

[MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair]

CALLING ATTENTION TO A MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

**DROUGHT CONDITIONS IN VARIOUS PARTS OF
THE COUNTRY**

श्री जगदम्बी प्रसाद यादव (बिहार) : श्रीमन्, मैं वर्षा न होने के कारण देश के अनेक भागों में सूखा की स्थिति और प्रभावित व्यक्तियों की कठिनाई दूर करने के लिये सरकार जो कदम उठाने का विचार रखती है, उनकी ओर कृषि मन्त्री का ध्यान दिवाना चाहता हूँ।

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ANNASAHAB SHINDE) : Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, the Hon'ble Members will recall that we had occasion to discuss the drought situation in certain parts of the country during the previous Session. At that time, the anxiety was mainly due to inadequacy of pre-monsoon rains as a result of which summer crops suffered. Since then, the monsoon, although delayed, broke out in the second half of June over different parts of the country and continued till the first half of July. Unfortunately, however, we have been overtaken by a dry spell in large parts of the country since the first half of July. As a result, sowings of early paddy and the main kharif crops have been affected. Reports of drought conditions during the current year have been received from the States of Bihar, Gujarat, Kerala, Manipur, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. Besides these States, drought conditions are continuing from the last year in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Mysore.

2. The concerned State Governments have undertaken the necessary relief measures wherever found necessary. These measures include :—

(i) opening of relief works, to provide employment opportunities to the affected population and to provide them with purchasing power, e. g. digging and deepening of wells, tanks, construction of village roads, etc.

(ii) distribution of taccavi loans ;

(iii) arrangements for drinking water supply ;

(iv) distribution of gratuitous relief

to children, nursing mothers and the old and infirm ; and

(v) strengthening of the public distribution system of foodgrains ; etc.

3. In accordance with the prescribed procedure for Central assistance, Central teams have visited the States of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan and West Bengal during the current year, and a team is visiting Tripura currently. A request for a Central team has also been received from Bihar recently. *Ad-hoc* loan assistance to the concerned State Governments, wherever necessary, has also been provided.

4. The prospects of kharif crops in un-irrigated areas would depend largely on the behaviour of the monsoon during the next few weeks.

5. An emergency food production programme for implementation by the Central and State Governments to save the existing kharif crops to the maximum extent possible, is being formulated and being taken up. This includes :

(i) putting all existing minor, medium and major irrigation works throughout the country into proper shape to operate round-the-clock ;

(ii) supply of pumping sets for utilizing surface irrigation, wherever available, to the maximum extent ;

(iii) preferential supply of electricity for agricultural purposes ;

(iv) completion of all incomplete minor irrigation works on a priority basis ;

(v) arrangements for immediate supply of fertilizers and pesticides for top dressing if it rains within the next 2 or 3 weeks ; and

(vi) formulation of a massive programme for rabi and summer production to meet the shortfall in the kharif crops.

6. The stock position of foodgrains both with the Central and the State Governments continues to be comfortable and all the reasonable demands of the State Governments for their public distribution system are being fully met. At present, over 1,25,000 fair price shops are functioning throughout the country and the State Governments and Union Territories have been advised to strengthen the public distribution system in their States.

[Shri Annasaheb Shinde]

7. While the present situation would certainly need careful watching and preparedness, it should not occasion any undue alarm. We are keeping in constant touch with the State Governments, and with their cooperation, we are confident of tiding over any difficult situation which may arise.

SHRI S. D. MISRA (Uttar Pradesh) : In your Statement you referred to "preferential supply of electricity for agricultural purposes". Is there the power ?

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE : Pump sets can be operated both by power and diesel engine.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA (West Bengal) : In your Statement you said, "All the reasonable demands of the State Governments for their public distribution system are being fully met." Who decides the demands whether they are reasonable or not ? Why in the case of State Governments also you mention 'reasonable' ?

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE : Because, so far no State Government has complained to us that the reallocations have been unsatisfactory or inadequate, and therefore I say that they are determined by mutual consultations.

श्री जगदम्बी प्रसाद यादव : श्रीमन्, अकाल अब धीरे-धीरे हरित क्रान्ति को समाप्त करके देश में काले बादल के समान छा गया है। मैं सरकार से इस बारे में घोषणा करने की आवश्यकता समझता हूँ कि सरकार को इस तरह की स्थिति को राष्ट्रीय संकट घोषित करके इसका मुकाबला करना चाहिये। अगर वह इस तरह की घोषणा करती है, तब ही वह इस संकट का मुकाबला कर सकती है; क्योंकि आज देश के 8 राज्यों से भी अधिक राज्यों में अकाल पड़ चुका है।

बिहार में अकाल का विश्लेषण करके तो यही कहना पड़ेगा कि पिछले साल रबी और भदई, दोनों फसलें समाप्त हो गई। इस बार भी आपको पता होगा कि आपने बिहार सरकार को जो रुपये बाढ़ सहायता के लिये दिये थे, उसमें से पांच करोड़ रुपये बिना पीड़ितों को दिये गये। वह रुपये केन्द्र को रिटर्न हो गया है। वहाँ के लोग असहाय पड़े हुए हैं और

सरकार भी असहाय है। रबी की क्राप से जो लोगों को सहायता मिल सकती थी वह नहीं मिल पाई है और मकई की जो फसल है वह समाप्त हो गई है। जेठवा मकई आदि की जो फसल होती है वह भी समाप्त हो गई है। भदई की फसल भी उनकी समाप्त हो गई है, जिसके कारण वहाँ की जनता को कई प्रकार का कष्ट सहन करना पड़ रहा है।

इसी तरह से गरमाधान की जो वहाँ पर फसल होती थी वह भी खत्म हो गई है। अप्रैल के महीने में ही सन्थाल पहाड़िया के कई लोग भूख के कारण मर चुके थे और अब यह स्थिति और जगह भी फैलती चली जा रही है।

आज अकाल की वजह से अनेक राज्यों में संकट की स्थिति पैदा हो गई है, जिसको मैं यहाँ पर दोहराना नहीं चाहता हूँ। इस संकट का अध्ययन करने के लिए केन्द्र की ओर से कुछ स्टेटों में टीमें भेजी गई हैं। कुछ स्टेटों ने तो इस तरह की टीम भेजने का आग्रह भी किया है। इस तरह की टीम केन्द्र बिहार और उत्तर प्रदेश में भेज रही है। केन्द्र की ओर से राज्यों को इस तरह के संकट का निवारण करने के लिए सहायता दी जाती है। राजस्थान सरकार को अरबों रुपया दिया गया, जिसमें से करोड़ों रुपया गबन हो गया। जहाँ तक बिहार की बात है, मैं आपसे यह कहना चाहता हूँ कि आप उसको जो भी सहायता दें, जिस कार्य के लिए भी दें, वह आप बिहार सरकार के ऊपर न छोड़ दें, बल्कि आप इस बात के लिए व्यवस्था करें कि जो भी कार्य आपके पैसे से वहाँ पर किये जाते हैं, वे पूरे किये जाते हैं या नहीं ? इस काम के लिए यह आवश्यक है कि जो सहायता दल वहाँ भेजे जाय वह यह भी देखें कि जो कार्य करने के लिए कहे जाते हैं, वे पूरे होते हैं या नहीं ? इसीलिए मैंने कहा कि आप आज राष्ट्रीय संकट घोषित कर दीजिये तब ही इस संकट का निराकरण हो सकेगा।

इसके साथ ही साथ मैं यह भी निवेदन करना चाहता हूँ कि जिन राज्यों में सूखे की स्थिति है वहाँ पर रोजगार दिलाने के संबंध में

केन्द्र कितना रुपया इन्वेस्ट करने जा रही है। आज जिन प्रदेशों में अकाल की स्थिति पैदा हो गई है, वहाँ पर कितने लोग अकाल पीड़ित हैं और उनमें से कितने लोगों को काम देने की योजना सरकार की तरफ से है। इसी सदर्भ में मैं यह निवेदन करना चाहता हूँ कि फ़ैमिन कोड के मुताबिक आप जिन राज्यों में श्रम योजना शुरू करेंगे या जहाँ पर योजना चालू कर दी गई है, वहाँ पर श्रमिकों को बहुत कम दैनिक वेतन दिया जाता है, जिसके कारण वे अच्छी तरह से श्रम नहीं कर सकते हैं। देखा यह गया है कि जो उन्हें मजदूरी मिलती है, उससे उनके लिए पूरे दिन का भी खाना नहीं होता है। जब उन लोगों को पेट भर खाना नहीं मिलेगा, अनाज खाने को नहीं मिलेगा, तो वे अच्छी तरह से काम नहीं कर सकेंगे। उन्हें अनाज भी न दिया जाय, पैसा भी कम दिया जाय, तो ऐसी हालत में वे लोग किस तरह मिट्टी ढोने और दूसरे कठिन परिश्रम के कार्य कर सकेंगे।

श्रीमन्, आपने कहा कि तकावी की व्यवस्था की है। हम लोग राज्य से आते हैं। अभी तक सरकार ने कही भी तकावी की व्यवस्था नहीं की है। इसलिए अगर आपको सूचना आई है तो आप ठीक से उस सूचना को कन्फर्म करें कि किस प्रकार तकावी की बात हुई है।

मैं एक बात और आपकी नालेज में लाना चाहता हूँ। बिहार सरकार ने कहा कि ऋण वसूली बन्द कर दो, लेकिन शायद आपको विदित होगा कि ऋण वसूली सरकार ने बन्द कर दी, लेकिन रिजर्व बैंक कहता है सहकारी बैंकों से, जिनके अधिकांश ऋण ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में है कि अगर तुम्हारा मिनिमम 85 फीसदी वसूल नहीं हुआ तो तुमको अगले साल के लिए एडवान्स के लिए पैसा नहीं देगे। एक तरफ सरकार जहाँ बन्द कर रही है वहाँ दूसरी तरफ सहकारी बैंकों के वर्मचारियों को ऋण वसूली के लिए अभी भी ताबड-तोड़ परिश्रम करना पड़ रहा है। इसलिए इन अकाल पीड़ित क्षेत्रों में सकटकालीन स्थिति घोषित करेंगे तो साथ

ही साथ बैंकों को भी अहसास होगा कि इस स्थिति में उन्हें उनको छूट देनी चाहिए।

मैं एक बात और जानना चाहता हूँ कि इन आठ या अधिक राज्यों में कितने प्रतिशत लोग अलग-अलग इस सूखे से प्रभावित हुए हैं और आगे जो सूखा चल रहा है और जैसी कि आपने सम्भावना प्रगट की है कि अगर दो-तीन सप्ताह में वर्षा न हुई तो आप मदद करेंगे। सावन महीने में पछुआ हवा के चलने से घनघोर बारिश होती थी, लेकिन आज पछुआ हवा के चलने के कारण जो किसान ने फसल बोई थी वह जल चुकी है। इसलिए आप उस सम्भावना को ध्यान में रखते हुए क्या हिसाब-किताब करेंगे, यह हम आपसे जानकारी चाहते हैं।

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE : It is well known to all hon. Members that this year the weather conditions have been very unusual. In fact the summer itself was unusually dry and there were no pre-monsoon showers and in some parts of the country, for instance like West Bengal and Orissa, jute sowing was very adversely affected. The monsoon was also very much delayed almost by three weeks. Later on, though for three weeks up to 12th July we received very widespread rains throughout the country, from the 12th July onwards dry spell developed. We usually have dry spells in the rainy season in the past years but this is usually confined to one or two States. But unfortunately this is now a very unprecedented sort of situation. The dry spell has spread all over the country. Therefore, this situation is causing quite some concern to us. Even then I would like to submit to the hon. Members that if it rains during the next seven or eight or ten days much of this situation can be saved. Therefore, we should not take a very panicky view of things prematurely. That is one thing.

Secondly, there are a number of steps we are contemplating. The hon. Member has asked why not send teams *suo motu* from here. In fact we are doing a lot of exercise. We are keeping in constant touch with the State Governments. If the worst comes to the worst, we propose to call an emergency meeting of all the Agriculture Ministers of States so that whatever emergency plan is necessary we will discuss with them. We will work out

[Shri Annasaheb Shinde]

a common action Programme of saving the kharif crops and planning for rabi and summer paddy. I do feel confident that as a nation we have so much experience in agriculture now that we shall be in a position to face up to the situation with confidence, though there would be difficulties—I do not minimise the difficulties which are inherent if the situation gets worse. As has been already mentioned in this House, the food stocks are almost 9.5 million tonnes. With the strengthening of the public distribution system I do feel that the requirements of particularly the weaker sections can be taken care of. In this I would seek the co-operation of the State Governments if an elaborate public distribution system is arranged. Then the States would be providing relief work. For that the State Governments need not wait for clearance from us. Relief is a State subject and they can proceed with it immediately as the situation develops.

As far as suspension of recovery is concerned, the hon. Member referred to the fact that the Reserve Bank goes on pressing for recovery. There is a well-established principle now—if due to natural calamities there are crop failures, the crop loans can be converted into medium-term loans; the State Government can take it up with the Reserve Bank, and I do not anticipate any difficulty on that ground.

श्री जगदम्बी प्रसाद यादव : लॉग टर्म नहीं होता है ।

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE : लॉग टर्म नहीं होता है, मीडियम टर्म होता है । I do not think because that has been examined, and ultimately we have also to see that the credit system functions. If we come to the conclusion later on that even this conversion into medium-term loan does not meet the requirements of the situation, then we can give further thought to this.

One point which has been raised by the hon. Member is, what is the precise percentage of population and areas affected by drought in various States. I think, with the situation emerging as it is, perhaps at this point of time it would be very difficult for me to give the precise population and the areas which are affected. In fact, I would say, as I said earlier, even if it rains during

the next seven or eight days, though there has been some damage ..

SHRI S. D. MISRA : What is the percentage of areas ? A general assessment can be given.

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE : In the northeastern States there are good showers by and large, though in Tripura and Manipur there are pockets. In the South, Tamil Nadu had good rains. Kerala recently has been having good rains. The Mysore areas which are drought prone areas, they are badly affected. But the coastal areas of Maharashtra and Mysore are having good rains. In Andhra Pradesh, in the Rayalaseema area.. (Interruptions) Not now. The situation is developing.

SHRI S. D. MISRA : The Minister must have seen in yesterday's and day before yesterday's paper, in the Statesman especially, that they have given a map of India with a graph. According to that graph—what he says is correct that the coastal area here and there is dry—two or three of the areas in the country are in drought today. Anything may happen within seven days. We can expect that something might happen.

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE : Today some signs are there. But it will be very difficult for me to give the precise areas. I would repeat—the areas are spread all over the country. In the Himalayan ranges, in Himachal Pradesh and in the western part of U. P...

श्री जगदम्बी प्रसाद यादव : उसके कारण तो बिहार में बाढ़ आई ।

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE : As far as the query which the hon. Member has made...

श्री जगदम्बी प्रसाद यादव : हमने एक चीज और पूछी थी रोजगार दिलाने की । स्टेट गवर्नमेंट्स ने जो व्यवस्था की है वह बहुत ही नगण्य है । इसी लिए हमने जानना चाहा कि इस रोजगार को दिलाने के लिए केन्द्र ने सारी स्टेटों को कितना पैसा दिया है या दे रही है । एक चीज मैं और जानना चाहता था कि वे गरीब जो भुखमरी के शिकार हैं, उनको हार्ड मैन्युअल वर्क के लिए पैसा दिया जाता है, लेकिन जिसका पेट भी भूखा

है और पैसा भी कम है वह मिट्टी ढोने और मिट्टी काटने का कठिन काम कैसे कर सकता है। इसलिए जब तक इसमें आमूलचूल परिवर्तन की व्यवस्था नहीं की जाएगी, तब तक लोग ऐसे कठिन काम को कैसे कर सकते हैं।

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE : Actually, I have replied to all these things that these are decisions within the jurisdiction and competence of the State Governments and they can take the decision, though our broad advice to them would be that in a difficult situation at least reasonable wages should be given so that the workers and the wage-earners are in a position to maintain themselves.

श्री जगदम्बी प्रसाद यादव : रोजगार दिलाने की व्यवस्था तो कुछ बतला दीजिये।

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE : The State Governments have to do that.

SHRI N. G. GORAY (Maharashtra) : Sir, I think there will be agreement in the House so far as the observation of the hon. Minister is concerned that we need not create any panic. Sir, there is no question of creating any panic. But I do feel that the situation is almost verging on emergency. And when he said that if any emergency arises a conference of the various Agricultural Ministers would be convened, there I beg to differ from him, and I would say that the time has already come and no time should be lost in convening such a conference for taking early measures. Why I say so is because this time the drought conditions are unprecedented. The weathermen have said that a comparable situation was prevalent in this country only in the year 1906.

That is, he had to go back nearly 66 years to find a situation comparable to the situation that obtains today.

He said that in some parts of the country there are good rains. If you just look at the map of India, you will find that these are fringe areas, Western Coast, Eastern Coast and some parts of the Himalayan ranges. The mainland is completely under drought right from Rajasthan to Maharashtra and Mysore. Therefore, the entire Gangetic region and the Deccan Plateau, all of them are affected.

And I am not exaggerating when I say that the kharif crop is almost destroyed.

Sir, he says if we get rains within five or six days the situation can be saved. I beg to differ on that point also. The situation is already out of our hands and even if there are rains within the next five or six days they will benefit the rabi crops a little. But the kharif crops could not be saved. Now, Sir, when a situation like this arises, and as you might have noticed from the papers the Punjab Minister has said that there is to be 30 per cent. cut in the electricity supply and the factories will work only five days in a week, that means the electricity supply will be substantially cut down. The Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister also has said that if it does not rain within four or five days there will be near-famine conditions. The same thing has happened in Rajasthan also. So, Sir, instead of waiting for detailed reports from all the States I would say that the Centre on their own should take the initiative in devising measures which will be able to combat the situation that is fast developing.

Here I would like to point out that yesterday the Finance Minister told us that the failure of monsoon has resulted in pushing up the prices. From the statement you will find that the prices of jowar, bajra, etc., cereals which are consumed by the common people, have been pushed up to the extent of 25 per cent., 35 per cent., 40 per cent. This is the data which is composed in about 50 centres that the Government has. But if you go to the remote villages you will find that this particular rise in prices will be much more in those remote villages from which the data is not easily obtainable. Therefore, it is safe to assume that there is already nearly 60-65 per cent. increase in prices, and if the drought condition continues, then the prices will soar up still further. Therefore, Sir, this becomes a multi-faced problem. It is not a question only of food. All the time we are being told that 85 million tonnes of foodgrains are in the buffer-stock. It is all right. It is a very comfortable position. But the point is how do you reach the remotest village? Therefore, I would say that from now on an adequate machinery will have to be built up.

We have been told that there are 1,25,000 fair price shops throughout the country. Perhaps one-third of them would be in the cities. What about the villages? It will come to about one shop for every five or six villages

[Shri N. G. Goray]

which is hardly adequate. Therefore I would like to urge upon the Minister that immediate steps ought to be taken to see that the number of cheap grain shops or fair price shops is at least doubled. Let us have another $1\frac{1}{2}$ million cheap grain shops throughout the country.

The other effect of this drought will be that there will be shortage of fodder and cattle will die in their hundreds and thousands because there will be no water, there will be no fodder. Therefore, in the scheme of planning that they are thinking there must be storage of fodder and there must be provision for cattle camps where the agriculturists can bring their cattle.

श्री जगदम्बी प्रसाद यादव : ट्रांसपोर्टेशन का क्या होगा ? रेलवे तो सामान पहुंचाती नहीं।

श्री एन० जी० गोरे : यादव जी, इसी लिए मैंने कहा कि यह एक ऐसा काम है कि जिसके बहुत से पहलू हो सकते हैं।

Therefore, I am saying that it is not only the Food Ministry or the Agriculture Ministry but three or four Ministries that will have to come together, contact their counterparts in the States and all-India plan will have to be evolved on the basis of district. Therefore, I am suggesting that all these steps will have to be taken—cheap grain shops, fodder storage, cattle camps and provision of drinking water—and the entire machinery of the States and the Centre will have to be geared up.

I would also say in conclusion that the Famine Relief Code has become antiquated. If you think it possible, I would suggest to the Minister that a parliamentary committee should be appointed to revise the entire Famine Code so that it will be brought up-to-date and measures will be taken in time to meet a situation like this. Instead of waiting for the situation to overwhelm us, it is better that we prepare ourselves and meet the situation before it arises.

SHRI ANNASAHAB SHINDE : Sir, I am thankful to the hon. Member for the various suggestions he has made. When I said that we propose to convene a conference of Agriculture Ministers if need be, my intention was not that no action should be taken till that time. In fact, from the state-

ment itself the hon. Member will be in a position to appreciate that my Ministry has already initiated action in a number of directions. We have worked out elaborate plans of meeting the situation. We are taking it up with the various Ministries concerned and we are constantly in touch with the State Governments. So we will not wait till Agriculture Ministers meet and say yes or no for this. Already action is being taken on a number of items and some lines of action have been indicated in the principal statement which I made in reply to the Calling Attention Notice.

Then, Sir, I would like to submit that though the situation is difficult, it will not be correct to say that the Kharif crops will be lost. This immediately affects the price line. Had it been true, I would have myself conceded it. What I was saying was that paddy, for instance, is such a delicate crop that a dry spell for a long period will cause immense damage to the paddy crop. But there are certain crops which can stand up to drought conditions a little, though the yields will be lower. If adequate rains are received, perhaps with the help of fertilisers we can have at least the normal yields. Therefore, I do feel that if widespread rains are received still the situation can be brought under control. So, we need not take a very discouraging view of the situation.

Secondly, as far as the public distribution system is concerned. I am inclined to agree with the hon. Member. Though the number of fair-price shops on paper appears to be quite large, my own feeling is that a number of these shops require strengthening. Some of them may even be defunct. Therefore we have drawn the attention of the State Governments to the need for strengthening the public distribution system particularly in villages so that we ensure that whatever foodgrain is available with us reaches the needy sections of the society at a reasonable price, at the controlled price. We allot the foodgrain available with us to the State Governments at controlled prices and they also distribute it through the fair-price shops at controlled prices. This principle has to be implemented in practice. Therefore, we will review the position again in this matter and see that the State Governments take some steps to strengthen the public distribution system.

Then he mentioned about fodder and saving the cattle. I think if the rains are there the fodder situation will not be so acute,

though there would be some problems here and there. But this is one of the items normally taken care of by my Ministry and the State Governments if the situation develops in that direction.

The main thing, to my mind, is really providing work because large sections of our society have no purchasing power. That would be the important item. The second is organising production programmes because in our country there are areas where even in a difficult situation, some of the crops can be saved. Therefore, organising production programmes on a very sound basis, on an emergency basis, would be called for. As I have suggested, even if we have to stop supply to entertainment places like cinema houses in order to restore electricity to pumping sets, etc., we will have to take a number steps in that direction. We are closely examining the position. Even if austerity measures are to be adopted for providing electricity to enable agriculture to have priority, we are consulting the State Government in regard to all these matters. I assure the honourable Member that no efforts will be spared. My only appeal is without your cooperation we shall not be in a position to function effectively. I appeal for the cooperation of all Members of this House irrespective of political differences. Despite all difficulties, with your goodwill just as we came up very well during the Bangla Desh crisis, I hope with your goodwill.

SHRI N. G. GORAY : Do not forget us after the crisis is over.

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE. I do feel confident that we shall be in a position to handle the situation in future.

श्रीमती लक्ष्मी कुमारी चूडावत (राजस्थान) : उपसभापति महोदय, आज हमारे देश के भीतर अकाल की काली घटाएं छाती जा रही हैं। अगर यही स्थिति हुई—बरसात नहीं हुई—तो इस प्रकार का एक भयंकर अकाल पड़ेगा जिसकी कल्पना मात्र से रोंगटे खड़े हो जाते हैं। जब अकाल का प्रश्न आता है, तो राजस्थान इसमें सबसे उभर कर आता है। राजस्थान ऐसा प्रदेश रहा है, बल्कि मैं कहूंगी इस मामले में एक ऐसा अभाग्य राज्य रहा है, कि हर समय अकाल की छाया किसी न किसी रूप में राजस्थान के किसी न किसी भाग में बनी रहती है, लेकिन इस बार अगर बरसात

न हुई, उसकी भयंकरता कितनी होगी, उसका अनुमान हम नहीं लगा सकते हैं। मैं एक्सेज-रेशन न करके स्पष्ट कहती हूँ कि इस बार जो अकाल पड़ेगा वह अनप्रेसिडेन्ट होगा। आज भी वहाँ सवाल यह है कि पन्द्रह-पन्द्रह, बीस-बीस मील दूर से पीने का पानी लाना पड़ता है। अभी जो बरसात हुई, हजारों हमारे गांव ऐसे हैं, जिनमें पानी की एक बूंद वर्षा नहीं हुई है, 65 परसेंट गांवों में अभी तक कोई सोइंग नहीं हुई है और 35 परसेंट में जो सोइंग हुई है, वह अगर इस हफ्ते में या पांच-सात दिन में बरमात नहीं हुई, तो वह सोइंग भी जल जाएगी, भस्म हो जाएगी।

उपसभापति महोदय, इसका असर राजस्थान में अभी एक करोड़ व्यक्तियों के ऊपर पड़ा है और जहां तक पशु-धन का सवाल है, उसका करोड़ों के ऊपर प्रभाव पड़ा है। पश्चिमी राजस्थान की सारी की सारी इकानामी पशु-धन के ऊपर निर्भर है। हमारा आधा राज्य रेगिस्तान है और पाकिस्तान के साथ मिला हुआ है, वहां प्रायः अकाल पड़ा रहता है। अकाल में वहां सीमा के पास वाले इलाके की जो आबादी है, उनको खिलाने पिलाने की जिम्मेदारी राज्य की है। अगर उनको खिलाया पिलाया न जाए तो वहां से चले जाते हैं और उनको पुनः स्थापित करने में कुछ विशेष प्रकार की कठिनाई आ जाती है। तो उपसभापति महोदय, मैं यह निवेदन करना चाहूंगी कि राजस्थान में जो अकाल आ रहा है, उसके ऊपर पहले से ध्यान देकर अभी से योजना हाथ में ली जाए। यह मैं मानती हूँ जब-जब अकाल पड़ता है, केन्द्र से उसके लिए धनराशि खर्च की जाती है, लेकिन जो अकाल के ऊपर राशि खर्च की जाती है, उस राशि का ब्याज केन्द्र सरकार को देना पड़ता है। मैं आपके द्वारा मंत्री जी से पूछना चाहूंगी : क्या हम कोई व्यापार कर रहे हैं, जिसकी पूँजी के लिए हमको ब्याज देना पड़ता है ? जहां भूखों मरते आदमियों को अनाज दिया जाए, रिलीफ दिया जाए, उसका ब्याज हमें देना पड़ना है। यह एक आम प्रश्न है जिसके ऊपर आपको विचार करना चाहिए। आखिर

[श्रीमती लक्ष्मी कुमारी चूडावत]

यह रेगिस्तान जो है, यह कोई हमारा बनाया हुआ नहीं है, प्रकृति की देन है। हमारे यहां अकाल 1963 में पड़ा, हमारे यहां अकाल 1965 में हुआ, हमारे यहां अकाल 1966 में पड़ा। उसके बाद 1968, 1969 और 1970, तीन वर्षों से लगातार अकाल वहां पड़ता रहा, भयंकर अकाल पड़ता रहा। उसमें खर्च भी किया गया, लेकिन उपसभापति महोदय, मैं मंत्री जी से कहना चाहूंगी कि जब हम इतनी राशि हमेशा अकाल के ऊपर खर्च करते हैं तो हमेशा के लिए ऐसी कोई परमानेंट व्यवस्था क्यों नहीं की जाती कि इस अकाल का निवारण किया जा सके। पत्तों में पानी देने से कुछ नहीं होता, जड़ में पानी देने से ही कुछ हो सकेगा। हमारी राजस्थान कैनल की जो स्कीम है, उस स्कीम में जिस प्रकार से रकम दी जाती है, जिस तरह से धीरे-धीरे करके उसको पूरा किया जा रहा है, उसको अगर हम वीघ्र पूरा कर सकते तो अकेले उससे अकाल दूर किया जा सकता है। अब जो अकाल पड़ा है, मेरा सुझाव है, अपनी पूर्ण शक्ति के साथ इस राजस्थान कैनल के वर्क को हाथ में लिया जाए, ताकि आगे आने वाले अकालों में कमी पड़ सके। इसी तरह से जो हमारी दूसरी स्कीमें हैं, चाहे वह नर्मदा प्रोजेक्ट हो, चाहे माही या सतपुड़ा की हो, उन्हें जल्द से जल्द पूरा किया जाना चाहिये और इन प्रोजेक्ट को पूरा करने के लिए जितनी रकम की आवश्यकता है वह केन्द्रीय सरकार को देना चाहिये।

आज फैमिन कोड के अनुसार जो रकम खर्च की जाती है, वह केवल कच्चे कामों पर खर्च की जाती है। हमारा जो फैमिन कोड है वह पुराने जमाने से चला आ रहा है और उसके मुताबिक जो भी कार्य किये जाते हैं, वे हवा में उड़ जाते हैं या फिर पानी में बह जाते हैं। इसलिए मेरा निवेदन यह है कि यह जो हमारा फैमिन कोड है, जो बहुत पुराना पड़ गया है, उसको बदला जाना चाहिये और इस समय हम जो कच्चे काम करते हैं उनके स्थान

पर पुख्ते काम हाथ में लिये जाने चाहियें, नहरों का काम किया जाना चाहिये, जिसका लाभ जनता को मिले और उन चीजों का असर भी हो। इस समय हम फैमिन कोड के अनुसार जो खर्च करते हैं, उसका असर जनता के ऊपर बहुत कम पड़ता है। इसलिए मेरा निवेदन है कि राजस्थान कैनल के काम को और तेजी के साथ किया जाना चाहिये। (*Time bell rings*) आज स्थिति यह है कि इस स्कीम के लिए 208 करोड़ रुपये आंका गया था और कई वर्षों के काम होने के बाद अभी तक केवल 88 करोड़ रुपये ही खर्च हो पाया है। इस नहर से 28 लाख एकड़ जमीन सींची जानी थी जबकि अभी केवल 4½ लाख एकड़ जमीन ही सिंचाई के काम में लाई गई है।

मैं यह भी निवेदन करना चाहूंगी कि राजस्थान को रेलवे वैगन देने में प्रायिरीटी दी जानी चाहिये। इस बारे में हमारा बिटर एक्सपिरियन्स है कि अनाज लाने के लिए वैगन नहीं मिलते हैं, जिसकी वजह से वक्त पर अनाज नहीं पहुंच पाता है। आज इस बात का प्रबन्ध किया जाना चाहिये कि हमें वक्त पर वैगन मिल जायें। इसी तरह से वहां पर घास की कमी हो जाती है और उसका भी अभी से प्रबन्ध किया जाना चाहिये। इसी तरह से हमारे यहां जो मोटे अनाज की कमी है, दूसरे अनाजों की कमी है, उसको बाहर के प्रान्तों से लाकर राजस्थान को दिया जाना चाहिये। फूड कारपोरेशन को फिलहाल राजस्थान से बाहर अनाज नहीं भेजना चाहिये और उन कामों को लिया जाना चाहिये जो पुख्ते हों और यही बात मैं जोर देकर कहती हूं।

SHRI ANNASAHAB SHINDE : We know that Rajasthan is one of the very unfortunate States in the country which is subject to frequent droughts. Particularly the western part is really very unfortunate area and I quite sympathise with the hon. lady Member for the conditions in Rajasthan. Hon. Members are aware...

श्री एस० डी० मिश्र : कैनल के लिए

पैसा दीजिये और वहां पर ड्राट हट जायेगा ।

SHRI ANNASAHAB SHINDE : She has very ably pleaded for that. She also said that there should be no difficulty for foodgrains on account of non-availability of wagons. Let me assure her that we will take adequate care to see that all the reasonable requirements of foodgrains of Rajasthan Government will be taken care of and non-availability of wagons will not come in the way of despatching required quantities of foodgrains to Rajasthan Government. The hon. lady Member need not have any fear that whatever foodgrains are there will be removed elsewhere by us. We will first see that the Rajasthan Government's requirements are met and if only they are not required by the Rajasthan Government they will be moved, not otherwise. She has made a point that whatever assistance is given by the Central Government, interest is charged on that. I may submit for the information of the hon. lady Member that the pattern of Central assistance is well set. Out of the total funds required for relief suppose the requirement is Rs. 100/- — 75 per cent are given by the Central Government and 25 per cent are to be provided by the State. Out of this 75 per cent, 50 per cent is outright grant. There is no question of paying any interest on it. That applies to Rajasthan also. Therefore the hon. lady Member should not have any apprehension that we will charge interest. It is an outright grant and not even the principal is recovered. Only 25 per cent constitutes loan and on that whatever interest is paid by other States, Rajasthan has also to pay.

As far as Rajasthan Canal is concerned, I am not aware of the case. I will convey the desire of the hon. lady Member and her suggestion to the Minister for Irrigation who will look into these things.

About the famine code, I think there is a wrong impression. Famine code falls within the jurisdiction of the State Government. It is for the State concerned to amend it or modify it. We have looked into this a number of occasions. We have taken it up with the State Governments and made suggestions to them that they should bring it up-to-date. A number of State Governments have made it up-to-date. And, Sir, this has been taken up from time to time.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Yes, Dr. Ahmad.

DR. Z. A. AHMAD (Uttar Pradesh) : Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I agree with Shri Goray that we do not want to create a panic. But the situation is very serious indeed. But Sir, let us hope and pray that within the next eight or ten days there will be rains. None the less, I would submit that we should be properly forewarned.

Sir, the honourable Minister's statement, as it goes, appears to be quite perfect. Everything has been done, orders have been issued and due care is being taken at all points. The question of relief, the question of opening of shops, the question of utilisation of the irrigation sources, the question of credit, etc., all these things are up to the mark.

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL (Gujarat) : Except the State Governments.

DR. Z. A. AHMAD : Yes. How correctly my hon. friend has said that the file has been properly attended to and the orders have gone ! But, actually what is being done in the States ? For that we should be asked. You should ask us. Files have been properly disposed of. You should ask us as to what is to be done. We know the apparatus of the State Government.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : Rains do not come from the files.

DR. Z. A. AHMAD : Sir, we know the apparatus of the State Government. The House knows very well how slow they are, how inefficient they are and how careless they are. As you go down, efficiency declines and you know what it is and so, I do not want to go into details. So, Sir, I personally think that initiative has to be taken, I mean, proper initiative, to give a jolt to the whole administration, to the whole State administration, by immediately calling a conference of the Agriculture Ministers and I submit that it would be good and advisable if the Prime Minister herself attends this conference. That would vest it with certain importance and so, the Prime Minister and other Ministers, senior Ministers, should attend that conference. Why not they do it ?

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL : And also the Secretaries because they are the people who execute the policies.

DR. Z. A. AHMAD : That is also right. I think Mr. Shinde will agree with me that if the rains do not come within the next few days, a very very big tragedy is going to take place and lakhs and lakhs of people will die if the

[Dr. Z. A. Ahmad]

rains do not come within the next fifteen days and I am sure it will not come despite our wishes, despite our hopes, despite our prayers. Therefore, my submission is that immediately you should consider this at the Cabinet level, at the topmost level and see whether, in view of the menace of widespread famine conditions—I do not say scarcity because in this case it is only famine over a large area—a conference of the Agriculture Ministers should be called immediately, to be attended by some of the Cabinet Ministers also and also by the Prime Minister, to plan properly and give a jolt to the entire administration and a proper direction.

Secondly, Sir, I also think it is necessary not to feel self-satisfied with your stocks in hand. I think it is 9.5 million tonnes. What is this 9.5 million tonnes? When so many people will begin to die, this will go away. Therefore, I think that it is necessary that steps should be taken in order to ascertain the stocks with the private dealers, because it is those stocks only which are going to create havoc and it is only those stocks that would disappear and create the blackmarket and you must be able to get quickly information as to how much stock is going to the different *mandis*, big and small. I do not say you should seize the stocks. Therefore, the process of mobilising the food resources of the country, not only in the hands of the States, but the much larger stocks with the private dealers, should begin so that at the time when there is famine, you should be able to requisition those stocks and distribute them through the fair-price shops. Increasing fair price shops is no solution. Increase the stock at your disposal; that is the main solution. If you have stocks, you will be able to increase fair price shops also. Merely by depending on 9.5 millions you will not be able to cope with the situation.

Then, I do not know how much you can get out of the utilization of tanks and utilization of irrigation resources, *taccavi* and all that. Well, you go on tinkering with these. All these are routine things. How many pumping sets will you give? If a man applies for a loan, he has to go through the whole procedure, and it takes three months...

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE : What is your suggestion?

DR. Z. A. AHMAD : My suggestion is this : The first thing you should do, and

which you will perhaps not do, is to get hold of the stocks with the private dealers...

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE : On the production side?

DR. Z. A. AHMAD : Whatever you can do, you should do. But can you do anything. The point is that an illusion should not be created. For God's sake, do not create an illusion that you can do much on the production side. The point is that food has to be given, relief has to be given. Have money at your disposal for giving credit and all sorts of things. But do not talk of increasing production and that you will be able to increase the production within one month or two months. You will not be able to do it. That will only be on paper. It will only give satisfaction to those people who do not know agricultural process. You should concentrate on relief, food and help to the people in distress, instead of increasing production. If you can do a little work on increasing production, well it is good.

Now, Sir, about this famine code I also feel that this famine code needs to be looked into...

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE : Your Commission can make suggestions.

DR. Z. A. AHMAD : It will take two years to make them. You should look into this quickly...

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI (Maharashtra) : It will go on till the end of the year. Then perhaps its life will be extended by one year...

SHRI S. D. MISRA : This would be like the Netaji Inquiry Commission. You may go on appointing Kulkarni Commission, Krishan Kant Commission and other Commissions...

DR. Z. A. AHMAD : I will humbly submit to Shri Shinde that he should look into this. What happens is that there is a great reluctance on the part of State Governments to put this into operation. This condition is not satisfied : People are dying...No, they are not dying...Deaths have taken place...No death has taken place; there will be so much of controversy around this. Therefore, I do not want to call it a famine code; you can give it any name. I do not want to connect it with the idea of absolutely grim dying out of lakhs of people and then the

code coming into operation. If there is a large-scale distress, some sort of code should come into operation. 'Distress Codes' I may call it. Supposing there is a large-scale distress and large-scale hunger, then it needs to be relaxed; its provisions need to be relaxed. Therefore, although you say that State Governments have looked into it, well, I think that further looking into it is necessary...

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : I think they can make a provision in that particular famine code for scarcity areas. Nowadays you do not declare famine areas because they do not fulfil certain requirements laid down by the British. I can understand some technical difficulty. But surely you can define now what you consider to be scarcity areas. Then you can declare it and enumerate the steps that should be taken.

DR. Z. A. AHMAD : I will summarise. An Agriculture Ministers' Conference should be called forthwith. It should discuss this question and take initiative as I said and give a direction to the whole State administration.

Provide for funds—be ready with funds.

Take a proper assessment of the stocks in the hands of the private dealers. Ensure that the stocks do not disappear. When there are famine conditions you should be able to get hold of those stocks and distribute them mainly in the country—side. Starvation will come in an acute form among the Harijans and the tribals, the poorer sections of the people. For these sections of the people the stocks should be mobilised and distributed through fair price shops in the countryside.

Lastly, some sort of definition of a scarcity area should be made and a scarcity plan or the so-called Famine Code or whatever you call it should be put into operation and the whole administration in the States in these areas should be geared up to this one main task.

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE : Coming to the last part of declaring scarcity areas, as is rightly pointed out, it is very difficult to declare famine because many of these areas do not satisfy those conditions. Therefore, we have been making research to draw a distinction between scarcity—drought-areas and famine areas. Therefore, for declaring these drought areas some broad principles can possibly be laid down. My Ministry will examine this. The State Governments can do that anyhow, but it will be a

good thing if some principles are laid down. Therefore, this matter will be gone into.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : At the next Conference, if you have one, it should be made a specific agenda. Now, in view of this point, you should define what is a scarcity area or distress area so that you can cover those areas which are not covered by the so-called definition of famine.

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE : I think we shall have no difficulty; some all-India principle could be worked out.

Then, Sir, regarding the suggestion which the hon. Member has made about the Agriculture Ministers' Conference, I myself have said earlier that we shall convene it and have the Prime Minister address it because it will give the necessary weight. The machinery required and all that will be created and necessary action-oriented programme will be created and we will be able to involve the Prime Minister and request her to address this Conference and advise us in regard to the action that is to be taken.

Only on one thing I would again repeat because when I said about panic I did not mean to minimise the difficult situation. I would again say what is happening now in the country, because either newspapers or other media, even politicians have been making statements—out of good intentions, of course—the anti-social elements and others think that this is a good opportunity to take advantage and exploit the situation. Therefore, I would appeal to all my colleagues that if, after all, realistically something has to be mentioned it has to be mentioned but at the same time I think what is required really in this country in a difficult time is to develop a feeling of confidence in the country so that we are in a position to face the situation.

I do not agree with one statement of the hon. Member I have great respect for him; particularly in the field of agriculture he has a tremendous amount of knowledge—that lakhs of people will die. What I am submitting is this: Now we have so much of experience. The year 1966-67, for instance, was a very bad year and that was the worst drought in a century and at that time many people thought that really conditions were difficult and that people will starve and there will be starvation deaths on a very large scale. But it has been our experience that if we try to tie up and

[Shri Annasaheb Shinde]

take emergency measures and try to mobilise resources, food, etc., we are in a position to save the situation. I do feel confident that even if the worst comes to the worst, nobody will be allowed to die. The Government of India, as I already said, has the strength to face the situation and see that nobody is allowed to die in this country even if a difficult situation emerges.

DR. Z. A. AHMAD : With determination ...

SHRI ANNASAHAB SHINDE : I do feel like that. Then, Sir, the hon. Member said,

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what can we do with 9.5 million tonnes in stock. I am not saying that everything can be managed with this but if the hon. Member looks into the history of the food economy in this country the maximum imports that have taken place were in the year 1967 and that was only 10 million tonnes. That means the worst period we could manage with that much of food and almost that quantity is with us now. Many a time in difficult circumstances we are inclined to take the view that everything is going wrong. I am not saying that there are no failures anywhere. This is such a vast country that either at the State level or here there may be failures and weaknesses. But may I say this that it was the very wise administration of the foodgrain policy which has helped us to conserve this large buffer stock and this should help us very much to meet the situation. Surely this will help us to help the poorer sections of the society through Fair Price shops. It is in this context that I welcome the suggestion of the hon. Member particularly with reference to strengthening the public distribution system because I am aware of the weaknesses of the system.

About the Famine Code I have made some observations earlier and I have also referred to the principles being evolved for declaring scarcity areas. About private trade I think in a difficult period we will have to take action to see that anti-social elements and others are not allowed to exploit the situation. We are watching the situation and examining the position. We will be very vigilant in these matters and the private trade or any other party, in an emergency

situation like this, will not be allowed to exploit the difficult situation and profiteer at the cost of the poorer sections of the society. Government of India will take all necessary steps and we would welcome any suggestion that may come from hon. Members.

SHRI MONORANJAN ROY (West-Bengal) : I am glad that the Minister has got confidence and is showing robust optimism. He also expects, as could be guessed from the trend of things today, that within seven days there will be rain. Yes ; we can expect, if not within seven days, at least within fifteen days there will be floods. But after 25 years of independence, looking to the vast area of the country, I would say that the irrigation that the Government has provided is almost nothing. The robust optimist he is, the Minister says with confidence that they will not allow anyone to die of starvation. I would request the Minister to go into this matter deeply, try to enquire and find out the truth. In Tripura already there have been 50 starvation deaths. Deaths do not take place among the rich peasants or the rich people in the rural areas ; deaths take place among the tribal people, among the agricultural labourers, among the poorest sections of society, the news of whose death does not reach the newspapers. And the Ministry tries to keep their eyes shut and the ears closed so that they do not hear or see. I can give another instance, the instance of Malda in West Bengal. Three-fourths of Malda was under water from July to October 1971 and now it is faced with complete drought condition ; not a single drop of rain has fallen since November 1971. Fifty people have died of starvation there. It is not me who is saying this, I am giving from the Report of the Member of Parliament of that area who has submitted a memorandum to the Government of West Bengal. In his memorandum he has given all the particulars, the names of the villages and the names of the father or husband or wife of the persons who died. He has given the names and the addresses of the persons who died of starvation, and he says that this is incomplete, because people do not want to create panic. It is not that here in Parliament we shall say something and panic will be created in the country. But the people of the affected areas are faced with such a situation. Those people, they do not want that the news of these starvation deaths should be circulated because panic will be created among the

people themselves. Even before the Memorandum was submitted, one of the Ministers, the Agriculture Minister of West Bengal, issued a statement in the press because, unfortunately, that is his own district. He issued a statement that there had been fifty starvation deaths in Malda district. And immediately he was put to trouble by his own party members, by his own colleagues Ministers and by the Chief Minister of West Bengal. And he had to withdraw that statement. But the fact remains that there have been the deaths. If you keep your eyes shut and ears closed and refuse to hear or see, then you can say that you shall not allow anyone to die of starvation. In Purulia district, which is a chronically drought-affected area, there the People live on leaves for months. They do not get cereals because they have no purchasing power. But in Malda it was not so. Since last year the people there have been undergoing such of flood followed by drought. The condition of the rural people of that area can be imagined. The Minister here wants all Members co-operation, all 'parties' co-operation irrespective of any political affiliation. Does he know that their own ally, the CPI, one of the CPI M. L. As. of that area, and another deputy leader of that party in West Bengal, they could not remain sitting in the conference called by the Chief Minister of West Bengal in Maldah? They had to walk out, because the starving people came and they represented that in that area 90% of the population in the rural area were affected and they were starving to day. Now, Sir, they only asked that these areas should be declared famine areas, and they had to get out of the conference. And the Chief Minister shouted, "I will not allow anyone to shout any slogan. This is no time for shouting slogans. I will not allow anyone to take political advantage of this situation." Whom was he telling? He was telling his own allies, the CPI leaders there. This is the situation. Corruption is rampant there in the village distribution machinery. And what is the demand of the people? They do not want any gratuitous relief or test relief, the gratuitous relief about which our Ministers say, "we shall increase the gratuitous relief." They do not want it because gratuitous relief does not reach the starving people. It goes away, it evaporates on the way, and those who are responsible for the corruption in this relief operation are the Minister's own party-men. Sir, the demand of those starving people is for opening gruel kitchens where, at least whatever will be given they will be able to take. In the name of

distribution of gratuitous relief, 50% is not distributed at all. At least the people will know whether they are getting food or not in the gruel kitchens.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : You better ask for clarifications.

SHRI MONORANJAN ROY : That is why I am giving some suggestions and am asking questions.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Please be brief.

SHRI MONORANJAN ROY : I am giving some suggestions also. I support the suggestion put forward by Mr. Goray that a parliamentary committee should be formed. It is not only a question of calling a meeting of the Ministers of the States and the Central Ministers presided over by the Prime Minister. It is a question of every citizen of India particularly those who are in the rural areas. Whatever you distribute, you should distribute through the committees of the villages themselves and not through the panchayats. That is a very specific suggestion. I would say that some panchayats are at the root of corruption. All-party committees must be formed in every State and in every area affected by drought. A parliamentary committee should be formed and a delegation should go to different States and assess their requirements. These expectations and wishful thinking would not help in grow more food. We have seen the green revolution. It is because nature bestowed it. It is not because of irrigation or any action on the part of the Government. Sir, I would again ask for fair distribution. I do not like to go into the figures as to how much is there and whether it goes into the black-market or not. That has to be seen. I want that those famine-stricken people must be saved. You may try to shut the mouths of the starving people for some time, so that their voices may not reach you, but you cannot stop them for all time. You are giving statements saying that there are no starvation deaths, but starvation deaths are taking place.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Please wind up.

SHRI MONORANJAN ROY : You must rush to those places and see that proper distribution is made.

SHRI ANNASAHAB SHINDE : The hon. Member has delivered almost a long speech. Of course, he was expressing his opinion. I have nothing to say about that. I can only say...

SHRI MONORANJAN ROY: If Mr. Shinde will excuse me for a minute, I myself had been to that area, to Malda, and I have seen it.

SHRI ANNASAHAB SHINDE: If the hon. Member has any specific case in mind of starvation death and if he gives particulars to me, I am prepared to take it up with the State Government and find out the truth. We do not want any allegation regarding starvation death to go unchallenged. We would like to verify it. Therefore, if the hon. Member has any specific information, I would welcome it. Then, about Tripura and those areas, we have recently reviewed the food position in all the north-eastern States and we have found that the stock position is quite comfortable. If it is a question of providing local employment, it is the responsibility of the State Government. You should draw the attention of the Tripura Government as to why in the particular area necessary steps have not been taken to provide employment, etc. As far as the parliamentary committee is concerned, I do not think it is proper. Of course, we value the suggestions of hon. Members. A number of valuable suggestions have been made during the course of this Calling Attention motion. In future, if necessary, we can have further discussions on these matters. We would welcome suggestions, but as far as the drought situation is concerned, I do not think a parliamentary committee will serve the purpose. If any hon. Members are interested in going to different areas and if they want to make any suggestions, we welcome those suggestions and my Ministry particularly will give the highest regard to the suggestions made by hon. Members.

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL: Sir, I would sympathise with the Minister. He has a very difficult task ahead. As he rightly pointed out, the function of this debate should not be to create panic but to restore confidence as far as possible. As regards the danger that looms large over our heads, every reasonable person will pray that this danger should vanish and the rains will come, but after all it is not in our hands, whether the rains come or not. If the rains do not come, are we ready? The fear of Members is that the preparations or the resources may not be adequate to meet the situation if the rains fail. Many suggestions have been made and the hon. Minister fortunately has experience of past famines

which have been tackled by his Ministry. He has dealt with the situation in the past, he knows how certain States have dealt with famine situations. He himself commended the manner in which the Government of Gujarat dealt with famine relief when compared to some places where it was not dealt with properly in 1967 also. But unfortunately many of those Governments do not exist today. There are new Governments, and will those Governments be able to deal with the situation? I am mentioning this specifically because I know something of Gujarat and already I have received complaints of how the cotton crop which is ready is being sought to be taken away from farmers by co-operative societies or non-existing co-operative societies by falsifying records. Are the new Government of Gujarat in a position to deal with them or are they conniving with them? Political rivalries have come up during the last elections. Are they going to have any effect on the situation where relief is necessary? I hope it does not. But I think it is the overall responsibility of the Central Government in such an emergency to see that such things do not take place. I mention something of Gujarat because I am concerned, I know it. I also know that the western districts of Orissa are in the grip of famine already and there is grave hardship. I hope Orissa, because there was not a Congress Government till very recently, will not receive a step-motherly treatment but will receive fair treatment. Unfortunately these things do not happen and therefore one has to mention them. We had the experience of famine in Bihar and in those days we were told that measures were being taken, that we would be able to meet such a situation in the future. I do not know what the situation is because to my mind Bihar is so geographically situated and the water level is so low that the hardship in a situation of drought can be considerably diminished by supply of water from tubewells, from the large rivers, by irrigation. Is anything of this type being planned particularly when there is such a danger looming large over us?

The other aspect that I would like the hon. Minister to remember is that in this country public charities have always been forthcoming in the past, but the sources of public charity have been sucked dry by this greedy Government. So they will not be able to look forward to much relief on that score.

DR. Z. A. AHMAD: What are those sources?

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL: Everything that has to be done will have to be done by Government itself from its own resources. I do not say you do not know what public charities are. Public charities have always been forthcoming. I know that lakhs and crores of rupees have come forward. In the State of Gujarat they have always been well managed, not from today but for generations, even from the days of British rule.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You do not have much time to discuss those things.

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL: Some people want to have party propaganda at all stages. I have not been talking from party point of view. I have been talking of the situation as it exists. I am trying to draw the attention of the Government to the danger that looms large before the country. The hon. Minister has had experience in the beginning in dealing with such a situation. I hope he will deal with it fairly and in such a way that there is the least hardship.

Friends have mentioned about failure of implementation of certain schemes which were meant to deal with certain situations. Rajasthan Canal is one. The Narmada scheme, the foundation of which was laid by Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, still remains on paper.

Is it going to see the light of day? Is this not the right occasion when some of the schemes which have become moth-eaten in the files of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food and in the Ministry of Irrigation and Power or both are pulled out and are activated so that the danger that the country is facing today and would face in the future if these schemes are not executed, would not come about? There would not have been such a situation if this had been done. And I would like the Minister to give his attention to this, particularly about how the State Governments which are the instruments through which he will have to carry out these things, are going to behave. I think it is high time that there is greater coordination at least in the matter of relief between the Central Government and the State Government. Therefore, I was saying when the Conference of Agricultural Ministers is sought to be called, I think also the Secretaries of Agricultural Ministries should be called because they should be there and they should be told how the country feels about it and how Parliament and the Ministers feel

about it, and how the work in this direction should be shouldered by them.

SHRI ANNASAHAB SHINDE: Sir, I am thankful to the hon. Member for making one point about my exploiting minor irrigation. But I am sorry I cannot share his pessimism. He thinks that because there are not Governments of his liking in the States therefore everything there is on the wane. I am sorry I cannot agree with him. He said that the Governments in the States are so weak that they will not be able to help the situation. I am sorry I am not in a position to share his sentiment that simply because Governments of his liking are not in some of the States therefore the State Governments will not be in a position to face up to the situation.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: He never said that the State Governments are weak.

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL: They are lacking in experience.

SHRI ANNASAHAB SHINDE: I think, the State Governments, now in 1972, are much stronger to face up to the situation than at any time in the past. Therefore I do not share the pessimism of the hon. Member.

The hon. Member was right when he referred to the Bihar situation in 1967 when actually a number of steps for exploiting minor irrigation were taken up, and that really provided such an impetus to agricultural production in Bihar. For the first time after independence, this minor irrigation activity gave impetus. We propose to take up activity on similar lines. Production-oriented programmes, employment-oriented programmes, these would really provide a basis for affording relief to our country. Therefore, our effort should be in that direction.

The hon. Member made a suggestion about attending to the problems of Orissa. I am thankful to him. The Orissa Government will not go by default. I myself had visited Orissa recently. The Orissa Government is in constant touch with us.

AN HON. MEMBER: The Minister was in touch with you.

SHRI ANNASAHAB SHINDE: May I assure the hon. Members that not only with regard to Orissa alone, but wherever there are difficulties, our duty is to help them and to coordinate in such a situation all the activities.

In my earlier replies, I have met some of the hon. Member's points.

SHRI VERENDRA PATIL (Mysore) : Several hon. Members have made useful suggestions already. I do not wish to repeat them because the hon. Minister has assured the House that those suggestions would receive sympathetic consideration.

Sir, I heard the statement made by the hon. Minister. Unfortunately, the impression that I gained is that the Government of India has taken the present situation in a routine way because the programme that has been chalked out to meet the situation and also to mitigate the hardship is a normal one. I want to make it very clear on this occasion through you to the Government of India that the situation, particularly this year, is very grave. Whether there were any starvation deaths or not, that is a different question. But I would like to remind the hon'ble Minister, of the statement made by one of the Ministers of West Bengal that there were starvation deaths in West Bengal. I do not, at this stage, wish to enter into controversy. Any way, that indicates that the situation in the country is very grave and it requires handling of the situation on war footing. I said just now that the programme that is chalked out is a normal programme. The hon'ble Minister with his long standing in the Ministry and also his vast experience is aware that there are several parts in our country which are chronically drought-stricken. Almost every year, the Government of India and the State Governments, both together, have been spending hundreds of crores of rupees on drought and floods. These are annual features. I am not talking about the abnormal situation that has arisen this year. But the hon'ble Minister and several Members of this House are aware that almost in every State there are certain parts which are chronically drought-affected and we have been spending a lot almost every year. What I want to suggest is that whenever such a situation arises the Government of India and the State Governments think only of some interim programme to provide some relief and employment. They have been taking up some rural works. But my little experience shows that as soon as the scarcity conditions cease to exist all such works are discontinued. It is the practice almost every where. I cannot speak with authority with regard to other States, but so far as my State is concerned, this has been the experience

SHRI S. D. MISRA : In my State of Uttar Pradesh this has been so.

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL : I am prepared to take the blame on myself also because I was in charge of administration of a particular State for a number of years. I feel sincerely that we are lacking in planning. I agree that there must also be a short-term plan for this purpose. At the same time we must think of a long-term plan because this has become an annual feature. Whenever we feel that scarcity conditions or drought conditions are prevalent in a particular area, then immediately we think of starting some relief work for providing employment, starting of construction of roads, starting of bunding and other such programmes. Then, what happens? When rains come we say since there are no more drought conditions, let us stop all work. Therefore, I can say with authority that by taking up this work every year under the category of short-term relief we have been spending hundreds of crores of rupees most of which is infructuous. So we have to think of long-term planning. It is all right to mitigate the hardships temporarily. Let us take works which should be on planned basis. Once we take up that work, whether drought conditions exist or not, it is the duty of the Government, both Centre and State, to see that the works which are taken up are completed in all respects; otherwise the expenditure incurred is going to be infructuous.

Then, Sir, the hon'ble Minister was pleased to say about the rural works programmes and other programmes. I have just now mentioned that it would be better if circular instructions are sent to the State Governments before taking up any fresh work in order to provide employment to those areas where people are suffering the works which have already been started should be completed first. I am given to understand that in Bihar about two years back when there was severe drought and some programmes were taken up, these were abandoned with the result that the amount spent has been infructuous. At least why not we continue those programmes and complete them before we think of starting fresh programmes? That is one suggestion I would like to make to the hon'ble Minister.

The hon'ble Minister was pleased to mention about providing pumps to the agriculturists. He knows that all the villages are not provided with electricity. I am told that in Uttar Pradesh there is electricity in certain villages but it is not regular, it is not steady, with the result that the agriculturists have

been put to a lot of hardship. Where there are no power lines, there is no point in providing pump sets. And if there is no water in the well or the stream or the river, there is no point in providing pump sets because there is nothing to lift. So, this is one of the points that I wanted to make.

Sir, when this is the state of affairs, we have received a report from U. P. and we understand from reliable sources that in U. P. when the people are starving there, when they are facing so many hardships, the Government in U. P. has issued strict instructions to all the Collectors or Deputy Commissioners or the heads of administration in different districts, to take coercive measures and recover all the arrears, not the current arrears only but all the arrears, the taccavi arrears, land revenue arrears and so many other arrears which are outstanding for the last three, four or five years. I think it is too much on the part of the State Government to do that. This is according to the information that I have received and I thought it was my duty to bring it to the notice of the Government of India so that they may issue suitable instructions to the U. P. Government.

Lastly, coming to my own State of Mysore, I was really surprised when I heard the Minister's statement. It is clear from the statement that so far the Government of India has not received any report from the Mysore State. In fact, the Minister there who is in charge of scarcity, famine and other subjects, has made a statement very recently on the floor of the Assembly saying that the situation in the State is grave, and he particularly mentioned about some districts of North Karnataka. The hon. Minister is aware of these notoriously drought-affected areas like Bijapur and certain parts of North Karnataka. I do not know why they did not prefer to make a report to the Government of India. But the result is, naturally the Government of India thought that everything was all right at the State level and there was no need for them to send a Central team. May I humbly suggest that instead of waiting for the reports from all the States, because you know the general situation in the entire country, why not you rush some officers to Mysore—whether it is a team or an individual officer, whatever it is, because the time is very short and we have to act very quickly—and guide them properly and give them not only advice but also financial assistance? So on these lines if

the Government of India takes immediate steps, I think to some extent it will be possible for us to meet the situation.

SHRI ANNASAHAB SHINDE : Sir, I do not know how the hon. Member, who is so much experienced, got the impression that my statement was of a routine nature. In fact, we mean to take up drought relief measures and to meet the exigencies of the present situation, as suggested by the hon. Member, on a war footing, on an emergency basis. There is no complacency whatsoever with my Ministry or with anybody who is concerned with us.

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL : I am satisfied.

SHRI ANNASAHAB SHINDE : Thank you very much. The Government is very much seized of the matter and we will not hesitate to take any steps which are required and demanded by the times and red tape will not be allowed to come into these matters.

Then, Sir, the hon. Member has made a suggestion for having a plan on a permanent footing for providing relief to the drought-prone areas which are subject to drought from time to time. I think the hon. Member himself must be aware, because he was in charge of a State Government, that the Government of India has now taken up for the first time a big programme for 54 districts in the country which are drought-prone areas. For instance, there are Bijapur, Chitradurga, Kolar, Dharwar and Belgaum; the hon. Member himself is aware that they are drought-prone areas of Mysore State. So, 54 such districts have been identified in the country and an amount of Rs. 100 crores has been earmarked for this purpose. Actually a sum of Rs. 27 crores has been spent during the last two years. We want the State Governments to spend the rest of the amount because we want that these areas should be provided with permanent protection against drought. And we want the State Governments to implement these programmes. Therefore, programmes for providing permanent relief in these areas have been taken up by the Government of India and it is entirely outside the Plan. The assistance goes entirely from the Centre. And based on this experience, perhaps in the Fifth Five Year Plan we will enlarge the scope of this. Therefore, very sound programmes for providing permanent relief have been taken up. Then the honourable Member made a reference to UP and all

[Shri Annasaheb Shinde]

that. I do not think the intention of the honourable Member is to stop recoveries of all the loans which were given last year and for which the farmers have got good crops in those areas. If distress is developing now, naturally the State Government will take note of it and I think the UP Government will be....

SHRI S. D. MISRA : There are orders right now, at this very moment.

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE : ...seized of the problem. As the situation develops, we would take up with all the Governments in the country...

SHRI S. D. MISRA : You must enquire.

SHRI BANARSI DAS (Uttar Pradesh) : It will be too late then.

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE : I do not think it will be too late. I would humbly repeat my first appeal. As far as this is concerned, let us not try to bring in politics...

SHRI S. D. MISRA : No politics.

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE : With the goodwill of all of you, we shall be in a position to meet the situation as it is developing now. Then the honourable Member made a suggestion as to why we should wait for the report of the State Government. He made a statement as to how it is that the Mysore Government has not sent a report. In my statement itself I said Mysore, Maharashtra and Andhra, these are the three States where, as a result of large drought, relief measures are continuing, and therefore, there may be some delay. In all those States where relief measures have been taken for drought, I think last year perhaps they have sent reports. But I think the delay in the reports will not come in the way of the Central assistance.

SHRI SITARAM KESRI (Bihar) : I should also be given a chance, Mr. Deputy Chairman.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : No, no.

श्री सीताराम सिंह : उपसभापति महोदय, जहां तक सुखाड़ का सवाल है, बिहार के लिये यह अभिशाप बन गया है। किसी भी वर्ष सुखाड़ गया नहीं। गत वर्ष पूरा बिहार बाढ़ से बरबाद हो गया, जैसा कि माननीय सदस्य

जानते हैं। फिर वहां का किसान सम्भल भी नहीं पाया था कि आज भयंकर सुखाड़ हो गया है। वहां पर कुछ क्षेत्र जैसे पूर्णिया का इलाका है, दरभंगा का है, छोटा नागपुर का है, कुछ मौत की खबरें भी आ रही हैं, भूख से लोग मर रहे हैं। अभी एक सप्ताह पहिले भयंकर पछवा हवा के चलने से जो भी फसल लगी थी वह भी फसल उड़ गई या उसके जो पौधे थे वे पौधे सूख गये हैं। आज स्थिति यह है, इतनी विस्फोटक परिस्थिति है, कि भुखमरी के चलते बिहार आज बरबाद हो रहा है, और बिहार सरकार की ओर से अभी तक कोई ऐसा इन्तजाम नहीं किया जा रहा है जिससे भुखमरी से लोगों को बचाया जा सके। आज पूरा बिहार भुखमरी की आग में जल रहा है और हम चाहेंगे कि अविलम्ब बिहार को अकाल क्षेत्र घोषित किया जाये और अकाल कानून के तहत जो भी राहत का काम हो वह युद्ध-स्तर पर शुरू किया जाए। पच्चीस वर्षों की आजादी के बाद आज दुःख के साथ कहना पड़ता है कि न सुखाड़ की समस्या का समाधान हुआ न बाढ़ का ही। अगर आकाश में पानी नहीं है तो पाताल में पानी है। पम्पिंग सेट लगाया जा सकता है। अभी मैंने माननीय मंत्री जी का भाषण सुना। मंत्री जी ने कहा कि राजनीति इसमें नहीं घुसेड़नी चाहिए। मैं अक्षरशः इसमें मंत्री जी की राय से सहमत हूं। लेकिन गत वर्ष बिहार में बाढ़ के चलते जो बरबादी हुई और राहत का काम जो शुरू किया था, उसमें हमने देखा कि कांग्रेस मंत्रिमण्डल के होते 75 रु० का तिरपाल 350 रु० में बेचा गया, 8 रु० मन का भूसा 24 और 25 रु० मन में बेचा गया। तो मैं चाहूंगा कि इस सम्बन्ध में कोई स्थायी योजना बने ताकि सुखाड़ और बाढ़ से बचा जा सके। इस काम के लिये स्थायी योजना बननी चाहिये; क्योंकि जब सुखाड़ पड़ता है तो तत्काल कोई राहत कार्य शुरू हो जाता है और कुछ समय बाद वह बन्द हो जाता है। इसी तरह से जब बाढ़ वगैरह आती है तो तत्काल कार्य शुरू कर दिये जाते हैं, मगर बाद में वे कार्य बन्द कर दिये जाते हैं। तो मैं

सरकार तथा सदन से निवेदन करूंगा कि इस सम्बन्ध में स्थायी योजना बननी चाहिये ताकि बाढ़ और अकाल का मुकाबला किया जा सके। मुझे आशा है कि सरकार सुखाड़ और बाढ़ के सम्बन्ध में कोई योजना बनायेगी।

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE : I have already spoken about the long-term programme. As far as Bihar is concerned, even the statements of the Chief Minister and others indicate that they are quite alive to the situation.

REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS

SHRI B. N. MANDAL (Bihar) : Sir, I beg to present the Thirty-first, Thirty-second and Thirty-third Reports of the Committee on Petitions.

EXTENSION OF TIME FOR THE PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSES ON THE ADVOCATES (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1970

SHRI D. P. SINGH (Bihar) : Sir, I move :

That the time appointed for the presentation of the Report of the Joint Committee of the Houses on the Advocates (Amendment) Bill, 1970, be further extended upto the first day of the last week of the Eighty-Second Session of the Rajya Sabha.

The question was put and the motion was adopted.

MESSAGE FROM THE LOK SABHA

THE GENERAL INSURANCE BUSINESS (NATIONALISATION) BILL, 1972

SECRETARY : Sir, I have to report to the House the following message received from the Lok Sabha signed by the Secretary of the Lok Sabha :

I am directed to inform Rajya Sabha that Lok Sabha, at its sitting held on the 31st July, 1972, has adopted the following motion extending the time for presentation of the Report of the Joint Committee of the Houses on the General Insurance Business (Nationalisation) Bill, 1972 :

“That this House do extend upto

the 21st August, 1972 the time appointed for the presentation of the Report of the Joint Committee on the Bill to provide for the acquisition and transfer of shares of Indian insurance companies and undertakings of other existing insurers in order to serve better the needs of the economy by securing the development of general insurance business in the best interests of the community and to ensure that the operation of the economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth to the common detriment, for the regulation and control of such business and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto”.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA (West Bengal) : I oppose this extension of time.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : It is just a message.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : Why this message has come ? Lok Sabha has extended. We do not concur in the extension of time. Why is the time extended ? Because there is pressure in order to raise the compensation. The previous agreement was that the compensation should be paid at a certain rate. Now manipulation has taken place. Suddenly a suggestion has come that the compensation rate should be altered in favour of the owners of these insurance companies.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : The House will be seized of it later. This is only a message.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : We reject the message. The message should be returned. I submit that this House should return the message to Lok Sabha as unworthy of acceptance by an elected House. It should go back.

SHRI MONORANJAN ROY (West Bengal) : This is a serious matter. We do not accept this extension of time...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : There is no question of discussion now.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : This is a fraud. There is no justification for this extension.

RE. ARREST AND CONVICTION OF MEMBERS OF RAJYA SABHA

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : I have