

which the Communists form a part have written to the Government of India that they would allow the people to starve rather than feed them with imported PL-480 "food? Have they made this noble gesture?

SHRI JAGTVAN RAM: I will not allow people in any part of the country to die of starvation.

#### CLOSURE OF FISHERIES EXTENSION UNITS

\*12. SHRI P. K. KUMARAN: Will the Minister of FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to close down all the Fisheries Extension Units in India;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) how the staff who are working in those units are proposed to be disposed of?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CO-OPERATION (SHRI D. ERING): (a) to (c) The Fisheries Extension Units have already been closed on the 28th February, 1967 and the staff of these Units absorbed in other Fisheries Institutes under the Ministry.

The action for closure was taken in pursuance of a recommendation of a Special Committee set up in 1965 by the then Prime Minister for effecting economy in expenditure.

SHRI P. K. KUMARAN: I did not understand what were the reasons. He mentioned some recommendations of a certain Committee. What are the reasons given by the Committee for closing down these Extension Units? In the absence of foodgrains, when foodgrains are not available, we are asking people to eat more vegetables and fish. What made the Government close down the Fishery Extension Units?

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SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE: The extension work is mostly carried on by the State Governments. First we made a suggestion that the State Governments should take over the units, but only two State Governments agreed, that is, Madras and Assam. The rest of the State Governments did not agree. Ultimately, the entire problem was reviewed and a Committee which went into this question found that in many of the States fisheries extension work was being carried on in a much better way by the State Governments and so it was an overlapping activity and it was infructuous expenditure; in the interests of economy this action was taken.

SHRI P. K. KUMARAN: What happened to the staff? May I know whether they have been absorbed in other Departments or whether they have been provided with alternative employment?

SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE: All the staff have been absorbed, and nobody has any difficulty in regard to that.

श्री गोड़े मुराहरि : मैंने इस बारे में माननीय मंत्री जी को एक खत लिखा था और उनको इस बारे में याद होगा क्योंकि उनका जवाब आया था । इसलिए मैं कहना चाहता हूँ कि अभी भी कई जगहों पर ऐसे लोग हैं जिनको अभी तक एवार्ड नहीं किया गया है ।

SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE: If the hon. Member brings to my notice that any lapse has occurred, I will look into it. May I assure him that our policy has been to absorb all the staff that have been rendered unnecessary or redundant as a result of this measure?

SHRI D. THENGARI: While absorbing the staff, will the Government assure that their continuity of service end grade, will not be affected adversely?

SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE: I will try to look into this.

#### NON-AVAILABILITY OF RATION SHOPS

•13. SHRI T. V. ANANDAN: Will the Minister of FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that rice was not available in the ration shops throughout the country and especially in the Madras city for 15 days in the month of January, 1967;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) what arrangements have been made by Government to supply rice regularly to the ration shops?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION (SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE): (a) There was some reduction in the quantum of rice supply in the ration in Madras and Calcutta during January but it is not correct to say that rice was not available in the ration shops, especially in Madras. Supplies in other statutorily rationed areas were normal.

(b) Non-availability of stocks with Government mainly caused by delay in local procurement.

(c) Madras does not depend on Central allocation for rice. They have stepped up their local procurement and do not expect any more difficulty in supplying the rice ration in full. In West Bengal, procurement has not yet gained momentum but the Government of India have arranged to supply some substantial quantity of rice mainly from Orissa.

SHRI T. V. ANANDAN: The answer to part (b) of the question does not disclose the fact. I am in Madras, and not only I but also other citizens of Madras suffered for over a fortnight to get rice from the ration shops. But here the hon. Minister says that

the issue of rice was not entirely denied but that there was some delay in distribution. It is not so. But did the hon. Minister make any arrangement to offset the reasons for non-distribution in the ration shops and why no particle of rice was available to the citizens in the ration shops?

SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE: I did not say that the Madras population did not experience any difficulty. I actually admitted that some difficulty was experienced by the Madras population, but, as I have already stated, the Madras scheme does not depend on supplies from the Centre. In fact it depends on local procurement, and due to some factors, climate and otherwise, there was delay in the harvesting of the paddy crop. Moreover, the procurement work also suffered because most of the officials of the Revenue Department were busy with election work. There was some dislocation to a certain extent but now the original position has been restored and the supplies are normal.

SHRI P. K. KUMARAN: It is reported in the press that the Government of Madras has discovered large quantities of rice which have been hidden by some people. The Minister stated that due to conditions of climate and other things they could not do it before. May I know whether the climate has changed now?

SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE: What I submitted was this that this year the harvest was a little bit less than the normal season and that it may be due to climatic reasons. Now the original position has been restored. In order to help the Madras Government as I have already submitted, we actually loaned 10,000 tonnes of rice from Andhra Pradesh under the condition that when sufficient quantities were available to the Madras Government they should supply to Kerala.

SHRI T. V. ANANDAN: Is it not a fact that when the people there were suffering for want of rice the wheat