

**THE BUDGET (GENERAL), 1985-86,
—GENERAL DISCUSSION—contd.**

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY (Karnataka): Madam Deputy Chairman, yesterday many Members have praised the Budget and the Finance Minister was a recipient of many compliments from his side and also from the Opposition. I for one cannot share this happy note. As I see the Budget does not contain innovations and changes which deserve such a praise and such a projections to call for congratulations by Members. There are various aspects of the Budget which rather disturb me.

Madam Deputy Chairman, I would take note of the various changes made in taxation by the Finance Minister. They have been welcomed by various hon. Members. But really speaking that the Finance Minister has no escape from this cost of Budget. There could be any other type of budget in the circumstances. He has obviously given relief to various tax-payers. They were long due. He has raised the exemption of personal income-tax to Rs. 18,000. People indeed expected that it would be raised to Rs. 25,000 at least. To that extent they were disappointed. He had to abolish the Estate duty because income from the Estate duty was meagre. On the same account, I fail to understand why gift tax has not been abolished. The resources generated by the gift tax are less compared to the Estate duty. It is about Rs 9 crores. And the administrative expenses involved for collecting the gift tax are quite sizeable. It could have been done away with. Why the Finance Minister stopped at this, I do not know. He has also reduced the income slabs which were overdue because they were cumbersome. Therefore, I do not desire to give compliments to the Finance Minister. I only say that these changes were inevitable and the tax system even now requires much more restructuring. It has got to be further rationalised and changed. The procedures have got to be further simplified. The most disturbing aspect of the Budget to me is the enormity of deficit financing that the Finance Minister has envisaged in this Budget.

He has taken shelter under the argument that deficit financing last year was more than the present, and it was absorbed and the rate of inflation was only about 5 per cent. May I tell him that the rate of 5 per cent in inflation is kept low, because the base year taken for the consideration was 1980-81. My friend, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee is here. I think he will tell me that if you look at the entire period of the Sixth Plan and the earlier Plan the cumulative effect of deficit financing is enormous. Anybody would agree that this has resulted in two evils; one tremendous increase in prices all round, and two, a large-scale generation of black money. The World Bank has gone on record to say that the black money in the Indian economy constitutes about 50 per cent of the GNP.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE (Gujarat): Would you excuse me please? I can clarify this position because it is not factually correct to say that what is circulated as the World Bank Study is in fact a study by the World Bank. Actually the position is like this. In the IMF, one of the individuals, staff of IMF, picked up a study of the operation of black money in different countries and in India he has picked up models from certain individuals and in that study he says that according to some Indian experts the size of black money operation in India varies from 2 per cent to 47 per cent of national income. But, unfortunately, instead of explaining it in detail in the proper background, a news item, I think it was in 1983, was circulated that IMF has conducted some studies and from that study they have come to the conclusion that the size of black money operation in India is about 50 per cent of national income.

SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE (West Bengal): He is correct, it was in 1984. He could have also said that they have also mentioned this 2 per cent figures. In fact, the consensus amongst the economists is towards the higher side.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: There is no consensus.

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY : Madam, I concede to what my friend said. But I would like to say that there is enormous increase in black money.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: There is no doubt about it.

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY : The Wanchoo Committee Report is an evidence and with this scale of deficit financing, I am afraid, there will be more generation of black money, and as a result of it there will be tremendous spurt in prices all round in future. We should not be complacent on this account. Another aspect of the Budget which is equally disturbing to me is that for the last five years the revenue budget is showing a deficit. Never in the past was there a revenue deficit. What is the meaning of this? During the term of my hon. friend Shri Pranab Mukherjee deficit started on revenue account. The implication of this is, you have to borrow money; you have to pay interest on borrowed capital.

SHRI R. RAMAKRISHNAN (Tamil Nadu): On a point of order, Sir. With due respect to Mr. Abdul Ghafoor who is sitting here and taking notes, when an important leader of the Opposition is making his Budget speech, neither the Finance Minister nor the Minister of State for Finance is here. This is a matter you may look into, not from the rules angle but from morality angle. I appreciate, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee is here and Mr. Abdul Ghafoor is taking notes and that is why I said, with due respect to him.

SHRI SYED RAHMAT ALI (Andhra Pradesh): Shrimati Ram Dulari Sinha is here.

SHRI R. RAMAKRISHNAN: Put morality requires....

SHRI SURESH KALMADI (Maharashtra): Rajya Sabha always gets step-motherly treatment. You pull him up.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We have sent a word; the Minister will come.

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY : That is why I referred to Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, not to the Finance Minister.

Madam, I was referring to revenue deficit. For the last five years, there has been increase in deficit. It calls for explanation. Nowhere in the world where there is strict budgeting, where norms are observed, is the deficit permitted on revenue account. Why is it going on here? The dangerous implication of it is we have to borrow money to meet the day-to-day needs of administration. That is the meaning of this; that is the implication of this deficit, and we have to pay interest on that. We have to take money from capital account to pay for our day-to-day needs. That is the meaning of revenue deficit. And many hon. Members pay compliments to the Finance Minister for his wonderful Budget.

Madam, there is another disturbing feature of this Budget. Developmental expenditure this year is less than what it was last year by 3 per cent. We are launching Seventh Plan and expected an increase in developmental expenditure and more investment. But what is the picture today? It is reduced, and overall increased investment is only about 6 per cent and in real terms, physical targets will be far less this year than last year. Already, there is a shortfall of physical targets in the Sixth Plan. You have not reached envisaged physical targets. This year, which is the beginning of the Seventh Plan, there has got to be more investment on various programmes. On the contrary, to my disappointment, there is decreasing developmental expenditure. This is how the economy is moving forward, I do not know why still people want to compliment him. With decrease in developmental expenditure, I am certain, growth rate will stagnate. Growth rate last year in industry was 4 per cent. Overall growth rate in the 6th Five-Year Plan is 5.2 per cent. This 5.2 per cent is less than the original growth rate envisaged by the Planning Commission. My friend will bear with me. Last year, growth rate was kept up because of good monsoon and good agriculture. Do I

take it that the Finance Minister expects good harvest this time also? Suppose there is bad monsoon and bad harvest, what will happen? The Plan last year was saved, and so was it saved year before last, because of good monsoon and good agriculture. Even this production of foodgrains has been stagnant compared to last year's figure, and this should be a sufficient warning to the Finance Minister. If there is bad harvest, bad monsoon, next year, all the calculations will be upset. The growth rate which has been envisaged this year is not, to my mind, adequate to take the country forward. Already, there has been a tremendous increase in capital-output ratio. My friend the Finance Minister will bear with me. This is another disturbing feature. The capital-output ratio is very high. It is increasing every year. This means, for every unit of capital we are investing, we are getting less and less return. I think, the capital-output ratio is 1:5 now. It used to be 1:4 sometime back. It has reached 1:5 now. This is a disturbing phenomenon. This shows financial indiscipline, fiscal indiscipline. This shows lack of performance, lack of efficiency. The country expects our economy to be just and efficient at this crucial hour of our development. It has got to be just. It has got to be efficient. I do not find this in the budget. In course of time, if this kind of laxity is allowed, capital-output ratio goes on increasing, production will suffer. Productivity will suffer. Growth rate will suffer. This is a warning signal.

There is so much of emphasis in the Budget, by the Finance Minister, on modernisation. I am glad about it. India has missed a big opportunity of modernising itself for long. The Finance Minister has woken up now. The people compliment him. For what? For waking up after a lapse over a period of years. Modernisation programme should have been taken up long back. It was given up. There was no, bold, courageous, approach to modernise our economy, upgrade our economy, to bring about technological innovation, absorption, improve-

ment. Technological progress in this country, Madam—it will be disturbing to many of my friends if I say this—the rate of growth in technology has been hovering between 0.7 and one per cent. Dismal. In many parts of the world, when technology has been taken seriously, the rate of growth in technology has been around 3 per cent. At least, more than 2.5 per cent. We are lagging behind. We are less than one per cent. And we call it a good progress. We say that modernisation programme has been taken up on a war footing. We overlook that there is a lapse, drag, neglect, of technology in the past, for the last thirty years. The Finance Minister is now trying to tell us that we are going in a big way to modernise our economy. We are having upgradation of technology, absorption of new technology. We are trying to bring about technological innovation. This is what he says. But when I am on technology, may I also say, there have been great gaps in various sectors. There are gaps between the primary, secondary and the tertiary sector. Even within each sector there are gaps. Take, for example, the primary sector, agriculture. There has been improvement of technology only in the case of rice and wheat. Same kind of technological growth is not visible in other crops. There is lag. Our effort has failed. No attempt has been made to improve agricultural production in every way. Between the primary and the manufacturing sectors also there is a gap. There is less technology in the agricultural sector, primary sector, than the manufacturing sector. There is less technology in the manufacturing sector compared to tertiary sector or service sector. There is no balance, there is no equilibrium or even growth. There is no overall technological development in this country. How can you bring about social change and economic transformation if there is a gap, there is a lag, there is a drag in economic technological innovation and technological development. Take the case of Japan. Japan has been able to achieve a remarkable economic growth of 10 per cent for a long period. It has sustained that growth because it had 5 per cent techno-

[Shri M. S. Gurupadaswamy]

logical growth. It has been sustained till today. Japan imported the best of technology from all over the world, adopted it, absorbed it, innovated and improved it, upgraded it and sold the technology in turn to other countries. We call ourselves as the third biggest country where the technological and scientific power is available. It is true. Large number of technicians are there, scientists are there, exports are there. There is a reservoir of know how in this country. But then why are we not moving forward? Why the rate of growth has suffered, stagnated? There is no really sufficient scientific or technical temper created in this country. There is no sufficient adequate technological environment. Technicians and scientists are there, but there is no technological bent of mind. There is no research of scientific and technical know-how on a comprehensive basis or on a large scale. That is why we are witnessing a retarded growth in our economy. Economy is some what in progress. It is snail's progress. That is the fate of our economy. My friend Pranab was giving compliments to Mr. V. P. Singh. He has to give because he occupied the seat just a few months back. Now he has given the seat to his successor and so he has to compliment him. After all, if he cannot compliment him, he cannot get compliments in turn for his previous budgets.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Not the compliment part.

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY: There is another disturbing feature in the budget. There is no mention in the budget about how to deal with poverty and unemployment, how to bring about social justice, how to bring about egalitarian transformation. I would have complimented the Finance Minister if there had been a real departure, a break from the past. There is no break from the past. There is only a continuation. I agree with Pranab that this budget is continuation of the previous budgets, nothing new about it. It is only a canon-

flage, that is what I can call it. A facade has been created. But in reality where do we stand? This budget does not give hopes to millions and millions of the unemployed and to those who are below the poverty line. There is no scheme excepting repetition of a few old schemes which are there already. There are no new schemes or no comprehensive strategy to involve millions and millions of our poor people in income generating activities which is necessary. If the whole country has got to be lifted from the morasse of poverty and unemployment, there has got to be creation of income generating activities everywhere in which all human beings have got to be involved. The people are to be made co-participants in the development. To use a Marxist phraseology they have got to be fellow travellers in development. The Budget does not give schemes for that purpose. The transfer of assets from the rich to the poor is not there. I would have appreciated the Finance Minister if there had been a scheme by which the transfer of assets would have been effected from the rich to the poor. Where is that? As a result of this Budget, the affluent, the rich will become more rich, there will be disparities in income, poor people will become poorer. I would have really appreciated if the Finance Minister had brought out in the new Budget of 1985, after the General Elections, and when we are inaugurating the Seventh Plan, a comprehensive wage-income-price policy. In the absence of this policy, how do you correct the distortions, the aberrations in the economy? The economy has suffered, it is suffering because of the derivations and distortions and disturbances created by misapplication, misdirection and mismanagement of funds.

Another disturbing aspect of the economy is that there is no assurance from the Minister about productivity growth. Productivity of capital, productivity of labour, productivity of management, productivity of land—is low, in fact is one of the lowest in the world today. Where is productivity growth? Do you want to

achieve a reasonable economic growth by maintaining the present productivity level? It is impossible. There is always a relation between poverty, employment and productivity. The Budget does not indicate this. Where is the link? But we call this Budget a dynamic budget. Where is it dynamic? It is miserably stagnant. I say this Budget will condemn our economy to stagnation. The stagnation will be in progress this year also. If God forbid, monsoon fails, if the food crops fail, there will be chaos everywhere. Already in the Eastern part of India in Bihar, in Eastern U.P., Assam and Bengal there is a functioning anarchy. There is no efficiency at all in the economy. The functioning anarchy at the level of administration also is spreading. And with this kind of administration, do you think you will achieve higher rate of growth?

Madam, we have achieved freedom. I am coming to the end of my speech. We have achieved national independence. We have sacrificed all our lives and properties for the sake of this. But this harvest of freedom should not be destroyed by the desert of despair. Despair is spreading everywhere. I am reminded of a story in Mahabharata. Perhaps you must have known it. Dronacharya was the Guru of Pandavas and Kauravas. One day he told Arjuna, his disciple, "you would be the master of archery. Nobody would surpass you in the art of archery". Arjuna felt very happy. Then one day when Dronacharya and all his disciples went to a forest, to their surprise they saw Ekalavya. He was shooting; he was aiming. They saw his perfection; they saw his courage. And Arjuna came to his Guru "Sir, you said I will be the master of the world so far as archery is concerned. But here I am seeing a sixteen-year old boy who, I think, is excelling me; I can't compete with him. Your prophecy has not come true. What shall I do?" Do you know what happened? The story is known. Ekalavya's thumb was cut! Dronacharya asked him to cut his thumb to save Arjuna. In the same

way, may I say to the Finance Minister, who is quite new to the job—I expect much from him in spite of my criticism—let him not cut the thumb of the poor to save the rich? That is what he is doing in this Budget.

Thank you, Madam.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Shri Darbara Singh. You have five minutes before we adjourn for lunch. Then, after five you will continue.

श्री दारबारा सिंह (पंजाब) : मैडम, यह जो बजट फाइनेंस मिनिस्टर ने पेश किया है इसको मैं फिगर्स में इन्वाल्स नहीं करना चाहता, मैं इसकी बैकग्राउन्ड, इसका फलसफा बताना चाहता हूँ। यहाँ बहुत कुछ कहा गया। हमने पिछले सारे सालों में, इंडिपेन्डेन्स, के बाद, जब से यह प्लानिंग शुरू की तो उसमें हमने इंसेंटिव तौर पर हर तरह की तरक्की का जरिया शामिल किया और इस और हमने हर जगह, हर सूबे में और हर लिहाज से आगे बढ़ने की कोशिश की। अब जब कि हमने यह फैलाव कर लिया है तो लाजमिन है कि हम इसकी इंटेंसिटी जो है उसको देखभाल करें। इस लिहाज से यह बजट जो है यहाँ पेश किया गया है। मैं यह अर्ज करना चाहता हूँ कि इंफ्लेक्चर जब वनेगा तो उसको आगे ले जाने के लिये, अपनी पूरी तरक्की का जरिया हासिल करने के लिये इस बजट में कोशिश की गई है और जो पार्टिसिपेशन आफ कन्सर्ड सेक्शंस हैं, उनको इसमें अपनी हिस्सेदारी अदा करने के लिये कहा गया है। यहाँ पर कहा गया कि टी० बी० पर इतनी छूट कर दी गई है। यह इसलिये है कि आज देश में और कोई बात होती है तो उसका पता सारे देश को लग जाय। इसलिये इसका फैलाव करना निहायत जरूरी है। रेडियो, टी० बी० और दूसरी चीजों को जो ये रियायतें दी गई हैं यह इसलिये हैं ताकि देश की हालत का पता चल सके जो केन्द्र में हो रहा है और दूसरी जगहों पर हो रहा है। बहुत सी ऐसी बातें

[श्री दरबारा सिंह]

है जो मैं फिगर्स के लिहाज से करना नहीं चाहता। लेकिन यह पोलिटिकल बात जरूर है। हम पर देश ने एतबार किया है, इस सरकार पर एतबार किया है और इसीलिए 402 मੈम्बर यहां लोकसभा में भेज दिये हैं। इससे हमारी जिम्मेदारी ज्यादा बढ़ गई है। जब हमारी जिम्मेदारी ज्यादा बढ़ी है तो हमें सारी चीजें उसी जिम्मेदारी के साथ देखनी है। इसमें शुरू में ही फाइनेंस मिनिस्टर ने एक बात कही कि आज श्रीमती इंदिरा गांधी हम में नहीं है लेकिन उनकी तमाम की हुई बातें हमारे सामने है। एक कल्ल महात्मा गांधी का हुआ और वह इसलिए हुआ कि कुछ लोग नहीं चाहते थे कि देश की आजादी, देश की उन्नति इतनी तेजी से हो। उनकी कुर्बानी हुई, इंडि-पैन्डेंस बनने के लिये उनको पनिश किया गया। इसी तरह से श्रीमती इंदिरा गांधी को पनिश किया गया चूंकि उन्होंने देश को आगे बढ़ाने की कोशिश की। इस लिहाज से भी हम देखें तो जो आज हमें मेजोरिटी हासिल हुई है, जितनी मेजोरिटी ज्यादा हासिल हुई, उतनी ही ज्यादा हमारी जिम्मेदारी बढ़ी है। मैं कहना चाहता हूं कि यह फलसफा हमें समझना चाहिए कि

हमने नार्थ से साउथ और
1.00 P.M. वेस्ट से ईस्ट हमें सारी चीजें देखनी है। उस लिहाज से हम कितनी आगे तरक्की कर सकते हैं उसके जरिये बूढ़े हैं और उसको दूढ़ने के लिए हमारी इम्प्लायमेंट जेनरेटिंग इकोनोमी है। मैं एक उदाहरण देना चाहता हूं, उस मशीन के दो पहिये हैं जिसको आप आगे ले जाना चाहते हैं वह एग्रीकल्चर और इंडस्ट्री। एग्रीकल्चर के बारे में जो कहा गया है उसके बारे में मैं अर्ज करना चाहता हूँ। यह भी कहा गया है कि डेफिसिट और बढ़ेगा। डेफिसिट के साथ यह भी सोचना चाहिये जितने जराये इस्तेमाल किये गये हैं इससे बजट में जो डेफिसिट है उसको कम करने की कोशिश की गई है कि कम से कम इतना अवश्य जनरेट हो सके। उसके लिए बहुत चीजें की गई हैं। पहला यह है कि वेस्टफुल एक्सपेंडीचर जहां भी पाएंगे उसको हटाएंगे ताकि

वह आगे बढ़ सके। नान प्लान में जितना हम आगे फैलाव करते हैं स्टेटस में भी और यहां भी उस पर रोक की जा सकती है। नान-प्लान एक्सपेंडीचर काटा जा सकता है। इससे आगे तरक्की करने की जरूरत है जैसे कि कहा गया कि प्रोजेक्ट्स के लिए जिनके लिए जारी है पैसा अभी से लगा दिया जाए। उसको हम आगे बढ़ाने की कोशिश कर रहे हैं।

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You may continue afterwards.

The Home Minister will make a statement at 5-00 p.m. today.

The House adjourns till 2-30 for lunch.

The House then adjourned for lunch at two minutes past one of the clock.

The House reassembled after lunch at thirty-two minutes past two of the clock, the Vice-Chairman. [Dr (Shrimati) Sarojini Mahishi) in the Chair]

Resolution Re. Review of the working of public distribution system.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (Dr. (Shrimati) Sarojini Mahishi): Now, we shall take up Private Members' Business, Mr. Pawan Kumar Bansal.

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL (Punjab): Madam, Vice-Chairman, I beg to move the following Resolution:—

"Having regard to the fact that the public distribution system in the country has not succeeded in ensuring adequate availability of essential commodities at reasonable prices to consumers, particularly the vulnerable sections of the society, and that the various consumer protection measures so far taken by Government have not achieved the desired results, this House recommends that the working of the said system should immediately be reviewed and a comprehensive legislation

introduced in Parliament so as to protect consumers from exploitation by unscrupulous traders who are in collusion with the staff operating the system and also to ensure that every citizen of the country gets at least two square meals a day."

Madam, in our struggle for our freedom, we discovered a unique feature of our human strength. Under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, a mass of humanity suffering from disease, illiteracy and hunger converted itself into a massive non-violent force that withered the might of all powerful British Raj and gave birth to a free and sovereign Indian nation. To make Independence meaningful to these teeming millions, one of the most pressing priorities of Independent India was to banish poverty and hunger from the land. During the last three decades of planning though the various progressive measures undertaken by us have made a perceptible change in the socio-economic conditions of the people, it is unfortunate that even today the silently suffering consumer finds himself helpless against the avarice of the wily and manipulative trader and the manufacturer.

As each spell of shortage of essential commodities during the period of drought in the country would shoot up the prices beyond the reach of the common man, the public distribution system was evolved to ensure that the people, particularly the weaker sections of the society get essential commodities of daily use without hindrance and at reasonable prices. Besides maintaining an equitable supply of the main necessities of life, the public distribution system also aimed to discipline the trader whose instinctive tendency was to hoard goods and profiteer during the time of shortages. However, its expansion both volume-wise and value-wise over the years notwithstanding, the system, in my opinion, has failed to generate confidence amongst the consumers and the benefit has not really percolated to the people for whom it was essentially meant. Today even the so-called fair-price shops hoodwink the consumers. The goods supplied to them by the Govern-

ment are often substituted by sub-standard ones and adulteration, under-weight and undermeasurement are rampant. As the consumer does not get his hard earned money's worth but wholly substandard goods at the fair-price shop, he turns to the open market, with the result that it is the private trader who rules the roost.

The goods meant for the fair-price shops are often diverted for private sale, and the poor ration-card holder keeps making rounds of the depots, each time returning empty-handed. On the date fixed for distribution, he is informed that the supplies have not been received and the same is the reply on subsequent visits. Finally the date is fixed towards the end of the month and if the harassed consumer fails to turn up, the quota lapses, adding to the kitty of the retail seller's free sale stock for much bigger profits to him.

Madam, it is a pity to see poor housewives with old tin-cans in their hands rushing in the morning for a place in the long queue of kerosene-seekers and returning after long hours of anxious wait with the cans still empty but despondency writ large on their faces. Only the first lucky few in the queue may get the supply and in the circumstances little matters how short it is. For others it is the passing off of yet another day in vain hope of getting their due supply of the commodity. That is the regular scenario at any fair price shop and there is none to help the poor consumer who may even have to forgo a day's labour and wages and the children their classes, in the quest for essential commodities for the family.

Then there is the total indifference for quality. As I said a little earlier, the goods supplied by the Government for distribution through the public distribution system are substituted by grossly sub-standard ones. Sugar is moistened to make it weight more and even kerosene gets its share of water. The choice before the harried poor consumer is either to accept it or forego his entitlement. In both cases he is the sufferer and it is the

[Shri Pawan Kumar Bansal]

dealer who stands to gain. If at all anyone dares to make a complaint to the Food and Supplies Office, it falls on deaf ears as their staff are partners in this systematic cheating of the consumers. For any extra charging, the depot holder explains that he has to pay the 'fee' for lifting even the allotted stocks.

For the system to gain credibility, it is not the opening of more and more far-price shops alone that will suffice but what is essential is to discipline the depot holders and the Food and Supplies staff. The depot holder, in order to misappropriate subsidised goods for private use, manages to get bogus ration cards in any number while the poorest of the poor living in unauthorised thatched huts or even in the open face innumerable difficulties and harassment even in getting the ration card made.

Amongst the steps required to be taken to improve and streamline the functioning of the public distribution system is better coordination between supplies, transportation storage and distribution of essential commodities so that these are uniformly supplied everywhere and their availability guaranteed. An efficient monitoring of the prevalent prices and of the working of the system could go a long way in coordinating procurement and distribution activities and help in taking immediate remedial measures where necessary. For this a well-knit organisational structure needs to be evolved.

In a welfare State the Government owes a social obligation to the producers to ensure them remunerative prices for their produce and further to the consumer to ensure eliminate the middleman's exploits and meet his genuine needs by supplying him the requisite quantity of essential commodities at reasonable prices. With this in view the public distribution system must be expanded to cover many more items of daily use and not be confined just to the even items to which it is being restricted presently.

To check successfully inflation, hoarding, profiteering, blackmarketing and such other anti-social practices we must now seriously think of taking up

production of essential commodities other than agricultural produce in the public sector. Here I am reminded of Mahatma Gandhi. He said, "I will give you a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man you may have seen and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore to him the control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to swaraj for the hungry and the spiritually starving millions? Then you will find your doubts and yourself melting away." If we remember this rule, the obvious conclusion is that the public sector should give greater priority to production of essential commodities. What value or significance does our industrial advancement or the revolutionary electronic chip have for the poor starving man who thanks his stars if he can get some left-overs of the rich or the nouveau rich feasting in big restaurants of five-star hotels? If our numbers could be our asset in bringing home to the British the realization that they must leave to us our own governance and the management of our affairs I am sure they do possess the hands which can work and work successfully for the prosperity of the country provided they are assured of at least two square meals a day.

Social justice is the cornerstone of our Constitution which is not just a law formulated by a majority, a transient majority, in a legislature, but a manifestation, an expression, of deliberative wisdom of the nation expressed in the form of paramount law of the land. The Directive Principles of State policy, particularly those enshrined in Articles 38 and 39 seek to secure a social order for promotion or welfare of the people, the right to adequate means of livelihood and distribution of material resources of the community to best subserve the common good. Madam, we cannot fail the founding fathers and all those who fought for the country's freedom.

coming back to the public distribution system, applying the Gandhian talisman again, one imperative change called for is that the supply of subsidised grains should be confined only to the poor. This is one of the considerations which really prompted me to move this Resolution. By doing so, we would substantially economise on expenditure on food subsidies which I learn is about Rs. 800 crores. The savings so made will definitely go to meet the losses incurred by the public distribution system as also check various malpractices. A well-to-do consumer today seeks to get a ration card only as a pre-requisite of getting a cooking gas connection. Thereafter, he forgets about it particularly because of the unfruitful and harassing visits to the fair price shops. At the other end the depot holder keeps on drawing the full regular stock and diverts the unclaimed part to the open market.

Today we find that whatever be the product or the service, it is the consumer who is at the receiving end in a sellers market. He has no choice but to pay excessive price for poor quality of food. Even the ISI and Agmarkings do not guarantee the high quality or purity of the goods. In the absence of due vigilance by the Government, the manufacturer and trader dole out anything and everything to the consumer.

The packaged goods are required to carry the date of manufacture, but in the absence of the knowledge about the expiry date of the article, the trader manages to sell even old articles. As such the law should in fact prescribe the printing of the date by which the article should be consumed.

Equally meaningless is the mentioning of the sale price on the cartons because the words "maximum retail price" and "exclusive of all taxes" leave enough scope for the shop-keeper to vary the prices.

The mentioning of the weight of the article on a package is also very

deceptive as what is mentioned is the weight when the commodity was packed and not what the consumer can be sure of at the time of purchase. In such a situation how can one ascertain whether he is getting proper due for his money or not.

Indiscriminate use of prohibited coal-tar dyes in food products is also a great health hazard. In the absence of proper dissemination of information about the effects of various dyes, people hardly know what to buy and what not to buy or whether to buy or to reject a particular commodity offered to them.

The problem of adulteration has acquired alarming proportions in our country and perhaps there is substance in it when it is said that today even poison is not available in a pure form. There is a lack of facilities for scientific tests and field investigation. The local authorities entrusted with the job are wholly ill equipped for it. Realising the proportion of this malady and the desirability to check the quality and standard of goods at all points, between the point of manufacture and the last retail selling point, the Law Commission has aptly recommended enactment of a law incorporating specific safeguards in respect of the quality of the goods produced and distributed. A hindrance to the checking of adulteration may be that this falls within the domain of the Health Department and there is no proper co-ordination between the Health and the Food Departments. Sometimes the job is entrusted wholly to unqualified persons and even to the Sanitation Department personnel.

There is a plethora of consumer protection legislation already in the country. The Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, the Essential Commodities Act, the Essential Commodities (Special Provisions) Act, the Prevention of Black Marketing & Maintenance of Essential Commodities Act,

[Shri Pawan Kumar Bansal]

Weights and Measures Act, the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, etc. and a host of other control orders and regulations are there which were all enacted or promulgated with a very salutary purpose. But their implementation has proved to be tardy because of lack of dedicated, committed and responsive teams of officials charged with the responsibility of enforcing the law laid down. Drastic action is called for not only against the erring traders, but also against the officials sabotaging the welfare measures of the Government. If the official is disciplined and the politician is asked to mind his business and not to interfere, I am sure, the trader would get the cue and discipline himself immediately.

Various in service courses for the staff do not really serve to motivate the officials who lack initial commitment. Introduction of consumer protection as a subject at the +2 level may help in organising consumer resistance amongst the youngsters and also make available dedicated potential staff to supervise the distribution of consumer goods.

Often we hear of the shady activities of the multinational drug companies eating into the vitals of our life. Drugs which have been discarded in the developed countries are injected into this country and on some occasions we may even be treated as guineapigs by them. Whatever be the laws to check such activities, the result of any raid or prosecution is not effective enough to deter them from playing havoc with the innocent lives. The tale of harrowing experiences of the meek Indian consumer is endless. I do not have for my subject today the sophisticated luxury goods— with regard to which the position is equally bad, but those which are needed by the common man of modest means, for example, a bicycle or an ordinary electric fan, the purchase of which also pose a problem to the common man. If a part of the purchased item is

found to be defective, the guarantee is not honoured and to the poor consumer's charging, the advertisement is discovered to be deceptive and misleading. Taking of misleading advertisements reminds me of the menace of the mutual benefit schemes which suddenly spurt up sometimes here and there in our country and the advertisements about these schemes promise to offer goods worth many times the money deposited by them after the lapse of a few months. The same is the case with advertisements promising magic cures. At present, there is no obligation on the part of the manufacturer of consumer goods to correlate the retail sale price to the cost of production while the farmers in the country do not get their due. The consumers have no choice in respect of essential items. Even the petrol and diesel dealers cheat the consumers by managing to manipulate the metres. While the meter reading is apparently seen by the consumer to be correct, he actually gets a short measure.

Madam, it is in this environment that I urge that the entire system of public distribution as also the running of open market in consumer goods be reviewed and steps be taken to replace the present-day high-cost economy by a low-cost competitive economy. And if the controlled cloth now sought to be sold through fair price shops does not ensure to clad the poorest of the poor, we should, true to our tenet of 'Bahu jan hitai bahu jan Sukhai', come heavily on extravagant and ostentatious living and direct the mills to produce only three varieties of cloth: the heavily subsidised for the poor, the heavily taxed for the rich, and in between the two, one to be sold at normal margin for the customer of average means.

Madam, if you permit me to slightly deviate from the subject, I must also congratulate the Finance Minister for levying an excise duty on marble blocks which is used by the rich to stud their bathrooms with. A natural corollary of the review of the system

will be the need to enact a comprehensive consumer protection law with a statutory consumer protection board or authority at different levels under an independent department of Consumer Affairs and with the jurisdiction to deal with all grievances and complaints of consumers. Representatives of recognised and reputed consumer associations should be co-opted on all such bodies, which should also be vested with the right to cancel the licence of any erring trader. Such a law should also contain provision to encourage genuine cooperative consumer stores and besides providing for the checking of various unfair practices referred to by me earlier, such a law should further recognize the rights of consumers to be informed about the commodity and to know the nutritional value of the packaged or canned foodstuff and, above all, the right to seek redressal of his grievances.

Madam, to conclude, I would submit that through this Resolution I have, with these words, humbly tried to focus Government's attention to a problem that needs immediate care. The light which other hon. Members speaking after me would throw on the issue will provide food for thought on the subject, and I am confident that, true to its image, the present Government under the dynamic leadership of Shri Rajiv Gandhi would now re-address itself to this pressing problem and come out with a policy which will meet the expectations of us expected by each one of us in the country.

With these words, Madam, I move the Resolution.

The question was proposed.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN DR. (SHRI-MATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI: There are no amendments. Now, these desirable will speak. Thereafter the hon. Minister will also speak, and the mover will get another chance to reply thereafter. Now I shall call Shri R. Ramakrishnan to speak

SHRI R. RAMAKRISHNAN (Tamil Nadu): Madam Vice-Chairperson, while welcoming the Resolution moved by my colleague, Mr Pawan Kumar Bansal, I would like to state that his Resolution is really not limited to the question of fair price shops or consumers but it is so far-reaching in nature that I think we can spend a full day, if not more, discussing this.

Broadly speaking, Madam, his Resolution I can divide into three parts: First one deals with the subject of fair price shops and the public distribution system in India and its inefficient working for which he has rightly called for a view. The second one deals with consumer protection measures which are so woefully and sadly lacking in this vast country of ours. The third and the final part of his Resolution deals with,

I think, the problem which 3.00 P.M. engages each and everyone of us in this country, high or low, viz. to ensure—to use his own words in the Resolution—"that every citizen of the country gets at least two square meals a day." I think that itself can take a whole year to discuss or we have been discussing it for the last 35 or 50 years or more and will continue to discuss it for another century before the various proclamations and the schemes of the politicians can be translated into reality, viz., giving out citizens one square meal a day, let alone two square meals a day.

I will deal with these parts one by one. Coming to the fair price shops and the public distribution system, I am very happy that the hon. Minister in charge of Civil Supplies, my good friend Rao Birendra Singh is here. He is perhaps going to intervene at a later stage and make some points. Now that he has taken over his Ministry, I am sure he will give it a new fillip and impetus which is so much required and which has been called for in this Resolution. According to the report of the Civil Supplies

[Shri R. Ramakrishnan]

Ministry itself and the claim made by the earlier Civil Supplies Minister Shri Bhagwat Jha Azad, the total number of fair price shops in the country, as on October 1983—these are the figures which I have as the latest figures—is 2.93 lakh shops. Out of which 90,196 shops are there in the cooperative sector. The target of the Government is to see that this is increased by 3.5 lakhs shops in this plan period 3.5 lakhs shops during this Plan period. It is indeed a tall target and I wonder whether the Government will be able to ensure that this is done. But fortunately according to the claims made by the Ministry, the growth rate during the last 3 years as far as fair price shops are concerned is 15 per cent. In terms of value, it has increased by 37 per cent during the last 3 years. As against a turn-over of 1800 crores which our fair price shops did all over the country, the turn-over is expected to reach 3600 crores at the end of this year. If so, it is really an impressive record. But, sometimes, what do you see in reality? As you know, India is a land of long queues. Whether you go to a cinema or to a cricket match or to a fair price shop, all that you see are long winding queues and people standing there. Not all those who are standing are genuine persons. Many of them are anti-social and other elements who stand there to make a fast buck. This is a complex matter. In spite of its laudable objectives, in the fair price system we find that there are a number of bogus card holders in the country equal perhaps to the number of genuine card holders. This is a difficult problem which the Governments all over are facing. How are they to go about it and how can they take steps to prosecute these bogus card holders? It is really a million dollar question. Sir, I know of a story about Madhya Pradesh. A dead man was drawing his ration for four years after his death. It is only an example of what is happening in this country. Still I think that the public distribution system and the objectives with

which it is there to help the common man to get the items like rice, wheat, sugar, kerosene oil, pulses, cooking oil and various other essential commodities are really welcome.

As far as Tamil Nadu is concerned, under the dynamic leadership of our Chief Minister, Puratchi Thalaivar MGR, you will be happy to know that we are doing very well as far as the public distribution system is concerned. When Rao Birendra Singh was the Food Minister, I had on many occasions gone to him for more rice for Tamil Nadu. He must be aware that at the time the amount of rice that we were distributing through the public distribution system was 80,000 tonnes of rice per month. This is one of the reasons that when we asked for more rice, Rao Birendra Singh at that time said that we were not contributing to the public distribution system. It was very difficult and unless we contributed to the Central Pool, he could not give us more. Now as you know, we are also contributing to the Central Pool. In this connection, I would like to quote from the Address of our Governor, Shri Sundar Lal Khurana. In his Address delivered recently to the two Houses of the Legislature in Tamil Nadu, he said: It is on page 6, para 9. I quote:

"Government have once again enhanced the ceiling for the quantity of rice to be supplied through public distribution system to 20 Kg. of rice per family and are today discharging the responsibility of maintaining a massive distribution network through more than 20,000 fair-price shops at the rate of approximately one per 600 cards distributing around 80,000 tonnes of rice per month. Operation is costing the Exchequer around Rs. 90,000 by way of subsidy and other operational costs."

The earlier Minister of Civil Supplies convened a meeting of all the State Ministers here at Delhi and Tamil Nadu came in for commendation for the manner in which fair-price shops are running and how the State Government is also able to ensure adequate supplies at these shops. Therefore, I am very happy to say and bring it to the knowledge of this House that the public distribution system is doing very well in Tamil Nadu under our Shri MGR regime.

Coming to the point in other States, in Kerala as well as in West Bengal and some other States, the State Governments have also complained very often to the Centre that they are not able to keep the public distribution system fully supplied with all the various things which they ought to give. We do not know whether the fault lies with the state or the Centre but this is a matter which causes concern, because the shops are there and when the people go there, they find that they are not able to get what they want and they get all the more irritated which creates more complications.

Coming to the target of the Central Government, it is the policy that there should at least be one fair-price shop for every 2000 persons. This I think only remains a distant dream as far as India is concerned.

Then about the spread, most shops in most of the States are only concentrated in the urban areas and not in the rural areas where they are really required. It is the rural poor and rural people who require a fair-price shop as much, if not more than the urban people. Therefore, there should be a spread of these fair-price shops in the North-Eastern and tribal belts particularly. Fair-price shops are required in such places because the rural people are fleeced by the landlords and others who are out for their blood, and I think the Government should consider this aspect when they call for a meeting of various State Government Ministers.

Coming to the question of consumer Protection, this is a very important point which Mr. Bansal has brought today. You know, in the textbooks on economics at the graduate and post-graduate levels, it is said that a consumer is the king; a consumer is sovereign.

AN HON. MEMBER: Those days are gone.

SHRI R. RAMAKRISHNAN: Those days are gone. The consumer does not enjoy that privileged position today. He is, in fact, a helpless victim of not merely rise in prices but also of black-marketing, hoarding, profiteering and adulteration. So, he is the victim of so many things and the morass from which he cannot really come out. Unfortunately for India, despite our growth and advancement in so many fields, there is no consumer movement worth the name. In the United States, in the sixties and seventies, we had Ralph Nader who spearheaded a movement that brought consumerism its name and its importance which it is having today in almost all the countries. But unfortunately for India, though there have been sporadic groups here and there, in order to organise the consumers, there has not been much headway. But the Government of India in its wisdom has constituted a Consumer Advisory Council and recently Central Council was set up by the Central Government. I wonder what are the objectives of this Council and whether the Council after formation has met and whether they are meeting regularly and advising the Government on the various measures which have to be taken in the interest of the consumer.

Mr. Bansal while speaking was mentioning about various Acts which are there and these Acts. I am sorry to say, are only on record, like the Prevention of Black-marketing Act, Essential Commodities Act and various other Acts are there.

I think, there are about 25 Acts under which consumers can get protec-

[Shri R. Ramakrishnan]

tion. But none of these Acts are ever used. There is even one Act called, Drugs and Medical Remedies Act. There are so many acts like this. But neither the Government takes any interest in enforcing them, nor the consumers' organisations themselves can go to the authorities or the administration and get them to enforce anything under these Acts. In fact, I would like to know from the hon. Minister, the hon. Minister of Civil Supplies, how many black-marketeers, how many hoarders and adulterators have been fined, jailed or convicted in our country? I will be very glad if the hon. Minister gives a reply on this when he intervenes. I would like to have this information State-wise. I would like to know whether any of these persons have been fined, beyond a token of Rs. 500 or Rs. 1,000 or even Rs. 10,000 which they will gladly pay? None of these persons have been given any sort of punishment. In fact, Madam, it was mentioned in the dark days of Emergency that some of these black-marketeers, hoarders and smugglers should be paraded openly in the streets, sitting on a donkey or something like that, so that the entire nation, the people can know about the dark deeds of these persons. But though those days are gone now, I would like to know whether any steps will be taken to punish these anti-social elements and take action against them. The consumers are not organised. There are certain safeguards. The Indian Standards Institution is there. Agmark and so many other things are there. There are also legislations under which the price of every article should be displayed on the package. It is also laid down that pharmaceuticals and other basic drugs should have the maximum retail price at which they will be sold, displayed on the package. Even this, Madam, Vice-Chairman, is not followed. Today, in India, the basic drugs, life-saving drugs, like anti-biotics, and other drugs, should be sold at a particular price. It is laid down, for example,

that B-Complex should be sold at a particular price. But it is sold at a much higher price. But no action is taken. The drug lobby is so entrenched that nobody can do anything against them. Right from the Minister down to the peon in the Secretariat, the lobbying operates and nothing can be done against them. At least in the case of these drugs, you should take action, strong action, because it is linked with the lives of millions of people.

I would also like the hon. Minister to tell me what action is proposed by the Government to control under-weighment in the fair price shops. There is no proper supervision. There should be some method by which these under-weighments and under measurements can be checked. There should be surprise checks of these fair price shops. If you ask for ten kg. of rice, they will give 9.5 kg. and they will cheat the consumer. There is so much rush and so much of pell-mell at these shops that nobody can say or do anything. The Government is the only authority to whom the people can look up to see that these sort of malpractices are stopped. I would like the hon. Minister to see that some sort of monitoring machinery is set up, some squads are appointed to conduct surprise checks—the consumers should also be taken into confidence in this regard to see that the consumer is not cheated.

Madam, this is a subject on which I can go on talking. But as far as the third part of Mr. Bansal's important Resolution is concerned, he wants to see that every citizen in this country gets two square meals a day. Madam, as I said, this is not something which one can dispute. This is really the objective of all political parties in India to see that poverty is eradicated. But mere talk and mere slogan is not going to solve the problem. We had the slogan of Garibi Hatao. I do not know whether 'Garibi' can ever

be "hataoed" in this country. My friend, Mr. Kalyanasundram, is here. He will have his own solution. My other friends are also here. They will also have their own solutions, for 'Garibi Hatao'. But the main point is, these slogans should be translated into action. This can only be done if the Government, both at the Centre and the States, come forward with massive employment-oriented and asset-generating type of schemes. The Integrated Rural Development Programme and the National Rural Employment Programme are no doubt laudable schemes. But apart from these schemes, unless we have food-for-work programme and other programmes where the problem of poverty can be tackled on a day to day basis and the economic condition of the down-trodden can be ameliorated, I do not think, we can ever solve this problem. I also share the concern of the hon. Member that we should do something to see that every citizen in India gets not only two spare meals a day, but three meals a day. But let us start first thing first. Let us try to do what is possible as it is, under the existing circumstances, and side by side take up these sort of programmes I am sure, we will have the good wishes and cooperation of all parties and cutting across all party responsible will be the ideal with which we will want to help and take our country forward to the 21st century.

As he has said under the leadership of our young and youthful Prime Minister Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, his able colleagues, and also good persons like my Chief Minister, Puratchi Thalaivar Dr. M. G. Ramachandran, I think we can take forward India to the 21st century and to see that India's flag is kept flying high in the comity of nations, and it is no longer called the third world or the developing country and that is given a status equal to the other developed countries of the world.

Jai Hind.

SHRI KAMALENDU BHATTACHARJEE (Assam): Madam, Vice-Chair-

man, I stand to support the Resolution moved by my learned colleague, Shri Pawan Kumar Bansal. It is enshrined in our Constitution itself that we have accepted socialism in India and we stand committed to it. Hence, logically and necessarily our Government has a social obligation to supply essential commodities and that too at a reasonable price to its citizens, especially to those who belong to the weak and vulnerable sections. If we try to assess the importance of public distribution system against this particular background, we should not fail to understand or rather fail to appreciate that the public distribution system has a very very vital role to play in our country. It serves the twin objective i.e. (1) supplying essential commodities to weaker and vulnerable sections of the society and (2) supplying those necessities of life at a very reasonable price. This public distribution system we should bear in mind, does not aim at eliminating private trading in essential commodities. It rather aims at serving as a complementary supply source. Its main aim is to discipline the open market. Public distribution system as has been pointed out by my learned colleague, Mr. Ramakrishnan, is a very vast, network, spread out throughout the length and breadth of our country. Its outlets are set up in almost all the nooks and corners of the country.

On the 1st of October, 1983, the number of fair price shops in India was over 2,97,000 and I presume, by now it should be more than 3 lakhs. Over two-thirds of these shops are located in rural areas. These are increasingly being set up in underserved or unserved areas, including those far-flung areas which are predominantly inherited by the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe people.

The public distribution system to be meaningfully effective requires proper coordination between production, procurement, transportation, storage and distribution of the selected commodities.

(Shri Kamalendu Bhattacharjee)

ties. Now, so far as production side is concerned, here I have a suggestion to make. It is that the Government should establish a sort of national rural land bank. This national rural land bank will take over all the uneconomic, fragmented, sub-divided holdings and introduce a sort of agriculture, and the farmers will be all Government servants. By this step only Government can have a very effective check over production. If the production of all these essential commodities, especially rice and wheat, is entirely left to the people, Government cannot have any effective check over its production.

So far as procurement is concerned we should bear in mind that the farmers or the producers should always get remunerative and reasonable price. I would suggest that the Government should go in for widening the commodity coverage so far as fair price shops are concerned.

Now I come to transportation. I hail from a far flung State—Assam—and my neighbouring State is Mizoram. We almost suffer from chronic food shortage. Why? Because here transportation is a very big problem. Now Government's consistent endeavour should be to minimise the timelag between allocation of essential commodities, their lifting by the States and ultimate distribution of these essential commodities through fair price shops. In this connection I would like to mention that so far as India is concerned, Railways play a major role in transportation, but rakes are not always available. You will be astonished to know that for two months no rake of sugar has gone to Cachar district and Parimal district of Assam. It was only through the personal help, when I took it up with the Minister of State for Railways, Shri Madhavrao Scindia, that he managed to send salt rakes to my district and district of Karimganj. Now this is a very major problem—the problem of transportation.

While we are suggesting a comprehensive overhaul of the existing public distribution system we should bear in mind that the existing system of transportation of the essential commodities has got to be revised and it must be done on a top priority basis. Actually on paper it is done on a top priority basis but if you go in for physical verification, you will find that it is not done on a top priority basis. There are discrepancies, there are malpractices. These are very much there. These have got to be looked into. What I suggest is that not only there should be zonal and State-wise buffer stocks, so far as sensitive areas are concerned—I mean sensitive from the point of view of communication—like Mizoram, Cachar and Parimal districts where one heavy monsoon will cut off these districts from the rest of the world, but in such States even district-wise buffer stocks also have to be created.

Now while on the subject of fair price shops, I want to say that the problem of ghost ration cards is an all-India problem. India is really a very populous country and it is said that every year so far as population is concerned, India produces one Australia. Now if we go by the statistics of ration cards, we will find that we are not 74 crores but more than 100 crores. So many ghost or bogus ration cards are there in the market. There are certain reasons behind this. The profit margin for the fair price shop dealer is what I call a compulsive theft-making profit margin. It induces the fair price shop dealer to become a thief. It should be made a reasonable profit margin and after creating a precondition for honesty for the fair price shop dealers, Government should take very stringent measures against them.

Now what I want to highlight is that there have been so many laws. My learned colleagues have already made a mention about them. There

have been so many laws regarding these essential commodities and regarding checking of black marketing in these essential commodities and Government may go in for making a hundred and one more laws, but to my mind all these laws will become meaningless unless and until there is public involvement, unless and until there is a sort of consumer resistance. There must be a consumer movement. It cannot be a Government sponsored consumer movement. It should come from within. In this context I would like to mention one fact. In Sweden it so happened. In Sweden it so happened that a match-box manufacturer used to put only 49 match-sticks in a box in place of 50 and he continued the practice for a pretty long time. But one very conscious consumer started counting the sticks in the match-boxes by way of random sampling. He was counting one, two, three and he went on counting hundreds and check up at various places. He finally came to find out that the manufacturer was actually putting in only 49 in place of 50. Then he started a campaign against him and ultimately made the producer of those match-boxes pay through his expensive nose in that he had to make some sort of concession for the coming years. Here, that sort of a thing has got to be done. I do not understand how, if the people in the area are vigilant enough, the fairprice shop dealer can smuggle out the things and pass them to the open market to the disadvantage of the very poor consumers.

We all know that "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." If we have to check the dishonesty of the fraudulent traders, we have got to become very very vigilant and, at the same time, have highly stringent Government laws. These two being coupled together, we can make the system very effective and we can fulfil our social obligations as a member of the socialist group of countries.

With these words, Madam, I conclude.

1 RS—8.

श्री कल्पनाय राय (उत्तर प्रदेश) :
उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, हमारे मित्र बंशल जी ने जो सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली के संबंध में रेजोल्यूशन लाया है और जो बातें उन्होंने कही हैं, मैं उनकी बातों से सहमत हूँ।

हमारे मंत्री महोदय, जो कृषि मंत्री रहे हैं और जिन्होंने हिन्दुस्तान के किसानों की जिदगी को सुखी और अच्छा बनाने के लिए बहुत अच्छे कदम उठाए हैं, आज भाग्य से फूड एंड सिविल सप्लाईज मिनिस्टर हैं। देश में इस बात की चर्चा है कि पेट्रोल इकानमी, ब्लैक मनी जेनरेशन हो रही है। मैं यह कह सकता हूँ कि जो सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली हमारे देश के अन्दर काम कर रही है, उसके माध्यम से जो जीवन की आवश्यक वस्तुएँ हैं, उनका वितरण न उपभोक्ता को ठीक से मिल रहा है और न तो जो पैदा करने वाले लोग हैं, उनको भी जो सामान पैदा करते हैं, उनको उचित मूल्य मिल रहा है। जो बीच के लोग हैं, वही बाधक है पूरी व्यवस्था को नष्ट करने के लिए।

मैं आपसे निवेदन करना चाहता हूँ कि जब हम किसी समस्या के ऊपर विचार करें, तो इस बात का ध्यान में रखें कि जो समाज का सबसे कमजोर वर्ग का व्यक्ति है, या जो सबसे गरीबी संख्या में गरीबी की रेखा के नीचे रहने वाले लोग हैं, उनको क्या जीवन की आवश्यक वस्तुएँ मिल रही हैं या नहीं मिल रही हैं। यह हिन्दुस्तान बुनियादी रूप से गांवों का देश है और हिन्दुस्तान में सात लाख गांव हैं और गांव में करोड़ों-करोड़ लोग हैं जिनको सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली के माध्यम से हमें जीवन की आवश्यक वस्तुओं को देना है।

आदरणीय सिविल सप्लाईज मिनिस्टर साहब, आप भी एक गांव के रहने वाले हैं और आपने हिन्दुस्तान के किसानों के हित में पांच वर्ष में जितने बड़े कदम

[श्री कल्पनाथ राय]

उठाए, उसका मैं सार्वजनिक रूप से देश के किसानों की तरफ से आपका अभिनन्दन करना चाहता हूँ। 1980 से 1985 के बीच में आपने किमानों को रेग्युलेटिव प्राइस दिलाने की दिशा में भारी प्रयास किया है, आपने 12 मार्च, 1980 को श्रीमती गांधी की अध्यक्षता में एग्रीकल्चरल प्राइसेज और इंडस्ट्रियल प्राइसेज के बीच पैरिटी होनी चाहिए, इस सिद्धांत को आपने, श्रीमती इन्दिरा गांधी के नेतृत्व में ही इस सिद्धांत को आपने स्वीकार कराया। और जो नया देश के प्रधान मंत्री ने बागडोर संभालने के बाद यह हिन्दुस्तान की करोड़ों जनता के बीच एलान किया कि अब हिन्दुस्तान में एग्रीकल्चरल कास्ट एंड प्राइस कमीशन की स्थापना की हम घोषणा करते हैं। यानी पहले किसान के खेत में पैदा होने वाली चीजों की कास्ट तय होगी, इसके बाद प्राइस तय होगी। किसानों के हित में चाहे कोई मार्जिनल किसान है, स्माल फार्मर या छोटा किसान है और चाहे वह बड़ा किसान है, यह सब के हित में एक बड़ा भारी पालिसी डिजिजन है। लेकिन आप जरा इस बात पर गौर करें कि हिन्दुस्तान में जो जीवन की आवश्यक वस्तुएं हैं, यानी आदमी को खाने के लिए अनाज चाहिए तो रोटी, चावल आदि ये सब चीजे खाने की बुनियादी और जरूरी चीजे हैं और वह उसको मिलनी चाहिए। उसको मोटा कपड़ा तन ढकने के लिए चाहे वह औरत हो या मर्द, उसको मिलना चाहिए। उसको दवा मिलनी चाहिए जो कि जीवन रक्षक और प्राण रक्षक है। इसलिए, रोटी, कपड़ा, मकान, दवा, शिक्षा, ये चार-पांच चीजे जीवन के लिए आवश्यक हैं और सरकार जीवन की आवश्यक वस्तुओं को जनता को बुलभ कराने के लिए फेयर प्राइस शाप्स के माध्यम से पूरे देश के अन्दर व्यवस्था करेगी। मैं उत्तर प्रदेश को जानता हूँ, जहां सरकार ने 12 आवश्यक वस्तुओं को जिसमें गांवों के किसानों को, गांवों के लोगों को वे आवश्यक वस्तुएं उपलब्ध

होंगी, एक सरकारी विज्रप्ति के माध्यम से एलान किया और गेहूं, चीनी, चावल, सस्ता मोटा कपड़ा, दियासलाई, साबुन, टायर, कोयला, इस तरह की 12 चीजें लोगों को उपलब्ध होंगी, फेयर प्राइस शाप्स के माध्यम से, ऐसा सरकार ने निर्णय किया। यह भी कहा कि पूरे देश के अन्दर एक जिले के सेंटर से वे चीजें ब्लॉक में जायेंगी और वह सामान ब्लॉक से फिर पंचायत दफ्तर पर जाएगा वहां एक स्टॉक रजिस्टर होगा, एक वितरण रजिस्टर होगा और एक निकासी रजिस्टर होगा और वह स्टॉक वितरित होगा। वह स्टॉक सभी प्रधानों के उम पर दस्तखत होंगे, तब फिर कोटा जिले में पंचायत या ब्लॉक को दिया जाएगा। मैं आपसे कहना चाहता हूँ कि यह पूरी सरकार की नीयत और सरकारी एलान के बावजूद जीवन की आवश्यक वस्तुएं बिल्कुल जनता को प्राप्त नहीं हैं और जो सरकार ने सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली के माध्यम से देश की करोड़ों जनता को जीवन की आवश्यक वस्तुएं देने का संकल्प लिया है और संसद के अन्दर हमारे मंत्री महोदय लोग जो आ कर यह बतलाते हैं कि इतने लाख इतनी सस्ते गल्ले की दुकानें हैं और इतनी आवश्यक वस्तुएं हम दे रहे हैं, यह बिल्कुल गलत है। मारी जीवन की आवश्यक वस्तुएं बिल्कुल ब्लैक मार्किट में विकती हैं। उसमें नौकरशाह भी शामिल है और उसमें जो सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली को चलाने वाली कोऑपरेटिव सोसायटीज हैं, सहकारिता विभाग है या सिविल सप्लाइज मिनिस्ट्री है या नौकरशाह हैं या ब्लॉक स्तर के कर्मचारी हैं या जिला स्तर के कर्मचारी हैं, वे सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली को बिल्कुल सफल नहीं होने दे रहे हैं और पूरे देश के अन्दर आम गरीब जनता को जीवन की आवश्यक वस्तुएं नहीं मिल रही हैं। आदरणीय मंत्री महोदय, आप इस बात पर बहुत ध्यान से विचार करें और मैं आपसे कहना चाहूंगा कि आप पूरे हिन्दुस्तान के फूड एंड सिविल सप्लाइज मिनिस्ट्री

को कांफ्रेंस दिल्ली में तुरन्त बुलाएं और उसमें सारे आर्ग्युमेंट्स के ऊपर विचार करें। एक तरफ किसानों से सस्ते दाम पर आप सामान खरीदेंगे और सब से ज्यादा अगर शोषण किसी का हो रहा है तो स्माल फार्मर्स एंड मार्जिनल फार्मर्स का हो रहा है। आज उसकी फसल मार्केट में आने वाली है। छोटे किसान को अपनी बेटी की शादी करनी है, साहूकार का कर्जा चुकाना है, उसे बैल खरीदना है, उसे सिचाई का टैंक देना है। मगर जैसे ही उसकी फसल आती है, चार एकड़, पांच एकड़, तीन एकड़, छह एकड़ खेत जोतने वाला किसान है, उसके सिर पर सरपंच बैठा हुआ है, सूदखोर बैठा हुआ है, सरकारी आफिसर खड़े हैं, को-ऑपरेटिव का कर्जा लिया हुआ है, पहले वह चुकाओ। अब बेटी की शादी करनी है, बैल खरीदना है, कोई छोटा मकान बनाने के लिए सीमेंट खरीदना है, अपना गल्ला बेचकर उसे सार्वजनिक जीवन की आवश्यक वस्तुओं को खरीदना होता है। लेकिन जो स्माल फार्मर्स हैं, सरकार की प्राइस डिमांड नहीं है, सरकार की तरफ से उचित मूल्य जो किसानों को मिलना चाहिए, रेगुलरेटिव प्राइस मिलनी चाहिए, वह प्राइस भी उसको नहीं मिलती है और इस प्रकार सबसे बड़ी लूट स्माल फार्मर्स और मार्जिनल फार्मर्स की होती है। बड़े किसान तो अपने खेतों में पैदा होने वाली चीजों का स्टॉक कर सकते हैं और जब मंहगाई आएगी तो उसे बेच सकते हैं। लेकिन मुसोबत है छोटे किसानों की और मार्जिनल किसानों की, जिन्हें अपने खेत की पैदावार तुरन्त बेच देनी होती है। तो सरकार की ओर से कोई रेगुलरेटिव प्राइस नहीं है, जिससे उनको उचित प्राइस नहीं मिल पाती है। मनमाने ढंग से गांव के साहूकार से, बिचौलिए उनकी पैदावार को खरीदना चाहते हैं।

मैं आपको एक उदाहरण देना चाहता हूँ कि चार रुपए किलो आलू आज बंबई में मिल रहा है और एक रुपए में चार किलो आलू आज फर्रुखाबाद में कोई

पूछ नहीं रहा है और बंगाल के किसान अपने आलू खेत में खोदने की हिम्मत नहीं कर रहे हैं क्योंकि वहां कोई खरीदने वाला नहीं है। आलू की सब्जी फाइव स्टार होटलों में लोग खा रहे हैं, घरों में इसका उपयोग हो रहा है। कौन सी हमारी राष्ट्रीय नीति है? एक आलू, मैं समझता हूँ कि यह ऐसी वस्तु है, जिसका उपयोग देश के बहुसंख्यक लोग करते हैं। लेकिन बंबई की मार्केट में आलू चार रुपए किलो बिक रहा है और फर्रुखाबाद, मैनपुरी पश्चिमी उत्तर प्रदेश में एक रुपए में चार किलो आलू कोई खरीदने वाला नहीं है और पूर्वी उत्तर प्रदेश के किसान और बंगाल के किसान अपने खेतों से आलू इसलिए नहीं खोद रहे हैं क्योंकि उसे कोई खरीदने वाला नहीं है। यह प्रॉडक्शन और कंज्यूमर्स की बात है। कंज्यूम करने वाले लोग पूरे देश के पैमाने पर हैं, आलू खरीदना चाहते हैं सब्जी के लिए। लेकिन किसानों को उनकी पैदावार के लिए दी जाने वाली प्राइस सरकार की तरफ से ठीक निर्धारित नहीं है। आज हिन्दुस्तान जैसे देश में 1200 करोड़ रुपये का तेल हम विदेशों से ले रहे हैं। बेलेंस ऑफ पेमेंट्स की बात कही जाती है, इसमें डेफिसिट यह है, फारेन-एक्सचेंज का बड़ा संकट है और हिन्दुस्तान के किसानों को रेगुलरेटिव प्राइस दी जाए, तो हिन्दुस्तान के किसान एक माल में खाद्यान्नों के मामले में आत्म-निर्भरता प्राप्त कर सकते हैं। आपको याद होगा कि 1980 में जब जनता पार्टी की सरकार का दौर खत्म हो रहा था, तो देश में 10 रुपए किलो भी चीनी नहीं मिल रही थी। लेकिन जब राव साहब कृषि मंत्री बने और देश की बागडोर श्रीमती इंदिरा गांधी के हाथ में आई थी, तो उन्होंने 22 रुपए क्विंटल गन्ने के दाम निर्धारित किए और 1982-83 आते-आते चीनी का संकट खत्म हो गया और देश के किसानों ने 82 लाख टन, 84 लाख टन गन्ना पैदा किया। मैं आपसे कहना चाहता हूँ कि ... (समय की घंटी) ... आज क्या हो

[श्री कल्पनाथ राय]

रहा है ? आज हालात यह है कि कंज्यूर को बंबई में महंगे दाम पर चार रुपये किलो आलू मिल रहा है और प्रोड्यूसर फर्रुखाबाद का एक रुपए में चार किलो आलू बेच रहा है...

उपसभाध्यक्ष (डा०) (श्रीमती सरोजिनी महिषी) : माननीय सदस्य अब समाप्त करें।

श्री कल्पनाथ राय : यह आपकी सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली की जो नीति है, उसका कच्चा चिट्ठा है। आप मंत्री जी बहुत ही किसानों के हितैषी हैं और कृषि मंत्री से फूड एंड सिविल सप्लाय मिनिस्टर बने हैं।

सरकार ने निर्णय किया है कि पहले हम कास्ट तय करेंगे, फिर प्राइस तय करेंगे। एग्रीकल्चरल कास्ट एंड प्राइस कमीशन में आप किसानों के प्रतिनिधियों को रखिए और हिन्दुस्तान के तीन करोड़ लोग जो शहरों में रहते हैं और समझते कि सारा हिन्दुस्तान दिल्ली और बम्बई है उनके प्रतिनिधियों की भी उस में रखिए। आज एग्रीकल्चरल प्राइस कमीशन में ऐसे लोग जो पूछते हैं खरीफ और रबी में क्या फर्क है, खरीफ लड़की है या रबी लड़का है। इतना जान नहीं है। ऐसे लोग एग्रीकल्चरल प्राइस कमीशन में बने हुए हैं। मैं देश के नये प्रधान मंत्री को, जिनके दिल में किसानों की वृहद्दी है, जिनके दिल में हिन्दुस्तान के किसानों को राहत देने की बात है, जिन्होंने सार्वजनिक रूप से घोषणा की है, चुनाव घोषणापत्र में भी कहा है कि हम हिन्दुस्तान में समाजवाद की स्थापना करना चाहते हैं, हम हिन्दुस्तान में किसानों को रेमूनरेटिव प्राइस देना चाहते हैं, हम हिन्दुस्तान के किसानों के लिए एग्रीकल्चरल कास्ट एंड प्राइस कमीशन की घोषणा करते हैं—मैं देश के करोड़ों किसानों की तरफ से नये प्रधान मंत्री को मुबारकबाद देना चाहता हूँ। उन्होंने इतना बड़ा पोलिसी डिजीजन लिया है कि आज एग्रीकल्चरल प्राइस कमीशन का नाम बदलकर एग्रीकल्चरल कास्ट एंड प्राइस कमीशन हो गया। इसके लिए हम

श्री राव वीरेन्द्र सिंह को भी मुबारकवाद देना चाहते हैं हिन्दुस्तान के करोड़ों किसानों की तरफ से—जिन्होंने इस सरकार के माध्यम से एक पोलिसी डिजीजन लिया है कि हिन्दुस्तान के किसानों की खेती में पैदा होने वाली चीजों की पहले कास्ट तय होगी, इस के बाद प्राइस तय होगी। यह बड़ा भारी कदम किसानों के हित में है।

हिन्दुस्तान बुनियादी रूप से गांवों का देश है, कृषि प्रधान देश है। जब आप महात्मा गांधी को सामने रख कर हिन्दुस्तान के लिए नीति बनायेंगे तो नीति सही होगी। जवाहरलाल नेहरू महात्मा गांधी से मिलने गये और पूछा, कि बापू हमें देश के अन्दर कैसे काम करना है। तो महात्मा गांधी ने राष्ट्रायक जवाहरलाल जी से कहा, जवाहर, जब तुम इस देश के लिए कानून बनाओ तो हिन्दुस्तान में जो पुअरेस्ट आदमी है उस की तस्वीर सामने रखो, उसकी तस्वीर सामने रखोगे तो इस देश के अन्दर कानून बनाने में, पोलिसी बनाने में सफल रहोगे। तो मैं आपसे कहना चाहता हूँ कि उस जब आप हिन्दुस्तान की प्रोक्वोरमेंट पोलिसी, सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली का कानून बनाते हैं तो हिन्दुस्तान के पुअरेस्ट आफ दि पुअर, वीकेस्ट आफ दि वीक इनमान को सामने रखकर कानून बनाइये तब इन्दिरा गांधी के सपनों का शक्तिशाली हिन्दुस्तान बना सकते हैं। इन्दिरा गांधी के सपनों का शक्तिशाली हिन्दुस्तान बना सकते हैं। इन्दिरा जी ने कहा—

I want to make India a developed, powerful, strong and socialist India. But for making India strong and powerful, united national efforts are needed. Either dynamise the economy of the country or get yourself dynamised.

देश की सरकार 2 अप्रैल से सातवीं योजना में कदम रखने जा रही है। फूड, प्रोडक्टिविटी और एम्प्लायमेंट यही आपकी सातवीं पंचवर्षीय योजना का मुख्य लक्ष्य है। फूड, प्रोडक्टिविटी और वर्क —ये

तीनों हिन्दुस्तान में सात लाख गांवों के माध्यम से सम्भव है, दिल्ली से नहीं होगा ।

उपसभाध्यक्ष [डा० (श्रीमती) सरोजिनी महिषी] : अब आप समाप्त करिये ।

श्री कल्पनाश राय : हिन्दुस्तान के सात लाख गांवों में रहने वाले करोड़ों इन्सान जब फूड प्रोडक्शन के काम में लगेंगे, माजिनल फार्मेर लगेंगे, स्माल फार्मेर लगेंगे, बड़े फार्मेर लगेंगे, तब फूड का प्रोडक्शन बढ़ेगा । 1983-84 में 13 परसेंट फूड का प्रोडक्शन बढ़ा जबकि इस साल 84-85 में एक परसेंट फूड का प्रोडक्शन बढ़ा है । इस का कारण यह है कि हिन्दुस्तान के किसान हिन्दुस्तान के स्माल फार्मेर, मझोले किसान खेती के धन्ये को छोड़ना चाहते हैं । खेती को जब तक आप इंटडस्ट्री के रूप में स्वीकार नहीं करेंगे जब तक हिन्दुस्तान का कमजोर वर्ग जो उसमें निहित है उसको उस में नहीं रखेंगे तब तक कोई भी प्रोड्योर-मेंट पोलिसी, सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली सफल नहीं होगी । मैं आपसे कहना चाहता हूं कि आप किसी भी गांव में चलिए, मेरठ में कहीं भी सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली के माध्यम से काम नहीं हो रहा है । यह श्रीमती इन्दिरा गांधी जी के समय की बात है कि उन्होंने कहा था कि फेयर प्राइस शाप्स के माध्यम से हम जिन 12 आवश्यक वस्तुओं की लोगों को आवश्यकता है उन को लोगों को सुलभ करायेंगे और ब्लाक अदालतों के माध्यम से जिला वितरण प्रणाली का काम करायेंगे लेकिन वह आज कहीं नहीं हो रहा है ।

उपसभाध्यक्ष [डा० (श्रीमती) सरोजिनी महिषी] : माननीय सदस्य अब जल्दी से समाप्त करें ।

श्री कल्पनाश राय : मैं समाप्त कर रहा हूं । लेकिन यह एक ऐसी चीज है कि जिसमें एक तरफ तो बंसल जी ने जो

प्रस्ताव किया है उस में कहा गया है कि हम अपनी पालिसी को रिव्यू करेंगे और उस के बाद एक नयी कंप्रिहेसिव पालिसी बनायेंगे, तो कोई कंप्रिहेसिव पालिसी नहीं बन सकती जब तक कि हम पुरानी पालिसी के डिटेल् में नहीं जायेंगे, जब तक कि हम पुरानी पालिसीज को रिव्यू नहीं करेंगे । (व्यवधान) आप का दृष्टिकोण तो दूसरा है । आप विरोधी दल के लोगों से मेरी प्रार्थना है कि विकासशील देश के लोग हम हैं । आप तो बड़े खुश हो रहे हैं, लेकिन आपने ने तो कुछ किया ही नहीं । आप को तो तीन साल के लिए देश भिन्न था तो आप ने उस में ही देश को अन्धकार युग में प्रवेश करा दिया । *आप गांधी, किसान और जनता का नाम लेकर सत्ता में आये थे*

उपसभाध्यक्ष [डा० (श्रीमती) सरोजिनी महिषी] : इस समय इस सवाल जवाब की तो कोई जरूरत नहीं है । आप समाप्त करिये ।

श्री कल्पनाश राय : आप किसानों का, महात्मा गांधी का और जनता का नाम लेकर सत्ता में आये थे लेकिन आप के जमाने में एग्रीकल्चर प्रोडक्शन लगातार घटा है । आपके जमाने में केन का प्रोडक्शन लगातार घटा है । आप ने सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली को तो तिलांजलि दे दी । आप ने समाजवाद का नाम लेना भी स्वीकार नहीं किया । समाजवादी व्यवस्था के माध्यम से जब तक आप उसूलन समाजवादी नीति में विश्वास नहीं करते आप सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली को स्वीकार नहीं कर सकते । मैं कहना चाहता हूं कि जब आप नीति बनाते हैं तो आप को बहुत सी बातों पर ध्यान देना होगा । पं० जवाहर लाल नेहरू ने 1936 में अखिल भारतीय कांग्रेस अध्वेशन की हैसियत से कहा था कि :

"I am a socialist. I believe in the Principle of socialism. The problems of India, viz. poverty and unemploy-

[श्री कल्पनाथ राय]

ment, cannot be solved without socialism, and when I talk of socialism, I mean scientific socialism."

जवाहर लाल नेहरू ने 1936 में ये बात कही थी। उसके बाद 1953 में आवाडी कांग्रेस में हमने समाजवादी स्ट्रक्चर आफ सोसायटी के सिद्धांत को स्वीकार किया। उसके बाद 1962 में हम ने सह-कारिता समाजवाद की आधारशिला है, कामराज जी की अध्यक्षता में इस समाजवाद के सिद्धांत को स्वीकार किया और 1969 में कांग्रेस का विभाजन इसी आधार पर हुआ कि कांग्रेस के मुट्ठी भर लोग चाहते थे कि बैंकों का राष्ट्रीयकरण न हो। श्रीमती गांधी के नेतृत्व में फैसला हुआ कि बैंकों का राष्ट्रीयकरण होगा। बैंकों का रास्ता करोड़ों गरीबों के लिये खुलेगा और इसी कारण से उस समय कांग्रेस का बंटवारा हुआ। राजे रजवाड़ों को हिन्दुस्तान में समाप्त कर, के श्रीमती इंदिरा गांधी ने समाजवादी आधार की रचना की और बीस सूत्री कार्यक्रम समाजवाद की दिशा में एक बड़ा कदम है और आज वह हमारे बीच नहीं हैं। उनके न रहने के बाद आजादी की लड़ाई के जो स्वतन्त्रता सेनानी थे उन्होंने सोचा कि हिन्दुस्तान कैसा बनेगा। जो कराची कांग्रेस में प्रस्ताव पास किया गया था 1947 के पहले, और उस समय के स्वतन्त्रता सेनानियों ने जो सपना देखा था और उसके बाद अपनी कांस्टीट्यूट असेम्बली में जो नीतियां हमने स्वीकार की थीं और उनके साथ राष्ट्र-नायक जवाहर लाल नेहरू के नेतृत्व में 1947 का जो बजट हमने यहां पास किया था उसके मुकाबले आज हिन्दुस्तान का बजट 42 हजार करोड़ का है तो हमने यह फैसला किया है कि प्लांट इकोनामी भी रहेगी और प्लानिंग भी रहेगी। आज दुनिया में दो व्यवस्थायें चल रही हैं। एक अमरीकन प्रणाली है जो पूंजी पर आधारित है जो कहती है कि केवल डेमोक्रेसी रहेगी। वे प्लानिंग और सोशलिज्म को स्वीकार नहीं करते और दूसरी रूस की प्रणाली है कि जो प्लानिंग को भी स्वीकार करती है और सोशलिज्म को भी स्वीकार करती है। वे डेमोक्रेसी को नहीं मानते। लेकिन हिन्दुस्तान

एक ऐसा देश है कि जहां हमारे राष्ट्र नायकों ने फैसला किया कि हमारे यहां प्लानिंग के साथ डेमोक्रेसी भी रहेगी। यहां प्राइवेट सेक्टर भी रहेगा और पब्लिक सेक्टर भी रहेगा और मिक्स्ड एकोनामी के आधार पर हम एक नयी दुनिया का निर्माण करेंगे। पूंजीवाद की गुदगुदी गंदी से हट कर हम एक नयी दुनिया का निर्माण करेंगे। तो इस पोलिटिकल फैसले को मद्दे नजर रखते हुए हिन्दुस्तान के मीन्स आफ प्रोडक्शन और प्रोडक्शन के डिस्ट्रिब्यूशन पर हमें विचार करना है। जब तक इन बुनियादी बातों को हम नहीं मानते तब तक आप सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली को लागू नहीं कर सकते। श्रीमती इंदिरा गांधी की यह दिली तड़पन थी, दिली इच्छा थी कि हिन्दुस्तान के गरीबों के लिये कुछ किया जाये और उन्होंने 1970 में वित्त मंत्री की हैसियत से अपने बजट में कहा था कि

economic stability, political stability and

social change can be brought only by

socialism. इसलिये मैं आप से निवेदन करना

चाहता हूं कि सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली का दूसरा नाम है समाजवाद। यह दीर्घकालीन कार्यक्रम है। हमने समाजवाद की नीति को स्वीकार किया है और इस नीति का एक अंग है सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली। इसलिये मैं आपसे निवेदन करना चाहता हूं कि 12 आइटम्स की जगह आदरणीय राव बीरेंद्र सिंह जी आप 5 या 6 आइटम्स रखिये। आप कैबिनेट में किसानों की बातों को हमेशा उठाते रहे हैं। आप से मुझे कहना है कि हिन्दुस्तान के सात लाख गांवों के लोगों के लिये प्रोडक्शन और प्रोडक्शन का डिस्ट्रिब्यूशन दोनों ठीक ढंग से कैसे हो, मिडिल मैन की लूट से प्रोडक्शन वालों को कैसे बचाया जाये यह बुनियादी प्रश्न है। आज कंज्यूमर भी लूटा जा रहा है और प्रोड्यूसर भी लूटा जा रहा है। बीच में ब्लैकमार्केट जैन-रेंट करने वाले जो मुट्ठीभर लोग हैं वे इस देश की जनता को छाती पर बैठे हुये हैं। इसलिये ऐसी कम्परीहेसिव पालिसी आप बनाइये जिससे कि कंज्यूमर को भी फायदा हो और प्रोड्यूसर को भी फायदा

हो और बीच वाले को .5 परसेंट या 10 परसेंट जो इधर-उधर करते हैं उसको मिले । एक रुपये में चार किलो निर्माणकर्ता से हम आलू खरीदे और चार रुपये किलो बम्बई में अगर जाकर बेचे तो हम गरीब हो जायेंगे दो महीने के अन्दर । मैं इसलिये आखिर मैं आप से कहना चाहता हूँ कि आप 12 आवश्यक वस्तुओं में से 5 आवश्यक ऐसी वस्तुओं को लें, जैसे राइस है, व्हीट है, आडिबल आयल, मिट्टी का तेल और चाय है ।

कुछ माननीय सदस्य : दाल भी ।

श्री कल्पनाथ राय : देश के गांव में दाल कहा मिलती है । मैं आपसे कहना चाहता हूँ कि आप केवल चावल, गेहूँ, आडिबल आयल, मोटा कपड़ा और चीनी, इन पांच-छ. चीजों को आप मान लीजिए, इन्हें आप जीवन की आवश्यक वस्तुएँ मानिये और जो लोग पैदा करते हैं उनसे सरकार डायरेक्ट खरीदे । इन चीजों के लिये सरकार मिडिल मैन को एलाउ नहीं करे । लिपिस्टिक, पाउडर जैसी चीजों को इसमें शामिल मत करिये । जो जीवन की आवश्यक वस्तुएँ हैं, मोटा कपड़ा है, चावल है, गेहूँ है, चीनी है या मिट्टी का तेल है, आडिबल आयल है इन वस्तुओं को आप होलसेल ट्रेड में शामिल कीजिए । जब तक होलसेल ट्रेड का सिद्धान्त स्वीकार नहीं करते, डायरेक्ट प्रोड्यूसर से नहीं खरीदते तब तक आप बुनियादी बातों को स्वीकार नहीं करते, तब तक आप हिन्दुस्तान के खेतों में काम करने वाले किसानों के हितों की रक्षा नहीं कर सकेंगे, करोड़ों कंज्यूमर्स के हितों की रक्षा नहीं कर सकेंगे और बीच का मिडल मैन इस मुल्क को लूटता रहेगा, पैरलल इकोनोमी का निर्माण करेंगे और उनको इस मुल्क की छाती पर बैठे देखेंगे । इसलिये मेरा निवेदन है कि समाजवाद का सिद्धांत लागू करने के लिये एक साइंटिफिक एक वैज्ञानिक पालिसी एडाप्ट करिये, एक वैज्ञानिक सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली को अपनाइये । सारे विरोधी दल के नेताओं को भी इस नीति को अपनाते समय बुलाइये, सारे देश के फूड मिनिस्टर्स की कान्फ्रेंस बुला कर जिसमें अन्ना डी एम के, सी पी एम, तेलुगु देशम के फूड मिनिस्टर्स को भी बुलाइये । एक नीति अपनाइये ताकि कंज्यूमर्स की रक्षा हो सके । धन्यवाद ।

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. SHRI-MATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI: Now, Mr. M. S. Gurupadaswamy.

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY (Karnataka): Madam, after seeing this Resolution, I feel rather sorry to make a comment. After six Plans, after more than three decades of planned development, we are in the unfortunate situation of discussing the minimum needs for our people. If you look at the state of affairs in the world and especially if you take into consideration the countries with population like ours and which achieved independence after we achieved independence, we really understand our pitiable plight. China became independent in the year 1949 and some of the countries in South-East Asia became independent after we got independence. All the countries in the world except the African countries and almost all the Asian countries except Bangladesh, if I may say so, have been well placed so far as food is concerned. India is an agricultural country and in all the Plans, programmes were formulated for agricultural development. In spite of it, there is lack of food. The per capita availability of food in India does not compare with the per capita availability of food in the South-East Asian countries. In China,

SHRI K. VASUDEVA PANICKER (Orissa): What is the man-land ratio in China? Can you tell what the ratio is there?

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY: I am coming to the question. In China, the man-land ratio is somewhat better than ours, I know. But the state of poverty of China in 1949 you must know, and, as a student of economics, you should understand that. The Chinese economy was more backward, food production was far less compared to the population there and the per capita availability of food in China in 1949 was far less, for your information.

[Shri M. S. Gurupadaswamy]

But I am making this point not in any derogatory sense just to insult ourselves. But we must draw comparisons to understand our position and to understand the nature of the problem and the dimension of the problem. It is said that we have achieved food production to the tune of 151 million tonnes this year and last year and we feel pleased about it. We think that this is adequate for our purpose. It is not. If you take the purchasing capacity of the people here, you will find it adequate but there is low purchasing capacity and the people are not in a position to purchase food. Even for their bare survival people have no money, no capacity. I am not talking of the minimum needs. However, about the minimum needs programme, Madam, the less said the better. We adopted it with a great gusto. A very important component of this programme is food, food for all. And food for work was also thought of some time back, which is being continued in some form or the other even now. But how many households are getting food? Thousands and thousands of families are deprived of the minimum needs, merely, because they do not have the purchasing capacity. The per capita income in India is one of the lowest in the world. I had no time to talk about this during the Budget discussion. Let me tell my friends for their benefit that even by the end of the 20th century, after 16 years from now, with the assumed rate of growth of 10 per cent, our per capita income will be near about 600 dollars per annum. The per capita income of China is 600 dollars now. The per capita income of Taiwan is 3000 dollars. This is reflected in our capacity to purchase the minimum needs, particularly food. The important point is, even with 151 million tonnes food available, if you ration it off for the whole population, it is not adequate for their survival. That is the situation here. You must understand that. Now, with a view to helping the poor.

the vulnerable, the oppressed, the depressed, the low and the lowliest in our society, we formulated a programme of action, a distribution system, that is, the Government at the Centre and at State levels evolved a distribution network to supply food articles like rice, wheat and sugar—kerosene, perhaps edible oil—to the poor sections, the middle classes. We set up a number of institutions for this purpose—cooperatives on the one side and food depots by individuals, on the other side. Over and above that, we started in big cities Super Bazaars, Janata Bazaars. Let me take the case of Super Bazaars, how they are functioning. Here in Delhi we have a super market in Connaught Place. When this was started by Mr. C. Subramaniam when he was the Food Minister, he gave Rs. 57 lakhs for starting the Super Bazar. He took that building from Delhi Corporation. Within a period of five years, the investment of Rs. 57 lakhs was completely wiped out. And the Ministry had to give more funds to run it. There was pilferage, there was theft, mismanagement, and some of the articles in the Super Bazar, in the Janata Bazar, are more expensive than the articles found in the open market, because of the nefarious activities. It is a sad reflection on our distribution system. Except a very few Super Bazars, all the Super Bazars in India are running huge losses. Poona Super Bazar has been wiped out. Bombay Super Bazar is in the red. Delhi Super Bazar was also in the red. (Interruptions). It is in the red for your information. I know that. When I say something, I say with authority knowing full facts. Your Bazar in Hotel Majestic in Bombay is in the red. What about your other co-operatives? Many of the co-operatives are mismanaged. This has been said by other friends also. Nowhere is there a definite period fixed for distribution of foodstuffs and other articles in the cooperative societies. People have to stand in queues all the days without knowing when the food articles

will be available. Why can't the Ministry fix up a period and say that the first week of the month is the period when foodstuffs will be available? This is the period when many people get their pay. By the first week of the month, they must get all the articles from the Government godowns and distribute it in a week. It is not done because these cooperatives do not have money or resources to purchase. They have been given money to stock the goods. But they misuse the money and the resources. They do not have the money in time. Therefore, they spread it out during the whole period. Sometimes, the ration card holders do not get any article at all. It is totally mismanaged.

My friend was talking about socialism. I know a bit of socialism. I am myself a socialist. I am not a capitalist. I know what it is. But the institutions started for social welfare and the people's welfare have got to run very efficiently. The efficiency quotient is so small, so low. How can you expect the poor people to get justice? The accounts also are not kept properly. This is about the cooperatives.

About the depots run by individuals. Many individuals take depots by influencing the local officials. Every individual who is running a depot—please check it—makes about 3000 rupees on an average per month. How does he make it? Your profit margin does not allow it. He does it by selling sugar, kerosene oil, wheat and rice in the black. This is another aspect. You have got to look into it. There is no uniformity in the list of supply of goods to various depots, cooperative or Super Bazars. In some areas, they sell only rice, wheat, perhaps kerosene and perhaps sugar. But they do not sell other things. Why don't you enlarge the list of essential articles and supply them? What is the philosophy behind the whole thing? The philosophy is to help the vulnerable and the poorer sections

of the people. If that is so, there has got to be a proper coverage. By supplying one or two commodities, their needs cannot be met. Why don't you have a list of articles which are called essential? Let us know the list of articles which are called essential? Please tell me whether the Government of India or the State Governments have got a common list, a uniform list an all-India list of essential commodities mentioned therein? These lists differ from place to place and from State to State. Why don't you have this list? That is another point.

There is one more point. Having said all that, having made criticism that the public sector, the cooperative sector, and the private sector have miserably failed in distribution of essential articles, I want to make a suggestion. In the year 1955 or 1956, a committee was appointed by the Central Government to look into the whole matter. Ashoke Mehta was made the Chairman. Ashoke Mehta Committee submitted its report long back. I do not know whether it has been considered at all. One of the recommendations, if I remember correctly, made by that committee was to nationalise wholesale food trade. Why don't you take courage in your hands and nationalise the wholesale food trade and avoid strictly all the weaknesses, the drawbacks, the loopholes, the omissions that can be found in the present system. The Centre has also been changing plans off and on. Some time back, food had to be collected at the farmer's level. Every farmer with certain exemptions, was asked to pay a certain quota of paddy etc. But it was changed without notice. Now levy is done at the mill-owner's level. At the State levels, mills have been asked to supply to the Government certain quota. They say they cannot because they have to purchase at high price. Why did you change the earlier system of collecting levy at the farmer's level and wanted the rice mills to supply these things which is not satisfactory? I would like you to

[Shri M. S. Gurupadaswamy]

look into this matter again. This is another aspect.

Then there is one more point. Shri Subramaniam was the Minister and I very distinctly remember, he drew up plan to modernise the rice mills in India. The reason was, according to him and according to the Ministry, the existing mills were ancient, out-worn and outdated, not efficient and not economic. There was a lot of wastage and therefore, he tried to modernise them. He drew up a plan of action. What happened to that? He left the Ministry. When Shri Jagjivan Ram became the Minister, it continued for some time; afterwards it stopped. Today nobody talks of rationalisation or modernisation of rice mills. There is wastage, tremendous wastage at the rice mill level and there is wastage at the storage level. Nobody is talking about storage, scientific storage. It was also stopped.

In India, we are a people who suddenly wake up on certain things, talk about them and forget later. This kind of fitfulness, unsteadiness, in a matter which is very vital to the life of the people, is not good, is not correct. Can I, in the Seventh Five-Year Plan, except you to evolve a comprehensive programme of action in this regard, and assure minimum *per capita* consumption of food comparable to other countries, which can satisfy our people? Can you do that? (*Time bell rings*) Otherwise, all talk of social change, social integration and removal of poverty and economic transformation will be futile. Thank you.

SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR SAHU (Orissa): Madam Vice-Chairman, I stand to support the Resolution moved by Shri Bansal because it is very timely and it has very deep significance. This is an important thing without which the fruits of planning will not reach the common man and the poorer sections of the people. This is

an essential ingredient of economic life, to keep the wheel moving, to have a good and efficient public distribution system. This is very much linked with the process of production and the whole economy as such. Now, India, through decades of planning, introduced by Jawahar Lal Nehru, is undergoing a sea change. Through all these Five-Year Plans, we may not have achieved the level of progress which has been reached by other countries in the world. But nobody can deny the fact that in food-grains production and other things, we have made tremendous progress of which any Indian can be proud.

Now, with the social change and the economic change which is taking place, I would say that even the public distribution system requires a new thinking and revamping. We should lay very great emphasis on improving the public distribution system and this is the need of the day. We say that the agriculturists and the poor farmers should get remunerative prices. But ultimately, everybody is the consumer in society. Unless each and every person gets a morsel of food, at a fair price, in the lean days, in the distant corners of the country, he cannot be happy and he cannot be asked to produce more. Today, when the Resolution has been moved, the fundamental question is, how the consumer protection and the public distribution system can be inter-related and can be made more efficient.

The constraints in the way of an efficient and good public distribution system can be divided into four factors. The social factor, the demographic factor, the administrative deficiencies and the economic environment factor. As far as the social factor is concerned, we have been bound by long traditions and system, traders and other things, which are existing now. We also rebel sometimes and do not accept modernisation and other things. as

lar as the public distribution system is concerned. We do not accept them. The other important thing is about the faulty administrative side. To my mind, we should adopt a new line in this regard. Up till now, at the Centre, the Food and Civil Supplies Department has been looking into consumer protection measures. But they rely not on consumer organisations, but on surplus and the statistics of surplus. This system is a British legacy, which was introduced during lean period, during the war time. Ad-hocism in the approach to public distribution system is one of the major difficulties. Madam, I would like to point out that at the time of the war with China, in 1962, during Chinese aggression, the prices shot up. The Government of India and the State Government took some measures, but than they forget it. But lately, during the Sixth Plan period there has been a concerted effort to improve the public distribution system. Still it requires improvement and improvisation.

The fundamental question is to change the outlook of the traders towards consumers. Western countries are alive to this situation. There the traders do not play havoc with the consumers. Here I will refer to one of the stories which have been reported in a paper. This is to understand the plight of the consumers in a nutshell. There was a long queue at a ration shop. A lady was standing in the queue and after a few hours her turn came. She asked to see the rice that was offered for sale. The reply given by the shopkeeper is, do you want to see the rice, did your husband see you before he married you? And he snored. Then the lady had to tell that she had not come for rice but for wheat and sugar. This is the condition of the consumer service in our country. So, we have to look into the aspect of consumer protection deeply. There should be strong supervisory committees. Ultimately, they can come to the rescue of the consumers. This is never possible by one departmental agency

which is looking into the matter. A reference has been made to a certain amount of adhocism. In this connection, permanent programming will have to be undertaken so that the public distribution system can get rid of the middleman. A rightly pointed out by Shri Kalpnath Raj and Shri Gurupadaswamy, I strongly urge, through you Madam, upon the hon. Minister to at least see that there is no adhocism, there is no hanky panky business. This is important. If we want to improve the condition of the poorest of the poor people, let there be nationalisation of food trade. Let the food be distributed at a reasonable price. That must be decided soon and that will only solve the problem in a permanent way. Otherwise, we cannot improve the public distribution system.

Coming to the consumer protection, I quote from the Economic Survey which has been supplied to us. It says, I quote:

"From the macro economic point of view, the maintenance of reasonable stability in prices is likely to pose an important challenge during the period of the Seventh Plan."

The Economic Survey, as published by Government of India, has said that the price rise will be most vulnerable point in the Seventh Five Year Plan. If we want to stabilise the price if we want to see that the common man, the poorest of the poor man gets a morsel of food, it must be seen that it is organised in a better way. Improvements must be brought in so that there is no adhocism, so that it can stand on a permanent footing.

Coming to other points, only in some urban centres we are seeing certain movements of the consumer. Here I will like to make the following suggestions. The consumer protection legislation should be strengthened and

[Shri Santosh Kumar Sahu]

efficiently implemented. Legal aid and service should be made available to the consumer in full measure. Then there must be consumer grievances cell at the production centres also. I will give an example. We have seen the newspaper reports. Even in the Indane gas the caps which were used earlier were stronger. Now plastic caps are used. The result is there is leakage in every gas cylinder, and yet the consumer has to pay for the full cylinder. So Madam as has rightly been pointed out by Shri Bansal, though there are many ways of protecting the interest of the consumer, the food distributing agency alone cannot protect the interest of the consumer. It is high time that the distribution of essential commodities is made the responsibility of one department and there must be another department to look into the protection of the consumers having powers to punish the traders and the people who are indulging in adulteration and other things. In this country if we go through the different records, adulteration and spurious drugs are killing thousands of people every where. We should rise to the occasion and have strong agencies to implement the laws. It is necessary that there must be a single new Department created dealing with Food Adulteration Act and the consumer protection laws. There is need for a comprehensive law which will be looked into by that agency so that ultimately the consumer's interest can be protected. And it is very fundamental, if we want the social objectives of planning to reach the poor, that we must see that in the Seventh Plan removal of deficiencies in the education of consumers for their protection is given top priority. As Mr. Gurupadaswamy has pointed out, we have given the co-operatives the responsibility for running the public distribution system, but capital is lacking and it is not possible for them to procure every thing and sell it. So wholesale procurement by the Government should become a per-

manent feature within a decade, and it should reach the outlets at fixed prices. That will give a ray of hope to the consumers that they are getting the goods at real fair prices and will ultimately help in building up the economy of the country.

Now this is very important. Probably it has been lost sight of. We have been thinking of Supply Department at the Centre. But what I would urge upon the Minister is to have a Supply Department not at the Centre but at the States level, because they are mainly concerned with the distribution to the retail centres, where the people are worst exploited, where more poor people do not get kerosene and foodgrains at proper prices in the lean period because there is no infrastructure, no road communication. They cannot purchase from other places. It is essential that a State Ministers' Conference is convened by the hon. Supply Minister and these problems looked into as to how the public distribution system can be made more effective, how consumer's interest can be protected. Legislation can really help when there is some agency to enforce it. All legislation that we may pass here will have no meaning to the common man in this country unless that is done and the common man will go on suffering for ever.

I would also like to stress that although the hon. Minister is not Minister of Health, he should impress upon his colleague that many lives are lost because of spurious drugs and there must be a stringent punishment for such people. This Resolution moved by Mr. Pawan Kuman Bansal is a healthy one. He has very nicely put it that there is need—and Law Commission has also said that there is need—for a comprehensive legislation. I hope the Law Minister will take note probably of this Resolution, if we adopt it, and bring forward such a comprehensive legislation where all those factors can be looked into. We hope that under the

able leadership of our Supply Minister, Rao Birendra Singh, some dynamic and effective steps will be taken to strengthen the consumer movement and the supply line in this country so that ultimately the common man gets his basic needs like food, cheap clothing, sugar and other things at reasonable and fair prices in the fair price shop.

SHRI K. VASUDEVA PANICKER :

Madam, I am standing in support of the Resolution moved by my learned friend, Mr. Pawan Kumar Bansal. I am grateful to Mr. Bansal for introducing such an important Resolution which inevitable is to draw the attention to this august House as also the Government to this problem. As I understand it, this Resolution involves two aspects. One, it involves the aspect of philosophy behind the public distribution system; and two, it involves a question, the question being whether the Government and also this House should not think that minimum supply of most vital essential commodities shall be provided under the Constitution as one among the Fundamental Rights. I said it involves a philosophy behind the system because, as per the preamble of the Constitution of India, this society is a socialist society, or, this society is going to be a socialist society. In such a society, whether it is a socialist society or a society in transition towards a socialist society, in such a situation the Government as well as the ruling party and also those political parties which think alike in this matter substantially, will have to think about the philosophy, namely, whether the poor people of the society, the majority of the society, the underdogs in this country, shall be permanently deprived of the three essentials of their day-to-day life, namely, food, shelter and clothing. Unfortunately, the people of India, the majority of them, are the victims of a system which has perpetrated permanent and continuous poverty over India. Forty per cent of the people of India are living below

the poverty line and, again, another 40 per cent of those above the poverty line are also not in a better condition. Maybe they eat twice a day, but still their condition also is not very much different. My point is those 40 per cent of people who are below the poverty line and another 40 per cent who are somewhat above the poverty line, all these people form the multitude of the total population of the country, they form the underdogs of the country, and they are underdogs in a situation where agony is always hanging over them. This is happening because in this country the fundamental productive means of the country is still not with the people of the country. The fundamental productive means of the country means nothing but land and land alone. Unfortunately, 80 per cent of the land in India is in the hands of only 20 per cent of the people and, again, majority of the arable land is in the hands of just two per cent of the people. Thereby, the system is depriving the poor people. The agricultural worker in Bihar, in Madhya Pradesh, in U.P. and elsewhere in this country is permanently deprived of getting the three essential things of his day-to-day life, namely, some food, cloth and shelter. The poor agricultural worker who is working in the paddy field or the wheat field of a kulak or landlord in India has to trek from 10 to 15 miles in order to reach the paddy field where he has to work. He is reaching there early in the morning before the sun has risen and is returning back to his home only after sunset. This public distribution system is totally ineffective so far as this poor man working in the farm is concerned, whether it is in Bihar, whether it is in U.P. or Punjab or Haryana or anywhere else in this country because this poor man who leaves his home at five o'clock early in the morning for the paddy field, trekking over 15 to 20 miles a day and reaches his home very late in the evening is not provided with the benefits of the public distribution system. He is not able to

[Shri K. Vasudeva Panicker]

avail of the opportunity; he is not blessed with that opportunity. So, this is a question before us as a socialist country or a country which is striving to become a socialist country. It is the responsibility of this country and the ruling party as also those political organizations which also think in terms of a socialistic transformation, to see that the public distribution system has to become an omnipresent and omnipotent system whereby it is a foolproof system. At the moment, throughout the country you are having 2,40,000 public distribution units. India is a land of villages, and the villages number between 5.5 lakhs and 7 lakhs. Your public distribution system is operating only in 2,40,000 places in the country. There is a lacuna in this matter. This aspect has to be considered.

The other question is that India has a Constitution, the provisions of which have been drafted from the Anglo-Saxon juridical world and the constitutions of the United Kingdom, America and Canada and elsewhere. Unfortunately, the provisions under the category of Fundamental Rights are the Fundamental Rights brought not for giving protection to the poor people who are toiling and toiling in the paddy and rice fields, in the remote far-flung areas of the villages of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. The Fundamental Rights are the Rights which are protecting the interests of those people who are called 'affluent' or who are called the 'haves', those rich people. What about the poor people who are called 'have-nots' who are slaves of this country because of that rotten system which is called the landlordism or feudalism which is crumbling but at the same time struggling to survive. So long as this system continues, the Government has got the responsibility to implement the contents of this Resolution ruthlessly, and for that purpose, if it is necessary, you have to incor-

porate the contents of this Resolution and also, especially very essential items which are the minimum requirement for survival of the human beings into the Constitution, and they should be included in Chapter III of the Constitution of India dealing with the Fundamental Rights. Thank you.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. (SHRI-MATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI): Mr. Dhabe. He is not there. Mr. Jagesh Desai.

SHRI JJAGESH DESAI (Maharashtra): I am very happy that Shri Bansalji has brought this Resolution and given us an opportunity to give our views on this Resolution.

Madam, at present, the market is not a consumers' market; it is a sellers' market. Goods are scarce. Artificial scarcity is being created by the hoarders and by the big business. And we have to serve the interests of the common man, the man who lives in remote villages of the country, the Adivasis, the Harijans, the middle class and the poorer sections of the society.

Madam, I have some experience of this Department. And I have come to the conclusion that the economic principle that supply and demand determine the prices, is a capitalist society's principle; it cannot be the principle of a socialist democracy. Prices should be determined by the cost of production and by reasonable margin of profit. You can curtail the supply by hoarding. I would like to give an example. When I was the Minister in charge of this Department, once I was coming from Pune. I went to supervise some of the fair-price shops giving controlled cloth in the district of Pune. Then I saw in the newspapers that 20,000 tonnes of sugar was hoarded in Bombay. I came to the Sachivalaya and asked my officers to go and find out from the godown of the sugar dealers,

examine their stock and report to me by 4 o'clock. And what was seen was that the actual stock was according to the books of accounts and that there was no malpractice. I was surprised about the news item. But then I called some of the dealers, and I told them, "I know who these black sheep are, and I am going to punish them." Then, they came with a correct story. It was like this: according to the Sugar Control order every week one fourth of sugar produced should be sent to the places where it was meant was not lifted. Although it was purchased, it was lying in the sugar industries godowns. As a result of this hoarding the sugar prices have gone up in the market. That is why I want to stress that the prices should be determined by the cost of production and not on the rule of demand and supply.

I would also like to place my views before this august House regarding public distribution system. We must continue to sell foodgrains, cloth, kerosene and sugar through fair price shops. But along with these items we should also sell pulses, because people want dal with roti; and people also want onions with roti. Therefore, we should include pulses, onions, coal, salt, mirch powder, tea, blades and cycle tyres and tubes in the public distribution system scheme. All these essential commodities should be sold through the fair price shops.

We know that there is black sheep in these fair price shops also. Malpractices are there in the fair price shops. But we have to see that all those fair price shops are nipped in the bud.

When I was a Minister I found out that in Bombay city itself there were 20 lakh bogus units. That means the foodgrains meant for one-fourth of the Bombay population was going in the blackmarket. That is why in Maharashtra we had reorganised the whole

public distribution system. We had cancelled all these bogus ration cards.

Madam, for all the essential commodities there should be only one price throughout the country—whether it is in Kashmir or Kanyakumari or a tribal or adivasi area. In other words, the Government should sell these items at the same price at all places where it is as sold at the place of production. If this is not done, then the people living in the remote villages have to bear the cost of these goods and the excessive transport cost. Our principle should be to serve those people who are living below the poverty line. In this connection, I would like to suggest a proposal for the consideration of the Government. The transport cost of these items should be shared equally between the Centre and the State Governments.

I would also like to say some thing about the ration cards. Ration cards should be given to those who have the right to vote and whose names are found in the electoral rolls without inquiry. Nobody can stop them from getting their ration cards. There is corruption in obtaining ration cards also. A person has to go to the Rationing office 10 or 15 times to procure a ration card. I would request the Government to issue ration cards to the genuine persons immediately.

I would also like to say about the promises which we have given in our last elections. We have given an assurance that we shall manufacture the consumer goods in the public sector. This was the commitment which was given to the people. But, I am sorry to find in the budget allocation for 1984-85, Rs. 193 crores were allocated for consumer industries, whereas in this budget I am finding only Rs. 148 crores. Why only this meagre amount? And for what purpose? Out of that, Rs. 30 crores for the National Textile Corporation, Rs. 86 crores for paper industry, Rs. 27 crores for cement industry and Rs. 5 crores for lea-

[Shri Jagesh Desai]

ther industry. And nothing has been given for commodities which we want to give it to the people, that is, consumers. It may be that we have not prepared the scheme for these items. Therefore, I would request the Minister to prepare a blueprint and see that some of the items which are required by the common man are manufactured in the public sector and are distributed through the fair price shops. Only one point more. For the cooperative sector, you have provided only Rs. 8.7 crores as share capital for cooperative societies in remote villages. This is not enough. If you want that the goods should reach the consumers in the remote villages of the country through the cooperative sector, then you have to provide more finances for share capital so that we can have more shops and the people can get the benefit. Madam, this is a must. We must do it. If we don't do it, then I think we will be failing in our duty. I had so many points to cover, but there is no time. Vigilance committees should be there for every fair price shop consisting of five consumers and the local MLA or the corporator. In the rural areas also there should be a committee to see that no malpractices take place. We have to see that this system is purified. Distribution of essential commodities should be only through this system, through the cooperative sector, not through the private sector. The cooperative sector should be responsible for the distribution of essential goods. Thank you very much.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. SHRI-MATI SAROJINI MAHISHI): we have to conclude at 5 P.M. There are two more speakers, and the mover of the Resolution has also to reply. In the meantime I would request the hon. Minister to intervene.

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (RAO BIRENDRA SINGH): Thank you, Madam.

Madam Vice-Chairman, I would have liked to hear more Members

speaking on this very important subject but because of shortage of time, you have very kindly given me an opportunity to speak at the end of this debate today, because perhaps this Resolution will lapse according to the rules of Rajya Sabha if it is not concluded today. If it continues, other Members also may be given an opportunity to speak later on.

I am thankful to Shri Bansal for moving this Resolution on a very important subject. All the hon. Members who have participated in the debate have taken very keen interest and have pointed out various deficiencies in the system and the need to improve it. The public distribution system in a large country like India with millions of our people below the poverty-line has come to stay. Attention has been focussed on the need for enlarging and expanding this system for the welfare of the society. Governments attention has always been engaged in this respect and I can say without fear of contradiction that public distribution in India has brought about a lot of benefit to the people, particularly the weaker sections. In fact, it is meant for them. There is demand for closer monitoring, for rectifying the defects, removing the malpractices and enforcing our laws more rigorously. A demand has been made that the Government should come forward with a comprehensive legislation on this subject. At the outset, I must say that I find it very difficult to agree to the demand for one comprehensive legislation for a very vast subject like this. The various laws that we have already enacted are enforced by various Ministries at the Central level and the real responsibility for enforcement of laws lies on the State Governments. We do whatever we can to coordinate the activities of the departments at the Centre and the Ministries and Departments in the States. For the time being, we have chosen seven essential commodities for distribution through our public distribution network—they are the most essential commodities in our view:

foodgrains like wheat and rice, sugar, vegetable oil, kerosene oil, coal, coarse cloth. And then there are dozens of other commodities which can be included by the States in the public distribution system if they so like. Facilities are provided for financing and for procurement of commodities which the States may like to choose in addition to these seven commodities supplied by the central Government at wholesale prices from the manufacturers, and then the fair price shops can distribute them to consumers at a reasonable price with a reasonable margin of profit. I agree with the honourable Members that there is lot of scope for improvement. We have been trying to reach the common man in the most interior areas. It has been stated that the system has mostly benefited the urban areas. This is not true. Eighty per cent of our fair price shops are located in rural areas to serve the needs of rural people, and we have been trying to reach the most interior places—in hills, in tribal areas, in the most difficult to approach areas, in desert areas in smaller villages. The policy is that there should be a fair price shop for every 2000 population. In some places this target has been achieved. In other places not enough has been done. We keep calling conferences of Ministers of Civil Supplies and we discuss it at various other national forums and States are involved in our efforts to improve the system. Friends like Shri Kalpnath Rai have suggested that I should soon call a meeting of the Ministers of Civil Supplies. Shri Santosh Sahu also made similar suggestion. I am soon calling a meeting of Ministers of Food and Civil Supplies from the States. In fact, we have a standing council, an advisory council, at the national level for public distribution system, and we have also set up in the year 1983 Consumers Protection Council at the Central level. This is exactly for purposes of looking into the complaints, the grievances, of the consumers...

SHRI R. RAMAKRISHNAN: Is it functioning?

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: It is functioning, and two meetings have been held since 1983. And I plan to activate this Council as far as possible with a greater degree of responsibility devolving on it. Mr. Ramakrishnan suggested that there should be a statutory consumers protection council also. Actually the Government is thinking on these lines and I hope we may soon be able to come forward with some legislation if we can work it out early. Mention has already been made of the various laws that are already in force. In fact the mover of the resolution himself has mentioned that we have the Standard Weights and Measures Act. It was earlier passed by Parliament in 1956. Then again in 1976 another Act was brought in. Then there is the Standard Weights and Measures Enforcement Bill which has already been introduced in this House and I hope it will soon be passed by Rajya Sabha and then by the Lok Sabha. This will improve things to a great extent. Then there is the Essential commodities Act of 1981 which has very rigorous and stringent measures for punishment to hoarders, blackmarketeers and other people indulging in malpractices in the matter of essential commodities dealing. Then we have the Prevention of Blackmarketing Act and the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act. We keep on asking for returns from the States as to how many raids have been organised, how many prosecutions have been launched, how many convictions have been ordered by the courts and how many people have been detained. There are special courts also to be established by the States. Some States have taken action while others have not. Even States which claim to be very progressive like West Bengal have refused to implement the Prevention of Blackmarketing Act. I do not know what the central Government can do in this regard because States have also certain rights and privileges under the constitution. Jammu and Kashmir Government are not implementing that. Other States are doing

(Shri R. Rama Krishnan)

it. I do not think I have time to go into the facts and figures. I would like to say within the next two or three minutes I have at my disposal that we are absolutely conscious about the need to improve things in the public distribution system. We want the number of fair price shops to increase and to be set up in the most interior areas. The turnover of fair price shops has increased tremendously since 1979 after the Congress Government again came to power. In terms of quantity, the turnover in 1979 was 18 million tonnes and in 1983 it was 27.12 million tonnes. In terms of money in 1979 it was Rs. 2,668 crores whereas the turnover in 1983 went up to Rs. 6,514 crores. The number of fair price shops increased from 2,39,000 old to 3,11,374 in 1983. And out of these, 90,000 fair price shops are under the co-operative system. That is how the system has been expanding at a very rapid pace.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: All friends who have taken part in this discussion on the resolution like Mr. Ramakrishnan, Mr. Kamalendu, Shri Kalpnath Rai Mr. Gurupadaswamy, Mr. Sahu, Mr. Panicker and Mr. Desai later on, have all made very useful suggestions. The Delhi State Civil Supplies Corporation in Delhi, for instance, has organised mobile fair price shops. In Tamil Nadu the public distribution system has worked very well and the co-operative system in places like Coimbatore has done well. There are very good reports that I receive.

An HON'BLE MEMBER: In Maharashtra too.

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: Yes, in Maharashtra also. Any State with which you are satisfied, I am also satisfied. I will pay the same compliments to the States with which you are happy.

Actually the Resolution itself is so comprehensive that I cannot comprehend what all can be brought under

it. We have various laws and we can keep on reviewing the 5.00 p.m. situation and, if need be, we shall come to this House again with a new legislation, with amendments to the legislation. The need really is to strengthen the consumer resistance, to strengthen the consumer movement, for which we are giving subsidy to the voluntary organisations. I would request all the honourable Members of the House, particularly the lady Members, under your guidance, Madam, to give a boost to the consumer movement through the voluntary organisations. The attention that has been focussed on the various problems of the consumers has helped the Government, has strengthened my hands, and I would request the honourable Mover not to press his Resolution. But I assure the House through you, Madam, that we shall take every step which is needed and which has been rightly demanded to strengthen the entire public distribution system and also to remove all the malpractices with the co-operation of the Members and the State Governments.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Bansal, do you want to withdraw your Resolution?

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL: Madam, in view of the assurances given by the honourable Minister, I would want to withdraw the Resolution unless, of course, I am accused of impinging on the right of some Members to speak.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Is it the pleasure of the House that the Mover of the Resolution, Shri Pawan Kumar Bansal, be given leave to withdraw his Resolution?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Yes, yes.

The Resolution was, by leave withdrawn.