

6 P.M.

THE BUDGET (GENERAL) 1975-76—
General Discussion—Contd.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MATHUR): Mr. I. T. Singh

SHRI I. T. SINGH (Manipur): It is 6 now. I shall speak tomorrow.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MATHUR): You can speak today.

SHRI I. T. SINGH: Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, while welcoming the Budget, I will make a few observations. The Budget of a Government is a measure through which we can see the policy of the Government, through which the economy of the country can be visualised. Therefore, every year the Budget is regarded as an important Government document. This year while considering the Budget, in the Lower House and in our House, hon. Members have given their own assessment and have given their own comments and observations. While seeing the Budget, I would like to remind the hon. Minister that consumption, distribution and investment are very important. Our country is now passing through a very crucial economic crisis, that is, inflation. At the same time, we are moving in such a way that we are tackling the two crucial problems, democracy and planning. Therefore, while considering the Budget problems, we should not depend only on the Budget, but we should take into account the Economic Survey of the Government of India and other relevant documents. Sir, I will quote the last para from the Economic Survey on page 53.

"To sum up, India's economy in 1975-76 will have to reckon with a highly uncertain international environment. Nevertheless the overall outlook will be greatly influenced by the trend of agricultural output. The resumption of an orderly process of growth with stability is, therefore, crucially dependent on our ability to impart a new element of dynamism to Indian agriculture."

Therefore, Sir, the Budget proposals before us may be broadly divided into two sectors, agriculture and industry. The other most important sector is defence. The

Budget should be looked at in terms of whether it is a welfare Budget or not. Every year the Government says that it wants to place a welfare Budget before the people. But how far the Government of India's Budget is a welfare Budget is subject to discussion. I will not take much time on this because then I will not be in a position to cover other aspects. But we should see what percentage we are spending on each sector. Any way this year's Budget is an improvement over the last year, because agriculture has been given top priority, energy has been given top priority and defence has been given top priority. These things are very important. Unless and until the country's borders are properly guarded, it will be very difficult to manage the internal affairs of the country. Since money is not coming from the sky, we should see how we can tap the resources of the country.

SHRI RANBIR SINGH (Haryana): Sir, there is only one Member from the Opposition. Is this the interest of the Opposition in the Budget discussion.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MATHUR): I am not the person to reply to that.

SHRI I. T. SINGH: There is one Member from the Opposition.

Therefore, Sir, . . .

SHRI G. LAKSHMANAN: Sir, I am also here representing the Opposition.

SHRI N. R. CHOUDHURY: You do not represent the entire Opposition; you only represent the DMK.

SHRI G. LAKSHMANAN: But you must know that the DMK is the only real Opposition Party in India.

SHRIMATI SUSHILA ROHATGI: We are happy to have a colourful Opposition member here.

SHRI I. T. SINGH: Unless and until agriculture is properly looked after, agricultural production is not accelerated and self-sufficiency in food is not attained quickly, the country is bound to suffer and we have been suffering. We are very sorry to

note that even after twenty-five years of our independence, we have failed on our food front and this is a sorry state of affairs. Added to this is the present inflationary situation. While we talk about the food front, Sir, we always tend to ignore one aspect of the Indian economic life. Most of the speakers here have emphasised the importance of the rural sector. But there is one point which everyone has missed. In every other sector, in every other walk of life, there is what is called the process of collective bargaining. In every other sector, whether it is the industrial sector or whether it is the service sector, collective bargaining system is there through which they tried to redress their grievances. And it is quite common amongst the fixed-income groups. If these people are not paid their allowances, etc they can bargain for that. If even the Members of Parliament desire certain things, they can put their heads together and achieve certain things. If, for example, the Government servants are not paid their dearness allowance, etc., their grievances can be voiced here collectively. But this is not the case with regard to the agricultural labourers or Indian farmers. In the unorganised agricultural sector, the labourers are not paid their wages properly. Moreover, in the agricultural sector, even for those people who want to work, there is no land nor scope to work. The unemployment problem amongst these people is very acute. About 70% to 80% of our population depends on agriculture alone and, in agriculture, there is too much of disguised unemployment also. As has been pointed out by Prof. Nurse, disguised unemployment is there in the field of agriculture. Where only one man is employed in a family, he gets employment and four others are not employed and these people are not getting any remuneration and they are not able to produce what they are supposed to produce. Therefore, Sir, all these aspects should be looked into. I say this, Sir, because if the agricultural problem is solved, then we can solve all the other problems. We should see how the Budget and our Plans achieve this object. Instead of having bigger dams, we must have smaller dams and small-size irrigation schemes. There are big dams in Punjab and Haryana and Punjab produce the largest amount of foodgrains. But, take the case

of Orissa which is a rice-producing State. It used to export rice to the other States once. But its position is also not good. We must have big schemes in certain select areas and small schemes for certain other areas to accelerate food production. We must also divide the country into different zones. Instead of converting the rice-cultivating area into a jute-cultivating area or the jute area into some other area, we should have specialisation in the production of certain foodgrains and this sort of specialisation should be resorted to in the matter of production of foodgrains. This matter should be looked into seriously.

Another thing that I want to stress is that the regional imbalances in the Indian economy are too many. My friend, Shri Mahanti, gave certain details about Maharashtra. We are not anti-Maharashtra, Sir. But the point is that we must have industrialisation in all parts of the country and not in one part only. If you go up to Calcutta you can see some industries. But, beyond Calcutta, you cannot see any industry at all. If you go to Assam, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Tripura, and Manipur, you will not find any industry at all. What is there to be called an industry? We do not have anything there. We have not seen any industry. Roads are not there; transport bottleneck is there; and there are other difficulties. But we are thinking of fertilizers, we are thinking of cars, we are thinking of air services, and we are thinking of having so many things. We are talking of having electricity there. But there is no kerosene at all there, there is no road there and there is no water to drink.

Special attention of the centre in the North-Eastern zone is called for in the matter of rail roads and industry.

Therefore, the life of those people living in these far-flung areas, in hilly areas, is worse than the beggars of Delhi. In Delhi, for plants and for flowers, there is drinking water and there is always light in the streets. In those areas there is no light. There is no food. There is no clothing. Therefore, the basic needs—'khaana, kapda, makaan'—must be provided. This should be seriously looked into while framing the Budget. No doubt, we have to balance the

[Shri J. T. Singh]

Budget keeping in view of our international commitments. Therefore, the budget is a very satisfactory one. We have to bring about a balanced budget in order to check inflationary trends in the country. The Finance Ministry took much pains while making this Budget. We are happy to welcome this Budget.

There is one more important thing that I would like to emphasize before the House. So long as the present confrontation between Pakistan and India is going on, the country's economy will be always affected. But as good luck would have it, in the recent times Bangla Desh was born. Bangla Desh was known as the 'Sonar Bangla' in the eastern part of the country. It was a rice and jute producing area. Now, Bangla Desh is a friendly country and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman has adopted secularism, borrowed from India. Therefore, we can have some favourable economic relations with that country.

There is also another favourable trend at the moment. We are having the good offices of Sheikh Abdullah within the framework of the Indian Constitution. Utilizing the very good offices of these two prominent Muslim leaders—one leader of a friendly country and another within the Union—we should visualize in the long run a loose confederation of these three countries which have common economic problems, that is, Bangla Desh, India and Pakistan. Then, most of the money which is being spent for Defence purposes can be diverted to other items of expenditure mainly on social services which need funds.

Take, for example, Social Services, on which we are spending very little. Take, for instance, Education. While planning—we have accepted planning—we cannot ignore family planning to maintain and sustain economic growth rate. Therefore, enough attention should be paid to family planning. The growth of the population is not properly cared for with sufficient funds. Then the concept of planning will be a total failure. Income gaps will also be there. While capital formation is taking place, certainly some money will go to some sections of society, and as such gaps in

incomes will widen. How far this Budget can check it, should be looked into.

In India, the burden of the entire levies fall on the middle and lower classes. Wherever there is concentration of wealth, that should be heavily taxed. That is not as heavily taxed as the society needs today. This should be done on the ground that the country is poor and the masses are suffering. There is no food, there is no housing and there is no clothing. Mere building of some skyscrapers in big cities is not common man's concern. There should be proper development schemes. A few skyscrapers cannot be regarded as an index of development and growth. There should be all round development. There should be a sense of security for all. If economic security is not guaranteed, political turmoil is bound to happen in this or that form.

The Government should give some sense of security to the masses in their day-to-day public life. This year, the burden does not fall on the common masses except that there is duty on sugar, bidi and tea. Some opposition Members have stated that the burden would fall on the masses. No doubt, these are essential commodities. But we should think in terms of international trade. India is a principal tea-producing country and we should ignore this duty in order to export more tea. We should welcome it in order to meet our balance of payments and, if necessary, we should impose even more duty. Tea was unknown to the villagers and in far-flung areas. (*Time bell rings*) Bidi is a common thing. Even the poor people should share some burden. Everybody in the country, whether rich or poor, should contribute to the well-being of the country according to their capacity. Only then, there will be a sense of responsibility and duty. My hon. friends on the opposite side are trying to exploit the political situation in the name of Jayaprakash Narayan and others. There are strikes, lock-outs, intimidation and sluggishness. These campaigns will not succeed because it is no longer valid in the changing circumstances. We have to move in the right direction. If we do not work hard, neither the Japanese nor the Germans or the Russians will not come to this country to work for us. How long

Can India depend on other countries? How long will we go to other countries with a begging bowl for food and other things? Therefore, from now onwards, we should prepare ourselves in right earnestness. Last, Sir, Manipur needs your care and attention to complete central projects in Loktak and to start some industries.

उपसभाध्यक्ष (श्री जगदीश प्रसाद माथुर) :
अब सदन की कार्यवाही कल प्रातः 11 बजे तक के लिए स्थगित की जाती है।

The House then adjourned at eighteen minutes past six of the clock till eleven of the clock on Tuesday, the 18th March, 1975.