

**CALLING ATTENTION TO A
MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC
IMPORTANCE**

**SITUATION ARISING OUT OF NONAVAILABILITY
OF FOODGRAINS IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE
COUNTRY**

SHRI V. K. SAKHLECHA (Madhya Pradesh): Sir, I beg to call the attention of the Minister of Agriculture to the situation arising out of non-availability of foodgrains in sufficient quantity in various parts of the country and their soaring prices.

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED):

Sir, the food situation in the country came under considerable stress and strain in 1972 on account of a setback in foodgrains production of nearly 4 million tonnes in 1971-72 and more particularly because of the extensive damage to the 1972-73 crops resulting from erratic and scanty rainfall and the prevalence of severe drought conditions in several parts of the country. Scarcity conditions were experienced in varying degrees in a number of States.

Market arrivals were lower and an upward pressure on foodgrains prices was witnessed almost throughout the country. There was a seasonal fall during October-December 1972 but the prices have shown almost a continuous upward trend since then.

[MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair.]

The price rise was more pronounced in the case of coarse cereals. The latest cereal index (at the end of June, 1973) was higher than last year by 14.7 per cent. Prices of gram and other pulses are also higher than last year.

The rise in prices of foodgrains has been a matter of great concern to the Government and they are fully aware of the hardship caused to the people.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA (West Bengal): On a point of order. The hon'ble Minister cannot mislead the House. He said that "the rise in prices of foodgrains has been a matter of great concern to the Government". But there is no visible evidence of it.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Let him continue.

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED:

The Government have, therefore, taken a number of steps to check the rise in prices. To meet the increasing demand of foodgrains of the State Governments the releases of foodgrains through the fair price shops have been considerably stepped up. The distribution during 1972 was nearly 10.5 million tonnes as against 7-8 million tonnes in 1971. During the first six months of the current year 5.7 million tonnes of foodgrains have been distributed as against 4.4 million tonnes during the corresponding period of last year.

Allocations of foodgrains to State Government have been stepped up considerably for the last two months to enable the State Governments to meet the reasonable demands of the public distribution system. In order to increase the availability of foodgrains to meet the increasing demands at reasonable prices, several steps including the take-over of wholesale trade in wheat have been taken to intensify the procurement within the country. The steps have been suitably supported by anti-hoarding and other regulatory as also austerity measures so as to create conditions favourable for reaching reasonable stability in the prices of foodgrains. The control over advances against foodgrains has been tightened and the banks have been advised to pursue a policy of cautious lending. The Government of India have taken all necessary steps in co-operation with the State Governments to organise Kharif production programme during the current season. Besides, foodgrains are also being imported in order to replenish and build up stocks with the public agencies. However, if the monsoon conditions prove to be favourable, with the measures already taken by the Government, the situation should be well under control.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Sakhlecha.

SHRI N. G. GORAY (Maharashtra): Sir, before the discussion starts, I would like to point out one thing. This is a very important statement and this is a very important question- We would like to know whether copies of such a statement should not have been circulated before so that we can pinpoint our questions.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, no.

SHRI N. G. GORAY: That is number one. Number two, will you not allow a long discussion on this? It is such an important issue that it is going to affect the entire life of the nation. Everybody is worried about it. Why don't you give us time to discuss it in detail?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That is a separate question. You can give a separate motion. It is a Calling Attention Notice now.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: These matters should be discussed for a whole day; even two days should be devoted for a discussion on this subject.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Yes, you give a motion.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: This is a fantastic statement...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Bhupesh Gupta, you give a motion- It will be considered separately.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: That motion we have given, but they do not move.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We shall see that it is considered. Yes, Mr. Sakhle-cha.

श्री वीरेन्द्र कुमार सखलेचा : माननीय उपसभापति महोदय, देश के अन्दर जो खाद्यान्न की गम्भीर हालत है और आज पूरे देश के अनेक प्रदेशों के अन्दर इस प्रकार की गम्भीर हालत है कि लोग भूख के कारण मर रहे हैं। मैं श्रीमान का ध्यान केवल आज के अखबार के अन्दर जो बिहार के समाचार छपे हैं उनके बारे में दिलाना चाहता हूँ। बिहार में 50 लाख लोगों के मरने की नीवत आ गई है। बिहार राज्य नागरिक परिषद् के महासचिव और कांग्रेसी विधायक श्री राम लखन सिंह यादव ने बताया कि बिहार पुनः भयंकर अकाल के कगार

पर आकर खड़ा हुआ है। आज बिहार में यह स्थिति है।

श्रीमान्, आज ही के अखबार में यह खबर भी है बांदा के अन्दर स्वयं कांग्रेस के लोगों ने यह बयान दिया है कि वहां दो आदिवासी महिलाओं की भूख के कारण मृत्यु हो गई है। एक और लोग भूख से तड़प तड़प कर मर रहे हैं और दूसरी ओर मंत्री जी हमारे खाद्य मंत्री जी जिनके बारे में सारे देश के लोग जानते हैं कि इनकी गलत नीतियों के कारण इनके डिपार्टमेंट के भ्रष्टाचार के कारण आज पूरे देश में हाहाकार मची हुई है। लोगों को खाने के लिए नहीं मिल रहा है प्राइसेज इस कदर बढ़ती जा रही है। ऐसी हालत में भी ऐसे फेल्योर के अन्दर भी खाद्य मंत्री को अपनी कुर्सी पर बैठे रहने का कोई अधिकार नहीं है। एक और जनता भूख से मरती रहे और आप खुद अपनी कुर्सी से चिपके रहे यह ठीक नहीं है। खाद्य मंत्री जी को तुरन्त त्यागपत्र दे देना चाहिए और अगर प्रधान मंत्री महोदया कहती हैं कि मेरी गलती है तो उन्हें स्वयं भी त्यागपत्र दे देना चाहिए। अभी उन्होंने कल परसों ही कांग्रेस पार्टी के अन्दर जो स्टेटमेंट दिया है उसके अन्दर भी उन्होंने स्वीकार किया है कि इन्वीट टेकओवर सक्सेसफुल नहीं हुआ। यदि आपका यह कदम सक्सेसफुल नहीं हुआ तो उस नीति को त्यागते क्यों नहीं जिसके कारण आप लोगों को दो तीन किलो अनाज भी उपलब्ध नहीं करा सकते? खुले बाजार के अन्दर मोटे अनाज की ज्वार व मक्का दो सौ रुपये क्विंटल, ढाई सौ रुपये क्विंटल में बिक रहा है। तेल 9 रु० किलो भी लोगों को नहीं उपलब्ध हो रहा है। बाजार से

[श्री वीरेन्द्र कुमार सखलेचा]

वनस्पति गायब है। जीवन की सारी वस्तुयें गायब हैं। आपने जितने सारे क्लैम्स किये वे सारे धोये सोबित हुए हैं। आपने कहा कि प्रोडक्शन हमने इतना बढ़ा लिया है कि हम सैल्फ सफिशियेंट हो जायेंगे। आज आप कह रहे हैं कि हम विदेशों से इंपोर्ट करने की कोशिश कर रहे हैं। फूड मिनिस्ट्री ने बड़ा प्रचार किया कि हमने इमरजेंसी फूड ग्रेन ड्राइव किया है और 15 लाख टन प्रोड्यूस करेंगे। बाद में कहने लगे कि 4 लाख टन अनाज का उत्पादन करेंगे और वह भी पूरा नहीं हुआ और आज देश की यह स्थिति पैदा हो गई है। मैं केवल एक उदाहरण देना चाहता हूँ।

माननीय उपसभापति महोदय अन्न को पैदा करने के लिए जिस खाद की आवश्यकता होती है फूड कारपोरेशन ने इतना बड़ा घोटाला उसमें किया है, उनकी फोटोस्टेट कार्डियां मेरे पास हैं, कि खाद के अन्दर दूसरी चीजें मिलाकर सैकड़ों बैगन्स भेजी गईं। उनको खोला गया तो उनके अन्दर मिट्टी भरी हुई पाई गई। इस तरह का भ्रष्टाचार फूड कारपोरेशन कर रहा है। उत्पादन बढ़ेगा कहां से? यह आपकी नीति के कारण है जिसके कारण देश में अनाज नहीं है, अभाव की हालत में लोग तड़प रहे हैं। और आपके ये जो क्लैम्स थे वे सारे थोड़े साबित हो चुके हैं। उपसभापति महोदय, मेरा खाद्य मंत्री से यह पूछना है कि दो तीन किलो अनाज देकर के कैसे लोगों का जीवन निर्वाह आप कर सकते हैं। जो दूकानदार हैं उनको आप अनाज उपलब्ध नहीं करा पा रहे हैं और बाजार में अनाज आ नहीं पा रहा है। आप के रेस्ट्रिक्शन के कारण महाराष्ट्र में ज्वार दो सौ ५० किंवटल

नहीं मिल रही है। क्या कारण है कि आपने इस तरह का रेस्ट्रिक्शन लगा कर के ज्वार के आवागमन को बन्द कर रखा है। जब लोग भूखों मर रहे हैं तो इस तरह के रेस्ट्रिक्शन का मतलब क्या है। इन्हीं सब कारणों से आज भाव आसमान को छू रहे हैं। क्या यह आप की इंफिशिएंसी का द्योतक नहीं है। इसी लिए मैंने खाद्य मंत्री जी से मांग की कि वे त्यागपत्र दे दें। श्रीमती इन्दिरा गांधी जी ने कहा है : "We are wonderful people." इस लिए आप देश की जनता पर छोड़िये। उसके मार्ग में आप बाधक नहीं बनिये।

श्री फखरुद्दीन अली अहमद : सर, मालूम नहीं कि आनरेबिल मेम्बर किस चीज का जवाब चाहते हैं। उन्होंने बहुत लम्बी चीड़ी तकरीर की जिस में सिर्फ जनरेलाइजेशन उन्होंने किया। किसी एक बात का जिक्र उन्होंने नहीं किया जिस का मैं जवाब दूँ।

DR. K. MATHEW KURIAN (Kerala): What about starvation deaths? So many starvation deaths are reported everyday in the Press. So it is not a generalisation.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr Kur-ian, when Mr. Subramania Menon gets his chance, he will put all your questions.

श्री वीरेन्द्र कुमार सखलेचा : आन ए. प्वाइंट आफ आर्डर, सर। मेरा प्वाइंट आफ आर्डर यह है कि मंत्री जी बिल्कुल गलत स्टेटमेंट कर रहे हैं। मैंने यह पूछा है कि मध्य प्रदेश के किसानों के पास ज्वार सड़ रहा है और दूसरी तरफ रेस्ट्रिक्शन लगा कर के उसको महाराष्ट्र जाने नहीं दिया जा रहा है, तो क्या यह आप की नीति का परिणाम नहीं है।

श्री फखरुद्दीन अली अहमद : मैं फिर यह दोहराना चाहता हूँ कि जितना हमारा प्रोडक्शन हुआ है उसको महीने भर रखते हुये जितनी जरूरत पूरी की जा सकती थी हर एक स्टेट की उसको पूरा करने की कोशिश की गई है। मैंने अभी हाउस के सामने फीगर रखी जिस के जरिये से मैंने यह बताया कि पिछली जनवरी के आखिर तक जितना हमने गल्ला सितम्बर, 1972 से दिया है वह पिछले साल के मुकाबले में कहीं ज्यादा है। हमने करीब 60 लाख टन, 6 मिलियन टन के करीब गल्ला मुख्तलिफ स्टेट्स को दिया। जनवरी से ले कर अप्रैल तक काफी गल्ला, 50 लाख टन के करीब दिया गया है। मैं समझता हूँ कि मई से जून तक बल्कि जुलाई के महीने तक काफी गल्ला हम स्टेट्स को दे चुके हैं।

श्री वीरेन्द्र कुमार सखलेचा : फी हैड कितना राशन आप दे रहे हैं।

श्री फखरुद्दीन अली अहमद : वह हर एक स्टेट की अवैलिबिलिटी के ऊपर मुनहसिर है। जहाँ तक मेरा इल्म है पाँच किलो से ले कर आठ किलो तक दिया जाता है।

SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV: (Uttar Pradesh): You are giving a wrong statement.

SHRI N. G. GORAY: This is a wrong statement. Sir. The ration given is not more than two kilos per person. And he says five kilos and eight kilos. It is not true, Sir. Again, I would like to point out that in this statement there are many things which are misleading. These will have to be challenged.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Sir, I have a submission to make. It is very difficult for us to participate in this discussion with a fantastic statement of the kind that has been presented before the House. I suggest

that in future over a matter like this which is serious, the statement should be shown to you and you should be satisfied whether the statement is plausible at all and whether it can be presented to a House of this kind. Please read the statement. Does it bear any relation to the reality in life? You also live in the society.

SHRI N. G. GORAY: Sir, for instance, it is said that 14 per cent rise has taken place in cereals. Your people know at your home and my people know at my home that the rise is 100 per cent and 200 per cent and not 14 per cent. What is this statement?

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: I would like to point out that so far as we are concerned, we have given the correct statement of facts. I do not see any....

DR. K. MATHEW KURTAN: No, no. it is wrong.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: It is a statement of distortion. It is a distortion of facts.

DR. K. MATHEW KURIAN: If the Minister cannot distribute rice, at least let him give correct statistics.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please have some patience. Let him complete his reply.

DR. K. MATHEW KURIAN: Mr. Minister, wheat and rice you cannot procure; at least collect some correct statistics.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: The prices of grains and other pulses are also higher than last year. Is that the proof of your distribution? They are higher than last year. The Minister should tell us what the prices were last year.

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: I have already indicated that so far as cereals are concerned, they are higher by a certain percentage.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: In Delhi mustard oil is selling at Rs. 8, higher than last year.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please let him complete the answer. You cannot go on in this way.

SHRI MONORANJAN ROY (West-Bengal): What kind of answer is he giving? He is misleading the House.

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: I would like to point out to the house that we have to take into consideration the cereals which are supplied by the Government through fair price shops. And I would like the House to appreciate that while we are distributing cereals through the fair price shops, the figure was 1.25,000 in September .

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Your distribution is collapsing. What is the use of your saying "distributing through fair price shops"? Your distribution system is collapsing due to lack of supply.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Bhupesh Gupta, your name is there on the list and when you get your chance, you can ask all those questions. Why do you interrupt now?

SHRI MONORANJAN ROY: For the information of the Minister, per head ration is

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Roy, first listen to the Minister. He is giving you his information. First listen to it and then you can ask your questions.

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED:
Now the number of fair price shops has increased since September from 1,25,000 to 1,93,000.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: What about the supply? The Council of Ministers has been increased from 14 to 55. What of it? Has it been any the better now so far as supply is concerned?

SHRI KRISHAN KANT (Haryana): On a point of order. Sir, this is a very serious matter. When the Minister of Agriculture is mentioning about increase in (lie fair price shops, I would like to know from him how many fair price shops iherc are in the villages, in small towns, in Delhi, in Bombay, etc and whether

they are getting supplies at all. The Minister must also tell us about the prices as compared to the prices in the open market. Only then can we have confidence in the Government.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Krishan Kant, it is not a point of order.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT: But, Mr. Deputy Chairman, you should direct the Minister to let the House know the correct position.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA (Orissa): Sir, it is not a point of order, it is a point of fact, what Mr. Krishan Kant was asking.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: When the Minister finishes his reply, it is for the Members whose names are here to seek clarifications and ask for further information. It may be that they can challenge some of the facts or information given by the Minister. But we have to go in a particular order which we have set. You cannot go on rising on a point of order and asking questions.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT: As the guardian of this House, you should be equally concerned with the correctness of the information so that the people of this country get the correct information.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Let us listen to what he says.

SHRI MONORANJAN ROY: On a point or order. The hon. Minister was saying that he has raised the quota from

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: There is no point of order.

SHRI MONORANJAN ROY: May I ask the Minister .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No. Take your seat. I cannot allow you. If you continue, whatever you say will go off the record. Let the hon. Minister continue.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: Whenever there is a discrepancy about the procedure, there will be a point of order. When

there is discrepancy about facts, how do we get guided?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That is what I am trying to do. When your turn comes, you challenge all the facts that he has given.

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED:
So far as the Calling Attention is concerned, the hon. Members want to know what steps are the Government taking in order to make the foodgrains available and what steps have been taken by the Government in order to control the price of foodgrains. So far as availability of foodgrains is concerned, we have taken steps by increasing the number of foodgrains shops from 1.25,000 to 1.93,000... (Interruptions) Hon. Members are not prepared to listen

AN HON. MEMBER: How can we listen to these things?

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED:
Secondly, as compared to last year from the end of September till the beginning of January and so on, the offtake from the fair price shops was about 7.5 lakh tonnes every month. This year the offtake has been 10.5 lakh tonnes every month.

श्री नागेश्वर प्रसाद शाही : (उत्तर प्रदेश) : मैं, श्रीमन्, आपकी सहायता चाहता हूँ।

श्री उपसभापति : आपको कोई सहायता की जरूरत नहीं है। आपका नाम है, आप पूछने वाले हैं।

श्री नागेश्वर प्रसाद शाही : श्रीमन्, गोरखपुर में तीन हफ्ते से किसी भी दूकान को कोई राशन नहीं दिया गया है। मंत्री जी यहां कहते हैं कि हम सप्लाई करते हैं।

SHRI MAHAVIR TYAGI (Uttar Pradesh): I submit that the clarifications may be asked for after the Minister has completed his statement.

SHRI MONORANJAN ROY: He said that there is increased offtake. Where has this gone?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: If you persist in this, I will have to think of some other step.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: You name us and send us out. That will be better.

SHRI O. P. TYAGI (Uttar Pradesh): There are ration shops without rations.

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: Since the beginning of May, we have increased the supply to various States for the purpose of distribution through fair price shops. I would like the honourable Member to remember that if we take it at 50 kgs. per capita per year, then, you see, we are providing through fair price shops to about 210 million people. If you take the rate at one quintal per year, then more than 120 million people are being provided through these fair price shops. Now, this fact has to be taken into consideration and I would only like the honourable Member to remember that this difficulty has arisen because of the shortage of foodgrains in our country and because of that, action has been taken to see to what extent foodgrains production can be increased during the *rabi* season and also during the current *kharif* season and there has been some effect. This is so far as the steps taken already are concerned.

Now, so far as the prices in the open market are concerned, I can certainly place those figures before the House and the honourable Members can see to what extent there has been a rise in the prices of these items.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Yes, Mr. Subramania Menon.

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: I would also like to point out that the honourable Member has made allegations that there have been starvation deaths. I have been in close touch with all the State Governments and my information is that there has been no starvation deaths so far . . .

[Interruption]

SHRI MONORANJAN ROY: What is this statement? There have been no starvation deaths? It is known that starvation deaths are there.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Roy, your colleagues also should ask for clarification. Please sit down.

SHRI K. P. SUBRAMANIA MENON (Keraia): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I am surprised at the rather cavalier manner in which the Minister has been reeling out statistics while the people in the countryside are dying of hunger and starvation. As a matter of fact, in my own State the situation is very serious and that was why the Government itself was forced to close down all the schools and colleges in the State. It is because there is absolutely no rice available in the market and there is no wheat. Nothing is available. As a matter of fact, when the Southern Food Zone was disbanded, the Government of India had given an undertaking to the Kerala Government that they would supply to the population of Kerala enough rice to enable them to take 12 ounces of ration per day per person. But what is happening? The Central Government has not been giving enough rice to Kerala and especially in the lean months the people have to starve there and they are starving there. We have got a 50 % deficit there and everyone knows it. But we have got rubber, we have got tea, we have got coffee and we have got coconut and all these things are very useful for the economy of the whole country and, therefore, our people have to be supplied with rice by the Central Government. Otherwise, they cannot live. But, Sir, what is the fact? After February 1973, the Government of India was supplying 80,000 tonnes which is just enough to give a rice ration of six ounces, that is, 160 grams per person per day. It was cut down in March and April to 60,000 tonnes. In May it was further reduced to 45,000 tonnes. Now, in June, July and August, in these lean months in Kerala, when even in the ordinary non-ration shops you do not get foodgrains, precisely at this time when production is not there in Kerala, when the free market rice is not available, the Government of India imposes a further cut and today, Sir, even a three-ounce ration per person per day is not given. Not only that.

Sir, Even the allotted rice is not in fact given. That is the position. The Government of Kerala had informed at some meeting that even the quantity allotted is not supplied. In April last, 7,000 tonnes of wheat were allotted; only 4,140 tonnes were actually given. In May, 30,000 tonnes were allotted; but the receipts were short by 4,710 tonnes. In June, 35,000 tonnes were allotted; but the receipts were short by 7,500 tonnes. I mean, Sir, when the prices are rising, the FCI creates more problems. When there is enough rice or wheat in the godowns in Cochin, in Alleppey and Kottayam districts there is absolutely no rice and no ration at all, because the FCI is not taking enough steps to see that whatever there is distributed throughout the State properly.

This is the sorry state of affairs. As a result of this, it has been reported in the paper, that one or two weeks ago 13 persons in one taluk alone in Chirayinkil taluk died of starvation. The "Indian Express" dated 23rd July, 1973, has reported:

'Acute famine conditions have forced some poor families in Chirayinkil taluk of Trivandrum district to pawn down their ration cards for Rs. 10 to 12 to buy lopioca or other low priced foodstuffs....Mr. K. A-Sivarama Bharathi, Socialist Legislature Party leader in the Kerala Assembly, alleged that 13 starvation deaths had so far been reported from Chirayinkil....'

This is the situation. In my own place where fishermen and other such poor men live, so many starvation deaths have taken place. These are the starvation deaths of grown-up people. A number of children and tender babies die of malnutrition, insufficient food and all these. These are not reported. Therefore, our State is faced with a very serious situation. I would like to ask the Government of India as to what steps they are going to take to see that the people in Kerala get at least six ounces of rice ration per head per day in these lean months. Secondly, what steps are the Government of India going to take to see that whatever rice is allotted is regularly supplied? What steps is the Food Corporation of India going to take to see that it is properly distributed throughout Kerala?

Lastly, I would like to tell the Government that even if they have to import rice, they must do so to save people from starvation deaths.

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: Sir, I do not know if the hon. Member has lately been acquainted with what has happened in regard to the supply of rice and wheat so far as Kerala is concerned . . . (*Interruptions*) Now, it is true that so far as supply of rice is concerned, it has been reduced in the months of May, June and July as compared to the month of January. But so far as the total quantity of foodgrains is concerned, we have made up that reduction by supplying more wheat. In the month of January also we were supplying in the neighbourhood of about 77,000 tonnes rice and wheat altogether. I find that in the month of May also we have supplied 53,000 tonnes rice and 30,000 tonnes of wheat—83,000 tonnes altogether. Again in the month of June we supplied 50,000 tonnes rice and 35,000 tonnes wheat—85,000 tonnes altogether. In the month of July we have cut it down because there was shortage of rice and wheat: for every State we had to reduce. We had suggested 45,000 tonnes rice and 30,000 tonnes wheat. But when recently the Chief Minister of Kerala and members from that place came and saw me, I increased it by 10,000 tonnes—5,000 tonnes rice and 5,000 tonnes wheat. So we are maintaining the supply so far as Kerala is concerned . . .

(*Interruptions*) Now when my friend is confronted with these figures . . .

SHRI K. P. SUBRAMANIA MENON: I am not confronted with figures. Even what you have allotted has not reached there . . .

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: Let me complete. So far as the question with regard to the fitness for human consumption is concerned, that matter was not brought to my notice by the Chief Minister and other people who came and saw me

DR. K. MATHEW KURTAN: Sir, on a point of order . . .

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN AU AHMED: I can tell the hon. Member that whatever we are purchasing we are supplying.

DR. K. MATHEW KURIAN: Sir, the Minister is misleading the House. I have with me a statement signed by the Chief Minister of Kerala. I quote only *otK* senio show that the Minister is deliberately misleading this House. "May onwards, they (that mean-, the Central Government) cut the rice quota to 45,000 tonnes per month. They have been cutting the qm Ia of rice in the months of May, June and July." The Minister should accept that much.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: His statement is the latest.

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: I have already said that I cut the quota. Later on, I have increased it and the total quantity is the same. So far as the question of making all that has been allotted available to the Kerala Government is concerned, I can assure the hon. Member that steps have been taken and further steps will be taken to see that whatever is allotted reaches the Kerala State and that there is no complaint about that.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: My friend he was surprised. I am aghast and shocked. I am surprised that the responsible Minister could have dared to give a statement of this kind which is not only an understatement, but a total misrepresentation of the reality in order to cover up the sins of the Government. I should like to have the following clarifications. First of all, prices are galloping at an unprecedented pace during these few weeks and the food articles have been registering a very high rise. This position continues. It is pointless to compare the prices only with the last year. You have to take into account the magnitude of the rise today. According to my information from the journals coming from various places and different countries, India today is leading in the whole world in the matter of rise in prices, especially in regard to foodgrains. This is the position. It is useless to say that it is due to the fall in production compared to the previous year. According to the figures

[Shri Bhupesh Gupta]

given by the officials, the prices in our country continue to rise even if the production goes up. Even when the production touched 108 million tonnes, the prices rose. Only in the fifties, we saw that the prices remained static or came down. Since then, during the last decade, it has never happened. The reason is hoarding, profiteering and speculation. The Government statement does not even mention it properly. Artificial scarcities are being created in different parts of the country by the hoarders and profiteers in collusion with bureaucracy and backed by certain politicians of the ruling party and also of the opposition. I underline the words "certain politicians of the ruling party and also of the opposition." He said that they have opened ration shops. You may say that. But what is your rationing system. It is on the point of collapse. Today's paper carries the news from Bihar that live million people are on the verge of starvation. According to the latest reports, many areas in Andhra Pradesh are facing near-famine conditions and the supplies are not available there. This has been officially admitted and not denied. They have given their justification for it. According to the Government calculation, 1.1 million tonnes are needed to cover 160 million people at the old rates. They are not getting this much. According to the statement, the ofT-take is less. It is an indication that whatever had been committed is not being supplied to the State and many of the fair price shops are not functioning. And surely the Ministry of Food and Agriculture should know how many fair price shops are working in the country and how many are without supply. Sir, ration has been cut in Calcutta. This has not even been said. Only recently 250 grams have been cut. It is a major area under statutory rationing. There you have brought a cut of 250 grams and you have not even mentioned it. And the complaints have come from the West Bengal people and the Government alike, but there is no mention at all. Rationing has broken down in Patna. Kerala ration is 7 ounce today and Mr. Achuta Menon, the Chief Minister, has said that he cannot meet the situation with the allotted 10,000 tonnes or whatever it is a month. It has been stated that all parties deputation came

and the deputation was not satisfied with the kind of assurance that you have given. You have given your reasons but they were not satisfied. The position remains as it is. There is no indication of Kerala either in the statement. The fair price shops are on paper only in many places. What is happening now? Why don't you divulge it? Why is the statement silent about the Government stock? It is less than 2 million tonnes when you require 1.1 million tonnes of grains for meeting the requirement of your fair price shops. Your current stock is barely 2 million tonnes or even less.

What has happened to the wheat procurement? You put a target of 8.1 million tonnes but when the procurement was about 1.5 million tonnes, the Chief Ministers and others met. You decided to raise at least 1.5 million tonnes more to bring it somewhere to six million tonnes instead of reaching the target of 8.1 million tonnes. Where are you now? Tell us, why do you 'hide this fact? Is it not a relevant information to be given? Your procurement today is—this procurement season is over— not even 4.5 million tonnes. You should say something about it. You took a decision that you would at least raise it to 6 million tonnes even though you would not be able to raise 8.1 million tonnes. Why have your Chief Ministers failed? Why has your Government failed in the States? What have you done? Give an explanation to the Parliament as to why you have not done it.

Now there is no mention about the food import in the whole statement. Why not. Is it so irrelevant a factor? You announced that 2 million tonnes of foodgrains had already been contracted for purchase from America, from Argentina and from Canada. Where do you stand and is it not a fact that you have sent instructions to these Embassies there to negotiate for the possibility of getting another 4.5 million tonnes of Foodgrains? What has happened" to that? Sir, that would cost more than six hundred crores of rupees if we brought it but we are not getting it. Tell us how much we have got. Is it not a fact that Argentina have demanded that you should enter with them into a long-term contract for 4 to 5 years even in regard to this demand and America is insisting that you

should return to PL4S0 and they have put you in difficulty and your arrivals from abroad are not even according to the estimated and contracted 2 million tonnes of foodgrains? Where are you going to get the grain for meeting the requirements and commitments with the fair price shops? Explain it. Why are you keeping these facts into dark? You have not said anything about it in the Parliament. Sir, this is another thing.

Now, if the procurement had been successful it would not have been necessary for us to import foodgrains with a marginal requirement. It would not have been necessary. Sabotage of foodgrains in the wheat trade or wheat procurement has resulted in pushing the country in the direction of dependence on foreign food import. Is it not a fact? Say something about it. Some of the State Governments even now instead of intensifying the procurement of rice are insisting on more and more foodgrains. Why are you not insisting on their carrying through the procurement of rice? Well, in Andhra Pradesh, what is happening we do not know in spite of the fact that the Centre has taken over the administration. In West Bengal, the State from which I come, the situation is extremely serious and the Food Ministry there is not only absolutely incompetent but corrupt up to the neck. Do you know the whole thing is a huge scandal? It may not be a Watergate scandal but it is a huge scandal of bribery and corruption in which Mr. Kasi Kanth Maitra is involved. Yesterday two of his associates—associates of the Minister—one Sud-hir Roy, J. P. and another Isaac have been arrested. I am told they were arrested from a prostitute's house. Whether they were arrested from the street which is near the prostitute's house. I do not know; that is a different matter; anyway those two have been arrested.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You should conclude now.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Sir, this is very interesting.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: That shows growth and progressiveness; you are a fellow-traveller with them.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: The licences that were issued were sold and people have been arrested. High officials have made money. Sir, about 60 people have been arrested, but what about the real man, Mr. Kasi Kanth Maitra, the Food Minister? When is he going to be arrested? All his associates have been picked up one after another. In England we find the Ministers resign, whether it is Lambton or Somebody else but here . . .

DR. K. MATHEW KURIAN: Here the Chief Minister gives certificates.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: No procurement has been done by the Ministry there. Procurement has been sabotaged systematically in West Bengal. With the production they had, they could have easily got much more foodgrains than they have been able to get in their stock. But they have sabotaged the whole thing. Ministers and some others are interested in linking up with the jotedars and so on to see that procurement is sabotaged. At the same time licences have been distributed freely for fertilizers and various other things. And the latest is the bran scandal and we would like to know how far Mr. Kasi Kanth Maitra is in it.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That will do Mr. Bhupesh Gupta. I have been asking you to wind up.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: What is happening about dehoarding and other things? Nothing is being done by the Government. In Bezwada our comrades went in a procession to ensure the sale of rice at one rupee per kilo and you know 18 of them were arrested under section 395 of the IPC, that is, for dacoity. Seven were charged under section 147 read with section 384 and some were charged under section 151. This is the position. You go and ask people to sell at controlled price and you are arrested for dacoity. This is the policy of the Government. This Government in the matter of food has not only bungled the whole thing but it has also shown that it is in collusion—some high-ups in the Government and the bureaucracy with some people in the trade. What you have today is artificial scarcity, man-made famine, man-made crisis, man-made difficulty and the whole nation is being held

[Shri Bhupesh Gupta]

to ransom by the whe lesalers with the back-in oi some people in the Government in hiding the Ministry which he heads. That is the position. Sir, prices in Delhi are souing: of course it is everywhere and I am nol Calking about other commodities and therefore I demand that all this should be discussed fully. The Government I say has hidden relevant facts in the statement, facts with regard to imports, with regard to stocks, with regard to procurement and so on. And now. Sir, the States are removing even the inter-State barriers, Inter-Di trict barriers have gone and now even inter-State barriers are being removed. Therefore kindly enlighten us on what you have suppressed.

1 P.M.

The hon. Minister thinks that we are ignorant people and we do not know anything. Kindly explain why you have suppressed these relevant facts.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You take your seat now.

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: I do not know how the hon. Member has jtripped to tlie conclusion that I have sup pi ssed the facts. I have given indications of all the facts which are material so far as the reply to this question is concerned. I have indicated that so many fair price shops have been increased, that such and such allocations from fair price shops have been made . . .

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: On a point of order. I want your guidance. You should guide us. He says: "I have indicated". Why does be not say with regard to procurement? Why does he not say with regard to imports? Why does he not say with regard to the rationing system what has happened to Calcutta and other cities? These are relevant . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Let him say.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: In Bihar a Cabinet sub-committee is being set up and five million people are on the verge of Starvation.

MR, DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: He is try-in to answer.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Now, You will trot out something, bin you should ask him. Why it was nol done. On a point ol order, as the Deputy Chairman and as the Presiding Officer you should do that when the food situation is under discussion. Do you consider that the facts that I have brought to the notice of the House are irrelevant? The figures may nol be correct according to him, but these are relevant facts. These are relevant matters to he enlightened upon. Now, Sir. he has not done it.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Let him answer.

SHR! FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED:

The hon. Member wants information with io three or four matters. I would certain I v like to point out that so far as •ment of wheat is concerned. till Saturday we have procured about 43 lakh tonnes, a little more than 43 lakh tonnes. As the hon. Member is aware, the target fixed was 81 lakh tonnes. Now, several causes are given for the purpose of this shortfall in procurement. One of the important causes ie that the wheal crop which was expected did not materialise because of hot wind towards the end. shrivelling of the wheat grain and also drought in some parts of the country. We have till now not received the acuta! figure of production of wheat. We are collecting the from various States. It will be possible for me to give the figures after a few days when all these facts have been collected: At the same time I would like to paint out that there are several other facts which have resulted in the shortfall of procurement One of the important factors is there has been a psychology of shortage throughout the country. . . .

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Hoarding and profiteering.

DR. K. MATHEW KURIAN: What psychology prevents you from taking over the procurement of rice? What is the psychology which comes in the way of a producers' lc\

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Let him answer.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I want to know whether it is a psychological problem which we are dealing with. The wholesalers issued a public statement: Scrap your wholesale trade takeover and we shall supply you 3(10 million tonnes of foodgrains thereby announcing to you and to the world that they were in command of at least 3 million tonnes of foodgrains. What have you done about it?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Let him answer.

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: As a result of this psychology it has to be admitted that there has been hoarding at the level of the traders, at the level of the producers and at the level of the consumers. They have been purchasing much more than what is necessary for them to do, . . .

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: This is an alibi that consumers are purchasing more than they consume. Does it mean that fifty crores of people are purchasing more? TMs is an alibi for the hoarders. This is a hoarder's argument.

DR. K. MATHEW KURIAN: He is giving some arguments from the old textbooks.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Are our people hoarding like this? They are starving.

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Kurian, do not make a running commentary. Take your seat, please.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Mr. Chandra Shekhar, have you hoarded something as a consumer?

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Kindly tell you are not prepared to. . .

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR (UttarPradesh): Mr. Gupta, you please enquire, since you have raised this point.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Kindly tell your Minister not to take the hoarder's argument, we are used to get that argument.

10—12 RSS/ND/73

VIR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Gupta, do you want the Minister to answer or not?

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED:

il. Member must also realise that so far as the wheat producer is concerned, he produces other crops also. Now, take for instance the case of UP. He is a great producer so far as sugar-cane is concerned. Sugar-cane price has been very good, very lucrative this year, with the result that by selling sugar-cane it has been possible for him to hold on to wheat in the expectation of getting a higher price. Similarly, so far as Punjab is concerned. . .

श्री बनारसी दास (उत्तर प्रदेश):
क्या आपका मतलब यह है कि एरिया घट
गयागेहूँ की फसल का ?

श्री उपसभापति : अब मतलब, जब
आपकी बारी आएगी, तब पूल लीजि-
एगा ।

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: So far as Punjab is concerned, there has been a very good crop of gram and because the price of gram was good, it was possible for him to sell gram and not sell wheat. Then also he is thinking as to what the present monsoon will be like and he is hoping that if the monsoon is like last year or the year previous, then the prices may go up. It may be necessary for him to need the wheat for himself. So he is also hoarding for that reason.

So, I may tell the hon. Member that it is not correct to think that so far as the procurement is concerned, that is over. The period has yet to go on, and I have no doubt that some more wheat will come out in the country if the monsoon is good and the next monsoon also afterwards is like that.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Government has virtually given up procurement.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: There is no point of order in that.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: We are correcting him. We are more informed

[Shri Bhupesh Gupta] about it; we can challenge. In the name of drought, you have virtually given it up.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Let him answer.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: The Government is saying that the things are taken out of the State.

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: I am in continuous and constant touch with the Chief Ministers concerned, so far as the procurement of wheat is concerned. And I may also tell the House that so far as the Chief Minister of Punjab is concerned, he has given me the assurance that it will be possible for him to reach the figure of 3 million tonnes of procurement. *(Interruptions)* Similarly, so far as UP is concerned, I have been told that it will be possible for them to procure a few more lakh tonnes. . . .

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: How much?

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: . . . of wheat, and we take. . . .

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: How much have they procured?

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: They have procured just about 6 lakh tons es.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Eighteen lakh tonnes was their target and six lakhs of tonnes they have procured. They have now stripped procurement. Or they are still procuring?

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: Therefore, I will ask for the cooperation of all parties, even those parties who are encouraging the cultivators not to bring out the wheat and to press for higher prices and so on; they should also come and cooperate in the interests of the country to see that whatever foodgrain is available comes out in the market. . . .

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Who will procure some good sense for you, tell me?

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: Well, I do not have to borrow from you. I can say.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: We can provide you something, provided you are prepared to receive.

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: So far as import is concerned, I think the hon. Member is aware that last year, before the financial year, we had decided, in the month of December, to procure about two million tonnes of foodgrains. Out of that, till the end of May, the contract was made, and we had contracted for about 1.6 million tonnes or a little over that. That has already arrived in the country and the rest has also been contracted for, and it will be arriving in the course of this month and next month.

Now I would like the hon'ble Member to be with me and in the national interest, not to press for the quantity which we have contracted which we are going to contract because the moment we indicate that figure it is likely to result in higher prices and so on. Therefore, I would beseech the House not to press me for these figures. I have got those figures but in the national interest I would not like to disclose those figures. All I can say is we have taken necessary steps to see that during the lean period during the next kharif crop and also later on so far as the food position is concerned it is not bad, and we are in a position to supply the requirement of the country.

My hon'ble friend has also mentioned about the same thing in West Bengal. It is only fair and just that these matters should be referred to the West Bengal Government.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Ration cards.

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: Personally speaking, they have detailed information regarding this matter and I shall certainly make enquiries about it. . . .

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: What about ration cards?

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: So far as the supply to West Bengal is concerned, I may tell him that it is not correct to say that we have reduced the allocation to West Bengal. In the month of

May we gave them 165,000 tonnes of wheat and rice, of which 25,000 tonnes was rice and 140,000 tonnes was wheat. In the month of June we gave them 20,000 tonnes of rice and 145,000 tonnes of wheat, that is 165,000 tonnes. In the month of July we have reduced the supply by 5,000 tonnes of wheat and we gave them 20,000 tonnes of rice and 135,000 tonnes of wheat, altogether 155,000 tonnes of wheat and rice. That is the position. So far as the distribution in West Bengal is concerned, they have done their best. They are making food available to their people.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: We come from the State of West Bengal and we can say that the machinery there has broken down. In many places things are not available.

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: Only recently I was in Calcutta and I had a talk with the Chief Minister. He was satisfied with the allocation and he said if it would be possible for him to manage with this supply.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: You said we'll make enquiry about it. Secondly, kindly make a statement on the floor of the House because food concerns your Ministry.

श्री सीताराम सिंह (बिहार) : हमारा पोटेंट ऑफ ऑर्डर है। मंत्री जी ने अपने भाषण से सदन को, गुमराह किया है। बारबार प्रकृति और मानसून का नाम लेकर ...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: There is no point of order. Mr. Goray.

श्री सीताराम सिंह : मैं मंत्री जी से जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या वे कोई लक्ष्य निश्चित कर योजना बनाते हैं ? श्रीमान् ...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: There is no point of order. You are trying to make a statement in the name of point of order. I would not allow that.

SHRI N. G. GORAY (Maharashtra): As I said just now, I have no appetite left for participating in the discussion because I should have thought that the food situation in the country is so serious that the Government could have very well imagined that the first question or the first calling attention would be on this subject because everybody is exercised over the food situation. When I say that everybody is exercised over the food situation I do not mean only food because once the food situation gets out of hand everything else falls. The price of food really sets the pace for the prices of other commodities. Therefore, I had this tight and expected that when the Food Minister was going to make the statement he would really take the whole House into confidence and tell us what the facts are, what the difficulties are and how we are going to face the challenge because yesterday or day before yesterday the Prime Minister has hinted—though there was a correction in the press, even with that correction the fact remains—that the coming two months are going to be perhaps much worse than what it has been before.

Now when such a thing is facing us, I think it was really your duty to tell us what the facts were. I told you that I could challenge all your facts because it is our everyday experience that the food articles, oil, sugar and all these things have become so costly in the free market that people really do not know how to make both ends meet. That is the situation.

You referred to the fair-price shops. You know that this is a myth. There are only a few fair-price shops. You said that now their number has been increased from 1,25,000 to 1,90,000 or so. But you know that many of these shops are only notional. In the first place, they are not there—In the second place, if they are there, they have no commodities. The supply situation is so precarious that they do not have any commodities to sell. That is what is happening in Maharashtra. There are about 30 lakhs of people on the relief works. They get their wages, but when they go to the shops with their wages, they find that there is no grain. It is not available. Wheat is not available. Rice is not available. Now, what is the use of saying that

LShri N. G. Goray)

there are fair-price shops when the fair-price shops say that there is no wheat? This is the situation and I thought you would give us a realistic picture of the whole thing and tell us whether there is really any grain, any wheat or rice, that could be sent to these fair-price shops. Otherwise their number or any increase in their number has no meaning at all. That is number one. Number two, you said just now that the *per capita* ration is from five to eight kilos. Now again I would like to challenge you there. I think all the Members here will bear me out that it is hardly two kilos *per capita*. And there are places where it is even one kilo. The State Governments say that they have no food to distribute.

The third thing is, many of us have to buy tilings in the open market. What you give us is so meagre that one is forced to go to the open market. You do not say about the open market prices. They are fantastically high. So when you say that a 14 per cent rise has taken place, you are really fooling yourselves; you are not cooling us. Though we happen to be MPs, many times we have to go to the open market. When we see that in the ration shop the food that we get is so little, we have to go to the open market. And when we go to the open market, we find that the prices have doubled, trebled. Therefore, if you go on telling people that only a 14 per cent increase has taken place, nobody is going to believe you. This Parliament is there because people think that at least in Parliament you will give facts which are facts. But if you present them in such a manner that nobody is in a position to believe them, then Parliament will lose the normal authority that it has. Therefore, I would beg of you to take this House into confidence and tell us what the facts are so far as procurement of wheat is concerned. Now, in spite of your declared policy of procurement, you do not have the courage to impose levy on the producers. The producer has two markets before him, one where he has to sell wheat at Rs 75 per quintal and the other, where he could sell his wheat for Rs. 150 per quintal. Naturally he would not come to you. Was it not obligatory on your part, when you thought of taking eight million

tonnes of foodgrains by way of procurement, to see to it that there was only one opening and not two openings for the producer? Was it not necessary to have levy? You refused to have levy. Why? because political considerations were there. You did not dare to give instructions to the Chief Ministers to see to it that every farmer will have to give so much to the State, because you were thinking in terms of elections. And even now you are thinking in terms of elections. So far as Maharashtra is concerned, I would like to tell you that crores of rupees were given for the Crash Rabi Programme. So many peasants received that money- But what about food procurement? They did not sell their wheat to the Government at all. They did not sell their wheat even to the co-operatives. They only said, "Here is wheat. You bring your transport and you bring Rs. 150 per quintal. We are ready to sell you wheat."

Sir, you gave them money, you gave them fertilizers, you gave them seeds and water for irrigation- And what had they given you in return? They say that they are not going to sell to you. This is the point which you have to see. Once you go in for procurement, you should continue to the last point. If you stop, then you do not get wheat. Wheat in the open market is sold at Rs. 3 and Rs. 4 per kilo. In Bombay, they are buying rice at four rupees per kilo. Everybody is saying that rice is available in the open market. It is available, but at what rate? Only at Rs. 4 and Rs. 4.50 per kilo. And it is only that type of people who stay in the Malabar Hill or the Mahalaxmi area who can afford to buy it. What about poor people? And you have produced an army of blackmarketeers.

Again, we are going in for taking over of rice wholesale trade. Have you got the machinery? If you have not got the machinery, please do not experiment with this because this is experimenting with the life of the nation. And ordinary man is not likely to tolerate this situation for a long time. The Prime Minister has said that *Untouchables* people are wonderful people. What is wonderful about them? Wonderful in the sense that they meekly submit to anything, even to starvation. This is not a sign of being 'wonderful'. This is a sign of being completely slavish in their atti-

tude. They do not think that they can change the situation. They think, that whatever happened, you have to submit to it.

Therefore, Sir, before the situation goes completely out of your hand—it is likely to go out of your hand—please come to the House and take us into confidence and tell us what is to be done. And tell us what you are going to do. And have you got the determination and courage to go to the logical end of your policies? That is what I would like to know.

SH KI DWUENDRALAL SEN GUPTA (West Bengal): The answer is 'no'.

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: Sir, the hon. Member has certainly raised very important issues in the course of his observation. But may I first of all point out that, so far as the reference to the Prime Minister's statement is concerned, he has surely drawn his information from what appeared in the press?

DR. K. MATHEW KURIAN: What about the main point? Why don't you concentrate on the points and come to procurement and main policies?

SHRI N. G. GORAY: I withdraw that reference to the Prime Minister. That is not the main thrust.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Kurian, you have not listened to him.

DR. K. MATHEW KURIAN: He has started diverting the attention of the House. He goes into the dilatory tactics.

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: What has happened in the press has also been contradicted that the Prime Minister did not make the statement.

So far as the procurement is concerned, certainly there are different views with regard to the procedure which ought to have been adopted for the purpose of procurement. There is a section which very sincerely believes that this ought to have been done through a levy system. As the hon. Member is aware, this levy system was also tried at least in two of our States—Madhya Pradesh and Bihar.

So far as Madhya Pradesh is concerned, they said that you see that the target which they had put is achieved. So far as procurement is concerned, 50 per cent should be done through levy system and 50 per cent through the non-procurement procedure. And so far as the figure of levy fixed is concerned, they have more or less reached that figure and they have been able to procure it. But in the case of Bihar the honourable Member would appreciate that this levy system has not succeeded at all. Against a target of about 6 lakhs tons of wheat, they have been able to procure only a little over 50,000 tons of wheat.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI (Maharashtra): Tons or kilos?

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: I think that on account of the experience which we have gained during the past few months, surely we will have to think what the method is which has to be adopted so far as procurement is concerned. I would also like to point out that in the case of Punjab, procurement was doing very well in the beginning, but later on when an impression was created in the country that the cultivator would get a higher price, it has also tapered off and I hope once the cultivator is convinced that there is no question of getting a higher price so far as the present procurement is concerned, ultimately wheat.

SHRI N. G. GORAY: Will you please tell me how he is going to be convinced and when there is an open market? How is he going to be convinced that he is not going to get a higher price? I am ready to buy at Rs. 3 or Rs. 4 and you do not prevent me—

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: There so far as Punjab is concerned, they have been taking effective steps in order to stop inter-State movement, in order also to see that the retail dealers are not allowed to purchase more than a certain quantity and that also the price charged by the retail dealers in their own State is not very high. These steps have been taken. So, like Punjab, if similar steps are taken in other States also, perhaps this system would have worked very well. And here

[Shri Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed] the most essential thing was that while we were allowing the retailer to purchase a certain quantity, the price at which he should be allowed to sell is the same. That price ought to have fixed and that ought to have been imposed. In that case there would have been an opening for the procurement also to get wheat according to the target fixed in a particular State. There have been lacunae and there have been shortcomings so far as these things are concerned. And I think we shall benefit from this experience and see how these retailers can be sealed up and things can be improved. This is so far as procurement is concerned.

DR. K. MATHEW KURIAN: You have given all the reasons to justify the sabotage of your procurement policy. I think there is no escape and unless you resign, unless the whole Government resigns, the food muddle will not end. You have given all the justification to support the sabotage of procurement.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I think if ever the honourable Minister required a task force, it is needed now.

DR. K. MATHEW KURIAN: You should resign first. . . .

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: The honourable Member only shouts, but does not want to listen. . . .

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: What about the task force?

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: So far as the present position is concerned, we have given an indication that so far as wheat procurement is concerned, it is much less than what we had expected and so far as rice procurement is concerned, it is also much less than what was done last year, because there is a shortfall in the production of rice. And we have been trying to import rice, but rice is not available in the international market also, and therefore, we have to depend on the supply of other foodgrains and so on and so forth. I can only assure the House that- . . .

SHRI DWIJENDRALAL SEN GUPTA: What about the levy?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: If you go on interrupting like this, I will close this Calling-Attention. . . .

DR. MATHEW KURIAN: Your suggestion seems to be better than this whole farce. . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It is all right for you, but other Members will suffer.

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: So far as availability of foodgrains is concerned, we have taken action and we shall be able to import sufficient wheat and other foodgrains from outside which will help us to tide over these lean months. We have also taken steps to see that kharif production is more and if monsoon behaves well, I can assure the hon. Members that the position will be much easier after two or three months.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: The Minister has asked for co-operation in the procurement policies and the wholesale trade takeover and distribution from Members? Basically he is failing to have the administrative grip on the weaknesses in this process which he has haltingly admitted. At the time of wholesale trade take over you fixed the procurement targets. When Govt. decided to procure wheat at a certain price, two prices were ruling in the market. Why unnecessarily blame the agriculturists? After all they are also human beings and they have their normal incentive to live? But decided that Govt. wanted to procure so much. There were pressures from some political parties to increase the price. Govt. resisted that and rightly so. I am against any lower price being fixed by the Agricultural Prices Commission. However suddenly a task force was appointed. This wholesale procurement is like going for tiger hunting. If you raise so many other petty matters like incentives of Scooters, oils etc, you will get lost. Thereby you can only divert the farmer's attention? Now Govt. can give scooters? And where are scooters? You have to wait in a queue for five years. If Mr. Ahmed wants a scooter for his grandson, he must get his name registered now. Otherwise, you would not get it. What is this task

force? It is rubbish. It is again a halfhearted policy. You are promising to give fertilisers. But where one fertiliser? You are unnecessarily holding hopes before farmers which you cannot fulfil. If you are interested in procurement for the next year at least, do not have halting policies. Sometimes somewhere levy system might be helpful. But in Bihar it will not work because one part of Bihar is not prepared to supply wheat to the other parts of Bihar itself? Then you said that if the farmer does not help in procurement, you will import, is it a policy? You should say: Govt, must have wheat. Have you so far sent any police to any village where food-grains are suspected to be hoarded, by rich farmers? Govt, is prepared to risk with the lives of millions of people. You are not prepared to arrest even one single rich farmer, who has hoarded all the grains. Govt, say that retailers should have been allowed to procure. But wholesalers are operating as retailers. So, the whole system has been sabotaged at the Government level because you Govt, does not to enforce discipline on the Chief Ministers and State Govts. What is the penalty imposed on the Chief Minister who has failed to procure? Has the Prime Minister taken any Chief Minister to task?

And then Govt, desires the people to share all these adversities and starvation. So, the difficulty seems to be, Mr. Ahmed, is this that it is your own Ministry and Govt, policies which have brought the country to this state and the people are facing great difficulties. You say that the fair price shops are there. Mr. Goray was actually very liberal in stating that it is available at Rs. 2 there. I know that coarse grains are available for Rs. 3 to Rs. 4. Maize from Punjab, grams from Rajasthan and UP and other coarse grains like barley which normally only animals eat are being sent to Maharashtra and other States at fantastic prices. When the Punjab farmers are getting prices ranging from Rs. 150 to Rs. 200. why should they sell wheat to Govt, at Rs. 76/- per quintal⁰ You must have pragmatic policies. Govt, must be a good buyer of?

The second point I would like to make is this: You have so many times stated

here—and the House has also criticised—the government's attitude towards fixing the prices. Govt, is prepared to beg from abroad and pay a price between Rs. 100 and Rs. 110, but you are not prepared to pay liberal more to the Indian farmer. Indian farmers during the last six or seven years have not been given remunerative prices commensurate in the rise in Industry. You yourself know that you cannot supply fertilizers, you cannot supply diesel oil and you cannot supply the other inputs in time and in required quantities and reasonable prices. You are pinning your hopes on this and think that you can raise production during the *kharif* season if fertilizers are made available. From where did you get this sort of information that fertilisers are available? Mr. Ahmed, you are the Minister a department responsible to supply fertilisers? And you must know that that newspaper information is not enough. I have just now returned from mofussil areas and I have seen that the fertilisers, urea, ammonia, phosphates, etc. and also the mixtures produced by the Fertilizer Corporation are being sold in the black market at twice, even thrice, the actual price. So, you will be fooling yourself and your Government if you think that fertilizers will be available. I know and you also know that the present production in the country will barely touch the level of 12 to 14 million tonnes whereas the requirements are about 32 to 38 million tonnes. I think you are misunderstanding the whole problem. You have made a grave mistake in thinking that there are fertilizers available. If you really want to spend money on foreign exchange, spend it on fertilizers rather than on other imports. But you must also search the houses for getting wheat and other grains that may be hoarded there so that you can save millions of people. Otherwise, all your progressive policies will not help. Ultimately, the people are thinking that you are helping the vested interests only and you are helping the rich farmers— This feeling must go from the people's minds and you must act bravely and in the manner expected of you.

The last point that I would like to make is that the distribution policy and the procurement policy have owner aspect and all these things would have worked a little

[Shri A. G. Kulkarni] more smoothly if the Food Corporation had behaved properly. The go-slow tactics of the employees of the Food Corporation should be censured by all the Members of Parliament. Govt. might be aware. When the ships are there, the FCI people are going slow. In the godowns the food is there and these employees of the Fertilizer Corporation are going slow and. Sir, for that. Dr. Kurian has to be blamed.

DR. K. MATHEW KURIAN: Why don't you also fight for the rights of the employees?

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: I would only plead with Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed that the food Corporation of India needs restructuring, particularly in the matter of management employee relations. I say this because when such emergencies are here, these people are playing with the lives of the people.

Then, Sir, an assurance has to be given at least for the future that the price of wheat will be upgraded to an extent that it will give an incentive to the agriculturist to part with his grains.

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED:

So far as the question of prices is concerned, I may point out to the House that the prices have to be fixed at a certain point, you see, and I think it will not serve any purpose if what is fixed at a certain point keeps on changing from time to time. If that is so, it will help neither the procurement programme nor the economy of the country. Last year, we took a policy decision that before the sowing season we would indicate to the farmer what price he is likely to get for a particular produce.¹

On the basis of this decision, just before the sowing season, we obtained the recommendation of the Agricultural Prices Commission. As the hon. Members are aware, the *Agricultural Prices Commission* recommended a price of Rs. 72 at that time.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: Are you yourself satisfied?

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: j
But we did not accept that price of Rs. 72. I

and we increased it to Rs. 76. That was accepted by all the Chief Ministers, and not a voice was raised against the price fixed at that time- That was the position last year. But the year before, while the price fixed for procurement was Rs. 76, in many so far as the cultivator is concerned, he did not get more than Rs. 60 or Rs. 65 per ton from private dealers. Therefore, this fixation of price at Rs. 76 was considered to be beneficial and helpful, so far as the cultivator was concerned. . .

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: Three years back and today it is the same. There are two prices going on.

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED:

What happened during this year was that there was a shortfall in production of *kharif* crops, as a result of which the entire pressure was on wheat. Black market prices were prevailing. But it is not possible for the Government to fix the price so far as the cultivator is concerned, on the basis of black market prices in the country. Now, as the hon. Member will see, this year, in order to give a proper incentive to the agriculturists, before the sowing season started for *kharif*, we obtained the recommendation of the Agricultural Prices Commission, and we have indicated that so far as *kharif* crop is concerned, we shall give them so much as the starting price, that is, nearly Rs. 63 as uniform price, for practically everything, except *bajra* where a little more has to be given, and we have indicated that just before the harvest we shall fix the procurement price- Now this should help and encourage the cultivators to increase production of various cereals in the country. I hope that the decision that we have taken in this connection will be helpful so far as foodgrains are concerned. I can assure the hon. Member that before the sowing season of wheat comes, we shall also take into consideration the various factors and see what should be the supporting price so far as wheat is concerned before the sowing season begins.

Now, with regard to the other suggestion which the hon. Member has given, I would like him to appreciate our difficulty. We will do whatever is possible, and I can assure you that whatever is possible for

the purpose of increasing the present figure of procurement, we shall do, and I hope that we shall get the necessary assistance and cooperation from the State Governments concerned.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Loka-nath Misra.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: I am thankful to you that ultimately you have showered your mercy on me ...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I go by the order on the paper.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: I think at no point of time, so much of nonsense was talked on the floor of the Rajya Sabha for such a long time by the Government spokesman. . .

SHRI OM MEHTA: It is not proper. . .

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: The Minister has said that he had absolutely no information from the Kerala Government that some of the stocks supplied to the Kerala Government were uneatable. Here is a document supplied by the Kerala Government, which says:

"In spite of several protests from the State Government, the F.C.I. is still supplying foodgrains that are unfit for human consumption. . ."

So, the Kerala Government says that it has repeatedly informed the Government of India that much of the food is uneatable. And the Kerala Government is not a government consisting of parties which are alien to Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed's party. . .

(Interruptions)

Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed should have, known about it. What can you do? You can beat the drum near his ear. But he is unable to hear it. I am beating the drum again in the hope that at least one beat would go into his ears. I am told that much of what is promised is not sent. The figures given about the working of the fair price shops are not real ones. That has been said by many. I have further information regarding the matter and

I would take the House into confidence and share that information. I am told that many of the fair price shops have been given to people who are either supporters of the Congress Party or of the C.P.I. in many of the States. That is the reason why whatever quantity of foodgrains is reaching the fair price shops is not percolating to the consumers. It gets evaporated there because they are the people who feel that they can get the benefit of the patronage of the State Ministers or of the Central Ministers. Therefore, they care two hoots for the public opinion in the local regions. Sir, Mr. Bhupesh Gupta has himself admitted that 5 million people have been affected. I am happy Mr. Bhupesh Gupta is now seeing reason.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: All I said was that it was reported in some papers that two very close associates of Mr. Kashi Kant Moitra have been arrested in a prostitute's house. It does not seem so.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: Let them be arrested from the hell. That makes no difference to me.

DR. K. MATHEW KURIAN: They should have been procuring wheat and rice. They were procuring more soft stuff.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: The newspaper report says that 5 million people have been affected in Bihar and 30 million have been affected in U.P. Two million people have been affected in Orissa. This is apart from what is happening in other States. The Minister says that he has been supplying increased quantities as compared to last year. I hope the Minister has some sense of understanding simple mathematics. If 30 million people have been affected in Uttar Pradesh, 5 million in Bihar, 2 million in Orissa and say 50 million in the rest of the country, then naturally the quantities have to be much higher than what are being supplied. You cannot compare a normal year's supply with an abnormal year's supply and say that we have doubled the quantity. The Minister takes great credit for announcing in the House that they have supplied larger quantities. But what has been supplied is nothing compared to what is needed in Orissa which is under President's

[Shri Lokanath Misra] rule. Two million people have been affected. When I said that it was a bluffer stock and not buffer stock and the Minister was bluffing the people, the Prime Minister came out with a statement that some opposition parties were trying to create a scare in the country. We did not mean to create a scare in the country. Now, the hon. Minister himself is trying to create a scare in the country. When a question was put to him about the actual quantity that the Government intended to import, he said that he won't give the figures. If he gives the figures, the prices will come down. Probably, he does not understand the economic methods that operate in the country, [f he says that he is going to import from foreign countries a big stock of wheat and rice, then immediately the prices will come down. He does not want to give it out to the Press or even to the House because some of his partymen are getting a protected market; they are getting money through blackmarketing. He does not want to give out the figures for their benefit.

Now Orissa is in a scarcity condition. Last session we told the hon. Minister that he should supply more, more so when Orissa was under President's rule. There is absolutely. . .

(Time bell rings)

What is this. Sir? You have given. . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You wind up now.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: I won't take a minute more than what I am given,

Orissa is under President's rule and that is all the more reason why the Government of India should give greater attention to it. In spite of the fact that we have been shouting to the Minister that Orissa is in a scarcity condition and more food should be sent—the floods have come *now*—nothing has been sent to the interior. Now it is impossible to send it any further because most of the coastal areas would be under flood. So they are going to starve. There have been starvation deaths in Orissa. *Samaj*, the most popular and widely circulated paper and, if I say so, the most dependable paper, has

published pictures from different districts where dying men have been photographed. And the hon. Minister denied! The Governor has not been able to deny because photographs were published. Therefore, I would request the hon. Minister to immediately rush food to Orissa and try to make it reach the far off places. After scarcity condition there is flood now.

Sir, in spite of this scarcity condition. I am told 25,0(>n tonnes of rice have been ordered to be sent out of Orissa. I do not know who ordered it. Twenty-five thousand tonnes of rice have already been taken out of Orissa. I do not know who ordered this. If it is Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, he must be squarely held responsible for all the starvation deaths that have been caused in Orissa.

Now, Sir, so far as the import is concerned, would the hon. Minister care to let us know at what price he is importing wheat? That would not cause any kind of stir in the market if Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed. . .

SHRI PRITHWI NATH (Uttar Pra-desh): Not in the public interest.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: Now in the public interest; it may be in his party's interest and his interest—I do not know. But in the public interest he should declare at what rate he is purchasing from the foreign countries. He may not immediately give us the exact figure as to what amount is being imported. He might give us a rough figure, say, 10 million tonnes, 5 million tonnes or 6 million tonnes. And if he gives us some idea about the rates at which he is procuring from foreign countries. I shall be thankful.

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: Sir, I have listened to the hon. Member. The only thing I would like to say is that if he is not prepared to understand, I cannot give him that understanding. And he has misquoted me while making a point about the Kerala Government. What I said was that the Chief Minister ■ and others who were here only the other day in Delhi have discussed with me all questions relating to the quantity of foodgrains and they never brought to my notice about the sub-standard food being

supplied to them. I stand by that statement and I do, not see any reason why it should not be accepted and why it should be contradicted by throwing a paper about which I did not make any reference. So far as Orissa is concerned, the hon. Member is aware that Orissa is surplus so far as rice is concerned and in the last three months we have been looking after the requirements of Orissa so far as wheat is concerned. In the month of May we supplied 20,000 tonnes of wheat, in the month of June we supplied 20,000 tonnes of wheat and in July also we are giving them 15,000 tonnes of wheat.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: Don't you have information that the Food for Millions organisation is distributing dehydrated peas as staple food in some parts of the State while you are taking away the rice from there?

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: I would like the hon. Member to realise that if we take a parochial view that whatever is produced in a particular State should not be taken out to other States then it will be impossible to manage the food economy of the country. The hon. Member is aware. . .

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: You cannot starve the Orissa people in order to send food somewhere else.

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: May I say this? The hon. Member must remember that when we procure either rice or wheat, we keep a certain portion for the State Government and the other portion is for the Central Government pool. Whatever is kept for the Central Government, only that is taken out of Orissa. Out of the procurement done in a State a certain portion is allotted to the State and another portion is kept for the Central pool and stocks from out of this pool will have to be moved out of the State to meet the requirements of other areas. If it is the contention of the hon. Member that whatever is procured in one State should not be allowed to be taken out of that State, then people would have died of starvation in Maharashtra, in Gujarat and in other places where there is deficit.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: He is misquoting me. I never intended that nothing should be exported out of the State if Orissa is self-supporting. But Orissa is starving. Now Uttar Pradesh is starving; are you sending rice out of Uttar Pradesh?

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: It is all very well for the hon. Member to criticise. We are in possession of all the and according to the situation prevailing in different States we are seeing that sufficient foodgrains are made available to them so that there is no starvation and no difficulty in the States concerned.

Now the hon. Member said that five million people are dying of starvation in Bihar,

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: Not dying. I said they are facing famine conditions.

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: Yes, facing famine conditions but may I point out one thing? I would request hon. Member, not to depend on these Press reports and create an impression in the country which is likely to create more difficulties than it help us in the solution of the problem we are facing. The hon. Member must realise that Bihar had a bumper wheat crop and so far as procurement is concerned less than 50,000 tonnes

wheat were procured from that State. Where has all the wheat gone? If today

the country is faced with this difficulty wheat cannot be moved from one place to another. I do not know how we

manage the situation. All these reports are inspired and we should not rely on them.

SHRI BABUBHAI M. CHINAI (Maharashtra): Your own Government is there and you are in power here also.

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: We should not accept whatever is given in the Press without ascertaining the facts. All that is done only for the purpose of creating an atmosphere which is not conducive to the interests of the country.

So far as import from outside is concerned, I have said that having regard to the national interests with regard to the price at which it will be available and so

[Shri Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed] on, I think it is desirable that hon. Members should not press me to say anything and if even that is misunderstood by hon-Members I do not know what to say.

SHRI DVV1JENDRALAL SEN GUPTA: Sir, the hon. Minister is in a very convenient position when he says that he has no report about starvation deaths. When a man dies, it is because of scarcity of food which leads to malnutrition and other diseases. So when a man dies there is no record to show that he has died of starvation as such. So my submission before this House is that there should be a committee to enquire into these cases of death as and when they are reported. There should be a thorough enquiry and proper remedial measures should be taken. As a matter of fact when there is huge deficit in the different States under the Famine Code those areas should be declared as famine areas and the Government of India should take the responsibility of feeding those areas. Now, so far as West Bengal

is concerned, the Food Minister, Mr. 2 P.M. Kashi Kanth Maitra, went to Tamil

Nadu with a letter from the Chief Minister of West Bengal to the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu for 50,000 tonnes of foodgrain. He has come back empty-handed. It was reported that Madras had a surplus stock, but nothing was released. Now, there has been a cut in the statutory rationing areas and it is said that there has been a cut even in the modified rationing areas. Ordinary cereal is sold in the open market at a very high price which is beyond the purchasing capacity of the common man. In view of the admitted scarcity by the State Government which has resulted in a cut in the ration and which is inadequate for the subsistence of the common man, with the Government of India review its commitment for allotment to the State of West Bengal of wheat and rice increase it immediately and release it for consumption in West Bengal, so that the cut in ration can be restored? The cut in the modified rationing area should be restored and the prices which are now so high should be reduced. When there is enough

the release of food is necessary.

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: I have already indicated that so far as West

Bengal is concerned, we have not made any reduction.

SHRI DWIJENDRALAL SEN GUPTA: I am asking you to increase it.

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: No reduction was made so far as the supplies for the months of May and June were concerned. Only with the consent and approval of the Chief Minister we reduced about 5,000 tonnes of wheat for the month of July. I think it would be possible for them to manage with the quantity which we have given them. As I indicated, in the month of June we gave 165,000 tonnes of wheat and in the month of July also. . .

SHRI DWIJENDRALAL SEN GUPTA: if there is no shortage, why have rationing?

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Did you enquire from the Chief Minister whether there has been a cut in the ration?

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: They have been managing. There has also been a good summer crop in West Bengal. They are procuring it. I think they are satisfied with what we have been allocating.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: That is not the point. In view of the fact that you too have a responsibility in feeding the statutory rationing areas, did you enquire from the Chief Minister as to why they had cut the ration when the supply from the Centre had not been reduced?

SHRI DWIJENDRALAL SEN GUPTA: He says that there is no dearth of wheat.

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: The hon. Member must realise that when there is shortage in the country and when in a particular State more ration than in any other State is given, in order to keep it in line, something else is reduced.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Is it your contention that the cut in ration is not due to lack of supplies from you?

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: We have been supplying as in the past.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: A simple thing I want to understand. The ration cut

—you know very well—of 150 grams in rice is not due to the fact that you have reduced any quota.

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: I have made it clear that so far as the total quantity of foodgrains is concerned, that has been there, but so far as the supply of rice is concerned we have certainly reduced it. We increased the supply of wheat in order to make the total more or less the same.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: How long it has taken to get this simple fact from you—

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: What I have been pointing out is that when there is practically a shortage of rice they should appreciate that instead of rice they should take wheat when it is available in their districts.

[Some hon. Members rose]

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It is already 2.00. Yes, Mr. Chinai. You please take only one minute. There are other names also.

SHRI BABUBHA1 M. CHINAI: Agreed.

Sir, in view of the fact that we are importing from abroad and spending the much-needed foreign exchange, why are we not thinking in terms of giving our farmers the price which we are paying to the foreigners? And in doing so, we will save the foreign exchange, we will not have to pay subsidy, and we will not have to go to deficit financing, and thereby we will be able to restrict our money supply. Secondly, I would like to know from the Minister about the 2-tier system of distribution, that is to say, people who are earning upto Rs. 750 are given from the fair price shops and the ration shops and others are given from the open market so that the vulnerable community of the population is saved to an extent, so that they may not have to buy from the open market at a very high price. May I know whether such a system is in the mind of the Government so that at least some parts of the population. (who are vulnerable, can be saved by not paying the open market prices.

SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED: So far as the first suggestion is concerned I have already indicated to the hon. Member that it is not possible to fix the price from time to time, it has to be fixed at a certain time. Now, so far as the second suggestion is concerned, that has been made in several quarters. We are examining it and we shall see to what extent it is possible to be implemented.

श्री श्याम लाल यादव (उत्तर प्रदेश):
मैं दो बातें जानना चाहता हूँ। उत्तर प्रदेश में जो भयंकर अकाल पड़ा है, उसको देखते हुए क्या सरकार पूरे प्रदेश का एक व्हीट जोन बना देगी, ताकि जो डफिशिट एरिया है, जहाँ अकाल पड़ा है, वहाँ पर दूसरी जगहों से गेहूँ पहुँच सके?

दूसरी बात यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि सस्ते गल्ले की जो दुकानें हैं, उनमें आप केवल 1 किलो गेहूँ पर हँड दे रहे हैं, उन स्थानों में जो अकालग्रस्त क्षेत्र हैं, तो क्या आप उस राशन में वृद्धि करेंगे? जहाँ आप गेहूँ नहीं दे सकते हैं, वहाँ बी०एस०एफ० और सी० आर०पी० की फोर्सेज भेज कर क्या लोगों को दबाना चाहते हैं, जिससे लोग मांग न कर सकें? इस संबंध में आप क्या करना चाहते हैं? खुद सरकार मानती है कि 23 जिलों में सूखा पड़ा हुआ है और वहाँ यू०पी० में राष्ट्रपति शासन है, आपका सीधा शासन है, तो फिर वहाँ पर गेहूँ क्यों नहीं दे रहे हैं?

श्री फखरुद्दीन अली अहमद: जहाँ तक इन्टर डिस्ट्रिक्ट मूवमेन्ट खोलने का सवाल है, अभी मैंने यू०पी० गवर्नमेन्ट से थोड़े दिन पहले ही बातचीत की थी और उनसे कहा कि जहाँ-जहाँ जरूरत है, जिन-जिन स्टेट्स में इस इन्टर डिस्ट्रिक्ट मूवमेन्ट खोलने से आसानी हो सकती है, अनाज के एक जगह से

[श्री फखरुद्दीन अली अहमद]
दूसरी जगह ले जाने में, तो हमें कोई ऐतराज नहीं है और वह स्टेट गवर्नमेन्ट खोल सकती है और जहां तक हमारी इत्तिहा है, यू० पी० में इन्टर डिस्ट्रिक्ट मूवमेन्ट खोल दी गई है...

श्री श्याम लाल यादव : नहीं, पूरे स्टेट में नहीं खोली गई है, केवल डेफिशिट एरियाज में खोली गई है। जब सर्पलस एरिया से वहां पर गेहूं जाएगा, तभी फायदा होगा।

श्री फखरुद्दीन अली अहमद : इसकी बाबत वहां की गवर्नमेन्ट से बातचीत करेंगे और अगर उससे फायदा होता है और मूवमेन्ट ज्यादा होता है तो उसका जरूर खयाल किया जाएगा। जहां तक डेफिशिट एरिया में फेयर प्राइस शाप्स के जरिए से देने का है, जो आपने बात बताई है, उसका भी जिक्र हम यू० पी० गवर्नमेन्ट से करेंगे कि किस तरह से वहां की दिक्कतें पूरी हो सकती हैं और हम इसका खयाल करेंगे।

श्री नारायण प्रसाद शाही : श्रीमन्, मंत्री जी कह रहे हैं कि उत्तर प्रदेश की सरकार से हम बात करेंगे। आपकी सरकार है उत्तर प्रदेश में, राष्ट्रपति शासन है उत्तर प्रदेश में, आप सीधे यहां से हुकमत चला रहे हैं। आप बात करने की बातें करते हैं। किससे बात करेंगे? अकबर अली खान से बात करेंगे, उनके एड्वाइजर्स से बात करेंगे? किससे बात करेंगे? वहां हालत यह है कि 23 जिलों में अकाल की स्थिति है, कोई गल्ला नहीं है। जो अपनी सर्पलस एरिया है, वहां से गल्ला जा नहीं सकता। आप इस बंदिश को ठीक नहीं कर सकते। आपकी सरकार वहां कायम है, आप सीधे यहां से फर्मान भेज सकते हैं, वहां पर सीधे

यहां से हुकम भेज सकते हैं। आप कहते हैं बात करेंगे। बात किससे करेंगे? आपकी बातों से जाहिर हो रहा है, आप कतई कोई कदम उठाना नहीं चाहते हैं। श्रीमन्, हालत यह है कि 1 जुलाई से लेकर 15 जुलाई तक गोरखपुर में राशन की दुकानों को सरकारी गोदाम से राशन नहीं दिया गया। दुकानदारों ने रुपया स्टेट बैंक में जमा करके चालान सरकार के दफ्तर में जमा कर दिए गल्ला लेने के लिए, लेकिन गोदाम में गल्ला नहीं है, गल्ला इशू नहीं होता। तार लखनऊ आ रहा है, तार दिल्ली आ रहा है, लेकिन गल्ले के लिए हुकम नहीं आ रहा है। आप कह रहे हैं कि सारी व्यवस्था कर दी गई है। व्यवस्था, इन्तजाम जबानी करना है तो सब कुछ ठीक है। हम लोगों की पूरी सहानुभूति आपके साथ है, लेकिन सहानुभूति और आपके दक्तव्य से लोगों का पेट नहीं भरेगा, लोगों को गल्ला चाहिए। अगर आप गल्ले की व्यवस्था नहीं कर सकते हैं तो कन्ट्रोल खत्म कर दीजिए। मैं साफ कह दू कि मैं कन्ट्रोल के पक्ष में हूं, मैं प्रोक्वोर-मेंट के पक्ष में हूं, मैं लेवी के पक्ष में हूं, मैं चाहता हूं कि किसानों से गल्ला लिया जाय, मैं चाहता हूं कि सरकार के गोदाम में गल्ला आए, लेकिन मैं यह भी चाहता हूं कि आप उस गल्ले का समुचित वितरण करें। आज माहौल यह है कि आपने ऐसे लोगों को दुकानों के लाइसेंस दे रखे हैं कि जो कुछ गल्ला आता है गोदाम से उसे वे ब्लैक मार्केट में बेच देते हैं, उसका वितरण नहीं करते हैं, लोग दुकानों पर आते हैं, लोट जाते हैं; क्योंकि गल्ला नहीं है। मैं साफ-साफ जानना चाहता हूं आपसे कि क्या आप इस तरह का हुकम गवर्नर साहब के पास भेजेंगे कि जो डेफिशिट एरिया है, वहां सर्पलस एरिया से गल्ले का

मूवमेंट खोल दिया जाय, जो रोक है वह हटा दी जाय और गोदामों से गन्ना दुकानों को इन्सू किया जाय और अगर नहीं कर सकते हैं तो कह दिया जाय कि गन्ना नहीं है, धोखे में न रखा जाय।

श्री फखरुद्दीन अली अहमद : मैंने इन बातों का जवाब दे दिया है। जो दिक्कतें आपने हमारे सामने पेश कीं उनको मद्देनजर रखते हुए मैं यू० पी० के गवर्नर से बात करूंगा कि किस तरह से वहां सहूलियत होने का इन्तजाम किया जाय।

STATEMENT BY MINISTER RE FLOOD SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY

THE MINISTER OF IRRIGATION AND POWER (DR. K. L. RAO): I beg to lay on the Table a statement (in English and Hindi) on the flood situation in the country. [Placed in Library. See No. LT-5152/73.]

STATEMENT BY MINISTER RE COLLISION OF TRAINS BETWEEN CORE-GAON AND MALAD STATIONS OF WESTERN RAILWAY ON 31st May, 1973

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MOHD. SHAFI QURESHI): Sir, I beg to lay a statement on collision between 489 Down and 485 Down local trains between Goregaon and Malad stations of the Western Railway on the 31st May, 1973. [Placed in Library. See No. LT-5174/73]

MOTION RE EXTENSION OF TIME FOR THE PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSES ON THE PLANTATIONS LABOUR (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1973

SHRI NAND KISHORE BHATT (Madhya Pradesh): Sir, I beg to move the following Motion—

That the time appointed for the presentation of the Report of the Joint

Committee of the Houses on the Plantations Labour (Amendment) Bill, 1973 be extended up to the first day of the last week of the 88th Session of the Rajya Sabha.

The question was put and the motion was adopted.

REFERENCE TO CLEMENCY TO NAXALITE LEADER, MR. NAGABHU-SHAN PATNAIK.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: (West Bengal): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I have obtained the permission of the Chair to bring it to the notice of the House a disturbing report which I have got. I understand that the Naxalite leader, Mr. Nagabhushan Patnaik, who is under death sentence, has been transferred to the Raja-mundry Central Jail and it is rumoured that the Government has not accepted the clemency petition for the commutation of death sentence. As you know very well, many Members of Parliament and prominent public figures of all India stature have met the President and requested him that the death sentence should be commuted. We had thrashed out also at the meeting held under the presidentship of the Prime Minister in connection with the 25th Anniversary of our Independence that these death sentences should be commuted. We understand from the reports of the Government that a number of death sentences on ordinary convicts have been commuted. We do not know why the death sentence of a self-sacrificing political workers—we may or may not agree with his ideas—should not be commuted. He has been keeping indifferent health. In fact he has been ill. We are naturally very perturbed over the report that the Government is thinking of executing him. This is simply shocking. I think about 88 Members of Parliament had submitted a memorial requesting that the sentence be commuted. Apart from that, many prominent men, Sarvodaya leaders and others had also made a similar demand. In Assemblies demands have been made. This is supposed to be >he Silver Jubilee Year of our independence. Why should this not be done? If clemency has not been granted, the Government should reconsider it. I appeal to President Giri, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, the Home Minister and