruption at different levels. We cannot accept it. We should not accept it and for this, our present Minister, who himself is so honest, is trying his best to root out corruption at different levels. I wish him success in this.

Recently, I saw a news that public i?

always facing a problem. When they go to the ration shop, they say, this is the material available. You take it or leave it. The quality is bad. The quantity is not enough. What do I do? I don't get it in the outside market and I have to take it from them. I request the Minister to be considerate to our citizens who can get right quality at this point. Sir, I would also like to mention that 100 kgs bags are too heavier bags. In fact, everywhere in the world, we are having 50 kgs bags. If we can reduce it from 100 kgs. to 50 kgs., it would be better because for manual handling, it goes to the villages where the poor workers or the human beings have to work like animals to carry 100 kgs. bags. This is inhuman in the modern society. We must reduce the weight of rice and wheat bags, Sir rice mills are being handled by the FCI. I do not think it is their job. Rice mills are lying idle in Orissa. I would request the Minister that either these rice mills should be handled by another organisation of the Government or it should be given to the smaller parties who can probably handle it much better.

Coming to Rajasthan, sir, some times, we do not get the material in time, the foodgrains Rajasthan is prone to drought every year except this year. So far the rains are very good this year. I appeal to the Minister to ensure that Rajasthan especially gets the foodgrains in time. Otherwise, we will have great problems in different remote areas, especially in area where accessibility is very very poor. Rs. 2 000 crores are being spent by the Government for subsidy on food only. I suggest that if we can make productivity better per hectare by supplying better seeds and we can give more subsidy in fertilizer. Let us give better seeds give more subsidised seeds so that the total cost of production of foodgrains is lesser. That will reduce the subsidy required for food and that will increase the efficiency of the Food production also.

Now, the final point. Sir, is that the FCI must supply the needs of different States as per their requirements. Now boiled rice is required in the eastern States whereas they do not get boiled

[Shri Santosh Bagrodia]

rice. I am sure, if the Minister makes effort, he can find out a proper process by which boiled rice is made available in those areas. Now, this year we have got very good rains and I am sure, the FCI will come forward so that the farmers can sell whatever they produce and this storage will help us in one or two years to come. With these words, I thank you very much to give me this opportunity to speak on the Food Corporations (Amendment) Bill, 1988 and this particular amendment will go a long way in providing much needed finance for the Corporation.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA). It is not that the

श्री राम अवधेश सिंह : हमें कितने मिनट का समय है और ज्यादा से ज्यादा कितना मिलेगा ?

उपसभाध्यक्ष (श्री एच. हनुमन्तप्पा) : 4 मिनट हैं और 4 मिनट ही मिलेंगे ।

श्री राम अवधेश सिंह : थोड़ा समय ज्यादा कर दीजिए ।

उपसभाध्यक्ष (श्री एच. हनुमन्तप्पा) : आप शुरू तो करिये ।

Why do you argue about the time?

श्री राम अवधेश सिंह : मान्यवर, जितना टाइम है और जो विषय है उसके लिहाज से तो हो नहीं सकता है ।

entire Food Corporation of India is under discussion. It is only the amendment.

श्री राम अवधेश सिंह : इस भारतीय खाद्य निगम के बारे में जितना कम कहा जाए उतना ही अच्छा है क्योंकि भारत सरकार के प्रतिष्ठानों की तरह यह भी एक अष्टाचार का अड्डा है और ऐसा बड़ा अड्डा दो-तीन प्रतिष्ठान हैं एक कोल इंडिया है और दूसरा सेल है और इस तरह से एक-दो और हैं । जितना अष्टाचार यहां है सो यह बात समझ में नहीं आती कि इनको जो खरीद है और सेल के बीच में

बहुत भारी अन्तर है बावजूद इसके इनको यह घाटा कैसे होता है और यह घाटा दिखाते हैं । कहते हैं अनाज सड़ गया तो यह जानकर सड़ते हैं । आप अगर मई और जून के महीने में रेल की पटरियों के किनारे खड़े हो जाए तो रेल में जो अनाज की दुलाई होती है तो आप देखेंगे कि रेल की जो बोगी है माल ढोने वाली वह ऊपर से खुली है ताकि कुछ पानी पड़ जाए और अनाज कुछ सड़ जाए ताकि इनको बहाना मिल जाए कि अनाज सड़ गया और उसका हम कहीं भी हवाला कर दें । यह प्रोक्थोर करते हैं 173 रुपये प्रति क्विंटल यह खरीदते हैं और 240 रुपये प्रति क्विंटल बेचते हैं तो 70 रुपये प्रति क्विंटल इनको फायदा है । अब इसमें घाटा कैसे हो जाता है ? कहीं चोरी, कहीं अनाज सड़ गया तो कहीं कुछ कहीं कुछ यह दिखाते हैं । इस तरह हिसाब करने से 23 मिलियन टन जो इनको खरीद है उस 23 मिलियन टन से 70 रुपये क्विंटल के हिसाब से गुना कर दीजिए तो 23 मिलियन टन का 1600 करोड़ से ज्यादा इनको फायदा होना चाहिए लेकिन 1600 करोड़ से अधिक फायदे की बजाय यह हर साल 700, 800, 1000 करोड़ के करीब-करीब घाटा दिखाते हैं । मंत्री जी हैं वह बतायेंगे कि साल में इनको कितना घाटा है । यह भी तो सही-सही बात नहीं सकते क्योंकि इनके जो आफिसर हैं कभी सही घाटा बता ही नहीं सकते और अगर इनको भी मालूम हो जाए कि कितना घाटा है तो शायद यह कुछ कर ही सकें । लेकिन जो सरकार है उसका भी दामन सफ नहीं है क्योंकि सरकार का सीधा संबंध कारपोरेशन के आफिसरों से हुआ करता है और उसमें से नीचे से ऊपर तक कुछ हिस्सा बंटता है । अगर हिस्सा नहीं बटे तो इतने-इतने भारी पैमाने पर चोरी नहीं हो जाता है । मैंने कई बार सदन में भी उठाया है कि जो फूड कारपोरेशन आफ इण्डिया में, कोल इंडिया में, सेल में हर कोई जो बड़ा-बड़ा पब्लिक अण्डरटेकिंग है उनमें कोई 300 करोड़ से 400 करोड़ से कम घाटा दिखाता ही नहीं है और इनका घाटा हमारे सिर पर जाता है क्योंकि घाटा तो इनको होता है और टेक्स हम पर लगता

है। कीमत बढ़ती है और जब कीमत बढ़ती है तो फिर घूम करके वह हमारे ऊपर आ जाता है। तो मान्यवर, मैं चाहता हूँ कि फूड कॉर्पोरेशन ऑफ इंडिया जिसको भारतीय खाद्य निगम कहते हैं उसके बारे में एक विस्तृत जांच कमेटी बने और यह संसदीय जांच कमेटी बने। नीचे से ऊपर तक इतना घपला है। आपको उदाहरण देता हूँ, पटना में जो मैनेजर है, उसको उस सेठ से जो ढुलाई वाला है और उसका जो दाम तय होगा प्रति क्विंटल ढुलाई का, उससे उसको मिलेगा कि हम तुमको बोरी की ढुलाई देते हैं दो रूपया या तीन रूपया, उसमें से आठ आना हमको दे दिया करो या एक रूपया हमको दे दिया करो। इस तरह से जनता के पैसे की लूट भारी मात्रा में हर रीजनल आफिस में जो मैनेजर हैं, वह कांटेक्टर से मिलकर करता है।

महोदय अंतिम पॉइंट जो मैं कहना चाहता हूँ, वह यह कि कोरिया से हमारा जो चावल इपोर्ट हुआ है, उस चावल का इपोर्ट एफ. सी. आई. न करके एम. एम. टी. सी. पहली बफा कर रहा है। इसमें क्या घपला है? महोदय, इसमें करोड़-करोड़ सठे सत्त करोड़ रूपए का मामला है? अगर इस पर जांच हो तो बोफोर्स की तरह ही एक बड़ा कांड सामने आएगा। जनसत्ता ने इसके बारे में जबर्दस्त ढंग से लिखा था पूरे फेक्ट्स-फिगर्स देकर और मैंने क्वेश्चन भी किया था, उसका जवाब अभी तक नहीं आया। तो मैं चाहता हूँ कि मंत्री जी इस बात को सफाई करेंगे कटे गेरिवली कि किन परिस्थितियों में कोरिया से चावल का इम्पोर्ट किया गया और जिन एजेंट के माध्यम से किया गया, उस एजेंट की क्या ओरिजिनेटि भी और क्या क्रेडिटिलिटी थी? वह जो एम. एम. टी. सी. के जरिए खरीदा गया, इस तरह खरीद कर इसमें बहुत भारी घपले वजी की गई है। मैं चाहता हूँ, इसकी जांच होनी चाहिए। बिना जांच किए यह बहुत बड़ा घपला किया जा रहा है, इसमें भी बोफोर्स की तरह एजेंट रखा गया है और उस एजेंट को पैसा दिया गया है। वह मेरा सरकार पर चार्ज है।

SHRI N.E. BALARAM (Kerala): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I am not convinced about the need for this piece of legislation. I say this because I have gone through the accounts of this Corporation for the last two years and I have found that the Corporation has been taking loans from the banks which are more than that of the previous years and I have not found, after reading the annual report, any indication of paucity of funds in this particular Corporation. That is why I said that I am not convinced about the need 'for this piece of legislation, of course, the Minister will, I hope, while replying, explain the whole thing and that is why I raised this point.

Sir, we are not expected to discuss the entire working of the FCI at this stage. But I would like to make two observations. One is that there must be a basic reorientation in the purchasing policy of the FCI on two points at least and I do not want to go into details. The purpose of this Corporation is obvious. It is to purchase foodgrains from the farmers at reasonable prices and distribute them to the consumers at reasonable prices. That is the main purpose of this organization. Now, excepting UP, according to my information, in several parts of the country, the FCI is not entering into the market soon after the harvesting period. Soon after the harvesting period means the period when small farmers and middle farmers are selling their produces. If you do not enter into this period, naturally the farmers will be forced to make distress sales. That is what is happening in several parts of the country. I give one example. I do not want to take much of your time. Last year, I think when Shri Darbara Singh was speaking he would have mentioned that fact. I do not know whether he mentioned that fact. Last time when the harvesting period was over the Food Corporation did not enter; they did not go in for purchases for one month, with the result that there is a his agitation among the poor peasant; and middle peasants, because they cannot sell their produces and they cannot get support price or any price; they have to go in for distress sale. The middleman comes in. I am not say-

{Shri N. E. Balaram}

ing that everywhere it is happening. But it is happening in several parts of the country. This Should be taken into consideration.

Secondly, Sir, I understand that they are encouraging or utilizing the services of middlemen for the purchase of produces. I think this is not a good policy. If they are purchasing, through the middlemen, naturally the growers will not get the proper price. (*Time Bell rings*) This is not happening in Uttar Pradesh. But in other parts it is going on on a large scale. So I suggest that unless at least on these two counts there is a reorientation of policy, the purpose of the Corporation will not be served.

My third point is about the employees in that Corporation. There is a large number of employees in that Corporation. Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, for the last 15 years, according to my information—I do not know how far it is true—the there was no revision of wages for these employees. But in other corporations there were revisions three times during this period. So there is too much discontentment amongst the employees and workers. Of course, in 1987 there were two agreements signed between the Corporation and employees. Now the employees are demanding the implementation of those agreements. These have not even been implemented. This creates a very bad situation inside the Corporation.

According to the Act of the Corporation there can be 12 Directors. But so far as my knowledge goes, there are only 6 or 7 Directors for the last 15 years. All of them are officers. I am not against putting officers in the Corporation. Officers must be there. But the Act provides that there can be non-officials also included in the Board of Directors. (*Time Bell rings*) But this was not done from the very inception of the Board. I do not know why it was not done. I say that also creates some problems.

Since I do not have time and since this is not the time to discuss the entire functioning of the Food Corpora-

tion of India, I do not want to go beyond that. I hope the Minister will understand the whole point. There are complaints as to how the Food Corporation of India is running. More than that I do not want to say anything. There are serious complaints which the Minister should take into consideration. Unless you tackle all these problems, I don't think the Food Corporation of India can function properly. This is what I have to say.

SHRI SUKH RAM: Sir, the scope of this Amendment Bill is very limited. But the hon. members who took part in the debate on this Amendment Bill got an opportunity to discuss almost the entire functioning of the Food Corporation of India. I welcome the suggestions which they have made. I welcome the constructive criticism also.

As the hon. Members know, the Food Corporation of India is a very big organisation. It operates through more than 2000 depots throughout the country. I can agree that there may be cases of corruption at certain levels. There may be negligence, omissions or commissions on the part of some officers or officials of the Corporation. I agree with the hon. Members that there is scope for improvement in the functioning of this Corporation. As I said, I welcome the suggestions made by the hon. Members. If they can give me somethings in writing I will definitely take their suggestions into consideration. In case they bring any instance or instances of corrupt practices to my notice. I will definitely take action. But everything has to be proved. Once any corrupt practice is proved against any officer or official, action is taken and action will be taken.

One hon. Member made a mention about the supply of sub-standard food-grains. When this matter was brought to the notice of the Government, action was taken. Some officers were suspended and some were dismissed. So, there is no question of hiding anything. We are there to take action so that functioning is improved. But we have to take a balanced view.

Sir, the Food Corporation of India was set up to protect the interests of the

farmers on the one hand. The floor price is fixed by the Government and we do not allow the Price to fall below that level. This has helped the country a lot. The farmers want to grow more food. It was the policy of the Government of India and the Food Corporation of India and it has helped us in the procurement of food. Along with other factors, it has contributed in our achieving self-sufficiency. On the other hand, it provides food security to the nation. As the hon. members know, last year we faced a very severe drought, a very severe natural calamity which we had not faced so far. We could face this challenge with our Own resources. Last year, the off-take or the release from our godowns was more than 22 million tonnes for meeting the requirements of the drought-affected people, for poverty alleviation programme, for the IRDP and whatever other social commitments of the Central Government. And we could meet them. That is probably the reason why many people did not feel the impact of the drought. I think, this House knows that as far as procurement is concerned it is largely done in Northern India. For instance, wheat is procured to the extent of 90 per cent from Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. And 10 per cent is procured from the rest—Madhya Pradesh and the rural area of Delhi, etc. And rice is procured to the extent of 70 per cent from Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, and Haryana. And you can imagine that our procurement ranges between 16 to 18 million tonnes annually. In a bad year, in a drought year, for instance, last year procurement fell down. I agree. But this is the normal procurement. And procuring this quantity in North India and supply-ing this quantity to every nook and corner of this country is not a small job. Road transport is involved, railways are involved, and so many factors are involved.

श्री राम सुवधेन सिंह : पिछले साल से इस साल ज्यादा हुआ है कि कम हुआ है ?

SHRI SUKH RAM: And this supply is made on time. There may be exceptions in it. There may be reports of non-supply at certain places. But they are

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exceptions, not the general rule. Generally, we supply foodgrains to all States according to their requirement. And we have to remember one thing that food is a State subject. Whatever we procure, from whichever State we procure, it is with the consent of that State Government, and with the assistance of that State Government. The public distribution system is the supplemental and not the substitution of the free market. It is primarily the responsibility of the State Government to feed their people, to maintain the price line. The Government of India, in pursuance of its social objective, procures foodgrains, as I said earlier, to protect the interest of the farmers and supplies them to the deficit States. The Government of India helps the State Governments, but the State Government should not throw the entire burden on the Central Government. We have tried our level best and we have been helping all the State Governments irrespective of any consideration—regional, political or otherwise. And we have to remember one more thing also that food is a very, very delicate area. Even if we have got sufficient production in the country, some unscrupulous elements in the trade, in the society can create an artificial scarcity. And once the prices of foodgrains tend to rise, there is no end to it. So, as I said, the Food Corporation, as a policy of the Government of India, provides food security and we have to have buffer stocks with us so that under such circumstances, the Food Corporation of India, the Government of India, is in a position to intervene effectively in the market so that price rise is checked, it is contained. That is the function of the Food Corporation of India. And we have to at least realise what are the contributions of the Food Corporation of India to which extent this commendable job the Corporation has done last year by releasing and arranging delivery of the foodgrains to all the States in the country. As I said the other day, had we faced the calamity of this magnitude about a few years back we would have been with a begging bowl before the advanced countries to feed our teeming millions. But it is a matter of pride for everybody in this country that we faced this challenge without any assistance,

[Shri Sukh Ram]

without any aid from any country. (In-
terruptions). And that is where the
Government of India's policy should be
appreciated.

श्री राम अवधेश सिंह : अच्छा मानसून
आ गया तो ग्रीन रेवोलूशन है और वह चला
जाए तो ड्राउट हो जाता है ।

SHRI SUKH RAM: Green revolution was
also possible on account of the policies of the
Government of India and the credit goes to
our farmers, scientists and the Government
policies.

AN HON. MEMBER: Monsoon is also
possible because of the policies of the
Government of India and monsoon comes
when the Prime Minister orders it.

SHRI SUKH RAM: A mention was made
about good monsoon this year. Rain-God has
been kind enough throughout the country.

श्री राम अवधेश सिंह : अच्छा मानसून
हो तो आपके यहां ग्रीन रेवोलूशन हो
जाता है और वह मानसून भाग जाता है तो
ग्रीन रेवोलूशन चला जाता है (व्यवधान) ।

SHRI SUKH RAM: If you kindly stop the
running commentary, I would be in a
position to complete my reply.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI H.
HANUMANTHAPPA): Ram Awadhesh
Singhji. you had already your opportunity to
speak. Why do you go on inter-rupting now?

श्री राम अवधेश सिंह : यह जब कह रहे
हैं तो.....

उपसभाध्यक्ष (श्री एच. हनुमन्तप्पा) :
इनको सुन लीजिए ।

श्री सुख राम : अगर इनको कोई बात
पसन्द नहीं तो अपने कान बन्द कर लें यही
रास्ता हो सकता है ।

Sir there are 35 meteorological sub-divi-
sions in the country and this year we have
had excessive rainfall in 12 sub-divisions
so far and in the rest of the 23 sub-divi-
sions we had normal rainfall as against
last year when we had excessive rainfall
in two sub-divisions and normal rainfall
in 7 sub-divisions. Now as my hon.
friend mentioned just now in Rajasthan,
Banner, Jaisalmer and Bikaner we did
not have rain for the last six or seven
years, and it is for the first time that
Rajasthan has had good rains not only
Rajasthan but throughout the country and
it has helped us a checking, controlling
the price rise and I am very hopeful that
we will have a bumper crop this year
and the anxiety of the hon. Members for
supply of foodgrains to the States will be
over. I think it is a question of just two months.
And, Sir then there was a mention of some
difficulty being experienced by the States about
the price rise also. Last year my Ministry made a
request to all the State Governments for the anti-
hoarding drive and I am glad to inform the House
that during the period August to July, there were
78,423 raids conducted by all the State
Governments; 4011 persons were arrested; 3546
persons were prosecuted and essential
commodities worth Rs. 38 crore seized. That also
helped holding the price line.

A question- was raised by an hon. Member
from the Opposition bench that supply was
not made according to requirements to West
Bengal, Kerala and Orissa some 3-4 States. I
made the position clear the other day also
here in this very House that as far as West
Bengal is concerned, last year against the
allocation of 15 lakh tonnes of rice,
lifting was 8.07 lakh tonnes. As far as
wheat is concerned, we allotted 15.12
lakh tonnes and lifting was 7.74 lakh tonnes.

SHRI CHITTA BASU (West Bengal):
May I seek a clarification?

SHRI SUKH RAM: Please have pa-
tience. I will try to satisfy you; but
let me complete. For this year also I
checked up from the Food Corporation

of India. During these six months from January to June, against the allotment of 5.92 lakh tonnes of wheat, only 4.47 lakh tonnes were lifted. As far as rice is concerned, against the allotment of 5.85 lakh tonnes, lifting was only 4.57 lakh tonnes. I checked up from the records and from the Food Corporation of India and they supplied me all the information and on the basis of that information I can say that there was sufficient food-stock available in West Bengal. I can agree that at a certain point of time, the foodgrains available might be less; but in that case the State Government should have intimated my Ministry about this short supply from the warehouse; but I checked up from my Ministry and I am informed that no such complaint was received from the West Bengal Government. Only a few days ago, the Food Minister of West Bengal met me; I explained this position to him and told him that in case they do not get the full supply from the godowns in West Bengal, they should write to me straightaway. I checked up whether the information supplied by the Food Corporation of India was correct or not..

SHRI CHITTA BASU- Not correct.

SHRI SUKH RAM: But it is the duty of the West Bengal Government at least to apprise me of this position. I can agree in certain months there might be short supply. But I cannot agree that throughout the year supply was not available in West Bengal. Similarly, I can tell you....

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THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA): Mr. Minister how much more time you will require?

SHRI SUKH RAM. I will take just ten or fifteen minutes.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA): If the House agrees, we can complete this and then the Minister of Surface Transport can make his statement.

SHRI SUKH RAM: I can tell you that

West Bengal is the highest taker of wheat and rice. As far as Kerala is concerned, allotment to Kerala is the highest among all the States. I checked up. (Interruptions) Please allow me to complete. If you are not satisfied, you can raise it with the permission of the Chair of course. Sir, I checked up the records. The normal allotment to Kerala has been 125,000 tonnes. In certain months particularly, last year and the year before last Kerala got higher allocation also. But these are exceptions and not a general rule. The general rule is, 125 000 tonnes. We are giving it in spite of our problems in spite of the difficult stock position. We are making the highest allocation to Kerala. Then, there was a demand from my hon. friend Members of Parliament, in regard to the Onam festival. I have made an additional allocation of 20 000 tonnes for this purpose.

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY (Tamil Nadu): Particularly Mr. Jacob is thumping the desk.

SHRI SUKH RAM; I think, you should not have any objection to that.

There was also a mention about the transit and storage losses. In 1982-83, the transit and storage loss was 2.37 per cent. In 1986-87 it came down to 1.63 per cent. Therefore, we are trying to reduce it. But there are certain expenditures which cannot be controlled. For instance, in the case of wheat for the year 1986-87, the procurement incidentals come to 34.81 paise per kg. Out of this, we cannot control expenditure to the extent of 26.66 paise i.e. 76 per cent. This relates to interest payments and mandi charges, charged by the State Governments. Then, there are things like purchase tax sales tax etc. We do not have control over them. We have control over about 24 per cent of the expenditure.* As I said, we are trying to reduce it. If you give any concrete suggestions I would definitely consider those suggestions. As you are we are also eager to see that unnecessary expenditure is reduced. We have reduced it. Hon. Member made a mention as to how much we have reduced in relation to the cost.

[Shri Sukh Ram]

There was a mention that the U.P. Government had imposed some restrictions on the movement of foodgrains. When this matter came to my notice I wrote to the U.P. Government. I think, they might have taken the necessary action. As hon. Members know, distribution is the job of the State Governments. If there is any problem if you bring it to my notice, I will write to the State Government concerned. You can also put pressure on them.

Mr. Morarka and some other Members raised the question that the cost should be reduced. At the instance of the Prime Minister, this issue has been referred to the BICP. All the details have been made available to them and we will be glad if the BICP makes any suggestion so that we are in a position to reduce some cost.

Mr. Dipen Ghosh and some others raised a point but I have already told that disciplinary action has been taken about the sub-standard foodgrains supply.

Mr. Morarka made another point that interest has increased from Rs. 262 in 1981-82 to Rs. 651 in 1986-87. This was on account of increase in the interest rate from 12.5 per cent to 14 per cent and the value of closing stocks also went up from Rs. 2232 crores in 1981-82 to Rs. 3941 crores in 1986-87. This is the reason how this interest amount has increased.

Then Mr. Morarka made a point that heavy borrowing should be curtailed and Government should control the average rate. Borrowing will be allowed to the FCI with the approval of the Government and rate of interest also will be fixed by the Government.

Then a mention was made about the purchase of Korean rice. When this news item appeared in the press it was brought to my notice and I personally looked into the matter. The facts of the case are, we contracted for 2 lakh tonnes of rice from North Korea. The quality of sample was examined by our Quality Control Officer.

The quality conformed to our standard and the price also of the Korean rice is comparatively less as compared to other rice for instance the five lakh tonnes which we purchased from Thailand. The price is even less than the Thai rice. And this is a purchase on government to government basis. We have not purchased from any private party. While making purchases of foodgrains from the foreign countries, we are concerned with three things—friendly country, competitive price and quality which should conform to our standard. These are the three considerations. The rice which we purchased was from the Korean Government and not from any private party.

So these misgivings are unfounded.

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY (Karnataka): Just a minute. In this point, may I know if the price of this rice imported from North Korea has been gone into deeply? My information is that the price that we are going to give to North Korea is higher and the difference is about 20 dollars per tonne and we are really paying near about 3 million dollars on that account because of the increase in price.

SHRI SUKH RAM: As I told just now, I personally checked up. The price is cheaper as compared to other rice.

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY : May be cheaper but in respect of the North Korean rice itself the price was raised later, as a result of which we are paying more than three million dollars.

SHRI SUKH RAM: I may tell you why we allowed the MMTC to negotiate this deal. Of course our officers were also involved in the negotiations. I checked up everything. There was a counter-trade also involved in this deal. I do not know the exact amount, but there was iron ore to be purchased by North Korea, and I think we will be saving foreign exchange to the tune of Rs. 20 to 25 crores. So, that was the main consideration for purchasing this rice.

I may tell you one thing more. We need rice very badly and rice is not available in

the foreign markets. And, if it is available, it is available at a very, very, exorbitant price and it may not be possible for us to spare foreign exchange to that extent. It was cheaper, the quality was good and, when compared with other offers, this offer was much less. So, this is an accusation of some people who just want to create some confusion or defame this Government—which has been the policy of some people.

श्री राम अवधेश सिंह : एजेंट को कितने का रोड़ दिया गया —।

श्री सुख राम : आप ज्यादा जानते हैं । आप उसमें शामिल होंगे । आपको मालूम होगा ।

श्री राम अवधेश सिंह : यह तो छपा है इसका जवाब दीजिए, ऐसे मजाक मत करिये "जनसत्ता" अब्बार ; छपा है । मैंने सवाल भी किया है, इसका जवाब दीजिए ।

SHRI SUKH RAM : Sir, I have tried to cover all the points which were raised by the honourable Members... {Interruptions} ... The whole world cannot satisfy the honourable Member.

श्री राम अवधेश सिंह : यह सिम्पल क्वेश्चन है आप भागिए मत... (व्यवधान)... आप यह बताइये कि किसके माध्यम से वहाँ पर राइस की डील की गयी और एम. एम. टी. सी. को क्यों पहली बार दिया गया, यह बताइये ।

श्री सुख राम : यह माध्यम आपको ज्यादा मालूम होगा । आप बात बता दीजिएगा । हमने तो गवर्नमेंट के माध्यम से खरीदा है ... (व्यवधान)

श्री राम अवधेश सिंह : आप सदन में बोल रहे हैं..... (व्यवधान)... मछली बाजार में नहीं बोल रहे हैं ।

श्री सुख राम : हमने उसको कोरिया गवर्नमेंट के माध्यम से खरीदा है । आप जरा मेहरबानी करके कोरिया गवर्नमेंट से मालूम कर लीजिएगा । हमारे लिए वही

माध्यम है । अगर आपके लिए दूसरा माध्यम होगा तो आप जानिये... (व्यवधान)

श्री राम अवधेश सिंह : अगर गलत बोलेंगे तो त्रीच आफ प्रिविलेज होगा । इस-लिए आप यहाँ बोलिए ... (व्यवधान) ...

उपसमाध्यक्ष (श्री एच० हनुमन्तप्पा) : आप बैठिए ।

श्री राम अवधेश सिंह : इन्होंने बहुत गम्भीर बात कही है ।

SHRI SUKH RAM : Sir, the whole world cannot convince him... (Interruptions)...

SHRI RAM AWADHESH SINGH : I challenge him : There was an agent between both the Governments.

SHRI SUKH RAM : Sir, as far as the (Suggestion, coming from an honourable Member, about stitching machines is concerned, we will definitely take that into consideration. It will save some of our expenditure and we will definitely consider it.

Sir, this is a simple, enabling provision and it is brought at the instance of the Finance Ministry itself. The Lok Sabha has already approved it and we have come to this House for its approval. I think I have covered whatever points have been raised by the honourable Members and I hope this honourable House will pass this Bill.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA) : The question is:

"That the Bill further to amend the Food Corporations Act, 1964, as passed by the Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA) : We shall now take up clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill.

Clause 2 was added to the Bill.

Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Title were added to the Bill.

SHRI SUKH'RAM : Sir, I move :

"That the Bill be returned."

SHRI RAM AWADHESH SINGH : He could not satisfy me.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA) : He has already said that he could not satisfy everybody.

The question is :

"That the Bill be returned."

The motion was adopted.

[THE VICE-CHAIRMAN, (SHRI JAGESH DEASI), IN THE CHAIR].

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Accident in River Ganga near Manihari Ghat in Bihar on 6th August, 1988

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJESH PILOT) : Sir, this House has, learnt with deep regret and anguish the tragic boat accident which took place in the river Ganga near *Mani-harighat* of Katihar district in Bihar on 6th August, 1988.

It has been reported by the Government of Bihar that the ill-fated vessel named "JALTARANG" started its journey in the cross ferry service from Menibarighat to Sahebgani on 6th August, 1988. At about 10.45 a.m., after proceeding about 100 yards from Maniharighat the motor launch lost balance and capsized. Reportedly about 300 persons were on board the vessel against the rated capacity of 123 passengers. A number of country boats which were near the site of the accident picked up about 125 persons and brought them to shore. Some of the passengers swam ashore. 22 bodies have been recovered and 66 persons have been registered as missing.

The State Government has further reported that immediately after the occurrence of the accident, the Block Development Officer, Manihari reached the spot - within half an hour. The District Magistrate Katihar also reached the spot at

2 p.m. Efforts were made by the local administration to bring out the vessel with the help of tractors which was not successful. Therefore, immediately the Naval Headquarters and Eastern Naval Command were approached for assistance. 7 Naval Divers from Delhi and 30 jawans with 6 boats from Siliguri arrived for rescue and relief operations on 7th August, 1988. The Chief Minister of Bihar, his Cabinet colleagues and other senior officials of the State Government reached the site on 7th August 1988 and supervised rescue and relief operations. The Chief Minister also announced an ex-gratia payment of Rs. 5000/- to the kith and kin of the dead.

Due to the swift current in the river, the salvage operations could not be undertaken effectively. However, with the assistance of a private steamer and one steamer of CIWTC attempts were made on 7th, 8th and 9th August, 1988 to pull out the submerged vessels on the evening of 10th August, 1988 the rescue vessels succeeded in temporarily lifting the ill-fated ferry launch out of water for about 30 minutes. At this time the local MLA and about 100 persons who had collected there were present and the State Government has reported that no dead bodies were trapped inside the vessel. It has further been reported by the State Government that the ill-fated vessel was built in 1975 and registered in 1976. The State Government has intimated that "the statutory requirement for the purpose of registration, grant of certificate of survey and issuance of certificate of competence of the crew members have been complied with in accordance with the provisions. The competent authority carried out the fitness tests of the vessels and on completion of such tests on 19.2.1988, issued a receipt in form No. 6 as required under Section 7 of the Inland Vessels Act, 1917 which is valid till 18.2.89."

A criminal case under various sections including 304, 304A; 307, 280 and 282 of the Indian Penal Code has been registered against Shri Narain Prasad Singh, the proprietor, the Manager, the Driver and other crews totalling 9. The Manager has been arrested on 7th August, 1988. Other accused persons are absconding. Warrant