

**PROCLAMATION IN RELATION TO  
MANIPUR**

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI F. H. MOHSIN) : Sir, I beg to lay on the Table, under clause (3) of Article 356 of the Constitution, a copy (in English and Hindi) of the Proclamation [G.S.R. No. 117(E)] issued by the President on March 4, 1974, revoking the Proclamation made by him on March 28, 1973, under Article 356 of the Constitution, in relation to the State of Manipur. [Placed in Library. See No. LT-6309/74]

**EIGHTH REPORT OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE  
ON OFFICES OF PROFIT**

SHRI YOGENDRA SHARMA (Bihar) : Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Eighth Report of the Joint Committee on Offices of Profit.

**CALLING ATTENTION TO A  
MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC  
IMPORTANCE****REPORTED INADEQUATE SUPPLIES OF  
RICE TO KERALA**

DR. K. MATHEW KURIAN (Kerala) : Sir, I beg to call the attention of the Minister of Agriculture to the reported inadequate supplies of rice by the Central Government to Kerala resulting in widespread agitations in that State.

TMR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair.]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ANNASAHAB P. SHINDE) : Sir, in spite of wide-spread drought conditions which prevailed during 1972-73, the Central Government took special care to supply the maximum quantities of foodgrains from the Central Pool to Kerala keeping in view the over-all availability and the relative needs of other deficit States. In order to assist the State, the supply of foodgrains

from the Central Stocks has been progressively stepped up; during the year 1973, 9.43 lakh tonnes of foodgrains were supplied to Kerala as against 9.32 lakh tonnes in 1972, and 8. lakh tonnes in 1971. For the first 3 months of the current year, 2.38 lakh tonnes of foodgrains have been allotted to Kerala. As staple food in Kerala is rice, out of 2.38 lakh tonnes allotted rice allocation was to the extent of 2.12 lakh tonnes. Adequate stocks of rice on Central account have been kept in Kerala to ensure regular supply of rice against the allotments made to the Centre.

With the arrival of kharif crop the market, the availability of food grains has improved and accordingly the supply from the Central Pool we adjusted keeping in view the availability of stocks and other factors. From January, 1974, when it was brought to the notice of the Central Government that the procurement of rice in Kerala has not progressed satisfactorily, all allocations of rice have been stepped up from January this year. The Central Government are in constant touch with the State Government and they have been assured that maximum assistance will be given to the State in the coming months.

DR. K. MATHEW KURIAN : This unfortunate fact of the matter is that whenever the problem of food is discussed in this House, the Minister brings a note prepared by some bureaucrats and gives a completely wrong picture. The Minister has whitewashed the entire problem of food in Kerala. I really protest against this kind of attempt. While a serious problem is being discussed the Minister's reply should at least reflect the seriousness of the problem. People of Kerala have been agitating for food for more than one year, but for several years. I can particularly remember that every year there have been anti-Centre agitations on the issue of food. One might ask Why is the problem of Kerala distinctly different from the problem of other States? Kerala is a chronically deficit State in foodgrains to the extent

IDr. K. Mathew Kurian] 50 per cent in the case of rice. This serious food deficit in Kerala is not because Kerala is not capable of producing foodgrains. In fact the yield rate in Kerala in the case of rice and paddy is one of the highest in India. Keraia is unfortunately deficit because it specialises in cash crops such as co-coanut, arecanut, rubber, tea, coffee and cardamom, pepper and other spices which contribute more than 13 per cent of the foreign exchange earnings of the country. Because of this specialisation which benefits the nation, Kerala goes with less food. Though Kerala produces less than 50 per cent of its food requirements, the balance of foodgrains used to be provided by the Central Government. Earlier it used to come from Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu and later on from the Central pool. Before the formation of the Southern food zone, rice used to come into the open market from other States. Therefore, the pressure on the public distribution system in the earlier period was much less. After the formation of the South zone, Government of India had undertaken the responsibility—I would like to underline the word 'undertaken'—to supply rice to Kerala—or other foodgrains at the rate of at least 12 ounces per adult. In fact informal rationing was introduced in Kerala in 1964 on the basis of the solemn assurance by the Central Government that a minimum of 12 ounces of rice can be maintained with the help of the Centre. In the earlier years of introduction of rationing in Kerala, the Central Government issued stocks from the Central pool. During months when there was shortage of rice in the Central pool, adequate quantities of wheat was issued to maintain 12 ounces of ration per adult. Though the people of Kerala prefer rice, they are prepared to eat wheat provided wheat is supplied. People of Kerala are prepared to change their food habits provided *wheat is made* available to them in sufficient quantities. But even wheat the Central Government has not been able to supply. From last July onwards, the Central Government reduced the allotment of wheat to

Kerala. The Minister's reply completely side-tracks the issue. His reply says that supplies have been stepped up. But he forgot to mention or deliberately did not mention that in the earlier period, the supply was reduced from the original commitment of the Central Government. After reducing it to the barest minimum in a few months they increased it by a few tonnes. This type of statement saying that they have increased the quantity after having reduced it to the barest minimum is not justified. The Government of India has been giving monthly allotment of rice since March, 1973 and the Food Corporation of India was asked by the Central Government not to issue rice or wheat in excess of the allotment. From May, 1973 onwards Central Government reduced the supply of rice to Kerala. This is a fact which the Minister cannot deny. The allotment was brought down to 44,000 tonnes in July, 1973 as a result of this inhuman cut imposed by the Central Government. Rice ration was accordingly reduced from 160 gms. to 100 gms. per adult from 3rd June, 1973. He cannot deny the fact that rice ration had to be cut down because of this inhuman cut imposed by the Central Government, though the rice quantum was increased to some extent from November, 1973 onwards. This I admit. But the quantum of wheat was drastically reduced from 40,000 tonnes in October, 1973 to 8,000 tonnes in December, 1973 and January, 1974. Sir, for more than seven months during the last year, the people of Kerala went without even six ounces of foodgrains. In May, 1973, for instance, the people of Kerala got in ration shops only between three and four ounces which, in Malayalam, we call chicken feed. The people were given the chicken feed of three or four ounces and the people had to suffer untold miseries.

Sir, several representations were made to the Government of India pointing out the very critical situation with regard to foodgrains supply in Kerala and the Chief Minister and the Food Minister of Kerala flew to Delhi several times spending a large amount of

money. The people of Kerala were very much agitated and many of them went into direct action and strongly demanded adequate supplies of foodgrains to Kerala. As a result of all these, Sir, some action was taken as is evident from the note prepared by the Kerala Government from which I would like to quote ;

"There was no immediate effect for these efforts. But it was helpful to create an understanding that when sufficient stock is available with the FCI, the Government of India should certainly issue the stock required for issuing ration continuously through the ration shops to maintain the supply of six ounces of rice and six ounces of wheat."

Sir, this was the understanding ; Six ounces of wheat and six ounces of rice. Let the Minister tell us what happened to his promise of six ounces of wheat and six ounces of rice to Kerala ? (*Time Bell rings*). Sir, I will take only five minutes more.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : You can take only two minutes more.

DR. K. MATHEW KURIAN : Sir, it is also interesting to note that the solemn promise of providing 12 ounces of foodgrains, whether it is rice or wheat or both, to the people of Kerala was broken and the people of Kerala were cheated during the last several years. Sir, one ounce is equal to 28.35 gms. and six ounces should be equal to 170.1 gms. In the name of supplying six ounces, the Government has been supplying foodgrains on the basis of 160 gms. rather than 170.1 gms. 12 ounces should amount to 340.2 gms. In fact, Sir, during the last several years, in the name of giving 12 ounces, they gave only 160 gms. on the basis of this theoretical calculation. What happened to the quantum of foodgrains which were denied to the people of Kerala on account of this wrong statistical calculation ? Sir, in place of five kgs. per head of wheat promised, a family in Kerala today gets hardly two kg.s. Instead of five kgs. per person, they get hardly two kgs. per family. Even on the basis of

160 gms., Kerala would require about 21,381 tonnes per week or 94,1 tonnes of rice for 31 days and an equal amount of wheat is also required. If the Minister has not told us what still he is going to take to ensure that solemn promise made to the people Kerala is fulfilled. Kerala cannot procure rice from the surplus States because of the zonal arrangements, would like to point out that with regard to wheat, the position is very precarious. Against a requirement of 50,000 tonnes per month at the rate of 80 gms. per adult per day, only quantity of 8,000 tonnes of wheat has been allotted by the Central Government in January, 1974.

Sir, we have really a very serious situation not only in the case of rice but also in the case of wheat. Though the rice quantum has been increased marginally, the Government has taken away the benefit in some other way. What is the net result of all these things ? I would say that we have explosive situation in Kerala. Even though the rice quantum has been increased marginally and also only temporarily, it must be noted that we are approaching the lean months now, 1 May-June-July period, which are going to be very difficult and the people Kerala live in a state of uncertainty to what will happen during this lean period. Sir, in the daily paper "Mathrubhoomi", run by the Congress there is a statement reported to have been made by the Food Minister Kerala, where he is reported to have stated that ..

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Will you stop now . . .

DR. K. MATHEW KURIAN : I am concluding . . . The wholesale take-over provided that the Central Government undertakes the responsibility of supplying 12 ounces of rice distribution through ration shops. I fortunately, Sir, the Food Minister Kerala, who is a Congress man, has lost his heart. He has not only been unsuccessful in getting something from the heartless Congress Government in the Centre, but he is a heart patient.

[Dr. K. Mathew Kurian]

convalescing in hospital. Sir, this is the situation. Then, Sir, there was a serious criticism in the Congress Working Committee in Kerala that despite a better agricultural crop in the country, the policy followed by the Central Government in the matter of supply of rice to Kerala is not correct...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Please wind up now. I have been giving you indications that you should wind up. . .

DR. K. MATHEW KURIAN : Therefore, I am winding up...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : You cannot continue like this. There is a limit. . .

DR. K. MATHEW KURIAN : In conclusion, I would like to point out that not only the Opposition parties but even the ruling party, the K.P.C.C., have condemned in unmistakable terms the callous attitude of the Central Government. Sir, 'Gujarat' will be repeated in Kerala, unless the Central Government acts and sees the writing on the wall, and ensures that Kerala, which contributes a substantial value in terms of foreign exchange to the nation because of its specialisation in cash crops, gets. . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Please sit down now. . . DR. K. MATHEW KURIAN : The Minister should tell us as to what happened to the allotments.

SHRI ANNASAH P. SHINDE : Sir, I have full sympathies as far the problems of Kerala brothers are concerned. . .

SHRI K. CHANDRASEKHARAN (Kerala) : Only sympathies ?

DR. K. MATHEW KURIAN : Only sympathy ? No food ?

SHRI ANNASAH P. SHINDE : The only thing is that my friend has been unnecessarily very harsh and also factually not correct. In fact, if we look into the statistics for the past few years, we find that progressively the allotments to Kerala from the Central pool have been increasing. That may .

not be to the full satisfaction of Kerala. That is a different matter. But to say that the Central Government is neglecting Kerala would not be correct. Sir, I have figures here. In 1970 the supply was 8 lakhs and 42 thousand; next year it was 8 lakhs and 57 thousand; then it went up to 9 lakhs and 32 thousand. In 1973, it is 9 lakhs and 43 thousand. Progressively, these have been going on increasing. Despite the fact that last year was a very difficult year, as far as the food problem of this country is concerned, and despite the fact that there were drought conditions, we have never neglected Kerala. Then, Sir, as far as the current allotments are concerned, if we look into the figures for January and February, this year, Sir, the allotments are marginally larger as compared to those of last January and February. Wheat has been reduced, but it has been supplemented by rice, because the main staple diet for the Kerala population is rice. And naturally we are anxious to supply as large a quantity of rice as possible for Kerala, and to that extent wheat has been reduced. But the total quantity that is being allotted has not been reduced. In fact, during the last two years the total quantum has marginally increased. Then, paradoxically the situation in the entire country is difficult. I know it is a plantation economy in Kerala. I am aware of some of the points mentioned by the honourable Member. I know Kerala makes a valuable contribution to the national economy by exporting plantation products. I do not deny it. Even though Kerala production is also progressively going up, unfortunately what is happening is procurement on the other side is also progressively going down year after year. This year according to the tentative estimates available with me the production figure is higher than in any previous year. . .

DR. K. MATHEW KURIAN : You will be aware of the yellow disease which spread on a large scale there.

SHRI ANNASAH P. SHINDE : I am not referring to this year's problem. Progressively over a number of

years production is going up; Central allocations are increasing marginally, but procurement is going down and this brings out some of the peculiar positions of management of food in this country. I would seek the cooperation of honourable Members because we are aware of the lean period which comes after June. In fact, our effort would be to step up allotment in those lean periods. I would only request my honourable friend not to pressurise the Central Government at this point of time. In fact, we are making arrangements to see that the stocks are augmented in Kerala, to see that stocks for a few months are maintained to meet the future requirements of Kerala. All these arrangements are being made. Therefore, let us not create an impression that Kerala would be neglected, that Kerala's requirements would not be looked after. We will continue to maintain supplies. No dislocation will be allowed to take place. Of course, the food situation is difficult everywhere, and we have to work under certain stresses and strains. I think the main difficulty is because of prices. It is part of the economy as a whole. And Kerala prices are higher. That really is hitting hard the consumers in Kerala. But we will try to see that adequate foodgrains are supplied to Kerala.

**श्री जगदीश प्रसाद माथर (राजस्थान) :**  
केरल में जो चावल की स्थिति पैदा हो गयी है, यह मुख्यतः 1964 में जो आपने सदरन जोन समाप्त किया था उसके कारण है। उस समय आपने एश्योरेस दिया था कि हम इस जोन को तो समाप्त कर रहे हैं चावल के, लेकिन हम केरल की जनता को 6 औंस चावल और 6 औंस गेहूं देंगे और उस एश्योरेस को आप कभी भी किसी भी वर्ष में पूरा नहीं कर पाये, उसका आप पालन नहीं कर पाये। आज वहाँ के लोगों को चार औंस चावल मिल रहा है और जिस प्रकार सदस्य महोदय ने कहा उससे भी खराब स्थिति वहाँ की है। तो क्या सरकार इस पर पुनर्विचार करेगी,

क्योंकि केरल चावल पैदा नहीं करता और आपने जैसी स्थिति वहाँ बना रखी उसके कारण ही यह गंभीर स्थिति वहाँ पैदा हो गयी है। सदरन जोन की पहले ज व्यवस्था थी उसमें जो चावल प्रोड्यूसिंग स्टेट्स थे, वह उसको फीड करते थे। तब क्या उस स्टेट्स का एक जोन बनाने की बात पर फिर सरकार विचार करेगी? और मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या केरल के गवर्नर ने भी यह सिफारिश की है कि केरल के चावल की समस्या का यही एक निदान है कि वहाँ सदरन जोन फिर कायम किया जाये। एफ० सी० आई० के चेयरमैन ने भी यही सुझाव दिया है। इसके अलावा पार्टियों ने भी, सी० पी० आई० और सी० पी० एम० ने भी माँग की है कि वहाँ के लिये जोन बनाया जाय। ऐसा होने से फ्री ट्रेड बढ़ेगा और वहाँ के लोग दूसरे स्टेट्स से चावल ले आयेंगे और यहाँ फ्री ट्रेड आपकी पालिसी में नहीं आता। लेकिन अगर केरल के लोग भूख न मरें और उनके खाने के लिये चावल मिले सरकार यह चाहती है तो क्या इसके लिये वह इस बात पर पुनः विचार करेगी कि वहाँ सदरन जोन बनाया जाय? क्योंकि तंजोर का जंडिस्ट्रिक्ट है, वहाँ चावल बड़ी मात्रा में पैदा होता है। लेकिन वह चावल केरल में नहीं आ सकता। और वहाँ के लोगों को वह इतना चीप पड़ता है कि उस चावल को वे अपने पशुओं को खिलाते हैं और वह चावल केरल के आदमी को खाने को नहीं मिलता। उस चावल के वहाँ पहुँचने का एक ही व्यवस्था है—स्मगलिंग और अगर केरल के लोग भूखों न मरना चाहें तो उनको वही करना पड़ता है। वहाँ आज गे भी मिलता है, लेकिन वह आपके द्वारा भेजा हुआ गेहूं नहीं मिलता। उनका ओपन मार्केट में गेहूं और चावल मिलता है और उसकी प्राइसेज बहुत हाई होती है इस समस्या का एक ही निदान है कि आ चावल का एक सदरन जोन बनायें और इस बा

[श्री जगदीश प्रसाद माथुर]  
की डिमांड भी केरल में है। वहाँ की जो रूलिंग पार्टी है उसकी भी यह डिमांड है, जो वहाँ की मुस्लिम लीग है उसकी भी यह माँग है और केरल कांग्रेस ने सुझाव दिया है। सारी पार्टियाँ सुझाव दे रही हैं कि इस समस्या का एक यही निदान हो सकता है। यह जो 1964 में आपने एश्योरेस दिया था कि 6 औंस चावल और 6 औंस गेहूँ आप वहाँ की जनता को देंगे, उसका पालन करने की स्थिति में आप आयेँ उसके लिये आप यह कार्य करें, तभी वहाँ की स्थिति ठीक होगी, अन्यथा जो स्थिति वहाँ पैदा हुई है उसके लिए हर महीने कोई न कोई मंत्री यहाँ आता है और एश्योरेस देता है कि सैन्ट्रल गवर्नमेंट कुछ देने वाली है, पर वह जैसा एश्योरेस पूरा नहीं होता है। जैसा कि कुरियन साहब ने कहा कि केरल की स्थिति भयंकर होती जा रही है और जिस प्रकार गुजरात में अनाज के अभाव की स्थिति पैदा हो गई वैसी स्थिति केरल में पैदा न हो जाए, यह डर है। अगर ऐसा हुआ तो इसकी जिम्मेदारी खाद्य मंत्रालय पर पड़ेगी और आप इस जिम्मेदारी से बच नहीं सकते। अन्त में मैं यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि इस स्थिति को सुधारने के लिये आप क्या उपाय करने जा रहे हैं।

SHRI ANNASAHAB P. SHINDE : Sir, at the national level, the zonal arrangements of rice appear to be working satisfactorily. But as far as the southern zone is concerned, of course, some of the points which the hon. Member has mentioned require some deep consideration. But ultimately any such arrangement can be reconsidered or rethought only in consultation with the concerned State Governments. I concede one point that when the southern zone as a single zone was constituted in the South, the conditions were different. At that time, Mysore was a deficit State. Even Tamil Nadu was a marginally deficit State. And only Andhra was a surplus State. Now the context has changed because Tamil

Nadu has become a surplus State; Mysore is also having a good year and it is now surplus; Andhra is surplus. Kerala is the only heavily deficit State. And naturally, some disadvantages are coming up as a result of these arrangements. Whether it can be reconsidered, etc. is a matter for future because the Government of India would not like to take an arbitrary decision in this matter without discussing with the State Governments concerned. But, in the meanwhile, what I would say is this. Take, for instance, Andhra. Because it is having a separate zone, they are having this year a very massive procurement and this massive procurement will help us to meet the reasonable requirements of Kerala. In Andhra, last year, for instance, there was a lot of dislocation of rail movement because of local agitation. But this year, the procurement is going on well this year. We are bearing in bute very substantially to the Central pool and the supplies from Andhra to Keraia are likely to be ensured very well this year. We are bearing in mind the points raised by the hon. Member, and naturally at appropriate stage, they will be discussed with the concerned Chief Ministers. The point is that we are keeping an open mind on many of these issues and I would only end up by saying that as far as the country as a whole is concerned, the massive rice procurement arrangements are continuing satisfactorily.

SHRI K. CHANDRASEKHARAN :

Sir, in the city of Calcutta, the statutory ration that is maintained is 12 ounces per adult per day. In the State of Kerala where there is statutory rationing throughout, the ration that has to be maintained is 12 ounces but the ration that has been promised to be maintained of late is six ounces per adult per day. And for that, a minimum of 85,000 tonnes of rice and 30,000 tonnes of wheat are required. The hon. Minister has referred to the fact that 8 to 9 lakh tonnes of foodgrains have been pushed into Keraia during the last three years but he has failed to take into account the fact that population has increased at the

rate of 3 per cent per annum. The hon. Minister also would give<sup>^</sup> only the statistics for the whole year, but the monthly requirements and the weekly requirements are not being met. For example, Sir, in March and April, 1973, we got 60,000 tonnes of rice and 7,000 tonnes of wheat. For the period from May to November, 1973, we got about 45 to 50 thousand tonnes of rice p.m. In December, 1973 and January, 1974, we were given 65,000 tonnes and 72,000 tonnes of rice respectively, and 8,000 tonnes of wheat. It will be seen from these figures that the rice and the wheat given are absolutely inadequate to meet the weekly and monthly requirements. And, therefore, many times the rationing system has failed completely provoking agitations, strikes and other protests by all the employees including Railway employees. Sir, under these circumstances it is necessary to point out that it is not as if the F.C.I. godowns in Kerala are without any stocks. The hon. Minister indicated that the Government of India is proposing to increase the stocks in the F.C.I. godowns. I do not know why the available stocks are not being used properly and adequately for meeting the requirements. I would like to have an explanation from the hon. Minister as to why we were given during the months of December, 1973 and January, 1974 only 8,000 tonnes of wheat and why we have not been given during 1973-74 the requirement of 85,000 tonnes of rice. May I suggest to the hon. Minister to see that the stocks in the F.C.I. godowns are utilised properly. If that is not possible, Sir, measures of a more serious nature will have to be thought of.

Sir, it has to be seen as to why the State of Kerala with its large exports > should not be allowed to import its own rice. In view of the Statement made by the hon. Minister it has to be considered why there should not be a single southern zone for the purposes of food and the inter-State restrictions that now exist are not completely taken away as three out of the four States in the South have now become surplus States.

4-19RSSJ74

SHRI ANNASAH P. SHINDE: Sir, about the zonal arrangements I have already clarified the position earlier. This will require the concurrence of the various State Governments and naturally we are reviewing the position from time to time. No new steps can be taken at the present moment because it cannot be done in the midst of a season. Naturally, a review of the position can be done only when the next rice crop is ready.

Sir, as far as the allotments are concerned, I stated that we will ensure that adequate stocks are maintained in Keraia, particularly during the lean periods. The allotments are stepped up in the interests of meeting the reasonable requirements of Kerala. Now, my friend is asking as to why we are only stocking and not distributing whatever is available with us there. If we distribute all the stocks that are available and do not keep any reserve, I think we will not be in a position to manage the food economy at all-in fact, if we have stocks in the postharvest period, they have to be most judiciously utilised. We have to conserve and augment them if necessary for the lean periods.

SHRI K. CHANDRASEKHAR<sup>^</sup>: When there are sufficient stocks in the godowns in Kerala why are they not being distributed? As it is, people are made to starve.

SHRI ANNASAH P. SHINDE: Do you want to suggest that no stock should be kept there? After all they are national stocks. We have to use them judiciously. There is more demand than supply. Naturally, we have to use them judiciously. If the stocks are not kept there and if some dislocation takes place or a railway strike takes place what will happen? The result will be that Keraia people will suffer. We are keeping the stocks there only in the interests of the Kerala people. If all the stocks that are kept there are distributed immediately, what will happen in the least! period? So, we have to be very careful in this and I would urge very humbly on my senior colleagues who raised this

[Shri Annasaheb P. Shinde]

question that agitations will not in any way help us to solve our difficulties. They will only add to the suffering of the people. That has been our experience in Gujarat and elsewhere. So, I would appeal very humbly, particularly the Members coming from Kerala that they should not introduce the element of agitation while pleading for their right for more food. So far as we are concerned, we are here to help and therefore there should be no misunderstanding on the score at all.

SHRI NIREN GHOSH (West Bengal) : Sir, I want to make a submission. Before the elections the Government loosened its purse strings in U.P. Why cannot something of that nature be thought of in case of Kerala also.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : It is no submission.

DR. V. A. SEYID (Kerala) : The Centre has always been extremely generous to Kerala in the matter of sympathies. When they were supplying six ounces of rice and other food—\*rains they were extending sympathies in 12 ounces. But I must say that the balance is in favour of the Centre because of their difficulties—they had considerable difficulties—procurement difficulties lack of stocks and various transport difficulties—and we completely sympathise with them. As a matter of fact, we were extending sympathies to them to the extent of 14 ounces when they were extending sympathies to us to the extent of only 12 ounces.

The one important factor which I wanted to stress is this : The main difficulty arose on two occasions—in last May and January. What happened in May was, suddenly two days before the end of May, around the 28th, in-<sup>1</sup>formation was sent to the State Government saying that stocks will not be available and so the entire supply system went out of gear. The Food- Minister of Kerala has recently stated that two days before the end of January information came from the Centre saying that they will reduce the supply

public importance

of rice from 85,000 tonnes to 63,000 tonnes and of wheat to 8,000 tonnes. This sort of sudden information coming from the Centre that they were going to cut supply within two days has completely upset the whole distribution system. But, at the same time, I must thank Central Government, particularly Mr. Shinde personally, he had been very very adjustable, very kind and sympathetic. He had, on two occasions or on more than two occasions, allowed us in such situations to make adjustments from the stocks available.

One thing more which I wanted to point out is the difficulties which Dr. Kurian pointed out and which appeared in the *Mathrubhoomi*—which Dr. Kurian wrongly qualified "run by the Congress"; it is not run by the Congress; that is a different matter. There some figures were published on the 28th January—that instead of 170 grams the Centre was actually supplying 160 grams. The Minister may be pleased to state categorically whether the statement which is published in the paper and repeated on the floor of this House by Dr. Kurian is correct. If that is true, then that is a deplorable "state of affairs. After all, we are getting only six ounces according to their own estimate and then to deprive the poor and starving people by some sort of a sleight of hand of 10 grams will be very deplorable, and people will be entitled to say that they were being cheated straightway to the extent of ten grams. This is a matter which the Minister should be pleased to look into and rectify the position if that is so.

There is one more point which I want to mention. (*Time bell rings*) Recently the Opposition parties threatened with pillage and takeover of the godowns where the stocks are lying. I hope it is a more threat and they would not carry it out. As the Minister has pointed out, such acts would only create chaos and conditions where even the six ounces which we are now getting will not be available. That will only create dislocation of supplies and the entire distribution system will break down. I hope they would not

carry out the threat and I would request them not to do it.

SHRI ANNASAHAB P. SHINDE : I am glad the hon. Member has brought out this point very forcefully— that no agitational approach should be resorted, to. We are in a democratic set-up and we may have political differences, but in order to settle political scores, foodgrain morchas, etc., are not desirable; they will only add to the hardship, I entirely agree with the view expressed by the hon. Member.

In order to put the record straight, I might say that as far as the Chief Minister and Food Minister of Kerala are concerned, they are second to none in pressing their case before the Central Government. "They have been repeatedly coming to us, even arguing with us and pressing for more allotments. Therefore, they have never been at fault as far as representation of Kerala's case before the Central Government is concerned. About the particular figures, since I have not got the exact version that came in *Mathru Bhoomi* it will not be appropriate on my part to comment on them. If the hon. Member sends me an extract perhaps it may enable me to scrutinise it and find out whether the figures quoted are correct or not.

As far as food supplies are concerned, I would reiterate that we will continue to attend to Kerala's problems continuously. We are constantly in touch with the Kerala Government and we shall see that there is no lack of sympathy at our end to meet the reasonable requirements to the extent possible within our limits.

SHRI V. V. SWAMINATHAN (Tamil Nadu) : When Members from Kerala stressed and stated that they are not able to get even 6 oz. of rice and 1 oz. of wheat the Minister said that the Centre should not be pressurised. I want to know when Tamil Nadu and Andhra are surplus States and they are able to supply food to Kerala why should the Centre be stiff and frown upon the sister States which are adjacent to Kerala and which can supply food to Kerala State? The two States

must be allowed to negotiate between themselves so that Kerala can get rice. As my friend, Mr. Chandrasekharan said Kerala is the State which gives a lot of foreign exchange to the Central Government. The Central Government must enable negotiations between Tamil Nadu and Kerala and between Andhra and Kerala or the Central Government must create special circumstances and permit Kerala to import food because we cannot satisfy the people's stomachs with statistics. We had been to Ernakulam in the first week of February to take evidence on the Indian Penal Code (Amendment) Bill and we actually saw the people suffering from shortage of rice.

SHRI K. CHANDRASEKHARAN : You yourselves could not get.

SHRI V. V. SWAMINATHAN : Yes; we ourselves suffered in the MLA's Hostel. So when Members of Parliament from Kerala want to bring this to the notice of the Central Government the Food Minister should not think that they are pressurising him. What is the difficulty which the Central Government feels in allowing Tamil Nadu to supply food to Kerala after mutual negotiations? The Tamil Nadu Government has fulfilled the quota prescribed by the Government. The FCI has collected more than what has been prescribed for Tamil Nadu. When over and above levy we have enough to send to Kerala, I do not understand why the Central Government is not willing to permit Tamil Nadu and Andhra to negotiate with the sister State for the supply of foodgrains. Really we cannot keep quiet when the sister State is suffering. As has been pointed out by our learned friends from Kerala there is no guarantee that what happened in Gujarat will not be repeated in Kerala also.

In this connection I also want to bring to the notice of the Food Minister, as in Kerala there is shortage of wheat in Tamil Nadu also and people are suffering. Only 9,000 tones have been supplied. Hostels, Hospitals, Bakeries and even patients suffering from diabetes are not able to get wheat. I would request him to see that sufficient wheat supply is

[Shri V. V. Swaminathan]

rushed to Tamil Nadu and also allow negotiations to be held between the States in the South for supply of more food, to Kerala or create special circumstances that would permit Kerala to import food.

SHRI ANNASAH P. SHINDE: I am very happy that my Tamil Nadu friends are so very sympathetic to the cause of Kerala.

SHRI V. V. SWAMINATHAN: Why? We actually gave; it is not mere sympathy in words.

SHRI ANNASAH P. SHINDE: But he is propagating a very dangerous principle of negotiating foodgrains on a State to State basis.

SHRI K. CHANDRASEKHARAN: The basic principle he has stated and it is for you to.....

SHRI ANNASAH P. SHINDE: I shall give him a concrete proposition, and let him agree to it,

SHRI K. CHANDRASEKHARAN: Why don't you say...

SHRI ANNASAH P. SHINDE: You just listen. To bring in parochialism and to ask for negotiations between State and State as if this is not one country is a very dangerous thing to do.

DR. K. MATHEW KURIAN: He did not say that.

SHRI ANNASAH P. SHINDE: The food management of this country is one and indivisible. Suppose Tamil Nadu is interested in handing over substantial quantities to Kerala what is the harm in their handing over the stocks to the Centre? Every single tonne that the Tamil Nadu Government would hand over to us we will see that it is passed on to Kerala. So, what is the harm in passing it on to the Central pool? I am sorry to say that despite a very bumper crop in Tamil Nadu, procurement is not satisfactory. We are very unhappy with it, though the Tamil Nadu Government has been co-operating with us in general in regard to the

food economy, but then I would put a very embarrassing question to my Tamil Nadu friend. Why do you resist it? Why not Tamil Nadu and Kerala from one zone, so that my Kerala friends can get the benefit? For instance, the price of rice in Tamil Nadu is from Rs. 1.20 to 1.35, whereas in Kerala it ranges between Rs. 2.60 and Rs. 2.95. Now, if you have really sympathy for Kerala and if you want to share in their difficulties, why are you resisting the suggestion of food being shared between Kerala and Tamil Nadu? It is a very parochial approach. Therefore, I would appeal, through you, to him that he should persuade the Tamil Nadu Government, so that Tamil Nadu and Kerala can be one as far as the rice zone is concerned and perhaps much of the suffering and hardship could be avoided...

SHRI K. P. SUBRAMANIAM MENON (Kerala): Without Andhra joining, it will not work.

SHRI ANNASAH P. SHINDE: We will persuade Andhra. To advise is, very easy but when it comes to a little sacrifice for the neighbouring State, then you have many reservations. So, it is all right advising me saying why not allow it from State to State. I would suggest to my Tamil Nadu friend to persuade his Government to make maximum contribution to the Central pool, so that with the help of the contribution from Tamil Nadu in particular we will be in a position to step up supplies to Kerala.

SHRI ABU ABRAHAM (Nominated): Most of the important points, have been covered by the hon. Members who spoke before me, but I would like to make just a few general observations. One important fact about Kerala is that it is the only State in the country which has a complete network of ration shops. This in itself is a great achievement, but, on the other hand, it makes the State vulnerable because it is entirely dependent on what it can get from the Centre. It cannot buy food in the open market at any price that is demanded without wrecking the whole system of ration shops.

*public importance*

Sec&ndly, as Dr. Kurian has pointed out, Kerala has a very high and impressive record of exports, cash crops, fish, coir, rubber and ail kinds of things. It is the largest foreign exchange earner among the States. I should say they have a right to expect a bit more generosity from the Central Government. Then, again, the State which has made the greatest progress in socialist planning and development is Kerala, whether you take fisheries or rural development, housing or education or land reforms. In other words, everything that the Central Government has been threatening to do but has not done, Kerala has largely succeeded in doing or at least in making a good beginning. Therefore, it seems to me to be particularly unfortunate that Kerala has to be continuously begging for food'. This is not a new situation. Every year, every month people have to come from Kerala to beg of the Central Government to give them a bit more food. It is a kind of hand-to mouth living. This has gone on for a very long time. Everyone knows that Kerala cannot produce enough food to feed its own people. So, I think the Central should now sit down and look at the problem in such a way as to make a certain realistic and steady arrangement for meeting Kerala's usual requirements.

Lastly, there is a general feeling in Kerala and in some other parts of Southern India that the Centre neglects these regions. This is particularly so in Kerala because I find in Kerala that wherever you go people complaining that the Central Ministers seldom visit the State. Even Members of the Planning Commission do not go there to look at the many impressive things that are happening in Kerala. This feeling of neglect is potentially very dangerous. I would request the Government not to ignore it. If at all the problem has survived thus far it is only because of other things that people get to eat like potatoes, bananas and so on. Had it not been for this kind of extra food that one can find in Kerala, the situation would have already been as bad as Gujarat. Thank you.

SHRI ANNASAHAB P. SHINDE: I can only say that so far as the Government of India is concerned there is absolutely no feeling in any way of neglecting the cause of Kerala or of not attending to the problems of Kerala. If that impression is there, I seek the cooperation of hon. Members to remove that impression.

SHRI K. CHANDRASEKHARAN: When did you last go to Kerala?

SHRI ANNASAHAB P. SHINDE: I am prepared to go to Kerala with you.

SHRI K. CHANDRASEKHARAN: I think I saw you three years back.

DR. K. MATHEW KURIAN: Why not tomorrow?

SHRI ANNASAHAB P. SHINDE: If my going there is going to help, I am prepared.

SHRI K. CHANDRASEKHARAN: Yes.

SHRI ANNASAHAB P. SHINDE: I welcome your suggestion, and thank you for your suggestion.

SHRI UMASHANKER JOSHI (Nominated): They are creating a menace.

DR. K. MATHEW KURIAN: They can go to Kerala after Gujarat.

SHRI ANNASAHAB P. SHINDE: The only statement that I am making is this. Despite a very difficult situation in the country during the last 18 months, we have seen to it that the maximum allotments were made to Kerala. While the country's situation was very bad, we had not reduced their requirements even marginally but we had marginally increased them. This should remove our Kerala friends' misunderstanding that Kerala's cause is being neglected.

SHRI N. H. KUMBHARE (Maharashtra): The hon. Minister has given us a comparative picture of the allotment made last year and that has been made in the current year and he has shown us that the allotment has been

[Shri N. H. Kumbhare]

considerably improved. None the less, as one can understand from the Note circulated by the Keraia Government, in spite of the improvement in the allotment they were forced to cut down the quantity of ration that was being supplied to the people there. So, I fail to understand how, despite all the improvement in the allotment, the people were not given the quantity that was being supplied. The overall position as regards food appears to be somewhat satisfactory. If that is so, the allotment could certainly be more liberal. The other day we discussed the food problem of Maharashtra and there are States where the problem of scarcity of food is chronic. In such a case, we naturally expect that if there is a hard-ship arising out of the shortage of food grains, let that hardship be borne by each and every citizen, irrespective of the State, to which he belongs equitably. That should be the broad principle.

The other point is, when the supply is reduced, the poor sections of the society are hit hard. When the poor man goes to the market he finds that he is required to pay more, double the price, for the same quantity of food. So, my suggestion would be that those who are in a better position to pay more price which they are doing now—in Bombay we find that rice is available for Rs. 5 per kg. That means the people there have got so much ample money with them that they are prepared to pay any price—should purchase their requirements in the open market. Why should we take care of those rich people? We need not give them anything. When there is so much rise in price, because of the easy money they have got, they can afford to purchase, and we should not take care of them, but should take due care of the vulnerable sections who are the worst affected people by the price rise in foodgrains.

SHRI ANNASAHAB P. SHINDE: I am inclined to agree with the hon. Member when he says that the national availability of food has to be com-

monly shared and there should be an equitable distribution of the available foodgrains. In fact, even his point as to why the richer sections of the society should be supplied with foodgrains at controlled rates was one of the suggestions which were thrown out in one of the reports of the Agricultural Prices Commission also. The Government of India have posed some administrative difficulties in implementing this but this is a suggestion which can again be considered so that we are in a position to concentrate on meeting the requirements of the vulnerable sections of the society.

As far as Kerala is concerned, I may inform the hon'ble Member that the largest percentage of population is covered under the public distribution system the purpose of which is mainly to help the poorer sections of the society.

SHRI K. P. SUBRAMANIA MENON : Sir, whatever the Minister may say about the statistics of supply of food, the fact remains that this year unusually, even in January, the prices have shot up in the open market because the ration has not been able to keep up to the needs of the people. Another reason this year is that there was widespread attack by the pest called brown hopper on the paddy fields, and lakhs of acres of paddy fields had to be burnt because this pest has destroyed the whole thing. Therefore, the situation is already serious. I would, therefore, tell the Minister that irrespective of what the figures show the problem is that the prices are still very high and unless the rationing system is kept properly oiled and well fed with rice and wheat, things will not improve. The wheat supply has been negligible, namely, 8,000 tonnes during the last two or three months. What can people do with this? Out of this 6,000 tonnes goes to the flour mills for making atta. So the wheat supply is very negligible, it is defective. Therefore, I would suggest that he should step up the supply of wheat as also see to it that 85,000 tonnes of rice is regularly given to the State.

SHRI ANNASAH P. SHINDE : Sir, we are aware of some setback to production because of some disease reported to my Ministry. As far as supplies are concerned, we propose to maintain the current level of supply of 70-72 thousand tonnes of rice. And we are thinking that particularly in the lean period we would make our best endeavour to see that the supplies for Kerala are stepped up.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : We will take up the Railway Budget in the afternoon. Dr. Alva will continue. The House stands adjourned till 2 P.M.

The House then adjourned for lunch at fifty-eight minutes past twelve of the clock.

The House reassembled, after lunch, at four minutes past two of the clock, *Mr. Deputy Chairman* in the Chair.

#### **THE BUDGET (RAILWAYS) 1974-75** **General Discussion—Contd.**

DR. K. NAGAPPA ALVA (Karnataka) : Mr, Deputy Chairman, Sir, as a member of the Railway Convention Committee I had the opportunity of touring the south, and had also the great opportunity of visiting important centres of railway activity, and more than that, the pilgrimage centres, last month. Sir, we went to Kanyakumari and the Rock Memorial of Swami Vivekananda; we went to Dhanushkodi and also to Rameswaram. At all these three places, I prayed; I prayed for wisdom to dawn on this Government so that there may be efficient working of the railway system which is the life-line and which concerns with the all-round development of this country. Sir, I had bath along with my friend at the Dhanushkodi confluence. In all these places my prayer was for peace and tranquility in this country so that the leaders and particularly the political leadership, may act quickly and save this country from economic ruin and political crisis.

Indian Railways have played a significant role even during Britishers'

days. After Independence, there has been so much of expansion. Their role during the war was not only significant, but it was a noble role. Railways have to play a great role. It is a labour-oriented and development oriented public sector concern. It is the greatest public utility service concern. Unfortunately, this Department is not being taken seriously by the Government. Efficient functioning of the Railways has a direct bearing on the national economy and all-round national development. This aspect has been forgotten by the Government. It is only through the Railways that imbalances can be set right and inequalities also be set right to a large extent. It is the declared policy of the Government that backward areas will be developed through industrialisation. This is possible only if railway connections are given to these industrial centres. But, Sir, what do we see today ? We see only that things are getting from bad to worse. During the last three years, things have been deteriorating very fast. There is inefficiency and there are losses everywhere and the people's confidence is shaken. It looks rather funny and awkward that the Government has to come before the Parliament with a Budget through which they have to increase the passenger fares every year and the jugglery adopted in the Budget is to make up for the losses and to get more money. The Fifth Plan outlay for 1974-75 is Rs. 368 crores and the gross traffic receipts for 1974-75 are of the order of Rs. 1,290.77 crores and the working expenses are estimated at Rs. 1,148.37 crores. The losses are shown to be of the order of Rs. 200 crores. The aggregate liability is of the order of Rs. 252.43 crores. This clearly shows that the indebtedness to the General Revenues has increased faster. Of course, the Budget Speech of the Railway Minister was a lengthy OK because it had to include certain explanations for certain things.

Sir, we have to blame the Railway Ministry to some extent. But we have to blame more the Central Government, also and the Central leadership. I feel very strongly that the Central