

is done in this case. Therefore, I say that the Government, although they have introduced a very good scheme, has failed to attract small investors. This is with regard to attracting savings.

As has been pertinently pointed out, where has this money been invested? As far as we know, from the report it appears that only a small percentage is invested in small-scale industries. It was thought that with the introduction of this scheme, small-scale industries would be encouraged and money would be provided for them. But we find that hardly 4% has gone to the small industries. The rest of it has been given to big companies or big monopolists.

[ THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair ]

In fact, they do not need help from this source. They have got so many other sources. They can find money from the banks, from finance companies, from financial corporations and so on where bigger interests are involved. The Unit Trust, it is reported, has advanced money not to the small scale people but to the big industries. Therefore, the purpose of it is defeated.

Now, we do not know anything about the managerial expenses incurred on the working of the scheme. Sometimes it is mentioned as 5 per cent., sometimes it is said it is more. We should have a clear idea about the expenditure incurred on the scheme. In fact, our effort should be to spend very little on managerial expenses and invest on sources which would yield higher dividends so that ultimately the small investor gets more interest.

Now the question was raised, and rightly too, that the value of the Unit in the market at present is Rs. 10.60. That is the purchase price. But when the investor returns his unit, he gets only Rs. 10.10. The difference of 50 paise is, thus there. If they are treated as shares, there should be one value for sale as well as purchase. Here the Government is the sole authority. They have fixed the price according to market conditions. Therefore, there should be one price for the purchase as also the sale of the Units.

Lastly, if the Government wants to popularise the scheme, and they should because it is one of the most important schemes in

the present economic context, it should start selling the Units at par for some time. I do not know, but I think there is one day in a month or a year when they sell the Units at par. For the rest of the period they sell at the market price.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Khandekar, it is 3.30 and we have the motion on the Orissa famine conditions.

SHRI R. S. KHANDEKAR: I am finishing. I would suggest that for some time the Units should be sold at par and more effort should be made to popularise them; otherwise it would be spoiling a very good scheme as they have spoiled so many other schemes up till now.

#### MOTION RE SITUATION ARISING OUT OF FAMINE CONDITIONS AND ALLEGED STARVATION DEATHS IN ORISSA

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA (Orissa): Before you take up this motion, I have a submission to make. I would very much like the Prime Minister to be here because she is the only Minister from the Centre who has been to that area and who has collected some personal impressions. The courageous Mr. Subramaniam did not want to face the weather.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That is all right. The Prime Minister would be here.

SHRI MULKA GOVINDA REDDY (Mysore): On a point of order, Madam. Just now the Constitution (Amendment) Bill has been thrown out. I would like to know whether the present Government is still enjoying confidence. It has lost the confidence of the Lower House.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Anyway, we are not concerned with that.

SHRI MULKA GOVINDA REDDY: We are very much concerned, Madam. They are not competent to continue functioning.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We go on to the motion on Orissa food situation.

SHRI BANKA BEHARY DAS (Orissa): Madam, I move:

"That the situation arising out of famine conditions and starvation deaths in Orissa be taken into consideration."

[Shri Banka Bhary Das ]

Madam, we are greatly concerned about the famine that stalks a sizable tract of Orissa and the starvation deaths that are occurring in spite of our persistent requests and appeals to the Government to admit that really famine has come. Starvation deaths are taking place but the present Government is not prepared to admit it. I do not know the reasons. Of course just two days back when the Prime Minister was in Orissa and was pressed by pressman to say whether there was famine or not, she indirectly admitted that there was famine, though up till now she had not expressed her opinion about the starvation deaths there. I was hearing Mr Subramaniam when he was replying in the other House. He admitted to this extent that there's great hardship in Orissa, the relief that was being given previously was inadequate and the measures that have been taken are belated. To this extent he has gone. I know when he visited Bhubaneswar last time, the rains came and washed away his tour programme. He could not go to that area. He had to depend upon the reports of the officers of the Central team that visited that area and of the State Government. Later I brought a calling attention notice here to show that we had no faith in the reports given by the officials or by the Orissa Government. We wanted that the Union Government should step in to look into the matters themselves and give their opinion about it. I do not want to dwell much on the word 'famine' or the words 'starvation deaths'. But I want to submit, Madam, that there must be some psychological reason behind this fact when they want to hide from us that there are starvation deaths and there is famine.

In this connection before I give you the background of Orissa, famine, I want to refer you to the Famine Enquiry Commission Report of Bengal, how famine came there. I can say that exactly the same situation prevails in Orissa. The report says, "The course of events and the way in which things operate are somewhat as follows. Crops fail because of drought, people in the affected area are deprived of local supplies of grain and the reserves of money are reduced because agriculture is their sole means of livelihood and without help they would starve. At this point

Government steps in and provides them with money to buy food. Money is provided as loan, gratuitous relief or as wages for labour in connection with relief works." This was the situation when Bengal famine came. And generally this is the situation wherever famine occurs. Madam, I want to give you a little background before I give my suggestions how to meet this great challenge that has come.

At the outset, I want to impress upon you that famine is not something that comes from the Heaven. I know that drought is sent by nature, God sends drought to this earth but famine is sent by human beings, by the rulers who adorn the throne. During the last monsoon there was hardly 25" to 30" of rain and that was also erratic. In the months of August and September the Deputy Minister of Orissa who represents that very area which is now famine-stricken met the press and categorically said that "Our people are suffering under great hardship, they are going without food, they are living on leaves and after selling their utensils and goats, some of them are selling even their children." This is not the statement made by any Opposition member. It is made by the Deputy Minister of Orissa who represents Nawpara sub-division of Kalahandi District in that State. In the months of August and September the Assembly was there and the Orissa Members confronted the Orissa Government with this statement. Then you will be astonished to know that one of the Ministers replied that they were all tissues of lies and the reports were based on third hand information. From here I can say that the famine that is now stalking my land, nobody is responsible for it excepting the Government of Orissa and to a certain extent the Union Government also. Madam, during August and September almost an identical situation developed, as I have quoted from the Bengal Famine Commission Report. Then migrations of lower class people took place. Madam, I can tell you that though on an average from 20 to 25 per cent of the people of India are landless labourers, in this particular tract about 40 per cent of the people are landless labourers, most of them consisting of Adivasis, Harijans and lower caste Hindus. It is another paradox that in that portion of Orissa they are called Sukhvasis. Sukhvasis means those who live in happiness.

It is a paradox. The feudal lords and land-owners have been for ages exploiting these landless labourers, the Sukhya is, those who are supposed to live in happiness. I am sorry to say that they started migrating. The Central Team that visited that state said that migration to a large extent had not taken place. I had been to that portion of Orissa during the last week of last month and I have made a note of it that in the very village of Sinapali which the Prime Minister visited the other day—the colony of Harijans—there were hardly 35 families out of 120 families. The rest had migrated for the last four or five months leaving their houses to be taken care of by thieves or by wild animals. The second stage was when those lower class people and the lower middle class people living in those areas began to sell their ornaments and utensils at very cheap rates to the moneylenders who for a long period have been exploiting that region. The third stage came when their livestock and cattle were sold. In this connection I would like to refer you to the report of the Central Team. They say that they had visited this area only one week back and they could not find that livestock had been sold to such an extent. What I want to refer to is that in that very Khanar panchayat which the Prime Minister visited the other day, Panchayat itself collected as much as Rs 14,000/- as levy on the sales of live stocks in that bazaar or market, at the rate of two annas per bullock. And the population of that block is hardly 30,000 and of the Panchayat Sammiti is only 4,000. And that Panchayat has during this drought collected as much as Rs 14,000/- from levy on the sales of livestock. And here is the report of the Central Team which says after going to that area that large scale sale is not a fact and that the sales were not abnormal.

Then came the fourth stage where the children were abandoned. Children are sold each for Re 1/- I do not want to read out all these things now because it is known to all. I have visited the place. The husbands deserted their wives and in many cases parents deserted their children. The entire family life is destroyed. And you can see as it happens in the case of famine everywhere, not only is family life destroyed, even morals go down.

Then comes the fifth stage when a sizeable population, about 40 per cent to 50 per

cent started eating non-edible articles like *peepal* leaves and other non-edible things. In this connection with your permission I might quote from the "Times of India" of the 12th of this month when the special correspondent of the "Times of India" visited that area along with Shri Chaganlal Joshi, an experienced, great social worker who had been sent there by the ex-President of the Congress, Shri U N Dhebar.

"Mr Chaganlal Joshi, a septagenarian social worker from Bombay sent by Mr U N Dhebar, was asking as a government official stood by, 'What are they eating here?' 'Mahua flowers and *peepal* leaves'. We could not believe it. We went into a hut and found *peepal* leaves being boiled for the afternoon meal."

Madam, I said these things the other day. I have seen with my own eyes how a sizeable population is living on *peepal* leaves and how a sizeable population is living on the powder of barks of trees. And here is a report from a great social worker deputed to the place by no less a person than the ex-President of the Congress. He along with the special correspondent of the Times of India has gone and seen the position as it is there.

Madam, then starvation deaths came. It was inevitable. I quoted from the Bengal Famine Report. These are the stages that the people pass through when a famine occurs. All this time the State Government was sitting silent though the State Assembly met in August and then in September. In December there was a great debate and only in December in the Supplementary Budget more than Rs 2 crores were provided. After two or three months, only from about the middle of March did they begin utilising this money.

From all this you can see, Madam, you can understand, how seriously the State Government and the Union Government have been taking the matter.

Madam, in this connection I want to quote from the Report on the 1866 famine. Just about a hundred years ago we experienced a great famine in this land. At that time lakhs of people died because the then government was a foreign government, an incompetent government, an irresponsible government, a government which did not care for the population. Even then th

[Shri Banka Bhary Das.]

Governor-General at that time accused his officers and said:

"The famine in Orissa occurred because of want of foresight, want of perspection and the precautions regarding the impending tragedy."

Madam, even the Governor-General of India during that British regime did not allow his officers to go scot free. But here in independent India, after nineteen years of independence, claiming that we are establishing socialism and a welfare State, they have allowed some four to five lakhs of people in that particular area to suffer from famine and left them and their children to be taken care of by nature or by wild animals.

In this connection I would like to refer to the press reports and the A.I.R. broadcasts made in connection with the Prime Minister's visit. The Prime Minister went to Orissa and so much talk is made about the morale of the people having risen. Madam, how I wish that this morale which they say has risen now, would continue till the coming harvest, till the months of November and December. But I want to say this, Madam. Let us not deceive ourselves. When a VIP goes to a place where the people are hunger-stricken and are going through the utmost hardship in their lives, they may get some hope from the visit of that VIP. But to these hungry millions, real morale can come only in the shape of food, in the shape of test relief works, in the shape of agricultural operations. In this connection I would like to quote Mahatma Gandhi who in 1922 said:

"Before a hungry people if God wants to come he will have to come in the shape of *rotti*, in the shape of food and not in the shape of God."

Therefore, the Prime Minister may go and others who are all interested in seeing that the situation is corrected, they also should visit that area, but with austerity and not with the pomp that is attached to the Prime Minister's visit.

Madam, the most important thing that I want to impress upon the House is that if they want the morale of the people to be uplifted then the only course to follow is from now on to concentrate not only on short-term measures but also on long-term-

measures for alleviating the miseries of the people. In this connection I want to refer to the report recently written by Shri Nabha Krushna Chaudhuri, an ex-Chief Minister of Orissa. Madam, he has been so much distressed at the misery caused by this famine that he has been overwhelmed and he has said that in spite of this distress the Government was playing to the tunes of the millowners there. Two days back in one of the largest circulated papers there Shri Nabha Krushna Chaudhuri has written:

"Instead of working as public servants because they are responsible for protection of the lives and property of the people, the Congress Government and the Administration are conducting themselves according to the advice of their appointed procurement agents of food grains. I know that many rice mill-owners by paying nominal Congress members' fees and by wearing *khadi* caps have become active Congress members. The Congress is very anxious for the profit of these rice millowners, because the Congress depends upon them for its election funds."

Madam, this is not my version. I am not saying that for accusing the State Government. It is said by an ex-Chief Minister of the State and even now the State Government is hand in gloves with the millowners and as a result of that the Government does not want to take any of these effective steps to allay the misery of the people.

In this connection I want to impress upon the House some of the measures that should be taken up immediately so that those who are now undergoing this misery may themselves see a ray of hope in their lives.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: But your time is over.

SHRI BANKA BEHARY DAS: Just five more minutes, Madam, and I have done.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You have already taken 20 minutes.

SHRI BANKA BEHARY DAS: Just one or two more minutes, Madam so that I may mention the projects to be taken up.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: But there are so many others to speak.

SHRI BANKA BEHARY DAS: I want to impress upon the House the measures that should be undertaken immediately. Test relief works should be undertaken in a bigger way. And as I have already pointed out, gratuitous relief should be given to the affected people. I may here mention for the information of the Prime Minister that the amount of gratuitous relief for every adult and every child has been reduced recently. And then in the fair price shops mostly paddy should be sold in preference to rice. Children's feeding should be stepped up and school fees should be exempted. Also agricultural operations should be started.

Also I want to submit that Orissa is a backward State financially and so the Centre should not insist upon the share of the State being paid for meeting this drought situation. The Centre should completely give whatever help the State Government requires. Also as long-term measures, the Indravati project should be taken up. The Chief Minister there had recently propounded the Special Area Development Project and that should be taken up with necessary changes for improving the irrigation. The Kolab project which has been lying with the Government of India should be taken up so that in future at least we may avert such a situation as the present one. Thank you, Madam.

*The question was proposed.*

THE PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF ATOMIC ENERGY (SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI): Madam, as the House knows, I have just returned from a two-day trip in Orissa. I was naturally greatly distressed to see the condition of the people and it was obvious that they had gone through considerable hardship and that they still have to face quite a lot of difficulties. At the same time I think that the energetic measures which the State Government has taken are bringing the situation under control.

The mover of the Resolution just now talked about certain measures. On my trip I visited such test relief works; I visited gratuitous relief centres, feeding centres, school feeding centres for children and so on. I visited a large number of villages. Certain programmes had been scheduled for me but when I arrived I was met by Oppo-

sition leaders and others who told me, 'they are not taking you to the worst hit villages; you should go to such and such villages.' Well, I immediately changed my programme and I went to the villages which they mentioned and I sent my colleague Mr. Jagannath Rao who was with me and Mrs. Nandini Satpathy to go to the other villages. We went into the houses, we talked with people. I do not know of course if I have still gone to the very worst affected places or not because it is difficult to compare these things and it was also not possible for me in the limited time to go into the remote interior. However, I think I have got some idea of what was being done to meet this extremely difficult situation. I think the House is aware that the State Government has appointed a Special Relief Commissioner to co-ordinate and direct relief work. He was with us throughout the tour. The relief programme has now been revised upwards to provide for an outlay of nearly Rs. 9 crores. A sum of Rs. 1.35 crores was made available to the Orissa Government some time ago for expenditure on relief, and a further sum of Rs. 2 crores is being released today to provide ways and means support for further expenditure. I have emphasised that neither rigidity of procedure or formality, nor lack of resources, should be allowed to come in the way of the programme and such further needs as arise and are agreed upon will be similarly met.

Now one of the most important and urgent needs of the affected people is the adequate and timely supply of seed requirements for the next Kharif crop. A programme for the procurement and supply of four lakh maunds of seed by the middle of June has been drawn up and it is already under execution. Side by side, Rs. 3.5 crores of taccavi has been arranged. The original limits for the grant of taccavi have been liberalised to provide loans at the rate of Rs. 100 per acre upto the limit of Rs. 800 to the same party. I have impressed upon the State Government and the officials concerned the importance of timely implementation of this programme and they have assured me that they will keep the target date so that difficulties of movement in the rainy season do not come in the way.

The number of people covered under the gratuitous relief programme meant for the

[Shrimati Indira Gandhi.]

old, the disabled and the infirm is being increased by the State Government to two lakhs. The number of free feeding centres has also been increased. Road works have been undertaken to provide widespread employment; 10,000 wells are included in the programme out of which 3,000 are to be made pucca immediately, and the remaining after the rains. Similar other works are being undertaken including those which can continue during the monsoon. Some medical teams are already at work and more will be sent.

One of the questions which was raised there concerned the actual wages earned by people volunteering for relief works. The State Government have agreed firstly, that as far as possible panchayat and other agencies should be utilised to organise these works with a view to minimising reliance on middlemen; and secondly, that in the pattern of wages paid, a minimum earning of the value of Re. 1/- per head per day is ensured for subsistence, irrespective of output, with more for anyone who is entitled to it on the basis of actual work.

An hon. Member has made a mention about the supply of paddy instead of milled rice. This request was also made while in Bhubaneswar but I learnt from some of the experts who were sent from here that the bulk of the supplies had already been converted into rice and stocks of paddy available were now relatively limited. Also I was told that the actual demand for paddy might not be much. In the villages I myself questioned several women of different castes and in different areas and I got the same reaction. They were not at all keen for paddy. The Chief Minister who was with me also talked separately in several places and he also got the same impression. However, the State Government has agreed to arrange for some stocks of paddy to be sent to the affected areas and if they find there is a demand they will make a greater effort in this direction.

The problem of the high price at which rice was being sold was also brought up before me and it has now been decided to subsidise rice in selected areas of specially acute distress and secondly to supply partly wheat and partly rice in areas where this combination will be appropriate, thereby bringing down the overall purchase price.

I was particularly concerned, as I am sure this House will also be, about the health and welfare of children in these areas. I have advised the State Government to consider extending the scope of the children's midday feeding programme to non-schoolgoing children, at least in the pockets which are specially hard hit. At one centre I saw this had already been started in small way. I might mention that all schoolgoing children are covered under this programme and they get one meal a day. I have also suggested that a suitable person might be attached to the Special Relief Commissioner to help him coordinate the Health and Child Welfare programmes.

For the next agricultural season, apart from loans and seed to which I have referred earlier, the State Government are arranging to press into service all available power tillers and some tractors to help cultivators plough their lands, subsidising the service in the case of the more needy.

I fully agree with the hon. Member that our attention should be as much towards the long-term needs of the area as towards their immediate needs. Orissa is a State which although potentially very rich is at the moment one of our most backward and poor States. But, Madam, I am sure you are aware that many parts of the country are in this condition even the part of the country from which I come which is the eastern districts of U.P.—so that the real difficulty is not something which has arisen just now. It is something which is long-standing. But this does not mean that we should not do everything possible to help them. We should certainly pay great and urgent attention to the long-term projects also because it is obvious that some of these areas have not received the impact of the development programmes in any appreciable measure and we cannot allow this state of affairs to continue. We must devise an accelerated programme for long-term development on a basis of priority. Various memoranda were presented to me there. I met members of the Opposition, I met the hon. Member of the other House who represents that area, I met voluntary organisations, student's organisations and so on and many of these points were made in those memoranda. The Indravati was also mentioned and I am asking my colleague, the Planning Minister to go into the matter at an

early date in consultation with the Planning Commission so that we can undertake this question of long-term development as early as may be practicable

One of the major difficulties of this area is also lack of communications especially as far as the Adivasi and Harijan areas are concerned and this must also receive our attention. The other need is of schools. There are ordinary schools, but I think their need is more for multipurpose schools where they can get some social and technical training. Now, of course, I do not know how much of this it is possible to do immediately, because the area is quite a large one, but certainly this should be taken in hand and expedited, as far as possible

The question of starvation deaths was raised by the hon Member. Now, in Sambalpur district the local authorities have made detailed enquiries into each case and I went through those reports. My general impression is that there have been some cases in which deaths have occurred. These cases have had, by and large, a background of age, of ill-health or disease, which was aggravated by prolonged under-nourishment and malnutrition. In some of these cases which I saw, old women were living quite alone and had nobody to look after them. But it did seem to me that slow starvation was not the sole cause of these deaths. And I should like to add that we saw large numbers of people, men, women and children and there is no reason to hold that there had been very great mass starvation, judging by how the people whom we saw looked. They looked thin naturally, but they did not look as if they were going to collapse or anything like that. In fact, we see people like that, as I mentioned, in the eastern districts of U.P. or even perhaps in the Delhi slums, if one were to go there. Nevertheless, it is true that malnutrition and poverty exists in a large measure and naturally I was most distressed and concerned to see this, especially with regard to the children. This is why I feel that the children's programme should be given priority and in this I hope voluntary organisations will also help. Already the students have their holidays and they have offered to help. Some of them are going there. This, of course, is welcome, but it also raises its own problem, which is the problem of feeding the people who may want to go there,

and this would be a difficult task, unless they themselves or the organisations themselves to which they belong, could take this responsibility. I think now there is much greater awareness there, both amongst the people and the Government, and I had a feeling that the work would be much more energetic and everybody was making a genuine effort to bring the matter fully under control. The major difficulty, as I mentioned earlier, is to get the seeds to the farmers before the rains begin. The Relief Commissioner was sure that he would be able to do this. I visited some of these distribution centres and, as I said, the people looked like normal Indians who were not too well fed. As I have mentioned, I think, somewhere, their spirit or their morale was very good. Those who came to see me were cheerful. They were smiling. Even though I talked to them, there were very few who made any kind of complaint and among those who actually complained there were again very old people rather than the middle-aged or the young. If there are any details which I have left out, no doubt the Food Minister will make it up.

Thank you

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Lokanath Misra. You have to be brief.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: Madam, I am also a co-sponsor of the motion. So, I must be given twenty minutes as well. Madam Deputy Chairman, I am rather happy and thankful to the Prime Minister for her kind visit to Orissa. Before the motion was moved, I indicated to you that the courageous Mr. Subramaniam went up to Bhubaneswar, did not dare the weather and came back unceremoniously. I do not know what he had to report to Parliament, even though he was deputed by the Prime Minister to go round before her visit.

SHRI AWADHESHWAR PRASAD SINHA (Bihar): But Mr. Subramaniam gave you rains there. Do not forget that.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: But he brought rain to the wrong place, where it was not needed. That is what Congress people do. Do not interrupt me. If you start interrupting me, naturally you should expect retorts.

(Interruptions)

SHRI ARJUN ARORA (Uttar Pradesh): You cannot hit back. You can only smile.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA Now, Madam, the *modus operandi* of the Congress Party is to always create trouble, to make interruptions, not to allow the speakers of the Opposition to have their say. Time is limited. If you give me time, I am prepared to talk for the whole day. The attitude of the Government of India reminds me of a statement made by a person who had a law suit in a court of law. When he was asked by some sympathetic people about the judgment in the court, he said "I have lost my case. I have lost my money, but I have learnt law". Likewise, lives have been lost, people have nothing to eat but Government have learnt that there is famine. Now, I have to indicate that this Government was warned about this. The Assembly warned them. Even in my humble way I had warned on the 1st of March, saying that at least eight districts in Orissa had very bad crops and there was almost famine, starvation condition among the people there because of drought. The people had got from their lands only about fifteen days' foodgrains. To this the hon Prime Minister said, in her reply to the President's Address, that Mr Lokanath Misra was creating a scare in the country unnecessarily and thereby an impression might be created abroad that India was facing a famine situation. I do not think this Government needs a clean certificate from countries abroad even when the country is undergoing such a serious famine, at least a part of the country.

Then, I hold the Government of India responsible primarily for the food scarcity. In spite of all the warnings given to the State Government and the Central Government, the export of paddy and rice was not stopped. The great Minister-in-charge of Food instructed the Government of Orissa to continue exports, as it was being done when Orissa had its normal food crop in other years. Kerala was supplied rice from Orissa because there was a 'Bundh'. West Bengal was supplied rice from Orissa equally because they had another 'Bundh'. Orissa did not have any 'Bundh'. Therefore, Orissa had to face famine.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE (Uttar Pradesh): Now, you have a 'Bundh'.

THE MINISTER OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY DEVELOP-

MENT AND CO-OPERATION (SHRI C SUBRAMANIAM) He is indicating it to you.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA We do not need a 'Bundh'. People are so starved I do not know if they can stand up to a 'Bundh'. If the Central Government allowed this export, on the advice of the Government of Orissa, then the Government of Orissa should also share the blame along with them. One of the ex-Chief Ministers of Orissa, Shri Nabakrushna Choudhury, who still continues to be an important member of the Congress Party.

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI NANDINI-SATPATHY) He is not a member of the Congress Party. He has resigned.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA That is information to me. You might disown him.

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL (Gujarat). Since the cardholders of the Communist Party joined, he resigned very rightly.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA One of the ex-Chief Ministers has said that the mill-owners wanted to make a profit. Therefore, they recommended to the Government of Orissa to have this export, and the Government of Orissa conceded to their proposal and recommended in their turn to the Central Government for the export of paddy ultimately bringing this famine condition to Orissa. To that extent Mr Subramaniam and his Ministry definitely are responsible for the famine condition in Orissa.

Madam, there have been suggestions by the Chief Minister of Orissa for funds being available from the Centre. Since this famine has been created by the Government of India and their food policy, responsibility naturally devolves on them to make funds available necessary for Orissa's famine. Some funds have been made available, and I read in the papers that it is to the tune of about Rs. 9 crores, but Orissa needs much more, and particularly this long-range programme has to be taken up. It might go even to Rs. 40 crores or Rs. 50 crores which will ultimately provide a permanent solution to the area. A short-

range policy would not carry the people very far. A recurrence of this type of famine might be a greater menace. Therefore, if provision is made for long-range projects, I think fertile as Orissa is, it would be a granary not for Orissa alone but for the entire country.

The Prime Minister was good enough to go into details about the wages earned for test relief work. Test relief work is not the only work that people do there. There is another job which is done on a very large scale, namely, collecting of 'kendu' leaves or biri leaves. After that particular trade was taken over by the Government—or in other words it has now been nationalised—the Orissa Government have started appointing agents who do the collection on their behalf, and in the process of collection of these biri leaves, even though a higher wage is stipulated for the collectors, I am told that the contractors are paying almost half or one-third of the wages allowed. I do not know if the Prime Minister had the time or the information to go into these details, but somehow it has been overlooked during her visit and in her statement. This is an important item in so far as it provides employment to a substantial number of people in that particular area, that being the only area that supplies biri leaves to the entire eastern India. Therefore, legitimate wages must be paid to them, and it must be enforced by the Centre that they get the legitimate wages.

Madam, liquor shops are having a hey-day. When people go hungry whatever money they can earn, just in order to forget the hunger they go to the liquor shops. As it is, there is bootlegging everywhere. The Government might take the plea that if we stop the licensed liquor shops, there would be only bootlegging there, but as it is you have it everywhere. On another occasion I said that in Cuttack there are 252 illicit liquor shops. This Government has only been successful in decentralising illicit distillation and sale of liquor in this country, if they have decentralised anything at all. Therefore, you must put an immediate stop to these liquor shops. Pay them back whatever is their balance due, but stop them if you want to save the people there.

About the long-term projects, Madam—it has been already referred to—Indravati project must be immediately taken up. That would help the area very substantially

through perennial irrigation. While going through the Vaidyanathan Report, as they call it, Madam there is something very peculiar here. It says

‘Regarding allegations of starvation deaths general enquiries made by the Team indicate that the deaths attributed to starvation were actually cases of death caused by prolonged illness like T.B., diabetes, etc., commencing long before the scarcity conditions set in. Malnutrition probably accelerating death in some cases. This has been attributed to starvation because of the psychology prevailing in the area.’

I do not know, Madam, who appointed this Committee. If Mr Subramaniam appointed this Committee, he should have thrown this particular bunch of paper into the waste paper basket. It does not consist of a single doctor or medical man. I do not know if a botanist can certify about a starvation death. If that is so, then a botanist is here.

**SHRI N PATRA (Orissa)** You are capable of saying that though you do not know. You belong to Rajas and Maharajas.

**SHRI LOKANATH MISRA** Do not take his briefing. We are giving the verdict because we live with those people. We are one of those people. You fly in the air and you never come to the earth, and you are the person who could not fly from Bhubaneswar to Kalahandi even though you flew all the way.

**SHRI N PATRA** When did you visit and start living among poor people? It is a news to us.

*(Interrupt on)*

**THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN** Order, order.

**SHRI C SUBRAMANIAM** The hon. Member from Orissa wants to know when the hon. Member visited the area.

**SHRIMATI NANDINI SATPATHY:** Did you visit the area?

**SHRI LOKANATH MISRA** I toured the entire area during the intersession period. Did the hon. Deputy Minister want to know or the hon. Member? The hon. Food and Agriculture Minister once acted as the liaison officer or public relations officer of the

[Shri Lokanath Misra]

Governor, now he has started working as the public relations officer of an hon. Member of this House. There is something revealing in the Hansard. It is an answer given in the British Parliament when an alien Government was ruling in this country, and what does it say? Even the Prime Minister here shirks responsibility to admit that there have been starvation deaths even though she had toured the area and must have collected all the information necessary. In spite of that she says that there have been no starvation deaths. I am ashamed of this Government. Even an alien Government which did not owe any responsibility to the people as such—what does it say? It says

“The question arose how much blame attached to the Viceroy for not exercising the power entrusted to him in order to save the people. An interview upon the subject took place between the Lieutenant Governor and the Viceroy, when the latter took the commonsense view, and intimated pretty strongly that the time had arrived when the importation of rice should be allowed to take place. It was for the House to decide whether the Viceroy had properly discharged his duty in the matter. In March a very important letter\*\*\*was written on the 28th of December, 1865, by Sir Arthur Cotton, who, in the view of an impending famine, recommended that vast quantities of food should be imported, and that money should be given to the Irrigation Company to extend their works as much as possible and to employ as many people as they could.”

These are proceedings of the House of Commons of 1887 when a famine took place in 1886 in Orissa. This is the Hansard.

SHRI P. N. SAPRU (Uttar Pradesh): From whose speech you were quoting?

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: I was quoting from an hon. Member's speech in the House of Commons.

SHRI P. N. SAPRU: What is the name of the hon. Member?

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: He is Mr. Stuart Mill.

An alien government which did not owe anything to the people in general here went

as far as that. Here is a Government that has been voted by the people, which shirks its responsibility in owning that there have been starvation deaths in this country. I am really ashamed of it. But I would further request the Prime Minister to immediately sanction as much money as possible from the Centre so that Orissa gets out of this difficulty and also to sanction further money for the long-range projects that have been set out in the memorandum which has already been submitted to her.

SHRI S. SUPAKAR (Orissa): The strength of a chain lies in its weak-link and Orissa happens to be the weakest link in the chain of different States of India. About 35 per cent of its population consists of either Adivasis or Harijans and economically it is most backward. This year the rains failed throughout India and therefore the predicament of the people not merely of Orissa but of the whole of India, has been compared with the great famine that occurred about 100 years ago. This year's distress can be compared, having regard to the failure of rains, with the conditions that prevailed in 1886 or in the year 1943 when the great Bengal Famine took place. It is not a question whether there have been starvation deaths or not, whether the distress can be compared with past famines or not but we have to judge here in this House whether the Government has been doing what is possible to relieve such a distress and the results will perhaps be judged when the history of this year is written either next year or some time thereafter when we compare the death rate that has prevailed during the last so many years with the death rate from the various sources that might have been there during this year.

It has been asserted on the one hand by the Members of the Opposition that there have been starvation deaths and we have the report of the Chief Minister of Orissa that these reports of starvation deaths have been verified and have been found to be incorrect in all cases.

AN HON. MEMBER: That is correct.

SHRI S. SUPAKAR: I have personally visited some of the areas of distress in the district of Sambalpur where reports and rumours were spread that there had been deaths from starvation in certain villages.

I personally visited those villages and made enquiries and found that no such death had taken place.

SHRI BANKA BEHARY DAS: Have you gone...

SHRI S. SUPAKAR: I went to Sambalpur District, I told you plainly.

Now, what has the Government of Orissa done in the matter? I submit that when there was the failure of the rains, there were discussions in the Assembly on three successive occasions and Relief Committees have been formed in almost all the districts including the districts which are acutely affected, namely, Kalahandi, Bolangir and Sambalpur and in all those districts members of the opposition have been associated with the committees and their suggestions are given considerable weight in that matter.

We have also suggested certain remedial measures to take extraordinary precautions and to gear up the administrative machinery to meet such an unusual situation. I feel that from the statement that was made today, it is apparent that the Government of Orissa and the Centre are doing their best to meet such a grave emergency. It is admitted that the State Government is prepared to meet the shortage, if any, of food and the State Government says that there is no scarcity so far as food supply is concerned. And that is also the report of the special Study Team that went from the Planning Commission.

The main question is to provide adequate labour and to provide them with adequate wages and certain remedial measures have now been taken up to see that a sufficient number of people are employed, especially those who are of the vulnerable section of the society, the Adivasis and the Harijans; they should be given work and they should be paid adequate wages. And it was said today that so far as the people who are not capable of working—the old, the infirm and those people who deserve gratuitous relief are concerned, a number of cards amounting to two lakhs have been arranged and are being distributed in all the schools, especially in the distress areas, mid-day meals are provided for the school children and other children. Though the summer vacation is due, the schools will not close and children,

both school-going children and those who do not go to school, they will be provided meals at these centres. Now, seeds have to be distributed, and we suggested about a month back that they must be distributed long before the monsoon actually starts. I think that that programme is also in progress. Now, a sum of Rs. 9 crores is being given by the Centre. As I understand, they had already allotted about Rs. 1.6 crores to State Government of Orissa—I learn it from an answer to a question that was put about two or three days back. I understand that today about Rs. 3 crores extra have been allotted to the State and more will follow. I also learn that *taccavi* loans which are very necessary for the sustenance to the small farmers and other farmers to the extent of Rs. 3½ crores will also be provided and it has been arranged that to the extent of Rs. 800, an agriculturist having a certain acreage of land will be provided loan. The real need is to provide the agriculturists with loans and also provide the agricultural labourers, amongst whom are the most vulnerable section of the society, the Adivasis and the Harijans, who are underfed and who are most backward economically, with means of employment and by helping the agriculturists with loans the Government will also be helping indirectly the agricultural labourers who will be employed by these agriculturists in their fields. These people who are at present in acute distress are habituated to agricultural labour, and not to such kinds of labour as earth work, road-building and other similar employment. I am glad to learn that power tillers and tractors will be supplied in the areas where the people have parted with their bullocks and are not able to carry on the agricultural operations for that reason.

Madam, besides the programme of providing gratuitous relief, mid-day meals and loans, it is essential for the Government to see that agricultural operations for the next agricultural season are carried on to the maximum extent. The Government, I hope, will do their best to help the agriculturists and thereby help not merely the land-owner but also the agricultural labour so that the distress may be reduced to the minimum. Therefore, Madam, I feel that the Government, should keep a close watch on the progress of relief measures that are being undertaken by the State Government

[SHRI S. Supakar]

and do their best to see that the different classes of people, the agriculturists, the labourers, the old and the infirm are given the maximum help. By doing so we shall be able to reduce the distress to the maximum extent.

So far as the question of supply of rice and paddy is concerned, I toured over the distressed area and I found that in some areas there was a preference for paddy over rice. I think the Government will do their best to see that rice and paddy are provided to the agriculturists.

SHRI BANKA BEHARY DAS: So the Prime Minister's report is incorrect.

SHRI S. SUPAKAR: She might be having her own impression. I am giving my own when I say that in some areas people prefer paddy to rice. I need not agree with the Prime Minister on all the points. I have my own personal views and I must express them. Therefore, I would submit that arrangements must be made to see that rice and paddy are supplied to the farmers and the labourers at reasonable prices and, if possible, by subsidizing the price.

Besides, I have another suggestion to make. Cheaper grains in the area, in which there is acute distress, should also be tried so that poorer people may be able to purchase them. And, instead of inedible things that they are forced to take, they should have better food at a cheaper rate having regard to their earning capacity and their paying capacity. These are some of the suggestions that I had to make.

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी : महोदय, प्रधान मंत्री जी का वक्तव्य सुनकर मुझे निराशा हुई है।

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: Please speak in English.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAEYEE: I am sorry.

मैं उन्हें बर्बाद करना चाहता था कि वे अपनी आख से उड़ीसा की स्थिति देखने गईं। लेकिन उनका वक्तव्य सुनकर ऐसा लगा कि वे सारी स्थिति पर लोपायोनी करने की कोशिश कर रही हैं। उन्होंने कहा कि जो लोग उनसे मिलने के लिये आये थे वे हंस रहे थे, मुसकरा

रहे थे और हमसे उन्होंने क्या नतीजा निकाला? मुझे एक गेर याद आता है

उनका देखे मैं जो आ जाती है मह पर गंतक।

वह समझने है कि बीमार का हाल अच्छा है।।”

लोग भूख से मरे या नहीं मरे, यह विवाद अभी तक चल रहा है। न यह सरकार की प्रतिष्ठा बढ़ाता है, न ही देश का सम्मान में वृद्धि करता है। किसी को यह मानने में सकोच नहीं होना चाहिये कि हम उड़ीसा के सकट को दूरदर्शिता से देख नहीं सके और उस सकट पर विजय प्राप्त करने के लिए प्रभावी कदम नहीं उठा सके। शब्दों का जाल हमारी सहायता नहीं कर सकता है। यह कहना कि मरनेवाले भूख से नहीं मरे हैं, लगातार कम खाने से मरे, दोनों में क्या अंतर है—मालन्यूट्रिशन में और स्टारवेशन में—आगे भेरे लिए तय करना मुश्किल है कि दोनों में रेखा कहा तक खींची जानी है। किन कारणों से उड़ीसा में ऐसी परिस्थिति पैदा हो गई जिसमें 60 लाख व्यक्ति प्रभावित हुए और 5 लाख व्यक्ति अपने घर छोड़ने के लिए मजबूर हुए। माताओं ने बच्चे सड़कों पर छोड़ दिये जो एक-एक रुपये पर बेचे गये और खरीदे गये। पत्नियाँ ने पत्नियों को छोड़ दिया। उच्च वर्ग के हिन्दू गो-मांस खाने के लिए विवश हुए। आज भी लोग पीपल की पत्तियाँ खा रहे हैं, महुआ के फूल खा रहे हैं। पत्रकारों से हमें पक्षपान की आशा नहीं है। अभी टाइम्स आफ इंडिया का उद्धरण दिया गया था। इंडियन एक्सप्रेस के 9 मई 67 अंक में उड़ीसा की जो स्थिति का वर्णन किया गया है उसको पढ़कर लज्जा आती है। सरकार को ईमानदारी से अपनी विफलता मान लेनी चाहिये। उड़ीसा सरकार और केन्द्रीय सरकार विफल हुई, यह स्वीकार करने में सकोच नहीं होना चाहिये। अगर विरोधी दल यह बात राजनीतिक कारणों से प्रेरित होकर कहना है तो गलत है और यदि सरकार अपनी विफलता छिपाने के लिए इस तरह की बात कहती है तो वह भी उतना ही गलत है।

महोदया, मवाल यह है कि उड़ीसा में यह परिस्थिति क्यों पैदा हुई ? उड़ीसा सरकार जानती थी कि सूखा पड़ा है और लाखों लोग उससे प्रभावित होने वाले हैं। अगस्त 1965 में उड़ीसा विधान सभा में सूखे में उत्पन्न परिस्थिति पर वृहत् हुई थी। दिसम्बर 1965 में फिर भी इस बारे में विवाद हुआ और बजट के दौरान फिर से चर्चा हुई, लेकिन उड़ीसा सरकार ने কোন से कदम उठाये ? संकट आने वाला है इसकी केवल जानकारी काफी नहीं है। संकट को आने से रोकने के लिए, अगर संकट आ जाय तो उस पर काबू पाने के लिए, शासन को कदम उठाने चाहिये। स्पष्ट है उड़ीसा सरकार ने कदम नहीं उठाये। अगर उठाये होते तो ऐसी गम्भीर परिस्थिति पैदा नहीं होती।

केन्द्रीय सरकार भी अपनी जिम्मेदारी से बच नहीं सकती। क्या केन्द्रीय खाद्य मंत्री इस तथ्य से इन्कार कर सकते हैं कि उड़ीसा से बड़ी मात्रा में चावल केवल और पश्चिमी बंगाल में भेजा गया ? वह कह सकते हैं कि उड़ीसा एक सरप्लस स्टेट है, अति उत्पादन करनेवाला राज्य है, लेकिन अगर राज्य सरकार में मही सूचना मिलती कि सूखे के कारण पैदावार कम हुई है, कुछ क्षेत्रों में अभाव और अकाल की परिस्थिति पैदा हो गई है, तो उड़ीसा में बाहर चावल भेजने की आवश्यकता नहीं थी।

महोदया, इसी सदन में खाद्य मंत्री ने कहा था कि हम किसी को भूख से मरने नहीं देंगे और इसी आधार पर विदेशों से अनाज मंगाने का समर्थन किया गया था। लेकिन हम भुखमरी को बचा नहीं पाये। इतनी बड़ी मात्रा में विदेशों से गेहूं और चावल मंगा कर भी अगर हम उड़ीसा का संकट टाल नहीं सके तो हमें गहराई से विचार करना चाहिये कि केवल बाहर से अनाज मंगाना काफी नहीं है। उस अनाज के विवरण की ठीक व्यवस्था भी करनी होगी। यह काम अगर राज्य सरकारों पर छोड़ा गया तो उड़ीसा का उदाहरण हमारे

सामने है। मुझे आश्चर्य है कि न प्रधान मंत्री महोदया ने कहा और न केन्द्रीय खाद्य मंत्री कहने के लिये तैयार हैं कि इन अभावग्रस्त इलाकों में जो बड़ा के सरकारी अफसर, तौकर-शाही अपने कर्तव्य का पालन करने में विफल रही उसको क्या मजा दी जा रही है। उनमें पाप पर परदा डाला जा रहा है। राजनैतिक स्तर पर नेतृत्व विफल हो गया और प्रशासन के स्तर पर गवर्नमेंट की मशीनरी, सरकार का तंत्र विफल हो गया, अन्यथा उड़ीसा में ऐसी स्थिति पैदा नहीं होती। यदि विदेशों से अनाज मंगा कर हम समझे कि हमारा काम पूरा हो गया तो उड़ीसा का उदाहरण अन्य प्रांतों में भी दोहराया जा सकता है। शासन तंत्र हृदयहीन हो गया है, वह मंग-दिल है, पापाण-हृदय है, उसमें जनता के प्रति महानुभूति नहीं है। कुछ महीनों में मैं देख रहा हूँ कि गवर्नमेंट मशीनरी पर पोलिटिकल लीडरशिप का कंट्रोल ढीला होना जा रहा है। सरकारी अफसर मनमाना कर रहे हैं, अवहेलना कर रहे हैं, उदासीनता दिखलाते हैं। केवल उड़ीसा में नहीं, केवल अनाज के क्षेत्र में नहीं, हर क्षेत्र में केन्द्रीय सरकार और राज्य सरकारों के अफसर उदासीनता दिखलाते हैं। प्रधान मंत्री महोदया को इस बात को ध्यान में रखना चाहिये कि धीरे धीरे सरकारी मशीनरी पर कंट्रोल ढीला हो रहा है, धीरे धीरे सरकारी मशीनरी सरकार पर हावी हो रही है, राजनैतिक नेताओं पर हावी हो रही है। यह परिस्थिति देश के लिये बड़ी भयंकर है और उड़ीसा हमारे लिये एक चेतावनी है।

महोदया, फरवरी में योजना आयोग की एक टीम उड़ीसा गई थी। उसने एक रिपोर्ट भी दी है। लेकिन खाद्य मंत्री महोदय ने उस सदन में माना है और वे यहां भी इस बात को स्वीकार करेंगे कि उड़ीसा में अगर परिस्थिति को बिगड़ने से रोकने के लिये कदम उठाये गये तो अप्रैल के महीने में उठाये गये। इतनी देर क्यों हुई, क्या उड़ीसा की राज्य सरकार इसकी सफाई दे सकती है ? क्या केन्द्रीय सरकार संतुष्ट है कि उड़ीसा में जब

[Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee]

राहत के काम करने चाहिये थे तब किये गये ? अगर नहीं किये गये तो क्यों नहीं किये गये, आज भी इसका कोई जवाब नहीं है। मैं कहना चाहूंगा कि अभी परिस्थिति काबू में नहीं है। खाद्य मंत्री महोदय भी यह कहते हैं कि "Situation is under control." प्रधान मंत्री महोदय ने भी इस बात को दोहरा दिया "Situation is under control." What situation ?" कौन सी स्थिति नियंत्रण में है ? अभी और समस्याएं हमारे सामने हैं। किसानों को बीज देने का सवाल है। पशुओं की समस्या कैसे हल होगी ? मैं नहीं समझता कि उड़ीसा सरकार अकेले इस पर काबू पर सकती है। केन्द्रीय सरकार को भी अपनी जिम्मेदारी निभानी होगी। बीज के साथ यह सवाल पैदा होगा कि खेतों में काम करने के लिये मजदूर कहाँ से आयेगे। अभी कम खाने से हालत यह है कि छः घंटा या आठ घंटा लोग काम नहीं कर सकते, चार घंटा काम करते हैं तो थक जाते हैं। इस लिये उनको मजदूरी कम मिलती है। अब वह मजदूरी एक रुपया कर दी गई है। वह भी पर्याप्त नहीं है।

SHRI BANKA BEHARY DAS: It is 61 nP as told by the Central Team.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Now they have increased it to Re 1. That is what the Prime Minister has stated.

SHRI BANKA BEHARY DAS: It is on a contract basis.

**श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी :** लेकिन आगे आने वाली फसल हो सबेरे, इसके लिये वहाँ मजदूरों की समस्या पैदा होगी। वेल कहाँ से आयेगे ? वेल किस तरह से जुड़ेगे ? कहा जाता है कि 56,000 पशु वहाँ बेच दिये गये। एक पंचायत ने उनकी बिक्री पर 14,000 रु० का मुनाफा कमाया।

मेरा सुझाव है कि केन्द्रीय सरकार को एक विशेष अधिकारी उड़ीसा में नियुक्त करना चाहिये। राज्य सरकार के भरोसे सब कुछ नहीं छोड़ा जा सकता। यह सदन और यह शासन इन उत्तरदायित्व को संभाले कि किसी

को भी भूख से मरने नहीं दिया जायगा। किसी को भी अकाल के गाल में समाने की छूट नहीं होगी। इस लिये वहाँ जो राहत के काम हो रहे हैं, वे ठीक हो रहे हैं या नहीं, इसकी जांच के लिये, इसकी देखभाल के लिये केन्द्र से एक आफिसर जाना चाहिये, एक विशेष अधिकारी की नियुक्ति जरूरी है।

दूसरी बात यह है कि जो स्थानीय अफसर अपने कर्तव्य का पालन करने में विफल रहे हैं उनको सजा मिलनी चाहिये, कम से कम उनका वहाँ से तबादिला हो जाना चाहिये। यह कहना मेरी समझ में नहीं आता कि अभी हम संकट पर काबू पाने की कोशिश करें, बाद में फिर किस की गलती है, किस को सजा दी जाय, यह देखा जायगा। भारत पाकिस्तान संघर्ष के दिनों में भी हमने ऐसा ही कहा और आज भी हम उड़ीसा की स्थिति पर लीपापोती करने के लिये यही कह रहे हैं। जो अफसर अपना कर्तव्य पालन करने में विफल रहे हैं, अविलम्ब उनका स्थानांतरण होना चाहिये। उनके कामों की जांच होनी चाहिये, उनमें जवाब तलब होना चाहिये कि वे अपने काम को क्यों पूरा नहीं कर सके।

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Your time is up.

**श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी :** एक बात कह कर मैं खतम कर दूंगा। जून में, जुलाई में खाद्य स्थिति और बिगड़गी। बरसात के दिनों में हर साल देश के कुछ भागों में अन्न की कठिनाई पैदा होती है। इस साल यह कठिनाई बहुत ज्यादा पैदा होगी क्योंकि सूखे का प्रभाव सब जगह है। उस समय केन्द्रीय सरकार कहीं असावधान न रह जाय, इस बात की जरूरत है। किसी भी भाग में परिस्थिति बिगड़ने से पहले हम अनाज पहुंचा सके बच्चों के लिये दूध की व्यवस्था कर सके, राहत के काम शुरू कर सके, यह देखना जरूरी है ?

एक महान संकट काल हमारे सामने है। इस संकट काल में केन्द्रीय सरकार, राज्य सरकार और सभी राजनैतिक दलों को मिल कर

काम करना होगा। यह प्रश्न राजनीति का प्रश्न नहीं है, एक मानवीय प्रश्न है। भगर मुझे खेद है कि प्रधान मंत्री महोदया अपने साथ विरोधी दल के किसान सदस्य को नहीं ले गईं। क्या वे उनको अपने साथ नहीं ले जा सकती थीं? श्री सुरेन्द्र नाथ द्विवेदी उनके साथ जा सकते थे। महाराजा कालाहंडी उनके साथ जा सकते थे। कांग्रेस के सदस्य भी उनके साथ जाते।

**श्री एन० पात्री** महाराजा कालाहंडी उनके साथ थे।

**श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी** : खाद्य मंत्री महोदय भी इस बारे में विरोधी दलों से सुझाव ले सकते थे।

**SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM**: Raja of Kalahandi was there.

**SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE**: Not on the invitation of the Prime Minister but of his own accord.

**SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM** : Why should he be invited? He belonged to that constituency.

**SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE**: But the Prime Minister should have shown the courtesy of inviting the Opposition members to accompany her. This is the partisan attitude which is standing in the way of the Government and if the ruling party with its large majority cannot rise above party politics, it should not accuse the Opposition parties. This should apply as much to the ruling party as to the Opposition parties. Thank you, Madam.

**श्री गोडे सुराहरि** (उत्तर प्रदेश) : डिप्टी चैयरमैन महोदया, आजादी के 18 साल के बाद भी हमारे सामने अकाल की परिस्थिति उत्पन्न हो तो मेरी समझ में कोई भी सरकार जिसको थोड़ा भी अभिमान होगा वह चुल्लू भर पानी में डूब भरती। अगर किसी विदेशी सरकार के जमाने में अकाल होता तो मैं समझ सकता था क्योंकि उनको लोगों से और हिन्दुस्तान की जनता से कोई मतलब न होता, लेकिन हिन्दुस्तान की ऐसी सरकार के चलते जो अपने आपको स्वाधीन सरकार कहती है,

18 साल के बाद ऐसी परिस्थिति हमारे सामने आई। मुझे तो समझ में नहीं आता कि कैसे इस सरकार के लोग यह बर्दाश्त कर सकते हैं और किस तरह इतनी बेशर्मी के साथ हमारे सामने आकर इस तरह के बयानात दे जाते हैं।

अभी प्रधान मंत्री का एक बयान हुआ। उसे सुनने पर ऐसा लगा जैसा उस समय लगना है जब किसी सोशल वर्क की संस्था—जिसे फेशनेबिल लेडीज चलाती है—की सालाना रिपोर्ट पढ़ी जाती है। उसमें एक, दो, तीन दिया जाता है कि मैंने एक जगह पर देखा कि फला महिला ने एक स्कूल खोला और वहां यह-यह काम किया गया। जो बयान अभी यहाँ हुआ वह मुझे इस तरह की रिपोर्ट जैसा लगा। इस तरह की मनोभावना से ऐसी बड़ी समस्या का हल नहीं दिया जा सकता।

साथ साथ मैं यह भी कहना चाहूंगा कि अकाल से मृत्यु के बारे में जो बहस यहां पर चल रही है, बार बार सुनने में आती है और खासकर हमारे खाद्य मंत्री महोदय उस पर जोर देते हैं कि वह अन्डर-नरिश्मेट है या किसी बीमारी की वजह से मृत्युएं हो रही हैं और जायद अकाल की वजह से उतनी नहीं—इस सम्बन्ध में मैं तो सिर्फ इतना ही जानता हूँ कि जहाँ पर अकाल की परिस्थिति होगी, जहाँ आदमी भूखा रहेगा, वहाँ पर उस आदमी के अन्दर जो भी बीमारी होगी वह उभरेगी और उसकी मृत्यु जल्द से जल्द हो जायेगी। यह हो सकता है कि बूढ़े लोग जल्दी मरे, लेकिन 15-20 दिन के बाद जवान लोग भी मरने लगेंगे। अभी बूढ़ों की ही मृत्यु हो रही है, यह कोई तमल्लू की बात नहीं होनी चाहिये।

मैं आप लोगों का ध्यान एक चीज की तरफ और दिलाना चाहता हूँ। उड़ीसा में जो कुछ भी हो रहा है उसका एक मुख्य कारण मुझे यह लगता है कि वहाँ जो लोग सत्ता में हैं, सरकारी दल के लोग हैं उनके और वहाँ के कुछ मिल-ओनर्स का ऐसा गठबंधन है जिसके मातहत वहाँ पर इस तरह की परिस्थिति उत्पन्न हो गई है। यह सभी को मालम है कि वहाँ का प्रोक्योरमेंट

## [श्री गोडे मुराहर]

वहां की कुछ मिल्स को दिया गया है जो वहां के धान को प्रोक्योर करके चावल बनाती हैं और आज उड़ीसा में ऐसी परिस्थिति है कि बहुत ज्यादा कीमत पर चावल बेचा जा रहा है जिसको खरीदने के लिए वहां के लोगों के पास ताकत नहीं है। इस चक्र को भी खत्म करना होगा। फूड ग्रेन्स कार्पोरेशन बनी थी, लेकिन उसने भी अपने काम को मिल ओनर्स को दे दिया, यानी आज किमान और जो चावल खरीदने वाला उसके बीच में दो मिडिल एजेंसी तैयार हो गई। एक तरफ तो सरकार मिडिल-मैन बन जाती है और फिर खुद अपना काम न करके उसको दूसरों को सौंप करके दूसरी मिडिल एजेंसी कायम कर देती है। दो मिडिल एजेंसी कायम करके फिर उसी धान को चावल बनाकर फिर उन्हीं लोगों को बेचा जाता है। इस तरह का चक्र जो चलाया गया है उसको खत्म करना चाहिए।

मैं यह पूछना चाहूंगा कि उड़ीसा में जब ऐसी अकाल की परिस्थिति बनी हुई है तो इस प्रान्त से और जगह चावल भेजने की क्या जरूरत पड़ी है। उड़ीसा में इतनी भयंकर परिस्थिति होने के बाद भी अभी तक वहां चावल नहीं दिया गया है, गेहूं अलवत्ता भेजा गया है, लेकिन वह गेहूं भी वहां की फ्लोर मिल्स को दे दिया गया है जो उसका ज्यादातर मैदा और मूजी बना कर ज्यादा दाम पर बेचती है। यह सारी परिस्थिति आपको समझनी चाहिए। एक तरफ सरकार अनाज बेचती है जो वहां के मिल ओनर्स के हाथ में जाता है और वे ज्यादा दाम पर उसकी ऐसी चीज बना कर बेचते हैं जो वहां के लोग खरीद नहीं पाते। जो भी रिलीफ वर्क होता है, जो भी सरकार की ओर से वहां की परिस्थिति का सामना करने की योजना होती है उसमें भी ऐसी व्यवस्था की जाती है जिसकी वजह से वहां के लोगों को फायदा नहीं होता और वे खरीद नहीं पाते। मैं चाहूंगा कि सरकार इसके बारे में ध्यान दे।

हिन्दुस्तान में कुछ ऐसे प्रान्त हैं उड़ीसा जैसे—हमारे उत्तर प्रदेश का एक हिस्सा भी है, रायसीमा है—जो हमेशा अकाल की परिस्थिति में रहते हैं। मैं चाहूंगा कि सरकार इसके बारे में गंभीरता से सोचे और इसके बारे में दूर-दृष्टि के साथ लम्बी कार्यवाही करके वहां की परिस्थिति को ठीक करने की कोशिश करे क्योंकि 18 मानों में हर साल ऐसी परिस्थिति इन प्रदेशों में उत्पन्न होती रही है। यह सही है कि आजकल जो परिस्थिति उत्पन्न हुई है उतने बड़े पैमाने पर अभी तक न हुई हो, लेकिन हर साल इसका सामना करना पड़ता है। इसलिए सरकार को लम्बा प्लान बनाकर इसके बारे में सोचना चाहिए क्योंकि ऐसे कुछ प्रदेश हैं और जगहें हैं, जहां पर हमेशा अकाल की परिस्थिति रहती है।

[THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA) in the Chair.]

मैं तो यही कहूंगा कि यह परिस्थिति तो हमेशा आती है लेकिन इसका फायदा सत्ताधारी दल के बड़े बड़े लोग और उनके दोस्त जो बड़े बड़े मिल मालिक हैं वे उठाते हैं। कभी कभी मुझे ऐसा लगता है कि जब बंगाल में अकाल पड़ा था तो वहां पर भी इस्पहानी कम्पनी ने लोगों की मृत्यु के ऊपर और लोगों की भूख के ऊपर पैसा बनाया था। आजकल भी उड़ीसा में और जगह जगह पर ऐसे लोग हैं जो इस्पहानी कम्पनी जैसे लोग हैं। इसलिए मैं कहूंगा कि सरकार को अगर इस चीज को हल करना है तो फिर इस चक्र से निकलना पड़ेगा और मैं जानता हूं कि जब तक कांग्रेस सरकार है वह इस चक्कर से नहीं निकल पायेगी क्योंकि सत्ताधारी दल में जो लोग हैं वे काम नहीं करने वाले हैं और वे अग्र स्थानों पर बैठे हुए हैं। मेरा तो इतना ही कहना है कि सरकार कुछ काम करे और वहां पर लोगों की आज की स्थिति है उसको ठीक करने की कोशिश करे। मैं अपनी ओर से तो यही ममझता हूं कि जब तक कांग्रेस को खत्म नहीं करेगे तब तक यह परिस्थिति हल होने वाली नहीं है।

SHRI M. N. GOVINDAN NAIR (Kerala): Mr. Vice-Chairman, here is another shameful story of millions of people in a State being brought to such great distress by the callous indifference of the Government both here and in the State. I have heard the speech of the Prime Minister. I read the report of the team which went to investigate the situation there in the State of Orissa. From all these certain things stand out. This is not the first time that we are discussing the subject of famine conditions in Orissa in this House. What was the attitude of the Food Minister on the previous occasions? Every time when this question was raised here he was taking a very wrong attitude. He was trying to find fault with the Opposition by saying that we were trying to raise the bogey about the situation there. But now after his own visit and after the Prime Minister had gone there I am glad that there is a change in their attitude.

From the report of the team which visited Orissa certain things have emerged. Now they say that rice is available in all the shops and even in the open market the price is not very high, but the difficulty is that there are few people who can buy because the purchasing power of the people, the capacity of the people to buy, has been exhausted. That is what the official report says. But you should read this report bearing in mind the speech of my hon. friend Shri Banka Behary Das. He has explained in detail how and why the purchasing capacity got exhausted. He has enumerated the factors because of which the present position has been reached. Why is it that the people can't buy rice even though it is available in the open market at Re. 1 per kg.? Now from the report it is clear that the Government have to give gratuitous relief to more than a lakh of people. They are already giving it to a lakh of people and it has to be increased to two lakhs. That is the situation to which the State has come. So according to the admission of the Government there are two lakhs without any means to buy their rations. Again I do not want to go into the discussion as to whether it was starvation death or death due to malnutrition but I want to point out that the indications were there from September onwards that the State of Orissa was going to be in the grip of famine, but the Govern-

ment remained indifferent till it reached this stage. The situation will get further worsened as soon as the rain starts, when the relief work is going to stop.

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM. It is not going to stop.

SHRI M. N. GOVINDAN NAIR: Your own team which went there says that because of rains they will have to give up the works that have been undertaken and that they are unable to find enough alternate work to be provided to the people who are now employed. They say that minor irrigation works could be conducted even during the rainy season. But they have also pointed out certain difficulties. They are not sure of overcoming them. So they are not sure to what extent they will be able to carry on the relief work. Kindly go through the report once again.

Then there is another question. Even the Prime Minister emphasized the necessity of helping the farmers with seeds. What is the present position in regard to that? According to their own report more than 6 million acres of land have been affected and the availability of seeds from that State cannot be more than 1½ lakh maunds. With my little information about paddy cultivation at least one maund of paddy would be necessary for one acre. I am not speaking about the modern Japanese type of cultivation because especially the farmers in Orissa and other backward areas follow the traditional method and according to that the paddy that would be necessary would be a maund per acre.

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM. How many pounds is it?

SHRI M. N. GOVINDAN NAIR. I do not know that.

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM. You do not know?

SHRI M. N. GOVINDAN NAIR: Do you mean to say that less than one maund is enough? The question is, more than six million acres have been affected and do you mean to say that the 1½ lakh maunds of seed that can be collected from Orissa will suffice for the farmers there? That is my point. The Minister seems to be extremely happy

[Shri M. N. Govindan Nair]

when I said that I did not know how many pounds made one maund and he is gloating over it. The problem is not that. According to your own report more than 6 million acres have been affected by drought and again according to their own report you cannot collect more than 1½ lakh maunds of seed. You have no plan to get seeds from other States. These points have been discussed in the report and they say that with some strain perhaps it would be possible to collect a little more seeds from Orissa itself and the maximum that could be collected altogether may be 3 lakh maunds. My point is, unless the Government takes serious note of this factor the situation will worsen further. If not from Orissa, why can't they collect the necessary amount of paddy from other places for cultivation purposes? Otherwise the same situation, I think, will repeat itself.

Again with regard to bullocks etc. much discussion has taken place. After visiting the cattle markets in the State the central team have come to the conclusion that large-scale sale of cattle has not taken place. But the speech of my hon friend here will convince anybody that what has been said in the Report in this connection is not the real state of affairs. In the report itself they say that tractors are necessary to be brought in and the Government wants to bring in some 200 tractors but they say that getting 200 tractors and training people and all that will be difficult. So it becomes clear that there is dearth of bullocks in that area and I do not know how the Government is going to face that situation. So my point is, instead of trying to blame the Opposition they have to admit that they have been very late in recognising the seriousness of the situation. If today the children were smiling and they were not as weak as they would be in a famine-stricken area, that is because during the last few weeks some free food was being given to them. Free kitchens were opened and some relief work had been started there. But why do you permit a situation to deteriorate like this when even in September you could know that the State was going to be in the grip of famine? And it is very interesting to remember that the first kitchen was opened, not at the instance of the Government, but by the Catholic Relief Centre. It is they who came into the field first. Of course the Bharat Sewak Samaj

was also collaborating with the Catholic Relief Centre. I am pointing this out to show that the Government was indifferent, the other social organisations were also indifferent and it was the Christian missionaries who had to come and start free kitchens there. Now they say that more than 10,000 people are being fed with free food. So the point is you have allowed the situation to deteriorate to a stage where lakhs of people have to be given gratuitous relief. Otherwise if the Government had taken serious note of the situation and given timely aid, the situation today would have been different. People could have been spared so much misery which they are undergoing now. At least now in order that the condition may not further deteriorate the Government should take serious care to see that proper help is given to them for the next cultivation, relief work should be further intensified and loans etc. should be available in sufficient quantity so that they may be able to regain normalcy in the State soon.

Thank you.

SHRI N. PATRA: Mr Vice-Chairman, at the outset I thank the Prime Minister for her recent tour of the drought-affected areas of Orissa. After reaching Orissa she did not stick to her scheduled programme but she went out of her way causing embarrassment to the security people and the people who had arranged her programme to see for herself the real conditions prevailing in the drought-affected areas and yet our friends in the Opposition are not satisfied and they say that she is whitewashing the actual state of affairs.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: But what is the embarrassment?

SHRI N. PATRA: A Member of the Opposition was referring to the paraphernalia for the Prime Minister's visit. Where was that paraphernalia? I was referring to it. The Prime Minister has gone out of her way to see, to understand, the real situation prevailing there. In her statement she says that the situation is very acute. From what I hear from the Opposition Members, who criticise Government in so many words, I find that there is no concern among the Opposition Members for the drought-affected areas. I am glad they are taking some interest.

SHRI BANKA BEHARY DAS: Have you gone to that area even once?

**SHRI N. PATRA:** My friend, you were absent when the Appropriation Bill was being discussed here. Then I had stated that I had gone there before I came to Parliament. I had myself been there. Do not boast yourself as a social worker. You were never a social worker. I have worked for the poor and the down-trodden for decades and decades. You are a youngster. You are a minor before me in service, but you are questioning me, as you were questioning Mr. Supakar. Before I came here I had visited the worst drought-affected areas, made a tour for three long days.

Our friend in the Opposition accuses the Food Minister for having sent rice to Kerala. Friends in the Opposition wanted to see the worst situation created in Kerala and they wanted to see that rice from a surplus State like Orissa should not be rushed there. But there was the difficulty about rice? I have visited Kalahandi and Kantabanji area also. I have visited the relief centres. I have visited the bazaars. I have visited the different market places and visited the fair price shops. Rice is ample, but the real trouble is the people have no purchasing power. In this backward area of Orissa, the people have lost their purchasing power. If the Opposition Members expect that the Government should have freely distributed rice, that would have been a different matter. Therefore, the sending of rice to Kerala never created any famine condition. Ample rice was always available in the drought-affected areas, but the people have lost all their purchasing power, because there was acute drought.

**SHRI LOKANATH MISRA:** Are you still sending rice?

**SHRI N. PATRA:** Still the Orissa Government has one lakh tonnes in its stores. (Interruptions) Should acute conditions in other parts of the country arise, Orissa should co-operate. Instead, the Opposition Members say that they require crores and crores of rupees from the Central exchequer. When they seek help from the merchants and different classes of people, they say Orissa rice should not go out. What is it? I cannot understand this kind of reasoning. You expect people even from European countries to get concerned about the drought-affected areas and famine conditions prevailing somewhere else, but you say that we should keep quiet and we should

not send out any rice from Orissa. Sending away the stock is not the real problem. The purchasing power of the people is the real issue at stake. When the Food Minister, when the Prime Minister when the experts have visited there and formulated plans, when they have made fool-proof arrangements, they are at their wits end; they want to raise the issue like this, whether the death is due to malnutrition or whether the death is due to starvation. If the Members cared or showed great concern about these people, they must have, at least after the Prime Minister's visit, who sanctioned immediately a sum of Rs. 2 crores for famine relief, shown a cooperative attitude.

**SHRI LOKANATH MISRA:** Join the chorus.

**SHRI N. PATRA:** The friends from the Opposition should rise to the occasion and organise some relief camps in that area. One of the hon. friends in the Opposition is concerned about the contractors, about the bidi merchants exploiting labour. Why should not these advisers go and organise relief work if they are concerned about these Adivasi people, concerned about these backward people? Why should they not send their social workers, organise some co-operative societies, organise labour. They call themselves social workers. They are simply watching the economic conditions of the people. Why should they not go and organise some relief camps, some labour co-operative societies for helping them in that process?

**SHRI BANKA BEHARY DAS:** We are also co-operating in that area. We are also there.

**SHRI G. MURAHARI:** You create all the famines and we are to help you.

**SHRI N. PATRA:** I know that one of them is a PSP man. The others are Sarvodaya workers. (Interruption) I know the man who is there. They claim him to be their man, but he is a contractor of Orissa. He belongs to the Praja Socialist Party. Such people are there for making profits out of his contractors. He professes to be a philanthropist. I do not know what philanthropy is there. They are taking help from the Government and are distributing it in their own way. This is the kind of relief work they are doing. This is the part which your Party has played so far. You

[Shri N. Patra]

have not offered suggestions in a positive or constructive way. On a belated day, after every arrangement has been made, you come now with some motion and you want to raise a controversy about the death, whether the death was due to starvation or due to malnutrition. No useful purpose will be served by this. You have no constructive programme. You are out and out to criticise the administration. We expect nothing more from you. We do not want your friendship also. We want the Government to take a long-range view. Drought is a recurring feature in such backward areas. Therefore, a long-term, phased programme should be undertaken and it should be implemented gradually in order to see that a single drought should not disturb the economy of the country so much. I request the Government to pay due attention to this. I again expect the Members of the Opposition to make a constructive approach to this problem and help to relieve the distress of the down-trodden people of Orissa.

**SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM:** Mr. Vice-Chairman, when I rise to reply to the debate, I do not do so in a spirit of crossing swords with the hon. Members of the Opposition or in a spirit of scoring debating points. We are dealing with a situation in which there is human misery and acute suffering and, therefore, our approach has got to be how to avoid this, how to alleviate misery, how to prevent starvation. While we are struggling with this immediate problem, at the same time we have to take a longer perspective and take measures to see that these conditions will not recur again, not only in Orissa but also in any other part of the country. The Prime Minister has visited the State. Originally she had a programme to be there for two days. She extended it by another day. As was pointed out by hon. Members, she visited areas where she was not scheduled to visit, so that there may be an element of surprise, to see the conditions for herself. She has made a report to this House and I am sorry to note that my hon. friend, Mr. Vajpayee, was disappointed with it. I do not know in what respect, because she said that the condition was under control or she did not find the conditions which were depicted by certain persons. But to a certain extent we should be happy and feel satisfied that the conditions are not only under control but conditions

have somewhat improved. The point for consideration is this, and that has been stressed by many hon. Members, that measures should be such that we should avoid starvation, we should avoid misery and we should avoid suffering. I shall come to what happened in the past, but I would like the hon. Members to look into what is being done now, what is being attempted now, whether this is adequate or something more has got to be done. If any constructive suggestion comes from any hon. Member that something more has got to be done, the Government would certainly look into it and see, if those measures are found to be necessary, that they are taken up, and we are not going to say that this comes from an Opposition Member or a Member of the Congress Party. The point for consideration would be whether those suggestions are constructive, whether the measures suggested are necessary for the purpose of meeting the situation. Therefore, it is from that point of view I would like to place before the House what is being done now, what is being attempted.

As hon. Members are aware, the State Government naturally with the assistance of the Central Government—because no State Government will have adequate resources to meet a situation of this sort—is making a threefold approach to this problem. The first thing is to provide employment to the people who are in a position to put in some work. As far as that is concerned, I do not think any hon. Member mentioned that as it is, what ever might have been done in the past, there are not enough number of works. I do not hear any such complaint now. My own understanding of the situation is, with the reports available and also with what the Prime Minister herself has seen, that sufficient number of works have been started at intervals so that they will be easily accessible to people who want to take advantage of these works. That is one aspect of it, and this is a very important aspect because it is only on this basis we would be able to provide the purchasing power which is lacking in the people, and it is with reference to that that certain deficiencies were noticed. Not only now, as the hon. Members are pointing it out, but even earlier it came out that even though these works have been provided for, the capacity of the persons who are working here to earn a wage is limited.

They are not able to work as in normal times for eight hours to turn out a certain quantity of work and on that basis to earn a living wage. Because of the general conditions existing there, they are in a position to work only for three or four or five hours, and working for three or four hours, to this limited extent, they are unable to earn a wage which would be able to meet their requirements. Therefore, this point has been taken up, and now the Government of Orissa has agreed to see that everybody is assured that he earns at least Re. 1 minimum—and it should be possible that they should be enabled to earn a little more, but the minimum is this, whether he or she is able to turn out work or not adequate to earn this wage. This is one aspect that has been taken up, not only the provision of relief works but also to enable them to see that they earn a wage which would be sufficient to meet their daily requirements.

The second aspect which was brought out by some hon. Members is that this relief work will have to be carried on till it is necessary, till there is necessity for this relief work. In that connection I think the hon. Member, Shri Govindan Nair, made the point as to what we were going to do after the monsoon, for example. This aspect of the matter has been gone into. I do agree that some of the works which are being executed now cannot be taken up, cannot be done once the monsoon breaks out. Therefore, the Orissa Government is identifying other works which can be taken up during the monsoon so that a number of works will be there to provide employment. But at the same time we also have got to see that there is sufficient agricultural labour available for agricultural operations. If we provide conditions in which all the agricultural labour will be attracted to these relief works, then the agricultural operation itself would suffer and then the next season will be worse. Therefore, we have got to ensure while we carry on the relief works that the agricultural operations are not affected in any way. Therefore, a balance will have to be struck, and I have no doubt in my mind with reference to what we would be undertaking even after the breaking of the monsoon, if any necessity is there for providing employment, that will be looked after and at the same time people will also go for agricultural operations and earn their wages there and by those operations

they will be able to raise the crop which alone will provide the purchasing power and also the foodgrains for supply to the people which would be happening in October or November. So this aspect is being kept in mind. Therefore, the first approach is provision of these relief works, and that has to be taken care of and after the monsoon to the extent necessary minimum wages should be assured to them.

The second aspect is this. The way in which this has been tackled is by giving of gratuitous relief. There are persons who are old and infirm. There are persons who are affected by disease, who are not in a position to come to these relief works and put in any sort of work, and therefore they have got to be taken care of. It is not as if any family in these conditions will be able to take care of these old persons or infirm persons or diseased persons. Therefore, gratuitous relief has been given by supplying cards to these people and assuring them a supply of 290 grams of foodgrains in the form of rice or wheat. This is being taken care of thus. Already 1 lakh cards have been distributed, but this is not adequate, and therefore we have requested the Orissa Government and they have agreed that they would distribute cards for another 1 lakh of people so that gratuitous for these old and disabled persons will be adequate to meet the situation. If more numbers will have to be brought into it, we will have to consider it after distributing these things; but the present estimate is that it would be possible to contain the situation, to meet the situation, by distributing another 1 lakh cards. This is the second way in which the situation is being met.

The third thing is the feeding programme, feeding programme particularly for the children. As hon. Members from Orissa should be aware—and other Members should be also aware of it—there is a school-feeding programme in Orissa. In this connection—and it is not for the purpose of earning the kudos of the House—I would like to mention that this is a programme which I initiated in Madras when I was the Education Minister there and now it has spread throughout the country, and because of this programme the school children are being given midday meal in the form of milk, some corn, some vitamin tablets and various other things. While we are continuing the school lunch programme, we are try-

[Shri C. Subramaniam]

ing to bring children who are not in school also into this feeding programme so that the child population will be taken care of. This is rather a difficult thing particularly to bring into this programme the non-school children. But every attempt is being made for this purpose and we have attained some success in that. I hope and trust that because of this children would come into this more and more. Here also we are taking care to see that it is a sufficiently nutritious food. As was pointed out by the Prime Minister, our first priority should be to see that our children are saved as even children were saved during the Second World War; in spite of ration and everything children were taken care of; as a matter of fact the health of children improved during those days. Therefore, our attempt should be to see that the children get the first priority and they get into this feeding programme. And as I have already stated, I am sure the House would recollect this. When I was talking about this coming scarcity condition, I emphasised one point that when the scarcity conditions developed, we should see that the children did not suffer. When the children suffer, not only they suffer for the present, but the next generation is also affected, when they become adults. That is why I emphasised that socialism should start with children rather than with others. Therefore it is necessary to see that the children are properly taken care of and I am glad that the Prime Minister has emphasised this aspect further.

[THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair]

My own view is—and I have expressed it before—that while we take up this programme of child welfare, feeding the children and others in this distress, this should not be merely a distress-relief programme, but this should be a permanent programme of child welfare. Then only perhaps will we be able to build up a society—if not for the present but in the coming generation—which will consist of a properly brought up, trained and educated generation, which we would be preparing for the future. Therefore that has also been taken up.

Madam, I am sorry, Shri Govindan Nair is missing. There is always a tendency amongst the Members there to make a speech and then go away. I think Shri Govindan Nair said that the Christian missionaries were the pioneers in this field.

I do not minimise in any way the work done by them. They have done very good work and we are grateful to them. But not only did they do the work. The hon. Deputy Minister has given me a list of others. The Red Cross is there, the State Council for Child Welfare is functioning, the Bharat Sewak Samaj is functioning there, various women's organisations are functioning there, the Sarvodaya workers are functioning there. Then they have also got what they call the Orissa Drought Relief Committee. We know that all these organisations are there. Therefore, let him not sit here and be under the impression that it is merely purely the Christian missionaries' organisation which has come forward. All the other voluntary organisations have also come forward and they are doing excellent work, particularly in the free feeding programme. It is being taken care of by such voluntary organisations. Therefore they are doing excellent work. Therefore, let us not, for the purpose of throwing some mud or stone at the Government say that nothing is being done, that these voluntary organisations are not there. They are being encouraged by the Government; all the resources are being made available to those voluntary organisations for the purpose of carrying on these relief operations. Therefore, I want to emphasise that voluntary organisations have come forward and I have no doubt that there is further scope for further organisations to come forward and take up this matter.

Therefore this 3-pronged approach to relief has been undertaken and I can give this assurance. Whatever might have been in the past, particularly from the month of March and more so from the month of April, a good deal of work has been done; relief work has been undertaken. That is how the situation has been brought under control. I do not see why people, particularly the hon. Members, should feel disappointed when we say that the situation has been brought under control. It looks as if they would be happy if it is out of control. Particularly some foreign papers also have written that the conditions are such that they would die like flies. Will you be satisfied if the Prime Minister gets up and says, well, we are going to die in millions? I think the hon. Member who moved this motion said that the 1943 Bengal conditions were to be seen here and that it was the same

condition as in 1866. I do agree that the conditions are almost the same. But the Government is different, the organisation that is tackling this is different. And therefore I want to give this assurance that we are not going to allow 1866 to be repeated where one million people died, one-third of population, and more than one million head of cattle perished. That is not going to happen. We are not going to allow 1943 to be enacted here—what happened in Calcutta. This Government takes the responsibility to see that this misery is relieved, that starvation is prevented. It is the responsibility of the Government. To the extent we fail, we fail in our responsibility. I am prepared to accept it. Therefore, there is no question of running away from the responsibility. We have undertaken that responsibility and we are not going to run away from it.

**SHRI BANKA BEHARY DAS:** You woke up too late.

**SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM:** I will come to that.

This is how the situation is being . . .

**THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** How long will you take? We have got a half-an-hour discussion.

**SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM:** I should be given some more time. Having heard the debate, I should be given time to deal with the debate. I can sit down even now if you are satisfied with it. I am in the hands of the House. If they think that this is enough, I am prepared to sit down.

**SHRI RAJENDRA PRATAP SINHA (Bihar):** The Minister should be given time.

**THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** Five minutes or ten minutes?

**SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM:** Five or ten minutes; not more than that.

**THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** You don't mind, Mr. Vajpayee?

**SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE:** No.

**SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM:** I will try to compress my ideas.

As far as the State Government is concerned—I will come to the Central Government later on—it was pointed out even in August/MS5RS/66—7

September when there was a discussion in the Legislative Assembly and the developing situation was discussed then. It is not as if nothing was done. Certain measures were undertaken for the purpose of meeting the situation. Again, there was a discussion in December. And I have got the printed proceedings of the House. Not only was there a discussion, but also the various measures which were to be undertaken are given there. Moneys have been allotted and measures have been taken. And therefore it is not as if the Orissa Government was just sleeping. And if the hon. Members say that it was not adequate, I am prepared to agree with them to a certain extent. But why that happened? I am sorry, the hon. Shri M. N. Govindan Nair is not here. I have been shouting and I have been telling this hon. House and also the other House, Parliament, that we are going to face a very difficult situation in the country and that we should be prepared for it. And the Communist friends and their fellow-travellers were saying that there is a Food Minister who is raising a scare in the country, who just wants to raise this scare for the purpose of getting food aid from abroad. But now the very same Member has the temerity to say that I have objected to, what he considers, the Opposition's scare-mongering. As a matter of fact, I tried not only to forewarn the country but also make it aware of the situation and place it before this House. Also the Government did take anticipatory measures. But for this, this, we would have faced not only 1866, we would have faced 1943, but also a much worse situation. Even with all these things, what is being said is that there have been a few deaths—I will deal with that also—that 15 or 20 deaths have taken place in this village or that village. Therefore the question for consideration is whether taking into consideration the circumstances, we did not take any anticipatory measures, if there has been any stepping down of our efforts. I will charge the Opposition, particularly those who are shouting loudly that we should not get aid, that the condition is satisfactory, that the Food Minister is creating a scare. As a matter of fact, many papers were also saying that unnecessary scare is being created, that there is absolutely no anxiety and that there are no famine conditions. Therefore if anybody created a sense of complacency

[Shri C. Subramaniam]

in the country, I would charge those who were at that time creating this impression that the Food Minister is creating a scare there, that there is absolutely no difficult situation, that everything is all right, provided we leave things to themselves. Therefore, if at all anybody has got to be charged for this complacency, it is those who tried to create an atmosphere of complacency at that time. Now they come and talk in terms of accusing this Government, of accusing me. But, let alone that, what is important now is, particularly from the month of March and especially from April, the effort has been further intensified and with the visit of the Prime Minister, I have no doubt in my mind that further intensification of efforts would take place. I think we can be assured, and we can have the confidence that everything will be done for the purpose of seeing that the situation not only is brought under control but the situation goes on improving from day to day, from week to week, from month to month. But as I have already stated, this is not the effect of merely one failure of monsoon alone. But unfortunately, the economic conditions are such that even one failure of monsoon immediately breaks down the economy there because the conditions are so backward there. Therefore, I am glad that the Prime Minister has got herself committed—and that is a commitment of the Government made by the Prime Minister—that there should be long-term measures to see that there is economic development in this area. And when we say 'economic development of this area', it is not merely an underdeveloped area, it is an area where we have a large percentage of Adivasis, the Scheduled Tribes and the Scheduled Castes, the most backward citizens of our country. Particularly, when we talk of socialism, they are entitled to get priority consideration with regard to economic development. Therefore, it should be our effort and it should be the function of the Planning Commission to allocate priority to the economic development of these areas, not only in Orissa but in the other parts of the country also.

Madam, I have no doubt in my mind that, while this has brought some distress and created difficulties for us, this itself would be a starting point or a blessing for this year provided we implement what we have promised, that we give priority and bring about

economic development this year. This is a most important thing. Therefore, I am hoping while there is evil everywhere, out of evil sometimes good comes out. And while we are taking measures to meet the immediate situation, if out of this situation a long-term economic development is planned and implemented in this area, that would be the greatest blessing that can come out of this. I hope it would come out and it has to come out of it; otherwise while we might save the situation this year, we may be facing a worse situation later.

Therefore, Madam, I am glad that this situation has been discussed here and I am glad that hon'ble Members expressed great concern about this situation in which we have to be concerned about, and the only assurance I can give to the hon'ble Members is that while they have every right to criticise the Government—we welcome any constructive criticism and even sometimes unjustified criticism—what is important is that out of this criticism whatever lethargy has been there, if there had been any lethargy, hereafter at least we should see that the action is prompt, that the action is adequate and through this prompt and adequate action we meet the situation, contain the situation and improve the situation. Thank you, Madam.

#### HALF-AN-HOUR DISCUSSION *RE* SPECIAL PROGRAMME ON NETAJI'S BIRTH ANNIVERSARY

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: May I at the outset say that Mr. Vajpayee would get ten minutes. There are six names before me, but they can only put questions for elucidation, no speech.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA (Orissa): but the Order Paper contains only three names.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: One can speak and the others can put questions.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: But . . .

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I hope you have read the rules.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: Then my name should not have been tagged on to the first name.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: In half-an-hour we cannot have so many speeches. Mr. Vajpayee.