

of the world. If I think Mr. Swaran Singh should have come and made a statement on this matter. You have not accepted my Calling Attention Notice. I do not know why it is not being accepted in this manner. We protest against this and the behaviour of the Government not to have accepted the Calling Attention Notice of such a vital importance. We have been pressing for this ever since the beginning of the Session; it has not been accepted. Parliament has not been given opportunity to take up the matter in a befitting manner in order to agitate the world public opinion in our favour and in favour of all the countries threatened by the U.S.A.

REFERENCE TO DEMAND FOR REVISION OF PAY SCALES IN PROVIDENT FUND ORGANISATION

DR. K. MATHEW KURIAN (Kerala) : Sir, I wish to bring to your notice and to the notice of the hon'ble Minister, Shri Raghunatha Reddy, who is here that despite repeated memoranda and agitations by the employees of the Provident Fund Organisation no effective steps have so far been taken to implement the decisions taken.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : I find that the hon'ble Minister has been re-elected despite the campaign against him. Here are the photographs of Shri Umashankar Dikshit as an independent candidate. I do not know how Mr. Umashankar Dikshit appeared as an independent candidate in the Andhra Pradesh campaign. Dr. Kurian, you should mention this thing. Poor chap escaped somehow or the other.

DR. K. MATHEW KURIAN : You have already mentioned it.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : On a point of order, I have great respect for Mr. Chavan. He is very interested in seeing it. He should certainly see this thing. It is an election campaign pamphlet for Mr. Ali Siddiqi saying "Cast your first preference vote in favour of Mr. Ali Siddiqi". And he is photographed with Mr. Umashankar Dikshit. You seem to be missing here, Mr. Chavan.

DR. K. MATHEW KURIAN : Regarding revision of pay scales in the Provident Fund Organisation, the All-India Provi-

dent Fund Federation of India, has submitted a memorandum containing a 20-point charter of demands regarding the pay scales.

The Federation has suggested that the need-based minimum wage should be implemented. As an interim measure the pay scales should be revised and put on par with the pay scales in the S.T.C. and the M.M.T.C. The Central Board of Trustees had appointed a sub-committee. The sub-committee, I understand, has already submitted the report. Despite the fact that the C.B.T. has taken certain decisions, I understand that the Government has not yet issued any orders or has not taken any final decision regarding the revision of pay scales of the provident fund employees. I request the hon'ble Minister to urgently look into the matter and to implement the higher pay scales for the employees of the Provident Fund Organisation. I would also urge upon the Government to accept all the other legitimate demands put forward by the Progressive Provident Fund Federation of India including the need-based minimum wage, bonus for all and recognition of the Federation.

In this connection I would also like to invite the attention of the Minister, since he is here, that on 20-10-73 the All-India Insurance Employees Association had entered into an agreement with the General Insurance Corporation but I understand that due to the inability of the Government to take any decision or because of the Government plea that the Government is not agreeing to the revised dearness allowance and scales this agreement could not be implemented. I would request the hon'ble Minister of Labour to personally look into this matter and at least ensure that the agreement entered into between the employees and the management is implemented particularly in the case of Provident Fund employees. That the revised pay scales are immediately implemented because many of the Central Government employees have already got the benefit of the third Pay Commission's recommendations. Now this is an issue which is pending. If agitations have to be avoided the Government should act expeditiously; otherwise, I am afraid, the employees will be compelled to go into direct action on this issue. Since the Minister is here he should be able to enlighten us.

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR
(SHRI K. V. RAGHUNATHA REDDY :
I have already spoken to the hon'ble
Member.

REFERENCE TO FOOD SITUATION IN WEST BENGAL

SHRI KALI MUKHERJEE (West Bengal) : I beg to mention about the food situation that is prevailing in the State of West Bengal. The West Bengal Government day before yesterday decided to cut the rations particularly rice, in the statutory rationing area which covers 120 lakhs of people particularly in the Greater Calcutta area, the Calcutta industrial belt and other industrial areas like Durgapur, Assansol etc. Sir, it is also reported in the newspapers that there have been a few starvation deaths which issue was taken up by the West Bengal Legislature and there was a discussion on this question.

Sir, the price of rice in West Bengal, particularly in the city, is Rs. 4.50 per KG. And as reported in the newspaper in the villages it is Rs. 3.90 per KG., in West Dinajpur, the borders of Bangla Desh.

From one kilogramme the ration was brought down to 750 grammes, that is, a 25% cut. And you very well know, Sir, that even one kilogramme was insufficient and it has been further cut down.

Sir, I would like to mention here a few facts for your consideration and through you of the Government's consideration. It is a fact that the Chief Minister of West Bengal, along with the Food Minister, came to Delhi last week and tried his best to take the food quota as was permitted last year and the year before last as well. It was refused and due to the refusal of the Centre to provide the necessary rations this cut has been made. That has to be taken basically into consideration.

Sir, we should remember—and I would like to place it before you—that West Bengal is a State which produce agricultural products like jute and tea which give the nation about Rs. 450 crores per year. Sir, here I would like to mention a few simple figures :

Jute sown on land

1947—2.49 lakh acres

1970—11.61 lakh acres

1973—13.53 lakh acres

Similarly, for the purpose of earning hard currency through export of tea for the development of the nation as a whole, West Bengal is sacrificing by taking over land for the purpose of growing tea plantations to grow more tea.

Along with that now you see the population growth. In 1947 the population was 2 crores and 5 lakhs: in 1971, 4.80 crores; now it is 5 crores. Out of this, 55 lakhs of the population consists of displaced persons who have come down from East Bengal (Bangladesh now) to West Bengal.

(Time Bell rings.)

Taking all these into consideration it was the responsibility of the Centre to feed West Bengal and give them the required quota of rations and supply it properly. They should take the responsibility which is a national responsibility. Sir for the purpose of earning foreign exchange West Bengal is producing more jute and tea and land meant for paddy and wheat is gradually being reduced since 1947 to a considerable extent and the nation is starving and going to starve to death.

Sir, there is another point I would like to mention.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : You may end now.

SHRI KALI MUKHERJEE : Due to bungling of food purchases and food distribution we have got a shortage of four millions now and we will have to pay through our nose fifteen or sixteen crores of rupees. We did not buy food at the proper time as China bought or Russia bought during the hot war in Vietnam, Laos, etc. Because of the bungling of the policy at the proper time and because you failed to buy food, you could not feed the country. Then why should people forget and forgive us, forgive the party in power? For violence and other things our friends गौ का भक्त are getting opportunites and these are the people taking the greatest advantage of the situation because of the mismanagement in certain parts, because of bungling in food distribution and because you did not buy food in proper time.