

Houses to be called the Joint Committee on Offices of Profit be constituted for the purposes set out in the motion adopted by the Lok Sabha at its sitting held on the 3rd August 1959, and communicated to this House and resolves that this House do join in the said Joint Committee and proceed to elect, in accordance with the system of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote, five members from among themselves to serve on the said Joint Committee "

The motion was adopted

MR CHAIRMAN I have to inform Members that the following dates have been fixed for receiving nominations and for holding election, if necessary, to the Joint Committee on Offices of Profit —

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| 1 | Number of Members to be elected                  | Five   |
| 2 | Last date and time for receiving nominations     | 4th September, 1959 (up to 3 P.M.)                                   |
| 3 | Last date and time for withdrawal of candidature | 5th September, 1959 (up to 3 P.M.)                                   |
| 4 | Date and time of election                        | 7th September, 1959 (between 3 P.M. and 5 P.M.)                      |
| 5 | Place of election                                | Room No. 63, First Floor, Parliament House, New Delhi                |
| 6 | Method of election                               | Proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote |

#### THE MISCELLANEOUS PERSONAL LAWS (EXTENSION) BILL, 1959

THE MINISTER OF LAW (SHRI A K SEN) Sir I move for leave to introduce a Bill to provide for the extension of certain personal laws to parts of India in which they are not now in force

MR CHAIRMAN The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill to provide for the extension of certain personal laws to parts of India in which they are not now in force"

The motion was adopted

SHRI A K SEN Sir, I introduce the Bill

#### THE CRIMINAL LAW (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1959

THE MINISTER OF LAW (SHRI A K SEN) Sir, I move for leave to introduce a Bill to amend the Criminal Law Amendment Ordinance 1944

MR. CHAIRMAN The question is.

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill to amend the Criminal Law Amendment Ordinance, 1944"

The motion was adopted

SHRI A K SEN Sir, I introduce the Bill

#### MOTION RE FOOD SITUATION —continued

MR CHAIRMAN We now pass on to the discussion on Shri Bhupesh Gupta's motion about the food situation. The Business Advisory Committee allotted 3½ hours and we have taken already 3 hours and 27 minutes. We have just three minutes left, but I have here a large number of Members who are anxious to speak and make their valuable contributions to the discussion for the enlightenment of our new Food Minister and I am allowing six Members from the Congress side and two Members from the Opposition to have ten minutes each. They are Shri Avinashlingam Chettiar, Shri P N Saprú, Shri M G Shah, Shri T R Deogirikar, Shrimati Yashoda Reddy and Shri Bibudhendra Mishra. Shri Basavapunniah and Shri Dahyabhai Patel. There is no

time limit for the Minister; 15 minutes for Mr. Bhupesh Gupta when he answers.

**SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA** (West Bengal): Is this justice that there is no time limit for him?

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The time limit is for you.

**SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA:** That is democracy.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Otherwise, he will take all the time.

[MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair]

**SHRI T. S. AVINASHILINGAM CHETTIAR** (Madras): Mr. Deputy Chairman, in the short time available to me, I would like to make a few suggestions. As the debate has disclosed, food is indeed a very great problem before the country. As the Ford Foundation Committee has pointed out in its Report "India's Food Crisis and steps to meet it", we will be reaching a population of nearly 480 millions by 1966 and we will need about 110 million tons, of which we have only about 83 millions. This will mean a deficit nearly of one-third. This problem can be solved only by a joint national effort. Big industries can be established by a few people. Money and a few technicians can do the job. In the matter of food production, millions of people throughout the country will have to cooperate. To me the ability to organise the food front will mean bringing to the people more enthusiasm and inspiration to produce more food. That will be the greatest contribution which any true Food Minister can make. In this connection I may say that we had our Mr. A. P. Jain as Food Minister and he did a very difficult task. I think we should give him our thanks, for facing this very difficult task, and for his ability. The task being very difficult, it must be met as a national question. Unfortunately our mem-

bers of the Communist Party want to make even this a party question and exploit the food situation. Food indeed is a very difficult problem. I should think that the greatest contribution that the new Food Minister can make to solve this question apart from nothing on files and the proposed change in policy with regard to the distribution system, is to have more production. More and more production is the only lasting solution to this problem and so all that can be done to produce more food should be done. Production is not increased by a few big persons. Production is increased by the small owners of land, of one acre, two acres or three acres, throughout the length and breadth of the land. They must be enthused to produce the greatest amount. A solution to this food problem, important as it is, will depend entirely on giving this enthusiasm to the millions of farmers in the country, inspiring the millions of farmers throughout the land, in all parts of the country. That I hope the new Food Minister will do and he has our best wishes. This indeed is a tremendous task. What should be done to enthuse these people? To me, greater use of fertilisers is one, as has been pointed out. I am sure no amount of committees are going to point out anything new. What has to be done is to implement those policies which you have already laid down, which the Food Ministry has laid down, which the Food Conferences have laid down, which the States' Food Ministers have laid down. One of the main things which they have dealt with is not only production of fertilisers, but also the conservation of the fertilisers that we already have in the country. Much of it is going to waste. There should be better utilisation, better management of it. I was talking the other day to a friend from U.P. I told him: 'You are from the rich Gangetic fertile area. What is the production per acre?'. I was surprised to know that the production of food, in that very beautiful area, where plenty of water is

[Shri T. S. Avinashilingam Chettiar] available, is only 8 or 9 maunds per acre. To my mind, the productivity is very low indeed. I know from experience, coming from a district which is also agriculturally important, that production can be stepped up, provided new techniques are introduced, provided the agriculturists are educated in them, provided the agriculturists are also given facilities to achieve higher production. That will go a long way towards higher production.

Another step for higher production is in extension work because extension means taking to them the techniques of higher production, taking to them the technique as to avoidance of wastage. I have found from the working paper submitted to the Planning Commission that in our country nearly ten per cent, of our food is being wasted due to pests. The percentage may be more or the percentage may be less. I am not here to pin down the percentage, but the fact is that the percentage of loss due to pests is tremendous. The percentage of waste through deterioration of food is tremendous. The percentage of waste in our own stores is also very high. So, on the one side, while we must increase food production by adopting improved techniques, on the other side, we must see that we do not waste food in any manner. That itself will also mean extension work. In this extension work—I hope Mr. Patil will hear me—will come not only extension for increased production of food and avoidance of wastage of food, but also education of our women. It is the women who waste or preserve our food in our country. In our country, a large measure of agricultural production is carried out in our villages by women. While marketing is done by men, the production in the fields is done by women. I am anxious that this extension work should also cover extension in regard to women's work. One matter in this Ministry, that is the agricultural extension training

that is being given under the organisation of the home science wing, under the leadership of a very distinguished home-scientist, Dr. Devdas, is to be deeply appreciated. The programme must be extended and the result should be that every man and woman in our villages should be fully conscious that he or she must produce more food, fully conscious in the sense that he or she must avoid wastage.

We must also develop new types of food. They must develop fisheries and poultry. There is tremendous scope. Not only these. Kitchen gardening, for example, can be adopted to the best advantage. There would be tremendous increase in food production by these methods. In a country like Japan, there is intensive cultivation in one or 1-1/2 acres of land only. We cannot copy America, for example, because there it is 800 or 900 acres for a farm and mechanical cultivation is adopted. But in our country where the land is divided and sub-divided, where it is even half an acre of land, or two acres, three acres, we must draw inspiration from Japan, where intensive cultivation is done even in small plots of land. This is the way we should adopt. One warning I should like to give. We have been talking about land reforms and co-operative farming societies. I think a great harm has been done by talking of land reforms all these years. The result is that many of these people who have been doing very good agriculture, have stopped taking interest in the land, not knowing what land reforms they are going to get. The sooner this matter is finalised the better for all. There will then be better food production. This reform has been hanging on for a long time. It has produced a very deleterious effect in regard to food production and I hope our Ministries in the Centre and in the States will take care.

One other matter I would like to refer to and that is about co-operative

farming. I do not think co-operative farming from a doctrinaire approach is very good. Co-operation is good, to pool human resources, to pool material resources, to help the community rather than individuals. This is very good from the theoretical point of view. But unfortunately from the way in which it has been received, the way in which it has been worked out, I do not see very much in it today. I would like to say, you begin with service co-operatives. You give them all the facilities which they want. With regard to co-operative farming, wait till they find the benefits of the service co-operatives. Let ryots ask for co-operative farming themselves. That time will come and people must be educated about it, and nothing can be forced into the minds of the people.

Mr. Deputy Chairman, in my opinion this is such a complicated subject that it is very difficult to say very much on it within the limited time at my disposal, but I would like to express our best wishes to the Food Minister, not in any personal sense, but because our nation's progress depends upon higher food production and upon solving all these food troubles.

SHRI M. C. SHAH (Bombay): Mr. Deputy Chairman, the food situation in the country today is, to say the least, a most disquieting one, and this position is there notwithstanding a record bumper crop of 73.5 million tons in 1958-59, about 11 million tons more than in the year 1957-58.

Sir, the position has become very very difficult according to me because of certain policy decisions taken by the Government. Before coming to that, I will show the general index of prices from 1954-55 to 1958-59. Taking the basis as 100 for 1952-53, up to the end of June 1959 there has been a rise of nearly 28 per cent., that is 8 per cent. per year. During this period there has been a rise of 44 per cent. in the case of food arti-

cles, that is 11 per cent. per annum. When the rise in the case of food articles has been 44 per cent. or 11 per cent. per annum, the rise in the case of foodgrains has been steeper. On the other hand, the national income has not risen that way. It has been stagnant. If you take the national income from 1954 to 1957, there has been a rise of only 5.4 per cent. So the national income or the income *per capita* has been rather stagnant. The food prices have gone up due to inflationary trends caused by deficit financing also. Therefore, the grinding effect of these two pressures, the inflationary prices and the stagnant income *per capita*, the depressing effect of these two pressures has been very heavy particularly on the middle classes having fixed money incomes. The middle classes are almost being wiped out, and therefore this question requires a very very careful consideration. Unless you stabilise the food prices and the prices of the other commodities—rather those prices will have to be stabilised at a lower figure in order to bring about an all round development—our development plans will fail. Therefore, Sir, this is what I would submit to the new Food Minister who is a bold man and an imaginative one too. Here, we are reminded of the boldness of Rafi Saheb. When the situation was very bad, when there were controls and when there was insistence on the retention of controls, he resisted all that insistence, lifted the controls and brought the food situation to a satisfactory solution. I am sure, Sir, that aspect will also be looked into by the new Food Minister.

Sir, the prevailing food prices, really speaking, are a classic illustration of the danger of State trading and deficit financing generating inflationary trends. Sir, in the year 1958, possibly in May or so, when the Planning Commission desired that the resources should be surveyed and when they found that the resources available were about Rs. 4,260 crores, they had to slash the targets of Rs. 4,800 crores. They made four suggestions and one

[Shri M. C. Shah.]

of them was about State trading in food. As a matter of fact, as we have learned later on, from this State trading in food, the Perspective Division of the Planning Commission thinks that there might be a profit of Rs. 850 crores in the Third Five Year Plan period. Really speaking, this proposal of State trading was not a carefully considered and well thought-out proposition. Even the Prime Minister, when he spoke here perhaps in February or so, said that they had embarked on this policy without having any apparatus, without having any machinery. Now the result we see is a dangerous one for the country. So I think, Sir, that if we find that this policy of State trading in food is not giving the desired results and is rather causing a great hardship particularly to the middle classes with fixed income and to those in the industrial areas, it is time to think about it again and there is nothing to be lost if it is reconsidered, and if we find that it was not a well considered and well thought-out proposition, then it might be dropped if it is necessary in the interests of the economic development of the country.

Now, Sir, there is always the excuse adduced that the rise in food prices is due to development. We had the foreign exchange crisis. Then we had been told that it was because of the crisis of development. Then we had the crisis in internal resources. The same excuse was given. About the food crisis also, they say that because of development the food prices must go high. As a matter of fact if we look at the past history, when the whole of the First Five Year Plan was executed, the national income rose by 3.7 per cent. per annum, and the prices went down by 13 points less than they were prevailing before the start of the First Plan. So, to say that this is so because of the development plans is an economic untruth, and the sooner it is discarded the better it will be for the country.

Again, there is another excuse about hoarding. I do not know whether there is much truth in that. I do not know whether there has been so much hoarding. Now the agro-economic survey says that hoarding is done by farmers. We know the condition of the farmers. There may be very few affluent farmers who can hoard. With this bumper crop of 73.5 million tons and with good rains, hoarding will be disastrous for those farmers if they hold on. Therefore, there is something wrong somewhere and I think it will be better for the new Food Minister to find out the causes of this rise in prices.

Now about the zones also, I am sure that it is not a well thought-out scheme. As a matter of fact in these industrial areas of Bombay and Bengal, price rises are very high. In Bombay the price rise is about 50 per cent. more. So I think it is time to reconsider this question of the zonal system too.

About State trading in food, it was stated by the then Minister, Mr. Jain, when we discussed it here in February—if I remember rightly—that there would be a bumper crop of rice of 31 million tons. It was then estimated that 20 per cent. of it would be marketable surplus which would be purchased by the States on behalf of the Centre. Twenty per cent. of 31 million tons comes to 6 million tons. Instead of 6 million tons the Government have been able to purchase only 5 lakh tons. The production was 73.5 million tons. What they have been able to purchase is only 17 lakh tons—12 lakh tons of wheat and five lakh tons of rice. So this is a very poor show either for the Centre or for the States, and it will be better to drop this scheme as early as possible. Let the movement be free, and I am sure the price will tumble down like anything, as was done by the late Rafi Saheb who was bold and imaginative. I appeal to the new Minister to look into those factors and adopt a bold and imaginative policy in order to alleviate the distress, to relieve

the poor middle class and the lower middle class people and the poor peasants from this distress of having to pay very high food prices. Nearly 70 per cent. of their income goes to the purchase of these food articles and that is intolerable. If this state of things continues, I do not know what will happen to the country.

SHRI HARIHAR PATEL (Orissa): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, it is not only unfortunate, but also a dangerous portent for the economy of our country that even in the twelfth year of our independence, we are discussing about this food shortage. A vital problem as this—and a problem which ought to have been solved within a short period after independence—should not be allowed to drag on for any longer period. We have been receiving lots of literature and big volumes regarding the activities of our Government to increase production. But in spite of all that, I am not convinced that the Government have made sincere efforts to raise production in our country. Whenever there is a question about the unsatisfactory nature of their efforts, the hon. Minister generally mentions about natural calamities and unforeseen events which upset their programmes, which frustrate their achievement of the targets, etc. But it seems to me that such pleas are only admissions of futility of all their schemes and projects and should not be taken recourse to so lightly. The purpose of planning is to eliminate and to minimise the factors of uncertainty as far as possible factors, which affect our economy, which affect production, and it will not do to plead helplessness on the score of unforeseen events. The waning participation of the people in the developmental schemes of our Government should shake them up from their deep slumber. I would request the hon. Minister to be more active, to analyse the past, to determine the present and to project the future on a surer basis. Land is the gift of God, and not a human product, and it is not subject to the rules of

arithmetic. If we are told by the hon. Minister that so much has been invested in land and therefore the yield will automatically follow in arithmetical progression, I think he is doing a wrong thing. We have been told almost in that manner practically till now. Organisation is the most important factor in the field of agricultural production and Government should pay a good deal of attention to this factor. During all these past years—I do not hesitate to say that the Government have failed in the administration of their agricultural policy. If we look into the report of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture for the year 1958-59, we will find that there was a good prospect of crop during that year and so the Report says:

“The various developmental measures for stepping up agricultural production were intensified during the year. Particular mention may be made of the efforts for extension of irrigation facilities, larger use of fertilizers and manures and popularisation of improved seeds and agricultural practices.”

Then, it goes on to say:

“The development of minor irrigation works which yield quicker results at comparatively low cost received considerable emphasis. Particular stress has been laid on effective utilisation of the irrigation potential already created through the construction of field channels, intensification of repairs of old tanks and proper maintenance of the works already in existence.”

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“The initial difficulties in the establishment of seed farms having been overcome, the programme has gathered momentum.”

Sir, if these have really been achieved, why is it that the result has not followed? Why is it that there is no satisfactory increase in the yield? My submission to the hon. Minister is that the report about achievements

[Shri Harihar Patel.]

which is found in these Reports, official files, etc. is not really correct. If he goes to the field and sees things there, he will find that there is a lot of difference between what is stated in the official reports and what is obtaining in the field, and that is the reason why our targets are not being achieved. I have no time to cite instances and therefore I would make this request that the hon. Minister would himself enquire into such reports and find out the truth. Last year also we discussed the food situation and if you look into the speech of the then hon. Food and Agriculture Minister, you can easily see how much the subject of agriculture and food has been neglected. He said:—

“It is true that, so far as major and medium irrigation works are concerned, we have developed a huge potential, but we have not been able to utilise it. In the years 1956-57 and 1957-58, the targets of utilisation were four million acres and the actual utilisation has been 1·7 million acres or, 44·8 per cent. of the target.”

Now, to rectify this state of affairs is the concern of the Irrigation and Power Ministry and the Community Development Ministry—we are told by the Minister of Food and Agriculture. My submission is that the Ministry of Food and Agriculture should not be so much handicapped regarding the subject of agricultural production.

Then we had it from the Prime Minister himself in the Lok Sabha, and I really admire him for his frankness. He said:—

“It was unfortunate that we had not realised the importance of agriculture in our planning. We had not given it a sufficiently important place, and we are now learning it to our cost that our past neglect has been responsible for the stresses and strains in the supply of food.”

There is the realisation of the mistake the Government have committed.

Realisation should lead to resolute action, but I do not know why it is not so in the case of our Prime Minister.

The proper solution of our food problem lies in increasing production. It has been repeatedly said by our Prime Minister as well as the then hon. Minister for Food and Agriculture. But the only result that followed this realisation, we find is in the direction of control of trade in foodgrains, and thus, we came to State trading in foodgrains throughout the country. I am not opposed to State trading in foodgrains but I do not understand how it can achieve equitable distribution and price stabilisation in the way in which it is being worked. The State has entered into the field of trade, pure and simple, like a middleman, without any purpose of serving people's interest. The State remaining only a wholesale trader does not in any way ensure fair distribution at a fair price by private agents. It does not serve the purpose of fair distribution at fair price at all. Rather the State remaining a wholesaler is made use of as a sort of protection for the malpractices of the retailers. In case of complaint by the consumers, the government officials will, almost invariably, side with the agents, for reasons which are common knowledge to all now. In my opinion, it is most necessary that the State should also have its own agencies to distribute the stocks and supplies to the market. Co-operatives can serve this purpose, but there are not a good number of co-operatives in existence, and to make the scheme of State trading in foodgrains a success, it is necessary that co-operatives should crop up in good number in no time. At the same time, Sir, I would also like to say that it is wrong in principle for the State to build up stocks for supply by procurement in the open market only. Procurement in the open market should be resorted to only when there is apprehension of the prices going down below the minimum and becoming unre-

munerative to the producers. The State itself should also engage in production and that can be done by establishing a good number of farms throughout the country. When there is an acute food shortage in the country, there is no reason why the State should not engage itself in production. The State can also procure from the producers straight and for this purpose, as one hon. Member, Shri Khandubhai Desai, has suggested, land revenue could be realised in kind. I do appreciate his intention, but I also foresee some troubles in the measures suggested. Firstly, if that is resorted to, procurement will have to be done from a good number of people, a very great number of whom may offer different varieties of foodgrains as revenue, and this will give rise to collecting and storing difficulties. Secondly, malpractices by way of mixing stones and pebbles with foodgrains by people paying land revenue is also not ruled out.

Thirdly it will be a substitute experiment for an established system and may lead to administrative difficulties. So, Sir, I am inclined to offer an alternative suggestion.

It is admitted by all that increased production is the need of the hour, and nothing should be done which may hinder increase in production. Distribution of land is not an end in itself, but is for increasing production. It is with a view to ensuring increased production and fuller utilisation of our cultivable areas that ceilings, etc. are imposed. Given a little incentive it is admitted that the farmers do produce at a very high rate. Then hon. the Minister for Food and Agriculture, Mr. A. P. Jain, did admit that certain progressive farmers did achieve a yield 3 to 4 times more than others. That being so I give a suggestion, Sir, that Government should take steps to guarantee a certain minimum price for foodgrains for a period of 4 or 5 years as it may be deemed proper . . .

(Time bell rings.)

One minute more, Sir . . . and also announce that exemption from ceilings will be allowed to those farmers who will sell to the Government at the minimum price, at a certain rate for each acre of possession. In that way Government will be able to procure paddy in large quantities from a small number of farmers, I mean, from big farmers on a big scale. So there will be no difficulty in procuring as well as in checking the quality of supply, etc.

I had a lot of other things to say, but as the time at my disposal is limited I resume my seat.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The House will meet at two o'clock instead of at 2.30 P.M.

The House stands adjourned till 2 P.M.

The House then adjourned for lunch at one minute past one of the clock.

The House reassembled after lunch at two of the clock, MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

SHRI P. N. SAPRU (Uttar Pradesh): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, the most important question facing us today is that of food. Food is something which no man can do without. Upon its adequate supply and purity depend the health and vitality of our people. Under-nourished people cannot supply the material for a nation that aspires to achieve a worthwhile standard of living. Rightly, therefore, the common man judges our administration by its ability to supply him food at reasonable prices, that food which he needs to sustain himself and his children. Nothing has discredited our administration more than the failure of our food policy. The Food Minister has taken over courageously this portfolio at a critical time in the history of the food department. He is well known for his vigour and dynamism



[Shri P N Sapru]

and the House would wish him success in his task. I confess Mr Deputy Chairman, that Mr Jain, his predecessor, was well-intentioned and that we were not completely fair to him. He had enormous difficulties, having regard to the fact that he was only responsible for supplies. The distribution was in the hands of the States

The problem of food can be considered from two aspects. The first is the short-term aspect. The second is the long-term aspect. The long-term aspect concerns itself with increasing food supply for our growing population. The short-term food aspect is that of finding solutions for the problem of high prices and fair distribution of food. Food is perhaps available but it is not available at rates which the common man in urban areas—despite the fact that they have got fair price shops—can afford. This hardship, no doubt, has been mitigated to some extent by fair price shops. There is no doubt that even though we had a production of 73 million tons of foodgrains this year, food prices have not gone down. What is the reason for this?

The Governor of the Reserve Bank of India has stated recently that the internal value of the rupee has gone down by 29 per cent. Therefore, to some extent this rise in food prices is due to inflationary pressure. This inflationary pressure should be controlled. It should make us think as to whether the time has not come for us to take stock of our financial policies and revise our policies and the ways and means of financing our plan. Part of this rise is no doubt due to some hoarding or withholding of stocks by traders in foodgrains. What steps have been taken to check this hoarding and profiteering? How many prosecutions were launched and with what effect? How many raids have been made on these hoarders? Why is there laxity in our food administration? What hope is there that in the immediate future things will improve?

The second question concerns itself with long-term planning. By the end of the Third Five Year Plan we should have 100 or 110 million tons, but our population will have increased by that time. We shall have in 1965-66 about 80 million more people. We are, no doubt, making progress in increasing food production, but the rate of increase must be tripled to meet the Third Plan target. This is the view which has been expressed by the Ford Foundation Committee in a report which is of absorbing interest. If India's production increases no faster than the present rate, the gap between supplies and targets will be 28 million tons by 1965-66. No conceivable programme can meet a crisis of this magnitude.

One of the difficulties is the present division, under our Constitution, of food administration into both Central and State spheres. The supply is the business of the Centre. Distribution is the business of the States. The National Food Council acts as a forum for the discussion of these problems. Without impinging upon the autonomy of the States, we cannot direct them to distribute food in a particular way. The Food Minister will have to use all his powers of persuasion with the States to accept common policies. Not an easy task.

I feel opposed to regional or zonal restrictions on the free movement of foodgrains. We are one country . . .

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA Sir, one point . . .

SHRI P N SAPRU Sorry I have got only ten minutes. We are one country. What happens in West Bengal or in Andhra should be of as much concern to us as what happens in Uttar Pradesh or the rest of the country. Certain artificial restrictions due to transport difficulties, shortage of wagons and so on I can understand. But I do not understand why export of food from surplus areas to deficit areas should be restricted on any other ground.

I would like to say a word or two about State trading in foodgrains. I strongly think that the idea of State trading is a good one, it should not be given up. But, I do not think that purchase of food through licensed wholesale dealers, having the position of monopolists, is exactly what is contemplated by State trading. Government must have its machinery and its own officers to purchase directly from the farmer. Then it should distribute the supplies so purchased to retailers. State trading involves controls, building up certain reserve stocks and price stabilisation.

*(Time bell rings)*

Sir, I would like to say one word about co-operative farming. I have not been able to see any valid objection to it. The implementation of co-operative farming which has been blessed even by this Report is being made more and more difficult by the agitation conducted by certain conservative parties. We have heard a great deal about hearth and home, but hearth and home of whom? Of the richer classes and parties? Sir, I believe that co-operation and not competition should be the rule of the future. I would like to ask one question. Why is it not possible for us to treat agriculture as an industry? Let me just explain the point. Let us float certain big joint-stock companies on a co-ownership basis. Let the State own 51 per cent of the shares, 49 per cent being owned by the shareholders themselves. Let there be some limits placed upon the number of shares that a person may have. Let the directors be appointed by these corporations. Their terms of employment should be fixed by direct negotiations between shareholders and the company. Government should have some ultimate powers to intervene in certain specified cases. This is intended not as a substitute but as a supplement to co-operative farming.

Finally Mr Deputy Chairman, I suggest that there should be a brains trust drawn from both intellectuals and people who have experience of

agriculture in rural areas. Let that brains trust advise the Planning Commission on which, I fear, agriculture is not properly represented. Thank you very much.

SHRI T R DEOGIRIKAR (Bombay) Mr Deputy Chairman, the food problem is agitating our country not only for the last few years, but, I may say, for more than 25 years. Sometimes, Sir, the prices rise and a shock is given to the public, and sometimes, there is shortage of food. But by overcoming these difficulties we are not solving the fundamental problem. That fundamental problem is, as we all know, to increase our production. Our production is not sufficient to meet our demands. Our new Food Minister has come. Of course, we welcome him and wish him every success. Let him have some long-term and short-term plans to resolve these difficulties.

Sir personally I feel that the position of our Food Minister is just like a King without his Crown and Sceptre. He has got responsibilities, but he has no powers and no rights. I will explain how it is so. Let us take the question of production. What is our poor Food Minister going to do? Excepting certain lands in the Union territory he has no other lands where he can have some crop-planning or some particular type of planning. He is helpless there.

DR. W S BURLINGAY (Bombay) We have got the entire Planning Commission.

SHRI T R DEOGIRIKAR On which the Food Minister is probably represented. But so far as our production is concerned—from one end of the country to the other—he is quite helpless as he has no lands. Then let us take the question of distribution. What can the Food Minister do? Distribution is entirely in the hands of the States. He is responsible only at crisis—when there is inflation. And that inflation is due to deficit financing resorted to by the Finance Minister in order to make the Plan a success.

[Shri T. R. Deogirikar.]

So, inflation sets in, prices go up, and our Food Minister is victimised. That is the entire difficulty. He has got a team of 14 Ministers of Food in the States. He does not deal directly with the food problem, but he has to deal with it through those 14 State Food Ministers. And those Ministers are responsible only to their Chief Ministers, and not to the Central Food Minister. That is the third difficulty. And the fourth difficulty is that our Food Minister has no control over the growing population which is assuming alarming proportions. So, these are the four difficulties under which our Food Minister is working. He has got full power as regards import of foodgrains, and he must import foodgrains. Otherwise, he cannot meet even the short-term demands of the people. So, that way, Sir, he can exert his influence in importing more and more foodgrains. Let me tell you, Sir, that we have ceased to feel ashamed of importing foodgrains. But the main problem remains untackled. The Food Minister is told by the Planning Commission that if the food problem is not solved, our plans will not succeed. Our plans will not be successful, as we know, unless this essential problem is solved. Thus, Sir, we find that the food problem has become important. I do not see any possibility of the food problem being solved in the near future, let Mr. Patil come there or let anybody else come there. The problem is so very intricate. In the first place, Sir, our morals have been completely shattered. I was just now told that our zonal system had played some havoc. In Madhya Pradesh, for instance, rice is sold for Rs. 9 per maund, and if you go one furlong farther, the price is Rs. 18 per maund. And so much is being earned by way of smuggling. Therefore, Sir, it is necessary to pay attention to these things.

DR. R. P. DUBE (Madhya Pradesh):  
I might tell the speaker that rice is not sold at Rs. 9 per maund. It is paddy

SHRI T. R. DEOGIRIKAR: Well, I stand corrected. I accept my friend's verdict.

Now, Sir, I will enumerate the 14 or 15 attempts which were made to solve the food problem. The first attempt was towards irrigation. Everybody had some hallucinations about irrigation. We thought that we must have a dam, we must have a tube well and a surface well. Now, let us look at the things that are happening in our country. The Chairman of the Central Water and Power Commission has stated that for 15 years from the commencement of any project we should not expect full results. The second attempt is in respect of fertilisers. We were thinking much about the Sindri factory, and the import of fertilisers has not helped us much. Then there was something about compost manure and farm yard manure. Then there was the C.T.O., which is going to be closed very soon. The fourth attempt was to reclaim land. The fifth was in connection with the Japanese method of paddy-growing. The sixth was in respect of community development. The seventh was towards Bhoodan. The eighth was for stopping soil erosion. The ninth was for reclaiming the waterlogged area. The tenth was in respect of bunding. The eleventh was the Grow-More-Food Campaign. The twelfth was for improving seeds—to have better seeds. The thirteenth was in respect of Krishi Pundits and crop competitions. The fourteenth was to send experts to China. So, these were the fourteen attempts that we made. Still, Sir, the problem is not near any solution. We are now making the fifteenth experiment, and that is co-operative farming. Well, I wish all success to that experiment. But the main reason why the food problem is not solved is that there is no proper balancing between the production of food and the growing population. So, unless you make it a point to maintain proper balance as between your growing population and your

production, the problem cannot be solved.

SHRI SHEEL BHADRA YAJEE (Bihar) What is the remedy that you suggest?

SHRI T. R. DEOGIRIKAR: I cannot suggest any remedy. I can suggest only one remedy. Our production must increase. That is the only remedy which I can suggest. Now, Sir, I can tell you what our present position is.

Our growth of population is to the extent of 90 lakhs per year. The *per capita* consumption is 5 maunds. During the ration and control days, Sir, it was 3½ maunds all over India. It was 1¾ maunds in Travancore-Cochin, 5 maunds in Madhya Pradesh. And the all-round average consumption was 3½ maunds. Today it has reached 5 maunds. I would ask the hon. Minister at least to fix the minimum that will be required for *per capita* consumption. That is essential. Production has gone up and it has come to 7 crores and 30 lakhs and still we see there is shortage of food. What should be the consumption has not been fixed. That should be fixed. Nothing of that kind has been done. And there is no surprise because we are injecting so much money in our economy and with it the circulation expanding, the purchasing power of the people is also increasing and therefore, there is no wonder that more food is consumed by the people. Growth of population and more consumption are two important features. Production has come to 7 crores and 30 lakhs. But I am not prepared to believe all these figures. I would straightaway ask Government to show how this figure of 7 crores and 30 lakhs was reached. What are the means by which the production of foodgrains was increased? I am not satisfied on that point and I express my doubts about it. Leaving that aside, Rs. 2500 crores to 3000 crores have been spent for more production and still the problem has not been solved.

I have got one or two constructive suggestions to make to the hon. Minister which he may take into consideration. If he does not take them into consideration now, he will have to take it later on, there is no other alternative open. Take the census figures from the Census Report. We are told very clearly that there is cultivable waste land in our country to the tune of some 10 crore acres. Then take the Government reports. Take the Foodgrains Policy Enquiry Committee's Report and also the last report submitted at Nagpur by the Congress which also says that a survey should be made in India as to how much land is there in the country that can be brought under cultivation. According to these estimates there is an area of 10 crore acres of land in this country. We are potentially rich, but practically we are poor (*Time bell rings*). At the end of the Third Five Year Plan, out of 10 crore acres, try to bring under cultivation at least one crore acres of land. For improvement of land we will require only Rs. 150 crores. In the Third Plan you are going to spend Rs. 10,000 crores and compared to this figure Rs. 150 crores is negligible. So insist on that. At Suratgarh you are making an experiment which is giving you brilliant results. There the production has come to one ton per acre and personally I think we would—whether you resort to mechanised agriculture or not—give employment to the people and bring such land under cultivation for more production. Personally I believe that if there can be co-existence in industry, I don't know why there should not be co-existence in agriculture. There should be government farms. I am not here speaking of experimental farms which are not doing much and which have not done much. But there should be State farms as in Suratgarh so that you can have maximum production. You can have them all over the country.

(*Time bell rings*)

MR DEPUTY CHAIRMAN Your time is over, Mr Deogirikar. Shri Basavapunniah.

SHRI M BASAVAPUNNAIAH (Andhra Pradesh) Mr Deputy Chairman, we are discussing a very important problem here, but the time allotted to me is very short. Anyway, at the very outset I tell the Government very frankly that there is nothing like a food policy for them. During the last twelve years and more, some seven or eight Ministers had handled that portfolio and I must say that each of them meddled with it in some way or the other and has actually created a muddle and today what we are facing is not the question of how to increase food production or how to improve food supply or anything of that kind, but a regular muddle. But the Government does not accept it. Yesterday the Deputy Minister said astounding things, that they had done this and that. These in fact, only indicate their utter complacency. If you like, take the authoritative figures provided by the Audit Department. These show that a sum of about Rs 1,160 crores have been spent on the import of foodgrains during the last ten years, or rather Rs 1,200 crores in round figures. And then they had major irrigation and minor irrigation works, tubewells, land reclamation and such other schemes all undertaken principally with a view to increase the food production and they cost them another Rs 1,000 crores. Another big thing that they took up with a view to increase food production is the abolition of zamindaris and jagirdaris and on this another Rs 600 crores were spent. In all, generally speaking I may say that a sum of about Rs 3,000 crores was directed mainly and principally towards achieving some increase in food production. But where are we now? Are we anywhere near the solution of this problem? There is some sort of improvement in certain respects, according to their figures. These figures say that while we had 12,000 oil engines some ten years back their number has increased some ten times and it is now about 120,000. Electrical pumps they had 8,000 and they have increased seven times and the present number is 55,000. Agricultural tractors have increased from 4,000 to 21,000. Simi-

larily the use of fertilizers has also gone up. I do not fully agree with my hon friend Shri Deogirikar and I feel their use has increased roughly ten times. But in spite of all that, as he pointed out, in spite of these Krishi Pandits and the sending and coming in of delegations and all that and the Japanese method of cultivation and their grow-more food schemes and the annual performances of the Government, where are we now? It is not as if the Food Minister alone has to answer that question. It is the whole policy of the Government that has to be considered. I do not want to divide the fourteen Ministers in the States and the Central Government. They are all responsible. The Central Government is responsible for it. It is no use hiding under the question whether it is under the powers of the Central Government or not, whether it has got powers or not.

Next I come to another matter. I am not prepared to accept the position that there is not enough food in the land. The question is whether we are self-sufficient in the sense that we can cater easily to the needs of all. *Self-sufficiency is there*. In fact there is increase in round figures. There is an increase of 25 million acres in the area under cultivation. Can you deny that? And there is an increase in the average yield of cereals and pulses, 18 million acres is the area under cultivation of these principal food crops. Five million acres are brought under irrigation. The production per acre has also increased. I may take four items, rice, maize, jawar and wheat. During the last five or six years we can see that the average yield per acre has increased by 130 lbs in the case of rice by 100 lbs in the case of maize and 80 lbs in the case of jawar and some 50 lbs in the case of wheat. In spite of that, the food position is like this. Besides these, there has been the annual import of 25 lakh tons. And then they say that everything has been done and still we are helpless because of this growing population. Well these things cannot be challenged and the Government must seriously sit and think out the solution. What

has been done? There is, in this problem, the question of food production and then there is the question of the distribution also. I do not want to say much about production. Have they tackled the question of distribution? I would say they have deliberately ignored this question of distribution. All these years they have been talking of their Five Year Plans, the development schemes, of the Central Government, holding the price-line and so on and so forth. What have they done to implement all that? That is what we have to ask them.

It is not a question of putting forward the plea of a growth in population. This is not how we should look at things. There is the more vital question of the long-term plans and needs. A long-term plan needs more capital for agriculture which the present policy of the Government does not approve of. Actually, agriculture is being deprived of this source. The second aspect of the situation is the human labour and the enthusiasm that is created in agricultural labour for increased production. On this also, there is not much of an encouragement. The poor peasantry is not deriving any benefit by all these developmental activities that are taking place. That is the reason why agricultural labour is not putting heart and soul into this job. Financial capital, we are unable to give and we are also not able to enthuse the human element in this field. I cannot suggest any remedies because it is beyond me.

Distribution, as I said before, is a muddle and is a failure. No effort was made to distribute foodgrains in a serious way. The Deputy Food Minister was making some wonderful observations, some astonishing observations. I have been struggling to find out how and in what way I can express my feelings in regard to that speech of his. I do not know whether I can call it an irresponsible statement. I do not know whether you would permit me to make that remark. I also do not know whether that would be parliamentary.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA Very parliamentary

SHRI M. BASAVAPUNNAIAH I would call it an absolutely irresponsible statement. He said that there has not been any big increase in prices and that whatever increase there has been is not much and that prices have started coming down. He also said that the situation is not so bad as we, the Communists, want to make it out to be. Now, our friend, Mr. Deogirikar is trying to help them by saying that they are helpless. After all, are they helpless to accept the facts that are there before us? Let them take this question up very seriously and answer serious criticisms in a serious way. Has that gentleman been travelling in a train? Has he been standing at a bus stop? Or, has he, after becoming a Deputy Minister, no such opportunities? I travel and it is impossible to take food in any railway station without being pestered and surrounded by hundreds of beggars. You cannot spend five minutes at a bus stand without being surrounded by beggars and yet the Deputy Minister was pleased to say that people are not starving. I asked for statistics in this connection and I got the figure of ten suicides for lack of employment and for lack of food. The Deputy Minister even then says that there has been no starvation death. What is his conception of starvation? Is there any responsibility anywhere to look into such matters? You know the things that are happening and the crimes that are being committed, the suicides that are taking place. All these things are connected with the question of unemployment, with the question of starvation and with the question of high prices of foodgrains. The Deputy Minister—I do not know on what authority—says that there has not been any starvation death. Our friends gave figures relating to a number of places. Let us take the so-called granary of India, Andhra. The Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Mr. Sanjeeva Reddy, while making a speech admitted that the ruling wholesale market price of rice was Rs 28 whereas the fixed price is Rs 18 an increase of ten rupees over the fixed

[Shri M. Basavapunnaiiah.]  
 price. The wholesale prices have a bearing on the general cost of living. More than 80 per cent to 90 per cent of the people are not in a position to purchase in the wholesale market and have naturally to go to the retail market. They buy a seer or two or three and you know, they have to pay Re. 0|14|0, Re. 1|-, Rs. 1|2 and even Rs. 1|4 in the case of superior varieties. For 80 per cent. of the consumers the price is between Rs. 35 to Rs. 40 per maund and so, there is no use hurling the wholesale prices on our face. There is no point in saying that everything is all right and that the trouble is created by the Communist Party. In West Bengal, it is Mr. Bhupesh Gupta who is creating trouble, not the problem of hungry men and women. In Andhra, there is a general strike going on and all workers are demanding the supply of foodgrains at reasonable rates. The Communist Party is not so wonderful as to manufacture a situation wherein it can easily bring out large number of people in demonstration even though there is no hunger or famine. I tell you that it would be a very bad day for you, for your Government and for the country if you start thinking on that line. I do not want to go into this question further.

Well, Sir, this has become an annual affair. In Punjab, last year there was a big and sudden movement. In West Bengal, now thousands of people are going to jail but you say that everything is all right, only the Communists are creating trouble. In Andhra there is trouble. The only real thing is that you do not realise what exactly is going on, you do not know the position in the country. The Communist Party is behaving with the utmost moderation in regard to the food question. Actually, on a number of occasions, people came to us and told us that we have become too mild to tackle this problem and that the Government has allowed things to go on as it is. This is the real grievance of the people. For six years we were going to the people collecting signatures and then going to the Ministers

and the officers concerned to do this or that but nothing was done. I tell you that nothing can move unless the people resort to some form of satyagraha but the difficulty is that even a satyagraha is a big revolution, according to the Government and no such thing can be tolerated. They talk of co-operation and we are prepared to extend to you our hand of co-operation but the only thing is that you should not ask us to non-co-operate with the hungry masses and co-operate with the lethargic Ministries.

Sir, I have made out four points which are very important. The most important of these is the price question. Government is deciding this question in a most unreal way. What is the meaning of Government deciding that Rs. 18 or Rs. 19 will be the price per maund whereas in the open market the quotation is Rs. 30 per maund? On what basis is this price fixed? Actually, the merchants cannot supply at that rate. Where should they plunder to supply rice to you at Rs. 18 per maund? You must allow them this concession of giving to you one-tenth of what they get while allowing the balance of nine-tenth to go into the hands of the profiteers and blackmarketeers. Otherwise, what is the way in which the merchants can meet this problem? We import twentyfive lakh tons of foodgrains every year. Can't you procure or devise ways and means to procure, either by total procurement or total rationing or total price control, whatever be the extreme you decide upon, an additional twentyfive lakh tons? Can't you do this without the State taking over the entire wholesale trade? I do not think the position is such a helpless one as all that, unless they are determined to allow the traders to run away with the profits but give some donation to the party in power whenever it requires it. Unless that be the policy, I cannot accept the contention that it is difficult for us to procure twentyfive lakh tons of foodgrains every year. By this way, we would be able to maintain the price structure.

My amendment is a very simple one. Whatever policy our hon. friend, the Minister, is going to announce within the next few days, it will be without a kingly deprived of the four points that I have mentioned. Whatever policy you decide upon in the coming future, you cannot fundamentally solve the problem and the question of distribution comes to be more emphasized. In my amendment, I have suggested, as a first step, the regulation of prices. This is a question which can be tackled by the co-operation of all. The second point is State trading and procurement by Government. You should move first of all in the way. Let us at least move in stages, piece-meal. Try it in three or four States, not all over India. The third thing is dehoarding of foodgrains. Well, there are hoardes and hoardes and today people owning more than ten to fifteen acres of wet land are hoarding. Can he deny that? Lastly, comes the question of co-operation of all political parties and others at all levels. If they want our co-operation in dehoarding, we are prepared to give all the co-operation but one thing we do not want to do is this: Do not ask us to non-cooperate with the hungry masses and co-operate with the lethargic Ministries. The Communist Party has all along been very helpful and has taken a very helpful attitude. There is no use going behind the facts and saying that there is no problem, that the problem is being created by the Communists and so on. You also put in the plea of the growth in population. This is not the way to look at this problem.

I press my amendment, Sir.

SHRIMATI YASHODA REDDY (Andhra Pradesh): We are having a new Food Minister now and I congratulate him for having accepted this difficult portfolio. Sir, personally I feel that Mr. Jain was not responsible for anything; it was the policies which he had to pursue that were responsible. But I hope this new Minister with his clear thinking, high

originality and great dynamism, will have enough strength to even overrule the Planning Commission and sometimes the Cabinet, and come to have a more realistic approach to this difficult problem.

Sir, this food problem is based on two main points; firstly, the question of production and secondly, the division of control between the States and the Centre. Sir, I feel that so far as this food problem is concerned, though we may need short-term policies, it can never be solved unless it is tackled in the right way and the right way, I feel, is to increase production. No amount of rationing, imports and control—which are short-term policies—will ever reach the crux of the problem. The policy of control gives rise to a sort of growers' resistance. I say growers' resistance because when the producers find that the Government is going to bring in control over the price, what do they say? The producer says, 'I am not getting enough by growing food crops; I will go in for cash crops.' This is the growers' resistance that is developed because of this control.

Now, people say that in spite of food production having been increased, the price of food also is increasing. Of course, if you look at the problem a little more realistically you will find why the price of food is a little higher. Now, have you seen whether the farmer is getting his seed in time and at a reasonable price? Do you see that fertilizer is made available to him in time? Do you ensure that he gets his tools and equipment in time? Nothing is being done for him. The price of the fertilizer which went up abnormally during the Suez Canal crisis has not come down. So when you say that the price of food has gone up, you must realise that his cost of production has also increased. If you are not going to give the farmer all the facilities that he requires, if you are not going to supply him seeds, manure, etc. at reasonable prices, how can he produce food and give it to you at a price



[Shrimati Yashoda Reddy.]  
which you think is reasonable? Of course, the consumers may find it difficult but this is the position. Now, India is mainly an agricultural country and if you do not help the farmers, I do not think we can solve this food problem.

Now, the Planning Commission has said that the success of the national Plan depends on the prices—food prices should not rise. But I say our whole nation depends on this production of food. If the food production is retarded, if you are not going to improve food production, the nation cannot exist and if there is no nation, what is the use of all these Plans? I do not say that we should not advance industrially but what I say is, India being predominantly an agricultural country, agriculture needs to be given the first priority and we should see that the farmer is given all the facilities that he requires for the production of food.

Now, the other day the hon. Food Minister said in the other House that the difficulty is that he procures the food but that the distribution is done by the States. I ask, why should there be this bifurcated functioning? Either have the whole thing in your hand or completely hand it over to the States. I personally feel that the whole thing should be left to the States. You tell the States how much you want to procure and ask them to do it. Why do you want to enter the field? Now, what happens is, it becomes a sort of a brawl between the two dogs, between the Centre and the States, and between the two you do not produce enough food for the masses. These are the two main points I had to make.

Now, coming to Andhra about which none of my hon. friends spoke, it is a peculiar State. Being a surplus State, they say it is not a problem State. It may not be a problem State but it has got many problems about which the hon. Minister at the Centre never

tries to think. Sir, if a little more thought is given to Andhra, I can assure you that Andhra will produce almost all the requirements of India. We have got a surplus of 6 lakh tons but yet the prices do not come down. This is firstly because we do not have a separate zone. Had we had a separate zone, had we had control over the movement of rice going into other deficit States, I am sure we could have given as much rice as the Centre wanted and almost at the price at which the Centre wanted. From Mysore and Kerala—I am sure our friends opposite will appreciate it—not only Government agencies but even private agencies used to come and offer higher prices for rice in Andhra. And human nature being what it is, I do not blame the farmers who gave away all their rice at higher prices. So what I say is, give us a separate zone and tell us the quantity of rice that you want us to procure and the State will, I am sure, procure it for you and procure it for you at whatever price you want. I think the hon. Minister will do well to listen instead of talking to his colleague. I am pointing out that our farmers are feeling great difficulty in getting manure and as I have just been telling, the price of manure which had gone up during the Suez Canal crisis has no come down. I hope the hon. Minister will try to bring down the price of manure and help the farmer in this matter of fertilizers.

Sir, I find sometimes people talk of first things first but sometimes it is beyond me to understand the way in which they talk about high policies touching celestial region—we with our feet on *terra firma* and our faith on the soil we do not understand. They say first things first; but here in Andhra which is an agricultural producing State and you do not give us fertilizers. We have been asking for fertilizers all these days. I can give you statistics but I have no time; now has the hon. Minister patience to listen. Sir, they do not give us even two-thirds of what we want. We sometimes have to get it from the

black market. They should be a little more realistic and do things with a little more imagination and care. Where there is greater demand and where you are going to get immediate results, there you must give fertilizers at the correct time and at correct price and then I can assure you that we can produce any quantity which the Centre wants.

Then there is the question of iron and steel. The other day I was explaining the position to Mr Jain with statistics and figures and he himself was very much amazed that production had gone down so much due to lack of iron and steel. Sir, nearly 18 to 20 projects in Andhra had to be stopped because of lack of iron and steel. They seem to think that iron and steel should always be sent to the industrial areas only. But what about agricultural areas? Agriculturists also depend on iron and steel to a great extent. India is an agricultural country and the first thing that India needs today is—whether industrial advancement is there or not—that agricultural production must be stepped up. We cannot stop thinking about food production. Sir, Mr Jain promised that when the iron and steel position became easy, he would give us a little more of iron and steel and I hope the new Minister will be charitable towards Andhra in this respect.

About reclamations, they say they will give money to buy bulldozers to reclaim land. Now I want to give some figures. In 1957-58 the amount was Rs 14.09 lakhs; in 1958-59 it was Rs 9.8 lakhs and this year it is only Rs 5.3 lakhs. Why? For want of foreign exchange. I do not know; but foreign exchange has become almost an obsession with our Government. For everything they say, foreign exchange. They do not find any difficulty in sending delegations abroad or in sending out experts to study co-operative system and other systems and when they come back, they do nothing. But for genuine needs when we want money for buying bulldozers to reclaim land and

produce better results, they say there is difficulty about foreign exchange. Sir, better results can be brought about quickly with the help of machinery, otherwise it will take some 15 to 16 years. So, I do not understand this penny-wise and pound-foolish policy of the Central Government. Nearly 64 machines in Andhra are lying idle for want of spare parts. Give us money and see whether we do not do justice in the matter of production.

There is another important thing in this connection. Why can't you at least save what is produced? The best districts of Andhra are Kistna and Guntur and they have the highest yield. This time we had floods and they washed away the crops and did huge damage. You talk of so many things, but what is produced, you are not able to save. Therefore, flood relief measures should be given top priority but that is not being done. I do not know whether it is the fault of Andhra or that of the Centre but I hope the hon. Minister will please see that this matter is given the necessary attention.

The last thing I want to say is this. I think my friend, Mr. Deogirikar, very rightly said that no amount of production is going to solve the food problem unless you solved the problem of population control (*Interruption*). Coming from me, it may not be taken seriously, but, Sir, I am very serious about this. Let the hon. Minister have a little more co-ordination and let him see that the population growth is controlled.

Sir, I have one more thing to say. Let the hon. Minister make them feel in the Cabinet that he is the most important Minister, that it is the most important portfolio which he is having. Whether it is foreign exchange or funds from within, let him have it. He must make the Cabinet feel—the Prime Minister also to feel—that this is an important portfolio and I am sure he will do it. Thank you.

SHRI BIBUDHENDRA MISRA (Orissa): Mr. Deputy Chairman, the food problem is not only serious to-day, but it will continue to be so for some more years to come in view of the tremendous rate of the growth of population and also in view of the estimate that by the end of the Third Five Year Plan period there will be 80 million more mouths to feed. The Third Plan is still on the anvil and if the target that is recommended by the Agricultural Production Team sponsored by the Ford Foundation, that is 110 million tons per year, is incorporated in the Third Five Year Plan, it will mean that in the coming seven years, every year the production rate has to be increased by 8.2 per cent. It is a difficult task indeed, considering the background fact that even in this bumper year 1958-59, the country could not reach the target of 4.3 million tons. These experts say that India has the requisite climate to produce and reach this target, that it is not difficult provided the Food Ministry is earnest, provided there is correlation between the different Ministries. I hope that when the new food policy comes out, it will have a new look and that the new food policy will take into consideration all these aspects.

I take this opportunity to speak a few words about the State that I represent, that is Orissa. There is a widespread belief and it is a wrong belief that so far as this year, 1958-59, is concerned, Orissa has a huge surplus, exportable surplus and that in spite of this huge exportable surplus the procurement there has not been satisfactory. As I have already said, this is a wrong notion. It is a myth that Orissa has a huge exportable surplus. Of course, we have a good crop this year, but then it must be seen against the background of the last three years, which were either drought years or flood years. If you take the statistics of the last few years, of exports from Orissa, you will find that in no year the export exceeded 2½ lakh tons of rice.

This seems to be the position in the years 1952, 1953 and 1954. But, since then, the situation has changed a great deal. Now, Bhubaneswar, as the Capital of the State, has come to stay. Rourkela has been established, Hirakud is complete and then there is the demand of the industrial areas like Machkund, Chauduar and Barbil and added to it is the question of population. If all these factors are taken together, I do not think even in this so-called bumper year, considering the export figures of all these years, and taking into consideration these facts also, the figure of export can be more than 2 lakh tons. Against this background it has to be remembered that in spite of the delay on the part of the Government, in fixing the procurement prices and in fixing the policy—generally the procurement starts every year in December and this year it has to start in February due to this delay in policy—Orissa has already exported, if my information is correct, to the tune of 1½ lakh tons of rice. Then, I would point out another difficulty, which the Orissa agriculturists are now facing and that is with regard to the fixation of prices. So far as the fixation of procurement prices is concerned, it will be seen that there has been discrimination, whereby the difference between the neighbouring States would be to the tune of Rs. 5 to Rs. 7 per maund. It will be easily realised that unless there is parity in the fixation of prices, unless there is one settled policy so far as the neighbouring States are concerned, it not only opens the gates for smuggling but it would also affect ultimately the production, inasmuch as the agriculturists will not like to produce rice and will shift to cash crops if they are not paid a fair price. It has been announced times without number by different Food Ministers in this House that they realise the importance of paying the agriculturists a fair price. Fair prices apart, it has also been suggested by the Ford Foundation Expert Team that the floor prices ought to be as an incentive declared before

the harvesting season. Those are the recommendations. Whatever be the fair price, whatever be the amount that is fixed, what is essential is that there should not be any discrimination, at least so far as the neighbouring States are concerned, if the agriculturist is to get a minimum price and if the production level is to be maintained. Then, again, recently there has been a suggestion in some sections of the press by some leading men, and I understand that there was also a question to that effect that the border between the neighbouring States of Orissa and Bengal should be opened, that there should be no restriction so far as rice movement is concerned. That would be a dangerous step so far as Orissa is concerned, because in that case all the rice will be flown to Bengal at a high price and Orissa will be in a state of famine. We are conscious of the national interest and Orissa is willing to play its part, its part in the national game. It is not only for the Food Minister, not only for the Union Cabinet, but also for all those who are interested in the national development to see that in the process Orissa is not annihilated from the map of India. I would request the Minister, when he frames his new policy, to look to it, to have complete figures of the surplus of Orissa, to find out and remove the difficulty that exists in the border States so far as the procurement price is concerned. That alone can help produce more and that alone can help Orissa. With these words, I conclude.

**THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (SHRI S. K. PATIL):** Mr. Deputy Chairman, I am grateful to the House for the very useful and valuable suggestions they have made and also for the confidence they have given me. It is an hour in my life when I take my duties very seriously and, if I may say so, very religiously. I do not look upon the task as one of the many tasks that come to the lot of a Minister. I look upon that responsibility or that task as something where I owe quite a lot to my coun-

try and I shall rise or fall by the opinion which ultimately they will have on my performance. I am deeply touched by the public reaction all over the country to my appointment to this very high office and very complicated office, and if I may say so, not a very coveted office just at the present moment. This has no doubt given me a good deal of confidence and courage. At the same time it has cast on me a heavy responsibility, the weight of which I am beginning to feel already. I can confess, if I may say so, to a feeling of nervousness, when I realise the complications and the vastness of that task. I have neither the claim nor the pretension to this very vital office of Food and Agriculture Minister. I can hardly say that I bring either knowledge or experience to this office of Food and Agriculture Minister. Notwithstanding all these personal handicaps from which I suffer—because I have never done anything in agriculture, I have touched many subjects in my life, but least of all is agriculture, food I have touched in plenty, but I have not been facing distribution to millions of people—I have accepted this responsibility in the fullest belief that I will have the sympathy and good wishes of my countrymen in abundance, both in Parliament and in the country, in facing the challenge our food situation has posed for us. And there I welcome the suggestions made over and over again even by the Communist Members for their co-operation. I would again seek the co-operation of every Member and I am quite sure that it will not be denied.

**SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA:** Mr. Jyoti Basu has already requested you to go to Calcutta and to intervene personally in the matter.

**SHRI S. K. PATIL:** I shall refer to it when I come to the speech of my friend, Shri Bhupesh Gupta. Now, many Members have made reference to the new food policy that the Food Minister is supposed to be formulating. If I may say so, in all humility, I have been Food Minister only for

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the past four or five days and to expect me to formulate a new policy, I think, there could be no more irresponsible act which could be expected of me. I have got to study. I have got to consider carefully many problems. I have been getting advice during the last four days. At least 400 people must have given me advice. It is very valuable advice sometimes, but very often it is so conflicting that one does not know which is right and which is wrong. Therefore, if I take a little time, in formulating the final policy of the Government of India, I hope the House will excuse me.

Besides, this is a question 3 P.M. which largely pertains to the

States of the country, because under the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution agricultural production is entirely a subject of the States. It is not even a concurrent subject. Concurrence comes in when we come to things like marketing of the food, research and thing like that, and that is why sometimes we are there. I am not merely saying so in order to get away from the responsibility. That is not my idea, but unless I induce the States' Food Ministers and Chief Ministers to go the whole hog with me, it is impossible for me, even if I formulate the policy, to implement that policy, effectively at that.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: May I draw his attention to two provisions of the Constitution, articles 73 and 256? I consulted very eminent lawyers. He has got ample powers under these two provisions with regard to matters of distribution, production, marketing and so on. I would request him to apply these two articles.

SHRI S. K. PATIL: I would humbly suggest to my hon. friend that I have got the powers of a giant but it would be foolish on my part to use them as a giant. Therefore I have got to wait. In the Government of India we have called a meeting of the National Development Council to which all the Food Ministers will come. We have

specially invited them and all the Chief Ministers who are members of the National Development Council, so that in company with them, in co-operation with them, we shall think of a new policy, both long-range and short-range, to which references have been made, and finally decide at any rate the short-range policy which is very urgent at the moment, and thereby lay the foundation of a long-range policy too.

Food problem, as has been suggested by every Member, is a national problem. Nobody denies that. Even my Communist friends do not deny that it is a national problem. It is a crime, if I may use that harsh expression, to use it for political or party ends. I am not suggesting that it is being used for that purpose, but sometimes there is a temptation to think that every misfortune of a Government is a fortune of the Opposition. Let us leave other misfortunes aside, but so far as the food problem is concerned, my humble appeal is that it should be treated as a national problem. And no party whether it is in the Opposition or not—to-morrow I may be in the Opposition, but it is none of my business to use the food problem as a lever so far as my political advantage is concerned. Its use for political ends, if I may say so, aggravates it, and sometimes it is aggravating it.

Now we come to the question of Bengal, incidentally—not that I am referring to that—I was thinking of what it is that I could do that would really alleviate the sufferings of the people in Bengal. If there is anything that the Government of India is not doing and after having done that the situation can be bettered, surely the fault will lie at my door. It is known that I have no experience of the subject. Immediately I became the Food Minister I got in touch with the Bengal Government. I am in constant touch with them. I am asking them as to whether there is anything that I could do so that the position or the

situation in general will improve I may say with the utmost confidence that everything that is possible to be done is being done, and every help that is asked for is being given to the West Bengal Government, so that there should be no question so far as the responsibility of the Government of India in this matter is concerned. I can tell my friends, especially the last speaker, that I am prepared to join hands with anyone and everyone in the solution of this problem, and in that if any Consultative Committees either here or in the States have got to be appointed, they have got to be made effective. I would not even consider that point which was debated yesterday that the Consultative Committees were appointed but for some reasons the Communist friends backed out—may be for good reasons, but I am not going into them. But what might have proved a failure yesterday may prove a success tomorrow. Therefore, I do not go by any prejudice at all, and I give an open promise to the House that provided they are prepared to give me a helping hand, I am always prepared to accept that helping hand so far as the formulation of the food policy is concerned and more so in the implementation of it in the various States. I plead for co-operation and an all-party approach to this very vital problem of food. We are proud to proclaim that India is one nation. This is a good thing. Everybody thinks that after independence we have become a nation. But what does that nation mean? Does it mean some kind of emotionalism, does it mean that when China or somebody else does something which we do not like, then our nationalism gets up and we feel that we are nationalists? What are the ingredients of that nationhood? I am not giving a lecture on that subject, but the point that is at issue just now is this that you can demonstrate your nationhood when a test comes, and if there is crucial test that has to come, it has come just now. Unless everybody in the nation is prepared to share both the fortunes and the misfortunes, surely there is no one nation. It is not sentimentalism of

which I am talking. It must have some kind of manifestation in our actual practice. What do we do? Surely so far as the food problem is concerned, when somebody tells me that this is a surplus State and that is a deficit State and the third is a marginal State, it may be so because every region cannot be self-sufficient in everything. Therefore, the test lies in this that whichever State might be surplus, whichever State might be deficit, unless we are prepared to bring the deficit, the surplus and the middle thing all together and level them up so that the fortunes and the misfortunes of the country could be distributed and shared equally, the problem will remain. If there is more, let us enjoy more; if there is less, let us all suffer and not those only who are in a deficit province. That is exactly the crux of the whole problem and therefore, as I said, we must begin to look at this national problem from this standpoint that our nationhood depends upon this approach that if we have got more, we are the trustees of it, we must share it with those who have not got it. That is exactly, as I understand it in my own humble way, what is one of the ingredients of the nationhood that we have acquired. It is not merely empty nationalism but our readiness to share our fortunes, and more so our misfortunes.

DR W. S. BARNINGAY Then why did you agree to the zonal system?

SHRI S. K. PATIL. I am coming to that. When I am saying these things, I am slowly evolving that and something even more than that. Every part of the country cannot be self-sufficient, if I may say so. For instance, when we talk of food, everybody knows in this House and elsewhere that some of the lucky provinces like Andhra are surplus. The hon. lady said that if permission was given, Andhra would feed the whole of India. It would do that if opportunity was given. I am prepared to give that opportunity and I shall come to her

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when I come to the list of speakers who have made suggestions Andhra is a surplus province, Madhya Pradesh is a surplus province, Orissa is a surplus province and Punjab is a surplus province. There are some provinces which are chronically deficit. I say 'chronically' up till now but they need not remain so. One such province is the one to which I belong, the State of Bombay. Another is the State of Bengal. That is also a deficit province. So also is Kerala. Many like Mysore, U.P. and Rajasthan are marginal—very often plus, sometimes minus, like that. Therefore regionally you cannot have self-sufficiency in food as you would not have self-sufficiency in other things, too. For instance, take cloth. Now, Bombay which is so deficit in food is surely a surplus province so far as cloth is concerned. Supposing the cloth was in short supply, could the people of Bombay or the Bombay Government or anybody from Bombay say that unless everybody is well clad and gets cloth at the minimum price, the textiles that it produces will not be available to anybody else? That is a wrong policy. It does not really fit in with a common nationhood in which we believe. Just as it is the duty of Andhra to share its food with others, so it is the duty of the State of Bombay to share its textiles with others. Take the other things. Take the mineral wealth of India. It is in the north-east. Take oil, take coal; take steel and many other minerals. Now, could we say that because somebody produces coal, the other parts of India will not get it? And here, the nature's arrangement seems to be that a particular region of the country cannot be self-sufficient in all these things. Therefore the moral is, wherever we have got more mineral wealth, more of textiles, more of food, it is our duty to feel that everything belongs to the country, and it has got to be shared by the country equally, if I may say so, without any undue advantage whatsoever to that particular part that was responsible for the sur-

plus of it. I am not giving a threat to any surplus State that they will not eat enough. But what I am saying is this, that we must not be at their mercy, nor should they dictate to us as to what should happen. They are not doing that and surely, they are reasonable enough and I am hoping that I shall be able to induce them to do what is right not only for their State, but for the country also. It is the duty of the surplus States to come to the rescue of the deficit States, as I said. It is their duty and they must do it, and that brings me to the various other problems.

The whole point is that there is nothing wrong about our country's requirements. A little bit of adjustment is required, and that adjustment will be made. It is for a time, transitional, and possibly some time would be necessary in order that we come to the right type of contact in these matters. I am sure we shall come to it; there is no doubt about it.

Then, Sir, take our planning. Our whole planning has been taken on the basis of a nation. Planning has not been taken to because we must put a particular thing in a particular place so that the advantage of it will go to that place. Let me talk—because I can talk about it with some experience—so far as the multi-purpose irrigation projects all over the country are concerned, because I handled that problem for a whole year. The House knows very well—and reference was made to it—that we spend somewhere about a thousand crores of rupees on these multi-purpose projects in various parts of India. Now, you cannot have irrigation anywhere and everywhere. There must be a river. You cannot say that in a mountain somewhere there should be irrigation projects although there may be no water and no river. We spent Rs. 175 crores in building Bhakra which will be completed in a year's time. Have we done that with the intention that the benefit of it will only go to Punjab and to nobody else? We have spent all

that money. Punjab will be responsible for paying that also. I can quite understand it. It is not the question of the money that is taken or not taken. It is for the whole country. Punjab, of course, being so near, is entitled to its benefits. But whatever remains after it, Punjab must lay it open to the whole country to exploit or share along with itself. So also is the case with the D.V.C., the Hirakud and many of these projects. They are not in all parts of the country. There are some unfortunate parts where such projects could not be taken in hand because there are no facilities for irrigation there. We have taken up power projects also and sometimes, power has got to be taken from a distance of four hundred or five hundred miles, because it is not possible to produce power at that particular place. I am giving all these instances to show that the very pattern of our planning is on the basis of nationalism. We create things wherever there are possibilities and it is intended that they should be distributed all over. That also brings with it industry, transport of goods, railways and so on and so forth. Therefore it is a national pattern that we are thinking about. So food also is on a national pattern and must be considered on a national pattern. Unless we do that, we shall be landing ourselves in very great troubles now.

Sir, this Ministry is called the Food and Agriculture Ministry. During the past four or five days I have sat there, I have been thinking how much of it is food and how much of it is agriculture and when I think of it, I find that out of every ten papers that I receive and I have to handle, nine are about food and hardly one is about agriculture. Really speaking, this should have been different. It would have been better if they were different because food is a temporary question. About half the countries in the world have no Food Ministers at all because there are no food problems. Now, you only appoint a Food Minister when there is a food problem;

otherwise, there is no Food Minister at all. When there is really a Minister for Agricultural Production, that is the important function of that Minister, and if it is given to me, I will do everything in my power to see that I become more a Minister of Agricultural Production than a Minister merely for the distribution of food. Only, to avoid the misfortunes of the country is an immediate problem. I know that. It has got to be done. But the immediate has become so all-absorbing and important that really what is exactly vital and essential to the country is a back-number so far as I could see. Our problem is this, and everybody has said that the problem for India is not whether there should be State trading or the zonal system and so on. These are really the short-range palliatives. But it is not a permanent remedy. There are no two things about it. The remedy that is open is more and more production—agricultural production—in this country. If anybody is saying—and if it is his view—that we can develop India's wealth in some other way and that we need not be very anxious to develop agricultural wealth in this country, he is doing immense harm to this country. It is a different matter in England. Nobody there says that England should be self-sufficient in food because they know that it cannot be so there. Their agricultural economy has been based and conducted like this for centuries together. Is there anybody in this country who would say that we can have more of steel, more of oil, and especially industry which can accumulate wealth, out of which you go and buy agricultural food anywhere, in any market? Is it possible? That is a wrong thing, and that is carrying coal to Newcastle. This country can stand fully on its own legs and become self-reliant so far as our food requirements are concerned.

Therefore, as I said, the fundamental thing on which the success of our Plan depends is to make India self-sufficient in food, in agricultural production, as quickly as we can



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 make it. If we made any delay in it, surely, we have not really helped the country in that regard. I remember some years back when I spoke as Irrigation Minister, I made some kind of a suggestion and that I am repeating today. I am not saying that the pattern is wrong or anything. What I am saying is that there should be a close and complete tie-up between the several departments of the Government that look after agricultural production. According to me, there are five departments to look after so far as the agricultural production of this country is concerned. One such thing is my department—the Department of Food and Agriculture. But there is a Department of Agriculture in the State. That must also co-operate and very closely co-operate. There is irrigation. We were talking about irrigation last year and the year before that. In the first five years of the Plan, the only thing that people talked about in this country was that we should have irrigation projects. Now, nobody thinks about them and we have got to remember Bhakra only when sometimes the hoist chamber gets flooded and there is some harm to it. And sometimes we feel that there is Bhakra also. I am saying that because I am very sorry about that, because having spent a thousand crores on our irrigation projects, if we do not get the maximum benefit out of them in the nature or form of added agricultural production, surely, we have not well spent that money—one thousand crores. That is why irrigation comes in. I am not blaming anybody. I want that there should be a complete tie-up. There should be complete unity of purpose so far as these departments are concerned. We must know that after all that is done, every acre that comes under irrigation means so much more food. People are saying that here the produce is half a ton per acre or one ton per acre. But even taking half a ton as the average, we get a tremendous amount of food production developed in this country. Somebody said that there is an opinion that at least for

fifteen years, you do not get the advantage of irrigation. I am not prepared to accept that proposition. Maybe, in some cases, it has taken more than fifteen years. In my opinion, in Andhra it was fifteen years when we had not this Government, but some other Government—fifteen to twenty years—before the irrigation facilities could be advantageously used by the agriculturists of that province. But surely, in modern times when it is possible for us to do those things in a year which took ten years to be done, fifteen years is not the time that we should wait for the production from that irrigated land. Therefore I should say that these three departments along with the Community Projects Administration are vitally interested in this. I am sure that there is some kind of liaison, co-operation, but I only wish it should be the completest co-operation. They must all feel like the limbs of one body. They must act and react together in order that in totality they produce what India needs.

The last but not the least, and the most important is the Planning Commission. There is the Minister of Planning. He is nodding and I am carrying his consent also along with me when I say that the Planning Commission is intended to co-ordinate, to smoothen, matters and so on. I am quite sure they are doing it, but what I am saying is this that they—all these departments—are not supposed to be checks and counter-checks. They are really departments which are supplementary and complementary to one another so that working together in unison they get the basis of the co-operation that is kept in view. I am quite sure that this will be heeded to and it shall be my constant endeavour, while I am the Minister for Food and Agriculture, to see that all these five agencies that are responsible for management—and sometimes mismanagement also—come to work together.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: The hon. the Planning Minister's nodding may

be recorded so that the commitment is on record.

**SHRI S. K. PATIL:** It is not a legal commitment, Mr. Bhupesh Gupta, but a commitment, because, after all, it is a good proposition that I am initiating. I am not saying something which is really repugnant to the interests of the Planning Commission or those of anybody. Food production, this year, they say, is 73·5 million tons, and everybody calls it a bumper crop and a record crop and so on. These adjectives are quite good. But they do not please me. What is bumper about it if in a huge country of 380 millions of population we get 73·5 million tons? It is a good crop no doubt; it is more than last year's—11 million tons more, perhaps 6 or 7 million tons more than the year before that. Therefore in that way call it a record crop. But looking to the land that is under plough, under cultivation, looking to the needs of the country, surely it is neither bumper nor anything record. We have got to have it, but I can say that this 73·5 million tons—it is not and cannot be all rice; it is other cereals also—if you look to the totality of it, I can say this that we are not really deficit for this year in this country. Then where is the wrong? What has gone wrong? We have enough food, but somehow or other it does not go round. It is not a question that we are really in deficit; it is a question of maladjustment so far as our distributive system is concerned, because this is not a distributive system like the canals carrying water; in respect of canals of water there are no tricks; the water runs smoothly its course, where you do not do the distribution and make maladjustments.

Here it is maladjustment and it has to do with persons and personalities, with groups of people, with traders, with businessmen, this that and so on, and when we look to the variety of them we come to the conclusion how very difficult it is to get

a uniform conduct from all of them or any particular variety of them. That is our difficulty. Therefore, the job of the Food Minister or the Agriculture Minister is not to say: "I have got a bumper crop or I have got this crop." People will say: "You may be having any bumper but the prices that we are paying are also bumper, and therefore, the 'bumper crop' cannot be taken as a synonym for the 'bumper price' that we have to pay." Therefore all these things have got to be tied up.

Then also there seems to be an idea in the minds of some people that the prices of things must never rise. The prices of things are bound to rise. Inflationary pressures are going to come—whether they are coming more or less is a different matter. Therefore what used to be the price ten years back or thirty years back cannot be the price today even if there is a bumper crop, even if this crop, instead of being 73·5 million tons, were a double of it, say, 146 or 147 million tons. Even then you cannot prevent, I do not mean this steep rise, but some rise in prices. I shall give you an illustration. Take America. They are producing the largest amount of wheat, such a large quantity that is not necessary for the consumption of the 200 million or 180 million Americans. Even there sometimes they set fire to it; sometimes they destroy it otherwise; sometimes they dispose it of as cattle fodder; sometimes they do nothing about it. Yet the prices are sought to be kept under control, and when I say 'under control' it does not mean that the prices never rise. What I am saying is that in a developing economy, in the kind of the planned thing that we are doing, deficit financing is also responsible. We don't get out of that responsibility. We have knowingly done that because it had got to be done. If by some little rise in food prices or in prices in general for that matter, if we can finish our planning, then we are looking forward to a time, ten years hence,

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fifteen years hence when all the bad effects that we might have possibly created by deficit financing would have been wiped off by the advantages, by whatever we get out of that planning. Therefore, these pressures are always there, and slightly the prices are going to increase, but if it is not slight I at once plead guilty to the charge if the charge is made that it is a phenomenal rise, that the people cannot afford to pay that rise and therefore that rise is not the normal rise, that merely the inflationary pressures have created but a rise which you must account for on some other account and not merely due to deficit financing to which the reference was made by my hon. friend Mr. Bhupesh Gupta. Not joining issue with him I am merely saying that these are the various factors that come into play whereby the prices rise in a very steep manner and they appear to be almost prohibitive as they appear today.

Now, that brings me to some of the very knotty problems that have been posed here and to which, now that I am giving a final reply, I must not simply sit quiet about, because you might say: "Look here. He is a funny Food Minister. He was asked quite a lot but he did not refer to any of the problems which were very difficult." But we are going to try a solution to it.

Reference was made here to one problem of State trading. Now I was asked because there are people here who are either wedded to State trading or opposed to it. They have got set opinions, almost cast iron opinions; they do not change. Whatever ultimately Government might do, the House would be interested in knowing that your Minister is not either wedded to State trading or to the opposite of it. What I mean is this, that State trading has got to be resorted to if ultimately it becomes necessary. If I can do without it I shall be happy to do without it. Why? Because, sometimes—it is not now—

after five years, after ten years or twenty years free economy must come into being. It is not always that a patient can be kept on injections. Therefore the time must come when he must enjoy normal health also. But it is no use saying that I must have State trading or not have State trading. Therefore you will bear with me that it is not a question of the opinion that I have got, whether I am going to formulate a policy in which there shall not be even the last vestige of State trading. Possibly not. For some time, as a short-term problem, somewhere, if it becomes necessary at all if, there is no other way open to me, for a limited period and for a limited objective, it will have to be resorted to. But surely I cannot give a guarantee whether it will permanently live there or it will go. These are political problems. I do not say now that politics and economics in the modern context have become the same thing. Most of our politics today is economics, because we work our political things through economic circumstances and economic events. Therefore those people who say that State trading must be there and that that is the only remedy by which the food situation can really be brought under control are saying something which I cannot understand; I cannot understand whether it is purely economic. I smell there is a lot of politics in it. But I say that I do not swear by it; I do not swear at it. Therefore, not swearing by it and not swearing at it; it remains to me as an instrument. If I want to use it I may use it for a limited period and for a limited purpose, but if I do not want to use it and there is no necessity to use it, it is not to be used simply because it is also a weapon in economics and that under all circumstances it has got to be used. But let us not run away with the idea that your Minister would not use it under any circumstances. I have kept my objective before me. And what is that objective? What is that ideal? The ideal, as was rightly expressed by my hon. friend,

Mr. Sapru, is this, to give to the millions of people of this country adequate food at a reasonable rate. That is the object, if you call it; that is the ideal if you call it. In order to reach that ideal, if it is necessary for me at some stage to use some part of the controls or to use some part of the State trading machinery, surely it will have to be done. But if I can achieve that object without having recourse to it, I shall be a happier man and I shall be able to say that I have resorted to free economy thereby having the law of supply and demand take its normal play in the scheme of things. If that could be done, I shall be very happy indeed. That is so far as State trading is concerned. My hon. friends will agree with me that once you resort to that and that becomes your only weapon, you must look to the logical sequence of it and to the consequences of it. Then you have got to have zones, perhaps not big zones but small zones. One set of zones might perhaps please the surplus States because they will be able to get the food that they have. But you can imagine what will be its repercussions and consequences on the deficit States. You can also see what would be its consequences on the productivity of the land, on the determination or desire of millions of our agriculturists to produce more and more food because, if you really take them into that kind of economy, then possibly it would perhaps act, I am afraid, as a terrible disincentive. That is to be done in rare circumstances. You have got to do it when there is a war or when there are conditions very nearly like that of a war. But then the conception is that as soon as this abnormal situation is over, control over that particular thing would be taken away.

May I tell you one thing? Everybody says that my predecessor, the late Mr. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, was a very able man. No doubt he was an able man—he was a good friend of mine—but he was also a lucky man, because both the years, he was the

Food and Agriculture Minister, nature saw to it that we had abundance of food. He was a very practical man because his ways were unorthodox and unconventional. I may tell you that some of my ways may as well be unorthodox and unconventional. We have to believe in one thing. Apart from all these qualities, his very success came at a time when all these rations and controls were removed, when the whole nation and the people were fed up with it because they had existed for such a long time. Even if the people had to suffer in the other condition—after those controls and rationing had gone—they were prepared to do that, because they thought that all along they were not going to remain, as if they were imprisoned within the four barriers of controls and rationing. What I am telling is this. Once you introduce controls, by all means introduce them, but having introduced them let us not shut our eyes to their logical consequences. The consequences will be the monopoly procurement. You have got to do it in that manner.

Then, the difficulties for the deficit States come up. Whatever it is, they will have to pay higher prices. Many things would have to be done and, perhaps according to me, the most disastrous of all is that we shall take away the incentive from the agriculturists. It is our duty to encourage in him that incentive in every possible manner. If I really function as the Agriculture Minister, it shall be my duty to see that by any means or manner it should be possible for the agriculturist to produce more and more in his own interest and in the larger interest of his country, by any law that I can make, by any zonal systems and other systems that I might introduce, by any amount of conferences that I can have, by any number of experts that I can be sending to all parts of the world and by bringing experts from outside—they are not as much the remedy—as to make that little man behind the plough realise his responsibilities

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and duties so that he can stand four square on his legs and say, "It is my country. I shall give my everything, I shall give my last drop of blood and produce to meet the requirements of my family and millions of my countrymen" That is the work of the agriculturist, and that is why I made a suggestion some time back that the Agriculture portfolio should be generally held in the States by the Chief Ministers. It is not so much that the other Ministers are not functioning properly, but the very psychological change that will come, that is when the Chief Minister looks after the Agricultural portfolio, is something very grand and very great indeed. That is why you find that even sometimes the Prime Minister of the U.S.S.R.—one of the Prime Ministers who, later on, had to go—was in charge of the Agriculture portfolio. And, when he had to go, the charge against him was that he did not mind agriculture as best as he should have done it. I am not quoting this in order to secure a point against anybody. I am merely saying that the practice everywhere in modern administration is that the portfolio of the most vital importance to the people is the food portfolio and that must be taken over by no less a person than the Chief Minister of the State. Therefore, either the Chief Minister or the next best man should really be in charge of this portfolio, it should be people of initiative, people who can take decisions so vital to the millions. Therefore, these are the people who should be entitled to hold this very important and vital portfolio

SHRI RAJENDRA PRATAP SINHA (Bihar): Will my hon friend persuade the Prime Minister to hold this portfolio, Sir?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order, order.

SHRI S. K. PATIL: I would be very glad indeed. At least that would make my headache less and I would

have been very pleased indeed. I am accepting that portfolio in the belief—not that I am a big man—that I can bring my practical mind, my robust common sense, my love for the people, my love for the country and all that to the problem. I may draw from other people whatever I lack, any expert knowledge, which I have not got,—it is too late in life to have all this expert knowledge; there is no place to keep it. What I am conscious of is this. If I can bring all these human qualities to bear upon the agricultural production of this country, I shall be a very happy Minister indeed, because, after all, in absence of food, oil and steel are going to fail. I can tell all these planners, and, with due humility, I can tell the Planning Commission that whatever planning they might be doing—Rs 2,000 crores in the First Five Year Plan, Rs. 4,500 crores in the Second Five Year Plan, and perhaps Rs. 10,000 crores in the Third Plan, totalling somewhere about Rs. 16 to Rs. 17 thousand crores that they will be spending—if at the end of the Third Plan, India's food production does not go up to 110 million or 120 million tons, and if still they have got to depend upon foreign food imports, their Plans have failed. I am not saying that your Plans are unsuccessful or they will not help because you are anxious about it, I am not saying that I am not associating myself with them; I shall be a part of them. What I am telling is this. The yardstick by which the major success of our Plan is to be measured is not how many thousands of crores of rupees we have put in, how much steel, oil and other things we have—they are all very necessary, of very vital importance. I am not detracting from their importance. But one thing like the air in our nostrils, without which we cannot live even for one minute, is the agricultural self-sufficiency of this country, the food self-sufficiency that has got to be achieved under any circumstances and by any means. For how long can you go to the other countries? I am very grateful to the

countries that have helped us in this matter of food—after all, gratefulness is a quality that all people should have, nations particularly. What I am just telling you is: Can you always live on the imported food? Five years, ten years, fifteen years one can understand, but progressively it must be less and less.

I was looking to the figures and I was surprised to find that instead of their becoming less and less, sometimes it is becoming more and more. I find that in the last year we imported somewhere about 3½ million tons. Year before that it was less. I am merely saying that in five, ten or fifteen years we should come to a position when we shall not be dependent. Supposing there is a war tomorrow and it becomes impossible to import. Are we going to drink oil and eat a little bit of steel and remain here? It is impossible. Therefore, what is necessary for human consumption and without which no Plan will succeed, no nation will make progress, apart from anything else, is food and the agricultural production. Therefore, it must be your, mine and everybody's endeavour to see that whatever the short-range policy—it may succeed and I hope it will succeed—the long-range policy is food production and more food production in the country, a policy to which we should devote ourselves with all the earnestness. That is what we need. And, if we do that, surely in five years' time we shall turn the corner and our country will become self-sufficient in food.

The zonal system, I have made a little reference to it. It is impossible for me to give the last word about it for the simple reason, as I said, that this is too early for me. We have called a meeting of the National Development Council. We shall consider the question there. There are two types of it—free market and the zonal system. But the zonal system, as I said, is either as a whole or a zonal system where some of the sur-

plus States are tied with the deficit States. We have got to see which of them is better, which of them leads to the objective that we have got in mind. That is a very intricate question. We have to see whether we should resort to one or the other. But that is not, as I said, an ideal. The ideal, according to me, is that the whole country will be one zone at one time, if not today, tomorrow or after five years. It must be the law of supply and demand, that must really do everything in the country, and not because some hoarders are there, some traders are there or something happening somewhere.

We have created in this country, what is known as, the fear complex. The whole thing has been aggravated or complicated by the fear complexes that we have developed. Our system, as it stands today, is not free from the fear complexes. The producer is afraid that if he does not hoard a little bit, assuming that he fails tomorrow, he is not capable of producing enough, what is going to come and help him. He has seen that day, he has seen worst days. He has seen days when he had nothing to eat. Therefore, it is perfectly natural for him. Because of that fear complex he tries to hoard a little bit. Take a bigger farmer who produces a hundred maunds or two hundred maunds a year. He tries to hoard a little more. The more and more help that you give them will enable them to hoard more and more. That is not bad. You need not be angry because he does a particular thing. But when he understands and realizes the complications and consequences of it, surely he will desist from that action. What I mean is this. There was a time when you were giving some money to these agriculturists from co-operative societies and from the bank. I am told, today you give four times, five times more—crores and crores of rupees—in order that that money should be available when they need it to buy their seeds.

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Having given that money, you created a position in which they were able to help themselves. They could keep their corn for some time because they were not immediately in need of money. Therefore, Sir, one thing led to the other. You wanted self-sufficiency by injecting more and more money into them and by helping them in certain consequences that flowed from that particular act. Sometimes, Sir, we become angry and we say "Oh! It would have been much better if we had not given that money to them." Well, that is not the way to look at these things. Our farmer is also a good citizen of our country. When he understands all these consequences and when that fear complex is removed from his mind, he will certainly react in a manner in which the country wants him to react. And our business is to convince him and induce him to react in a manner which is favourable and which is desirable. That is exactly what has got to be done. The other complex is this: Even a small trader or a small businessman feels "If I am going to be out of my business, I must offer resistance." And that way, Sir, even a small ant offers resistance if you put your foot over it. We must not forget, Sir, that lakhs and millions of small traders and big traders, for centuries together—their fathers and forefathers—have been doing a particular kind of business. And if one fine morning they are asked to vacate those places of business, then naturally they will offer resistance. That way, Sir, even you and I have offered resistance in some cases. And what is the remedy? The remedy is not to get angry with them, but the remedy is to induce them and to convince them about a particular thing. If, however, they become intractable and if nothing can be done without certain punitive measures being applied to them, then by all means apply those punitive measures to them, but do not at least begin with such punitive measures. So, Sir, these are

the fear complexes that are being created everywhere—the wholesale fear complexes. Wherever you go, you will find the whole thing surcharged with some kind of electricity which gives you a shock. You cannot touch anything without some impact of that fear complex. Well, I can assure you that it shall be my duty, with your constructive suggestions available to me, to see that we create a healthy atmosphere in this country and also to see that this fear complex is removed, and let everybody know that the Government is as true as its word and it will really redeem the promises that it makes. And, Sir, we shall make promises only when we are able to redeem them. When we remove these fear complexes, then I am sure all these things that we desire can be achieved.

Then, Sir, I feel that there should be no rigidity in these matters. Many people who are fond of rigidity advise us to be rigid in doing certain things. Of course, Sir, sometimes, this rigidity is better. But when you deal with a mass of people, not only with one class, but with a variety of classes, what is required is goodwill and understanding, and not rigidity. Therefore, Sir, it shall be my duty to avoid rigidity, as far as possible, in many of the things that we shall have to do.

Sir, I shall now come to some of the observations that were made by my friends, if anything, to indicate something, and not because I have any quarrel with them. My friend, Mr. Bhupesh Gupta, asked "Why don't you go to West Bengal? If you go there, the situation can be relieved." I can tell him that if by my going any situation in West Bengal could be relieved, I would not wait here even for one minute, and I shall be there the next minute. But surely, Sir, I have got to do it in consultation and in co-operation with the West Bengal Government. I cannot go there just

like a bull in the China shop and break all the crockery that is kept there.

**SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA** It is surprising that Shri Jyoti Basu who is hunted under the law of preventive detention made a public statement requesting for the hon. Minister's presence, but the State Food Minister or the Chief Minister did not invite him at all. We are shocked to find this sort of thing

**SHRI S. K. PATIL.** Sir, as soon as that statement was made, I got in touch with the Chief Minister of West Bengal who happens to be a very good friend of mine, and I told him that if my presence was necessary, it would be there. But, Sir, what is necessary is not my presence but the presence of rice and the presence of paddy and other things. I may be important, but not so important as the rice and the paddy. Therefore, Sir, I did contact him, and he suggested that he was getting 45 thousand tons of rice and he would like to have 50 thousand tons for September. He said "I want so much paddy. I have already taken 10 thousand tons from Madhya Pradesh, and I want 30 thousand tons more." Well, I said "Have it." I even asked him "is there anything more that I can do so that the situation in Bengal can improve and the people can get their minimum requirements?"

**SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA** Have you suggested to him that there should be some immediate discussion with the leaders of the Famine Resistance Committee, and he should release all the prisoners there?

**SHRI S. K. PATIL:** I could have understood it if the situation had been normal there. I could have suggested that if all these things had not existed there. Of course, this is a temporary thing which will disappear when this agitation dies down and when there is enough food in Bengal. And there is surely going to be enough food in West Bengal, and

the crop in West Bengal is so good that possibly all this will be our past experience. Well, in order to have co-operation from all the parties there, I can go there not once but any number of times—to get co-operation from the people of West Bengal. And, mind you, when I say 'the people of West Bengal', that means all parties, including the party of my friend, Mr. Bhupesh Gupta. And that would be done

Then, Sir, he referred also to the target of 8 million tons at the end of the Second Five Year Plan and the target of 110 million tons at the end of the Third Five Year Plan. All that is true. Merely these targets do not please me. Well, I am no expert myself, and I cannot say what should please me. But the general concept is that unless we increase our food production by about 40 per cent., we shall not be able to have self-sufficiency in food. My definition of 'self-sufficiency' is not either this year's production or the last year's production or even the production of a year before that. We can call ourselves self-sufficient only when, even in the leanest of years, we are able to stand on our legs and when we are able to build up our stocks in our best years. That exactly is the meaning of 'self-sufficiency'. I can assure you that every effort that is possible in all these five departments of the Government that I have mentioned will be made, and co-ordination will be stream-lined so that we can achieve the maximum results

Then, Sir, he also stated that all those high prices were due to certain inflationary pressures. Well, to a large extent, I subscribe to that view. It is correct. But along with it, Sir, there are many other factors that have contributed to this rise in prices.

Then, Sir, Mr. Khandubhai Desai—he is a man of experience, and possibly for some part of his life he has been a farmer too—said that our food policy must be treated as a national



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policy. Well, I feel more strongly and earnestly that it must be so, and it must be treated as our national policy. Although it is a State subject, yet this overall food production in our country is some responsibility as much of the Central Government as of the State Governments. Therefore, it has got to be treated as a national policy. Sir, he also says that this land revenue and this irrigation cess, amounting to Rs. 150 crores, should be collected in kind. To that, Sir, several answers have been given. I have been thinking about these things not now, but for the last 15 or 20 years. This question has been hotly debated not only in this House but even in the State Legislatures—whether that is possible to be done. Well, there is nothing new about it. If you remember aright, for centuries together, when there were no coins, etc., we used to collect this revenue in kind. Therefore, Sir, that 'in kind' revenue is not at all a new thing. Now, we do not do that because money has become so easily available. And there are certain difficulties also, because its qualities and its prices have got to be fixed. You cannot easily fix these qualities and these prices. Then, Sir, somebody suggested that our farmers are so very clever that they can mix stones and other things with their foodgrains and give such foodgrains to the public. Well, I do not think our farmers are so unpatriotic that they will give some kinds of stones for our people to consume. Well, ultimately we have to see whether these prices and qualities can be fixed. Therefore, Sir, I always keep an open mind as to whether this whole thing can be done. Of course, it is a matter for our experts to decide so that our food problem could be solved. And then big reserves should be built with imports from foreign countries. I am not ashamed of that, because it is done with a purpose, because the time will come, say in five or ten years, and sooner than we expect, when we shall not be dependent on imports

and instead, India will be an exporting country as far as food is concerned, and that day will be a red letter day. Until that time, I have to buy the food, by paying money and I shall do it in order to build up our economy at home. I am not asking for it as a sort of beggar, but we pay for the food and if necessary we will have to buy them until such time as we become self-sufficient in the production of food.

Sir, Mr. Jaswant Singh went to the other extreme. I would not have referred to it, but when we come to have opinions we are rather inclined to go to extremes to such an extent as to make a sort of unhappy expressions or observations. He observed that dealers have to pay heavy election subscriptions and therefore, they do all these things, and therefore, they make Congressmen also pay for it because they have to cover the subscriptions. But after all, the voters of the Congress have not remained so blind that they will go on paying for anything because the elections of the Congress have got to be run. I can understand if about a few unfortunate people like me who have got to run elections and to take a very important part Mr. Bhupesh Gupta and Mr. Jaswant Singh think that way, but it was an uncharitable expression to say that it was all due to this tendency on the part of the traders that they should make as much money as possible so that they may be able to pay the Congress. I wish it were possible to loot all the money that they make. I am merely referring to it, Sir, because such a remark openly made should not go without being challenged.

Mr. Shiva Rao in his balanced speech made certain important suggestions. Firstly, he doubted the statistics and asked whether we have got 73.5 million tons of foodgrains and if so how did we make it? Others also doubted these statistics. I may tell them—not that I am quite certain

of these figures—"If you doubt the present statistics, then the statistics of last year also should be doubted, because all these statistics are made in the same manner." The statistics samples are spread out and we see to it that we reduce to the minimum percentage the element of doubt. The thing has got to be examined. They are examined by gallop polls and it is not everybody that gets an invitation to send a reply. They have allotted or apportioned the thing in such a manner that all sections of the people are taken in and if an actual poll is taken, there will hardly be a difference of two per cent. between these figures and the actuals. Statistics are of that kind. You cannot go and take the physical weight or measure of the produce or everybody's crop. You have got to take samples. But the samples should be widespread and varied and in our schemes the conditions are sufficiently wide and they are such that the average that we get will ultimately be the average that we would have got if physical measurements had been taken. This is exactly how the statistics are made. I shall go into that problem, but for our purposes today, these figures are not wrong, for the simple reason that in the same manner in which the present statistics have been arrived at, the other statistics have also been arrived at. Therefore, there should not be any doubt or feeling that these figures have been boosted in order that we might show a kind of bumper or record crop so as to assuage the feelings of the people. Nothing of that kind. The hon. Member also suggested the development of fisheries. That we are doing. I do not know what all the Government is doing in this connection, but I know many things are being done and I was myself connected for a number of years with fishery, not only as a fish eater which I am in my humble capacity, but otherwise also, because I believe it is a wealth of the nation and it has got to be done. I was connected with the biggest fishing companies in India before I became

a Minister—I cannot be connected with any now. But I wish them well, because that means more and more wealth, fish is wealth. My Deputy Minister here also knows about it because he is a specialist in poultry, fisheries and things of that description, and to the extent we achieve success in these lines, we definitely reduce the pressure on other food items and the problem will grow less. Therefore, this has got to be done.

So also there are the irrigation works to which I have made a reference.

My hon. friend Mr. Avinashilingam Chettiar also made a very good speech in which he made many constructive suggestions. More and more food should be there and on that everybody agrees and for that there should be incentives provided. There must even be remissions etc so that farmers may be induced to produce more food. There should be such incentives like good prices, remission of taxes and there should be a host of them. I will go to the extent of saying that even if there be a loss, say for a period of ten years, we should do these things in order to create this incentive in the farmers so that they may become food conscious and thus produce more. We shall produce ten times this quantity if every farmer becomes food conscious. That is the remedy. I shall welcome all suggestions from any part of the House and even from people outside on such schemes, schemes to create this food consciousness and this incentive, say by good prices and so many other things, remission of taxes and other things, in order that the farmer may feel that he has enough incentive to produce more. I shall be always ready to consider them and Government will not mind if they have to spend on this work because it will be good investment and ultimately the dividends will be rich indeed. Therefore, that also will be done.

As was pointed out—and it is a truism—in our land there is wastage

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and it is even more, in its totality, than the shortage, wastage due to insects, pests, rats and things of that description. And also we have no silos as they have in some countries like Africa, which are not supposed to be more advanced than we are. There, in every little place they have their silos where the food is well preserved sometimes for two or three years. And through wastage we lose some 5 to 10 per cent, and our deficit is not as high as 5 to 10 per cent. After all, it is only some 2½ million tons out of a total of 73.5 million tons which comes to somewhere less than even 5 per cent. Money spent on avoiding wastage will be money well spent, for we will stop this huge wastage and along with that this shortage also will be stopped.

Mr. Shah also referred to inflationary tendencies and he gave good reasons for these inflationary tendencies. On the one hand our national income has remained almost stationary or moved a little bit, and hon. Members know that with a little inflation prices rise. But we have to prevent big rises. At the same time, we cannot go to the extent that they go in America, for instance, where sometimes they use very unorthodox methods. Sometimes they burn their wheat or other crops or throw them away somewhere in order that the prices may not be affected. We cannot do that in this country. But whatever is possible to be done, will actually be done and we have got to do something in such a manner that although there is a little rise in the circumstances, it is not beyond control and does not become prohibitive to the millions of our countrymen.

Sir, I think I have almost answered all the points. So far as the stock position is concerned, we have done everything in our power to see that we maintain enough stocks. This year has taught us a new lesson and that lesson is this. We thought that with a record production of 73.5

million tons, possibly, we need not have a big stock. But we have now learnt that even in the best of years, we require stocks, because these stocks are a reminder to the people and every man will know that if anything goes wrong then these stocks will be rushed in and matters set right. So for some ten years or so, we must have abundant stocks so that our economy does not really go out of gear and if anything has to be done in that direction, it will be my duty to do so.

Mr. Sapru also referred to the failure of our food policy. He referred to difficulties which will have to be surmounted. He also suggested some very important things, that food should be treated as an industry, that there should be some kind of a trust or company, and he gave some details, that a brain trust should be created. Now, this question of a brain trust in another manner appeals to me very much. Years ago, when I was in the United States, when I had no idea whatsoever that one day I was going to be the Food Minister of the Government of India, I was studying a few things with the farmers of California and there I could see the enormous amount of literature and other methods of propaganda that they used. All kinds of media they used in order to develop the farming habit, or as they called it, the "farming skill." They call it the programme of the four H's—the heart, the head, the hand and . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: Health.

SHRI S. K. PATIL: Yes, I think health. It is not a purely agricultural programme. To this programme the whole propaganda system was hooked up. The whole broadcasting system was hooked up in the U.S.A. just to bring the supremacy of agriculture before the people. Even the ordinary man, Mr. Joe, or Mr. Smith, whoever has done something in the matter of production in his farm will be brought and asked to broadcast and he will

give his knowledge to other farmers, in his own farmer's language he will talk to other farmers and tell them what exactly he did. And this became very important and popular. The result of it was that knowledge that was there with a few farmers was disseminated immediately and within twenty-four hours, all over the land, and everybody became the possessor of that knowledge.

4 P.M.

If there is a pest, sometimes it is destroyed, but if the other farmers do not know how to destroy it, immediately that knowledge is fed to them, so much so I do not know how many millions and millions of dollars are spent on this kind of propaganda. This results in the farmers ultimately knowing what is best in their interests so that the pests are not only destroyed but better and better crops, healthier crops, are brought forth. If anything can be done in that direction so that our farmers are also brought into their own, I shall not hesitate to do it. The farmers should not feel that they are the last rung of the ladder. If they form the last rung of the ladder, then it is the strongest rung of the ladder on which the whole ladder will stand and, therefore they form the base of the economy of this country. Agricultural economy is the very basis of this great country which we have sustained at a heavy cost and we intend spending enormous sums by the end of the Third Plan. This has to be done and it shall be my pleasant duty to see that it is done, if I may say so, with your co-operation when I take this in my hands soon.

Mr Deogirikar referred to the rise in population and he rightly said that over that aspect I have no control. Therefore I cannot do anything but it is not as if the increase is as much as ninety lakhs. It may be 1.8 or 2 not more and certainly not ninety lakhs. He perhaps was looking to the end of the Third Year Plan when the population figure may be increased by the figure mentioned by him but it

is a thing over which we have no control. He said so many other things, for instance, he mentioned that we have got very many experts and he named them one after the other and the number came nearly to fifteen and the sixteenth was suggested by somebody else, the water diviner, the Pan Maharaj or some one of that description. There seems to be some tendency and also a kind of cynicism that has really overtaken our Members. I agree that it is not that India has no knowledge and that, therefore, we have got to import from outside but there is something in extraneous knowledge also. I have been Irrigation Minister and I would say that we possess in this country some of the most talented irrigation engineers, engineers about whom this country can be proud any civilised society can be proud but there are other engineers also. Sometimes our engineers also go and have a check-up of other plans. It is good because knowledge increases and engineers may become even more self-confident than they are. In that manner if you get an expert here or there it is not bad. Nowhere has it been said, just because we send a few men to China or Japan, that the thing there is something of a heaven which we should bring to India and transplant here. That is not the real thing. I can tell you that the land is the hardest mistress to please. It is not something that you can monkey with or toy with. It will never allow you to toy with and it is very conscious of its right. I do not know whether it is animate or inanimate but you have got to respect the land and you have got to feed the land. We cannot bring here the same conditions as in China but surely there are some things which may be common. Sometimes, we send people to America not because their methods could be copied but because it is possible for us to improve our methods by the exchange of people here and there. That we do and nothing beyond. I do not think that we are accepting those methods. Even now we have seen that even long before we started using those methods,

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those very methods have been condemned in China because there has been a shortfall in production and they have found out that the method they had adopted was not the right method and that it should be improved. Maybe it is good or bad; I am not criticising that method but what I am saying is that if we can derive some benefit, surely we can do so.

Mr. Deputy Chairman, I have nothing more worthwhile to add. I merely say this, as I began, that I have not any new policy, any new change. I have not even gained that knowledge and experience which many Members in this House possess but I have one thing I have faith and, with that self-confidence, claim that if it is for us that this challenge must be met, we shall meet that challenge. There is no challenge in India that cannot be met. People cannot frighten me. After all, what is a single individual? Whether he swims or sinks or whether anything happens to him is not a thing of any consequence whatsoever. What is of utmost consequence to this country is that the food policy of this country must not fail. It must succeed. If it fails, then everything along with it goes down. Therefore, it shall be my constant endeavour to do everything in my power, with your co-operation, accepting the constructive suggestions from whatever quarter they come, whether they are unconventional or unorthodox methods, to have a food policy which would be a truly healthy national food policy for having adopted which we shall not at the end be a target of attack or a laughing stock of the world but of which we shall be proud, proud both of our food policy and the country of which we share all the fortunes and the misfortunes.

SHRI D P SINGH (Bihar) I did not want to interrupt the hon. Minister while he was making a very good speech but may I suggest that he should not look in all directions while speaking?

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA. Mr. Deputy Chairman, we have heard a fairly powerful speech and the hon. Minister has ended his speech with a note of challenge. I do agree, Sir, that the challenge has to be met, and it must be met on the policy front. It will be seen how the hon. Minister undertakes the fight for the correct type of policies and for abandoning the discredited policy of the Government in the field of food.

Now, Sir, it is not possible for me to say very much on the subject within the fifteen minutes at my disposal although I am supposed to reply to the debate this time. I shall, however, confine myself to the problems of West Bengal because Dr. Nalinaksha Dutt and Mr. Thomas, the Deputy Minister of Food, devoted their speeches entirely to the West Bengal problems. As for Dr. Dutt, I am sorry that he let down the people of West Bengal. Perhaps he was speaking on a brief prepared for him by his friends in the West Bengal Government. I do not blame him. As for our friend, Mr. Thomas, we have known, Sir, of doubting Thomases but now I find that we have a falsifying Thomas in the Treasury Benches. What Mr. Thomas gave us was a misleading picture of the situation in West Bengal. The fact that eight thousand people have gone to jail in their legitimate demand for food should convince the House of the urgency of the situation. I do not know how many arrests are taking place today, but by yesterday eight thousand people had gone to jail. There is a mass upsurge behind this although this mass upsurge for reasons best known to others was not blessed by the Prime Minister.

Now, the problem of West Bengal is one of production and distribution. A heavy deficit is there and even by meeting the entire deficit, it is not possible to help West Bengal out of this impasse, a situation which has been experienced for the last two years. According to the Central Government, the Centre gave in the years 1957 and 1958 what the West Bengal Government wanted but even so the situation remains what it was and has

even become worse. Therefore, Sir, we must find an answer as to why the situation is so bad. Nothing has been done by the West Bengal Government, despite this heavy deficit, to increase production. On the contrary, that Government has not even distributed the land in its hands, about 1,25,000 acres of land, to the agricultural labourers and the poor peasants and *mala fide* transfers have not been stopped with the result that the poor peasants suffer. Fertilisers are being distributed to the friends of the Food Minister. Nobody knows where fertilisers go. Everybody talks of fertilisers going to the blackmarketeers; they do not go to the peasants for whom they are meant.

Sir, I can say various other things in this connection. So on the production front we remain where we were and we are today told that the deficit has gone up to 15 lakh tons. Why is that so? I tell you that the West Bengal Food Ministry has become a festering cesspool of corruption and malpractices. Ask any ten men in the street at random who is responsible for the food crisis in West Bengal; the inevitable answer will be Mr. Prafulla Sen. Do not make it a party issue. You ask any ten men—you go to Calcutta—at random and ten out of ten will say this thing and yet even after giving resignation this gentleman remains in office. I would like to ask him to impress upon Dr. B. C. Roy to get rid of the State Food Minister. He can only advise the Chief Minister. It will be to the good of the people of Bengal and it will also help the situation.

Now, distribution is a very very important thing. I do not believe that the Centre has not got power; under article 73 of the Constitution the executive jurisdiction of the Centre extends to the States in matters in regard to which we can pass legislation. We have passed the Essential Commodities Act. Executive jurisdiction is also there under article 256. They can give directions to the States to comply with the policies of the Central Government. Therefore, he is in a posi-

tion to act. I therefore suggest that the Central Food Minister should hold an enquiry into the Food Department of West Bengal to find out as to why this crisis has come about and who has been responsible for creating this crisis. How is it, despite meeting the deficit, the people of Bengal suffered year after year and how their agony and misery mounted every year? It should be found out in order to get a proper type of solution. He can do so. I stress the importance of an enquiry by the Central Ministry. You have got the constitutional power to do it. The Law Minister is here and if he thinks I am wrong, he can get up and say

Then about the system of distribution, it permeates with corruption; every pore of the mechanism permeates with corruption. Here I have got a bunch of notifications which Shri Siddhartha Ray has sent to me. He was a former Minister. Here are 57 notifications, I have prepared a list of these 57 notifications for the hon. Minister. I am passing it on to him and he will see from these that contradictory orders were issued, one order cancelling another, one order modifying another. That is how things went on. There was a complete chaos and only there was a method in this whole business and the method was that all friends of the Food Minister, profiteers and hoarders, prospered all right, come what may to the people of Bengal. I hope this list will be passed on to him and I shall lay a copy of the list on the Table of the House. All these are official orders, not mine. Then orders were issued by the West Bengal Food Minister in order to amend the orders of the Central Government by using the power of delegation of the Central Government. There is here documented evidence for all that and you can look into them.

Now there were many systems. First, there was what was called the "handling system". Profiteers and hoarders were allowed to handle food-grains and they made a mess of it. Such firms as Sukumar Dutt and Co.,

[Shri Bhupesh Gupta.]

P. S. Nepal Dutt etc. were given licences for this kind of handling. An enquiry was started against one of them—Messrs. Sukumar Dutt and Co.—and the Food Minister abandoned that enquiry. Then came the permit system. Here I have got the West Bengal Food Enquiry Committee Report consisting of 7 members, all Congress M.L.Cs. and M.L.As, presided over by a Deputy Minister—now Cabinet Minister—Mr. Tarun Kanti Ghosh. What does it say? If you like, you can go through it. The Report was submitted last year in August to the Chief Minister. It says that permits were issued to the rice mills of individual friends of the Food Minister ignoring the claims of others. The Ministry were supposed to issue such permits. Permits were issued in one district, in certain areas but not in others, with a view to helping the hoarders and profiteers. That was how it was done and when the Central Government insisted that this should be done away with, even so the permit system went on. This is what they say here and it is Congressmen who say that, not me. Sir, permits had been issued in violation of the accepted and established rule, in violation of Government orders, in violation of Government regulations. Am I to be blamed for it? Will you call it political propoganda? Not one Communist was there. I can tell you no one from the Opposition was there. This is how the position became precarious.

Then, Sir, what happened? One favourite rice mill—Guha Mills—became prosperous: they were allowed to take away foodgrains. Rules were waived in their favour and rice went out of the market. Another firm, B. K. Roy Choudhury and Co.—they got permits and became multi-millionaires—all friends of the Food Minister. Nobody bothers about it. When we made allegations in the other House about the L.I.C. deal, the Chagla Enquiry Commission came into existence. I do not know why, when these things have been said by the Congressmen themselves, there should not

be an enquiry under the Commission of Enquiry Act on the initiative of the Central Government to look into the dealings and affairs of the Food Ministry of West Bengal. I put that question and I put it in all seriousness. Go into this matter and satisfy yourself. Do not satisfy me. See what has happened and what is happening. It is very very important.

Then developed the system of licensing of godowns. Up to 300 maunds one can store in any godown without having to take out any licence. Now, hoarders may choose 25 godowns, stock the foodgrains in them and they do not account to the Government. And that system continues.

Then there is the system of retailers not having to submit in their returns the information as to where they got their stocks from. Because if you submit that information, you will know where the stocks are. The Central Government, it seems, requested the State Government that there should be a proper licensing of godowns and the retailers should also be made to disclose the source of their supplies but the West Bengal Government never accepted it. The result was profiteering and black-marketing on a large scale. These things have to be gone into.

Again you will find an interesting thing. Dr. Roy day before yesterday made a statement. He says that 13 lakh families having more than four acres of land have surplus stocks. According to the experts, these are the people who hold back the stocks. Sir, agriculturists and poor peasants are now accused of hoarding. Exactly this was what used to be said at the time of the Muslim League Ministry. Ispahanis used to say this; the Muslim League Ministry used to say this. The Famine Enquiry Committee when I went there as a representative of the Communist Party, rejected this thesis. And you will find they made the hoarders and profiteers responsible for the famine of 1943 in West Bengal. Sir, here in this Report, the Congressmen themselves have

said that the benefit of any increase in food prices is enjoyed mainly by the millowners, aratdars, traders and speculators. This is what they have said. There is a contradictory statement here Dr. Roy says one thing and the Committee say another thing. This is how contradictory statements are being made. They are in a complete chaos, I can tell you. They have made a mess of the whole thing and have built a paradise for hoarders and profiteers in West Bengal and they have made it a hell for the people of West Bengal. What are we to do? Are we to fight all the time? Sir, it is not an agitation. It is a Statewide national upsurge that is going on in West Bengal. We do not want it. We want to settle down but we want fulfilment of our demands. Therefore, Sir, in this connection you should consider some of our demands.

Firstly, Food Advisory Committee. Mr. Prafulla Sen would not have a Food Advisory Committee

MR DEPUTY CHAIRMAN Your time is over.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA I have got a few minutes left I did not start at

MR DEPUTY CHAIRMAN. You started at 4-05

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: The interruption was there and I saw my watch when I started. Anyway, do not quarrel over that.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN. You must wind up

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Yes; I am winding up

Now, the position is this. The Food Advisory Committees should be there. Co-operation should be sought through proper Food Advisory Committees at all levels—all-parties committees. We have offered our co-operation but Mr. Sen will not accept it. Because it comes in the way of his business. Then, he has a big business in food,

I can tell you. In the State Advisory Committee, the Opposition Members, Mr. Jyoti Basu and others, had to resign from it, because he wanted to make it a farce. We do not believe in participating in a farce

Then, Sir, extension of modified rationing to all areas should be guaranteed and we demand that modified rationing should embrace all categories A and B, and rice should be supplied at the rate of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  seers at Rs. 17/8/- per maund plus one seer wheat. That should be done. There should be procurement of 5 lakh tons of foodgrains from the rice mills and otherwise. Internal procurement is essential. Dr. Roy and Mr. Sen have given up these things, especially Mr. Sen, because he would not like to trouble his friends. Then, Sir, adequate Central assistance should be given. Three crores of rupees at least should be immediately sent for giving loans and other assistance to needy people. Introduction of test relief work should be undertaken on a large scale. Distribution of gratuitous relief is also essential. Then, Sir, immediate disbursement of sufficient agricultural loans, etc. is also very essential, and what is more, anti-hoarding drive. This is the crux of the problem. We do maintain, no matter what that Food Minister has said, that there is profiteering and hoarding, thanks to the Food Minister, and we want to disgorge those stockists. The moment we started the movement, some stocks started coming into the market, because the impact of the movement was there. We have been told that the crop is coming and, therefore, the price is falling. It is not at all so. The harvest will come two months after. Prices are falling because of the anti-hoarding movement. Now, these are some of the suggestions that we have been making from time to time. Are they reasonable or unreasonable suggestions?

MR DEPUTY CHAIRMAN. That will do

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA. Therefore, I would appeal to the Central Government that they should take



[Shri Bhupesh Gupta.] initiative in this matter and take the matter out of the hands of the Food Minister in whom the people have not the slightest confidence. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and the Congress Parliamentary Board advised us that we should do this thing and that thing. Why can't he advise the Chief Minister of West Bengal that he should get rid of that gentleman, Mr. Profulla Sen, who is responsible first and foremost for this man-made famine in our State. How long are we to suffer—I ask you. Hon. Members must realise . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That will do, Mr. Gupta.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: . . . that the people are struggling there.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order, order.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Therefore, I say that he should not wait for being invited by the Chief Minister. Mr. Profulla Sen would never like him to be there. I say that you should go on your own, proceed there, take the first available plane, reach there and land there in the Food Ministry. Clear them, that cesspool of corruption, as I have put and initiate a new policy, a new method. Three suggestions only I make. One, release all political prisoners, arrested persons in connection with the food movement. Two, start discussion with the leaders of the Famine Resistance Committee, who are leading this movement. Three, formulate a proper policy in consultation with them. Give rice to Bengal as much as they want, as much as requires to be imported. What we want is a change of policy and the removal of the Food Minister of West Bengal, who has no right to exist, who has forfeited the right to exist. Will the Congress Party . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please sit down, Mr. Gupta. You raised the debate on the Food Situation in the country and you spoke nothing except about Bengal.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Earlier I spoke . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order, order. I am putting the amendment to the House. The question is:

"That at the end of the Motion the following be added, namely:—

'and having considered the same this House is of the opinion that Government should initiate consultations with the representatives of all parties to bring about drastic changes in the policies of Government and the administration of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture with special reference to such matters as (1) regulation of prices (2) State Trading and procurement by Government (3) dehoarding of foodgrains and distribution at cheaper prices to the consumers and (4) co-operation of all political parties and others at all levels.'

The motion was negatived.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The discussion is concluded. We will go to the next item, Legislative Business.

#### THE DOWRY PROHIBITION BILL 1959—continued

SHRI P. A. SOLOMON (Kerala): Mr. Deputy Chairman, the other day I had expressed my intention to support this Bill. But I do not think the dowry system can be completely eradicated only by this measure. Social education and propaganda among the people are equally important in the efforts to uproot this social evil. Yet, I do not think it is "putting the cart before the horse", as stated by the hon. Member, Dr. A. N. Bose, the other day about this measure. I would say now the time is overdue with respect to such an enactment, especially an enactment by the Centre, because social education as well as legislative measures