

COUNCIL OF STATES

Friday, 12th December 1952

The Council met at a quarter to eleven of the clock, Mr. CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR PLANNING & IRRIGATION AND POWER (SHRI J. S. L. HATHI) : Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Report of the Technical (Khosla) Committee for the optimum utilization of the Krishna and Godavari Waters together with—

- (i) the comments of the Governments of Madras and Hyderabad on the recommendations of the Committee ; and
- (ii) the minutes of a Conference held on the 8th December 1952 between the Planning Commission and the representatives of the Governments of Madras and Hyderabad to further consider these recommendations. [Placed in Library. See No. IV M.4 (33).]

MOTION RE: FOOD SITUATION

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Rafi Ahmad Kidwai to move that the Food situation be taken into consideration.

THE MINISTER FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI) : Sir, I beg to move :

That the food situation in the country be taken into consideration.

Sir, the food policy that Government is following just at present has been fully explained in the Chapter on Food in the Planning Commission's Report which has been corrected to suit the present policy. Now, I would like the House to consider the situation as it was existing in May before there was any change in food control and as it exists today.

I will begin with Madras. Sir, from the first week of June, there were allowed certain changes in the procurement and distribution of food in Madras. The whole State was divided into zones and movement was made free within those zones. Rationing was abolished, but at the same time, the fair price shops were continued in the rationed areas and people who wanted to buy rations from the fair price shops were being supplied the same quantity at the same price as they were getting from the ration shops.

Much had been said about the difficulties of the people of Madras on account of derationing or what they called 'decontrol'. I would like you to consider what the position today is. There has been some difficulty on account of decontrol, but that difficulty would have been there whether the old system had continued or the new system had been enforced. We were feeding a certain number of people in Madras from the ration shops. We are feeding today a much larger number than we were feeding before. So, all those people who were getting their ration from the ration shops at a particular price are still getting it and more people are being fed in certain areas at the cheap grain shops than we have ever fed on account of the policy of derationing. Therefore, it is wrong to say that on account of decontrol the people of Madras have been put to particular hardship. In May last, we were feeding 25,928,854 persons from ration shops or cheap grain shops. Today, we are feeding 29,997,197 people. Therefore, so far as the people of Madras are concerned we have not allowed them to suffer even though there had been failure of rains. Recently, I visited Madras and I gave assurance to the people and the Government there that whatever foodgrains they require will be supplied from the Centre and will be sold at a price which will suit the different pockets.

As I have stated, the foodgrain movement control and rationing

[Shri Rafi Ahmad Kidwai.]

were abolished from the first week of June. And what was the effect there? I am giving below figures of off-take of food from the foodgrains shops and it will be seen how many people started taking from outside, and if the number of people we are feeding today has increased it is because we had to feed the people in the rural areas where the rains have failed. In June 1950, the off-take from the ration shops was 41,000 tons and in 1951 it was 50,000 tons. In June this year after derationing, it remained only 25,000 tons. In July last year, it was 59,000 tons, and it was 25,000 tons this year, and then when the rains started, following that, the prices outside naturally rose and in rationing shops the off-take was as high as last year. That continues up to now. Therefore, the people of Madras are not worse off than they were last year. But they are better off in other respects. A certain number of people are being fed from the open market. The open-market price last year was much higher than it is this year. Last year, it was called black-market price, because although there was nominal control on the price, really there was no control. We got quotation from the Government sources as to what were the prices in the open market.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU (Uttar Pradesh): Is the hon. Minister speaking about Madras only or about the other States?

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI: I am speaking first of Madras. I shall be taking State by State.

I may give the comparative prices in 1951 and 1952 that were prevailing in the Madras markets for which we were receiving regular quotations. I will give the prices as in first week of November and December last year and this year. In 1952, the price at Visakhapatnam was 23 rupees a maund and last year it was 50 rupees a maund. There were a large number of people who were purchasing in the open market

and those who were purchasing from the ration shops last year are today purchasing in the open market. I have shown the difference in price. Now,.....

SHRI P. SUNDARAYYA (Madras): Am I correct that it was 23 rupees in November 1952?

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI: I said that in Visakhapatnam, in the first week of November, the price was Rs. 23. Last year, it was Rs. 50.

SHRI P. SUNDARAYYA: What was the price on first of November this year?

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI: I said Rs. 23 at Visakhapatnam.

KHWAJA INAIT ULLAH (Bihar): Is it rice?

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI: Yes, the price of rice. The price at Bellary in November this year was Rs. 28 a maund and in the first week of December this year it is Rs. 27 a maund. Last year in November it was Rs. 45 a maund and in December also it was Rs. 45 a maund. At Cudappah last year it was Rs. 48 a maund in November and Rs. 48 in December. This year both in November and December the prices are Rs. 24 a maund. At Madura last year the prices in November and December were Rs. 30 a maund and this year it is Rs. 24 a maund.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY (Mysore): Is it the price in the fair price shops or in the open market?

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI: It is in the open market for people who are not getting from the ration shops and who choose to purchase from outside.

SHRI H. D. RAJAH (Madras): Was that open market encouraged by the Government? How did the Government come to know of the prices in the open market?

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI : Government always gets these quotations from the markets and I am quoting from that quotation.

SHRI H. D. RAJAH : Obviously there is a mistake. Last year there was control in those areas about which Mr. Kidwai was speaking. When he says this is the price in the open market, I take it, according to law it was black market. How did the Food Minister get the price of the black market ?

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI : I think the hon. Member realises that during last year we were feeding only 25 million people in Madras and the rest of the people also were fed from somewhere. They were purchasing from the open market because they were outside the rationed area and therefore, I am quoting the prices that were prevailing there.

SHRI P. V. NARAYANA (Madras) : Is Government freely allowing the black markets to sell at very much higher prices ?

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI : Whatever it is, I am giving the figures. I will give copies of the publication. At Coondapur the price last year was Rs. 30 both in November and December. This year it is Rs. 19-4-0 in November and Rs. 19 in December. Similarly, there is difference between the prices during last year and this year. This is the condition of Madras.

I will now take up another State where there has been some relaxation.

Some relaxations were introduced in Mysore and the hon. Member will also find there that the prices have shown similar results. Now in the rationed areas we are still supplying a large number of people this year than we were doing last year and open-market prices everywhere have come down.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY : Could the hon. Minister quote some examples ?

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI : I will quote some examples.

SHRI P. V. NARAYANA : They are all black-market figures.

MR. CHAIRMAN : They are open-market figures.

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI : In Mysore we were feeding from ration shops last year 6,002,000 people and this year we are feeding 6,017,000 and I will give you the prices also.

DR. R. B. GOUR (Hyderabad) : What is the total population of Mysore ?

KHWAJA INAIT ULLAH : That is in the Census Report with you.

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI : The rest of the population was fed by the open market. I have not got the comparative prices of Mysore but I will give them after some time.

Now I will come to Bihar. In Bihar there was rationing only in one city—Jamshedpur. There was some provision for cheap grain shop in Patna and the rest of the population was being fed from the open market. Now we are continuing the cheap grain shops in Jamshedpur and some provisioning in Patna also; otherwise rationing has been abolished and movement of rice and other foodgrains has been made free and I will show the Members the effect on prices. In the first week of December in Simdega last year the price was Rs. 18 and this year it is Rs. 16. In Bihar Sharif the price this year is Rs. 26 and last year it was Rs. 26. It has not gone down. In Gaya last year the price was Rs. 25 and this year it is Rs. 20. It has gone down by Rs. 5. In Chapra last year the price was Rs. 26 and this year it is Rs. 25. At Hazaribagh last year it was Rs. 24 in November and this year in November it was Rs. 23. But in December last year it was Rs. 24 and this year it is Rs. 18-8-0. In Jamshedpur last year in December it was Rs. 22 and this year it is Rs. 21. At Patna last year it was Rs. 27 in November

[Shri Rafi Ahmad Kidwai.]

and in December also it was Rs. 27 and this year in November it was Rs. 26 and in December it is 21. At Ranchi the price has remained the same. At Jaynagar the price last year was Rs. 36 in November and in November this year it was 26. In December last year it was Rs. 34 and this year's quotation we could not get. In Bhagalpur the price has gone up by Re. 1 this year on last year's price. In Arrah also in November the price last year was Rs. 24, but this year it was Rs. 27; but in December it has come down from Rs. 19 last year to Rs. 18 this year. Similarly in Kishanganj last December prices were Rs. 33 and this year they are Rs. 24.

SHRI M. P. N. SINHA (Bihar) : May I know what happened to the grains that were kept there in the Government godowns in Bihar ?

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI : They are being supplied wherever the prices start rising; where there is scarcity, Government shops are opened and foodgrains are supplied. I will tell the hon. Member that there are still some people there who are getting this.

KHWAJA INAIT ULLAH : May I know the price of rice in the fair price shops in Bihar ?

MR. CHAIRMAN : Let him answer the other question.

SHRI M. P. N. SINHA : Has Government information that the rice that has become rotten is being thrown away on the roadside. Thousands of tons of rice are being thrown out.

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI : That is another question. If the hon. Member gives me notice, I will get information, but still in Bihar there are 12 million people who are under the relief provision and they are being fed from the Government stock.

Then there were relaxations in U.P. also. There is no rationing and the prices of all the foodgrains have gone down.

SHRI H. C. MATHUR (Rajasthan) : Will the hon. Minister kindly give figures for Rajasthan ?

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI : As I said, in U.P. the price of every foodgrain has gone down except rice. Hon. Members must have seen in to-day's paper that Government has subsidised wheat this year to the extent of more than Rs. 5 crores. Private merchants cannot be expected to sell at subsidised rates. Therefore, their prices are a little higher than the price in Government shops. But Government itself has raised its price to make up some of the loss. But let us hope that when the new wheat crop comes in, the price of wheat also will go down. It was found that people bought only wheat from these shops because rice and other grains were cheaper outside. So they are only selling wheat in these shops and the other things the people purchase from outside. This has been the new policy. We are relaxing wherever relaxation will give relief to the people. And whenever we find relaxation works hardship on any class of people, we give them relief. I think hon. Members will realise that the situation as it existed in May last was quite different from the situation as it exists today. In May-June last there was agitation in many important centres for reducing the price. Today there is not that agitation. Everywhere the prices have been brought down and our stocks are sufficient to ensure that wherever prices increase, or when prices rise, we open fair price shops and thus bring down prices. Hon. Members will find there are ample stocks and our production also is going up. In 1951, we imported 4.7 million tons of foodgrains; but we found in 1952 that we could cancel some of our orders and so order for 0.9 lakh tons of foodgrains was cancelled and we received here only 3.9 million tons. Still our carry-over for the next year is much more than what it was last year although in some States we did not procure in the last six months. Our carry-over this year, as I said, is going to be 18 lakh tons as compared with only 13 lakh tons last year. We should also remember that this year, the private trade is allowed. Therefore, a very large stock is being carried over by private

raders. If we take into account all these stocks, we will find that we are not so much in deficit as.....

SHRI H. D. RAJAH : On a point of information, Sir. Regarding this 18 lakh tons of carry-over, may I take it that this is exclusive of the quantities of foodgrains eaten by worms and moths and other pests and which is not fit for human consumption ?

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI : I do not know anything. But because there was a hue and cry raised by some people, therefore we appointed a committee of private traders who are experts in storage and that committee went round and examined every godown and they found that a very small percentage which perhaps the private traders could have saved, they were not able to save, not the 18 lakh tons which I have just referred to.

Now, as I was saying, last year we imported 39 lakh tons and to that we could add the 13 lakh tons that was carried over from the previous year. So we have for this year's consumption a provision of 52 lakh tons. This year we carry over 18 lakh tons. If there was no stock with the private merchants either, which they carry over, then we would have had a deficit of 34 lakh tons.

SHRI L. H. DOSHI (Bombay) : Is the demand going down ?

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI : How can the demand go down when the population is increasing ?

SHRI H. D. RAJAH : They are living on air !

SHRI B. C. GHOSE (West Bengal) : Their purchasing power is falling.

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI : We supply in some areas at concession rates. But the demand is going up and our production also is going up.

As I was saying, our deficit would have been 34 lakh tons had not the

private merchants also carried a stock which may be 30 lakh tons or 40 lakh tons. But in order to ensure that there is no shortage in the country we are importing this year also, between 25 to 30 lakh tons of wheat and rice. And I am sorry to say we will have to import millet also, on account of failure of rains in Madras. But up to now the position about rice was most difficult. The rice prices in other countries are every year rising, and therefore, we had to spend a large amount on the import of rice, importing it at Rs. 30 a maund and selling it at Rs. 27 a maund.

SHRI H. D. RAJAH : What a pity !

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI : I am, however, glad to inform the House that our rice position has very much improved now. In 1951 we imported 7,49,000 tons of rice and in 1952 we imported only 7,31,000 tons. And every State this year was supplied a larger quantity than last year, for instance, Bengal, Madras, Bombay. In fact all the rice-eating areas were supplied larger quantities and still we have a carry-over of 1,30,000 tons. So we have met a larger proportion of the demand from the country's production than we did last year, and I have the ambition of feeding by 1953 the whole country from the country's production. This year the rice crop has been good. Orissa has undertaken to supply us a much larger quantity than it had ever supplied and.....

SHRI S. MAHANTY (Orissa) : At what cost ?

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI : At a very reasonable cost. So has Madhya Pradesh ; and Punjab has agreed to exhaust its production almost and supply us for the deficit areas. I hope to get larger quantities from U.P. also than last year.

SHRI ABDUL RAZAK (Travancore-Cochin) : Is there any assurance from

[Shri Abdul Razak.]

the U.P. Government to place its surplus rice at the disposal of the Central Government ?

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI : There is no question of surplus. The position in U.P., in western U.P. particularly, is that the people there can give up taking rice and eat wheat instead. Therefore, I am trying to supply them wheat getting as much rice as possible from eastern U.P. To enable us to do so, the U.P. Government have applied a cordon from the eastern districts so that the grain may not be exported. So the rice we get from eastern U.P. we can take to the deficit areas. I hope to get between 9 lakhs and 11 lakhs and that will meet the requirements of the rice-eating areas; and the rice that I am importing this year will form the stock which can be used for emergency. This is, Sir, the food position today.

SHRI M. P. N. SINHA : Sir, may I ask one question ? Are you getting any rice from Bihar ?

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI : Bihar has asked for some rice. I have told them "Your crop has been good. Instead of getting any rice from us, you must supply us some rice."

SHRI M. P. N. SINHA : I think your position is correct. Give us some wheat.

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI : Some people are selfish and some are generous.

SHRI B. K. P. SINHA (Bihar) : I controvert that statement, Sir, Bihar is deficit.

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI : In Bihar also, there are some people who are selfish and there are some who are generous.

I may have a biased view, but I think the food situation today is much easier than it was six months before and, in spite of the gloomy forecasts of some of our economists, I hope that our situation this year will improve ;

our production is going up—there is no doubt about it—and I hope, Sir, from this year we will be self-sufficient in rice except that we will have to continue the control on rice because we would not like a situation to develop wherein the 1943 conditions may be repeated. We will have to import some wheat for some time, but let us hope that our wheat production will also go up because of the large acreage that has been brought under cultivation, irrigation projects are developing and, as the Planning Commission has forecast, perhaps in 3 or 4 years, we may not have to import.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY : Sir, I want to know the figures about Mysore. The hon. Minister promised to give figures for Mysore.

DR. R. B. GOUR : Sir, I want.....

MR. CHAIRMAN : ... figures for Hyderabad ?

SHRI P. SUNDARAYYA : Sir, I want.....

MR. CHAIRMAN : Wait, wait ; you all want some information.

KHWAJA INAIT ULLAH : Sir, it is a question of food and everybody wants to know.

SHRI K. C. GEORGE (Travancore-Cochin) : Sir, the hon. Minister said in his speech that he would take State by State. Travancore-Cochin has not been touched. I did not hear anything about Travancore-Cochin.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Kidwai, what they are saying is that you said you would give the information State-wise. The Assam gentleman wants for Assam, the Mysore gentleman wants for Mysore - ...

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY : I want figures for Mysore, Sir.

SHRI H. D. RAJAH : Travancore-Cochin, Sir.

SHRIMATI VIOLET ALVA (Bombay) : Bombay too, Sir.

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI : Now, Sir, in Assam, in Dibrugarh, there have been some floods and all that ; therefore, the position is not normal. In November 1951, the price of rice was Rs. 25 and this year it was Rs. 30. In December the price has come down to last year's price, Rs. 25. In Silchar the price in November last year was Rs. 25 and this year it is Rs. 21-4-0 and we have not got December figures. Last December the price was Rs. 18-2-9 and let us hope that it will be less this year. In Tihu, the price last December was Rs. 28 and in November this year it is Rs. 20. We have not got December figures but when it was Rs. 20 in November, it would be less in December. In Assam, only in Dibrugarh the prices have risen this year—it was higher in November, but, in December they have come down to last year's level. In other places prices are lower this year than last year.

SHRI H. C. MATHUR : What about Rajasthan and that part ?

DR. R. B. GOUR : What about Part B States ?

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI : Last year, Rajasthan took some wheat and some rice because they thought there would be a deficit; but, it turned out the other way and the off-take from the ration shops went down very low and they were unable to sell anything. They had got from us some wheat and we had to arrange for its sale this year. They had borrowed 9 lakh maunds of wheat for last year which they could not sell simply because the price outside was lower than the prices obtaining at the Government shops. The condition of grain was deteriorating and, therefore, the Government of India had to negotiate for its sale with the wheat millers. The off-take from the Government shops was very low and continued to be very low till August last when it started rising because the prices at the close of the season, just before the harvesting, go up; and in some areas

there was failure of rain also. I have got some figures for Rajasthan. In Kotah, last year, the price of rice was Rs. 32. This year, in the first week of December, the price was Rs. 26. I can give you figures for wheat and jowar. You will find that everywhere the prices have gone down except in areas where there is scarcity for which the local State Government is making arrangements.

SHRI M. S. RANAWAT (Rajasthan) : Kotah which you have quoted is only a small area which is always surplus. You have not mentioned about the other places, e.g., Jodhpur and Bikaner.

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI : I did not quote any limited area. I referred to the whole Rajasthan area.

SHRI M. S. RANAWAT : You said about Kotah. I had been in Kotah and I know the conditions there.

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI : I told the hon. Members that the off-take last year, throughout the year was 8,000 tons a month and this year it has come down to 1,000. That was required only in scarcity areas, which was in the beginning of the season. At the close of the season there was shortage because this year in some areas the wheat crop had failed.

Therefore, in Gwalior, prices rose and we had to supply them. I am sorry, I am talking about Madhya Bharat. In Rajasthan, as I have stated, the off-take for the whole State, not for Kotah alone, was 8,000 tons a month which came down to 1,000 tons a month. Similar is the case with other foodgrains, like jowar, bajra, etc. At one time they had hardly any sale and, therefore, from their own procurement, they supplied us foodgrains for export to deficit areas. Their off-take in the last few months or few weeks has gone up, but, the new crop is coming and the off-take will again go down.

DR. D. H. VARIAVA (Saurashtra) : Sir, may I know about Saurashtra ?

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI : Yes, I can give you figures for Saurashtra,

MR. CHAIRMAN : Well; they will exhaust all the States.

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI : What is the main food ?

DR. D. H. VARIAVA : The main food is wheat.

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI : I will give you prices of wheat or rice, whatever you want. Well, Sir, in the first week of November—I am talking about millets, jowar, bajra, etc.—last year the price was Rs. 22 and this year it was Rs. 26. After they removed the ban on the movement in the first week of December, prices came down from Rs. 26 to Rs. 14. (*Interruption.*)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Order, order. I think the wiser procedure would be for us to take the matter into consideration and have the amendments moved. The whole thing will be thrown open for discussion and then, the points which hon. Members raise from this side or that will be noted by the Minister and, in his concluding reply, he will try to answer as far as possible the questions or points raised by Members from both sides. So, the question is :

That the food situation be taken into consideration.

There are four amendments. I would ask the hon. Members who have given notice of those amendments to move them without making speeches, and then the main motion and the amendments will be open for discussion.

SHRI P. V. NARAYANA : Will the situation be comprehensively placed before us ?

MR. CHAIRMAN : It will come up for discussion. This is the beginning.

SHRI S. MAHANTY : Sir, I move :

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

“and having considered the same, this Council urges upon the Government that the present system of procurement should be substituted for procurement and supply of food grains on the State level, through State agency”.

SHRI N. SANJIVA REDDY (Madras) : Sir, I move :

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

“and having considered the same, this Council approves of the policy of Government regarding general control of foodgrains and welcomes the desire of Government to adjust the same to suit local or temporary conditions without prejudice to the basic objectives”.

SHRI H. D. RAJAH : Sir, I move :

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

“and having considered the same this Council recommends to the Government to remove all controls in respect of procurement of foodgrains from the peasants and guarantee a minimum price as recommended by the Grow More Food Campaign Enquiry Committee”.

SHRI B. GUPTA (West Bengal) : Sir, I move :

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

“and having considered the same, this Council regrets that the Government should not have assumed the responsibility of feeding the people but should have at the same time imposed compulsory levy on the peasantry”.

MR. CHAIRMAN : The motion and these four amendments are now open for discussion.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : Mr. Chairman, I am sorry that the Food Minister in the course of his observations did not give us any outline of the food policy of the Government.

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI : I said it was given by the Planning Commission.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : It is true he related certain measures which Government have taken during the last few months, but he did not give any indication as to how they may be related to the

food policy of Government. I shall have more to say on that matter presently, but for the moment I would only say this, that it appears that there are opinions and attitudes, so far as the Ministers are concerned, on the question of food policy, but no real policy at all.

There are, I believed, two problems that we should discuss in this connection first, the food position, and second, arising out of that and related to that, the food policy—what it is, and what it should be. Now, in so far as the food position is concerned, the hon. Minister has given us certain figures of prices today compared with prices during the same period last year. But whenever we want to discuss the food position, we, as also the hon. Minister himself, are faced with the difficulty arising out of statistics and figures. The Minister himself has said on more than one occasion that the statistics are not dependable. Even the Five Year Plan has stated that apart from the fact that it is not possible from available data to say how much precisely is the total food production in the country, there is also some doubt whether these data could safely be used for framing a judgment as to whether or at what rate food production in the country has been increasing. How any policy can be framed on that is difficult to understand. But I shall try to place before you the confusion that arises out of these statistics.

If you take the statistics as they are published in the Bulletin of Food Statistics and as also, I believe, repeated by the Grow More Food Campaign Enquiry Committee, you will find that during the last four years the total production has been 43 1/2 million tons on an average. It was less in some years and only in 1949-50 it reached the very high figure of 46 million tons. On an average the import has been 3 million tons. Total 46 1/2 million tons. Now, what confuses me is this, that every year during the last four years, that has been the total average supply. The Finance Minister has also referred to the fact that the population has increased in the mean-

while. It increases at the rate of 1 1/4 per cent. a year. The annual requirement as calculated by the Planning Commission is 4 1/2 lakh tons a year. The available supply has not increased. The population has increased. And on top of that it is reported that there has been an increase in food consumption in recent years by growers on account of their improved economic condition. So, how is that possible? While on the one hand population has increased and on the other there has been increase in consumption on the part of the growers, yet there has been no increase in the supply and everything is all right. There seems to be something essentially wrong about that position. (*An Hon. Member : Something wrong with statistics.*) Yes, I am referring to that. Those were the figures that were published in the Bulletin of Food Statistics and also in the report of the Grow More Food Enquiry Committee.

Now, take the Planning Commission's Report, which gives the figures for the last three years. It does not quote the statistics that I have just now quoted. For example, for 1950-51 the production according to the Bulletin of Food Statistics is 41.7 million tons, and in the Planning Commission's Report it is given as 44.2 million tons. And the Planning Commission, of course, say that their figures are as corrected by the I. C. A. R. sample surveys. Probably that would be put forward as a plea for the discrepancy in the two figures. But the fact remains that the figures give us no indication as to what the total food production in the country is.

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI : That is why I did not rely on those statistics. I relied on the statistics over which we have control : what is in stock, what we have purchased, what we have issued, what we have imported, etc.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : I was just referring to that. It appears that a food policy is being framed not only by the Government but by the Planning Commission, and they have no data for framing that food policy.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY : They have their intuition.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : That is about production.

Now, Sir, I was reading the Planning Commission's Report, and naturally, when you are framing a policy, we should also like to have some idea as to what our deficit is. I should have thought that the Planning Commission would have calculated the deficit in relation to our requirements and the production or supply available. But naturally they did not take that into consideration, presumably because they had no data.

And then they went on to calculate the deficit on the basis of the imports that were brought into this country from year to year, and it was said that it would be much better to take a practical view of the matter.

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI : Yes.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : And they estimated the deficit at the figure at which we were importing foodgrains from abroad. But I should think that that is an approach which is not justified so far as the Planning Commission's Report is concerned, because it is a report which is full of what should be done and what should not be done.

Sir, in the vital matter of food the deficit is calculated on the basis of the import into the country. Then, Sir, I cannot understand how without having any data, the Planning Commission came to the conclusion that 7.5 million tons of additional food would be required at the end of the five years. How they have come to that figure, it is not clear. Without having any statistics as the basis on which to calculate the requirements and supply they have come to that figure. That is really something which I cannot understand. Therefore, Sir, as our statistical position is so unsatisfactory, I should make an appeal to the Government to see to it that it is improved.

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI : Yes.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : The Government, I believe, knew from the very beginning when they came into office that they had no reliable figures. Yet 5 years have passed, we have talked and talked, but it appears to me that we have taken no steps to improve our statistics on which only a rational policy could be framed.

KHWAJA INAIT ULLAH : Are we talking on the Five Year Plan or on the food situation ?

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : That is related to the food situation.

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI : He is talking of the past five years. Not the future.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : Even the Grow More Food Inquiry Committee stated that there must be a certain amount of Central supervision over the collection of agricultural statistics in States in order to ensure uniformity and comparability. May I suggest, Sir, that the Central Government should take upon themselves the task of collecting statistics apart from the States and set up an organisation for that purpose, because unless and until that is done, I do not think any rational food policy can be elaborated ?

Then, we should naturally be concerned as to how production may be increased. I do not want to go today into an enquiry as to the achievements of the Grow More Food Campaign. That has been done by the Grow More Food Inquiry Committee and it has shown that the results have not been as expected. Only about 50 per cent. achievement has been recorded. But I should also like to know as to what Government have done about the recommendations made from time to time by the committees that they themselves had set up, for example the recommendations made by the Purushottamdas Thakurdas Committee. That Committee said that an increase in production by 10 lakh tons could be secured within five years and I believe that five years are almost over. What has

happened to those recommendations that were made by this Committee? What steps did Government take to implement them and what results have been achieved?

Now, Sir, there was a conflict last time, between Minister and Minister, it appears, in relation to the matter of increasing production of food. It appears that the Food Minister was of the opinion that restrictions were impeding food production, but the Finance Minister said from the available data that no reliable conclusions could be drawn from the facts that they had at their disposal. There was also the related question as to how far prices affected production. It appeared to me that it was the opinion of the Food Minister that if prices were high naturally there should be an increase in production. The Finance Minister was not of the same view and it appears he was, on the basis of actual facts, not very far wrong, because, Sir, if you take the wholesale price indices, you find that whereas they have gone down since the time of the Korean war by about 15 per cent., the prices of wheat and rice have not gone down very much.

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI : They have gone down very much.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : Now, in April 1951, the index for wheat was 560 and in October 1952 the index was 556.

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI : That is the Government ration shop price. Not the open market.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : These are the figures quoted in the Five Year Plan. I am quoting from Government statistics. I have no other statistics available to me. If the hon. Minister will give me the statistics which are to be considered better than the figures which are quoted in the Five Year Plan, then I shall accept them. So also in the case of rice. It was 555 in April and 527 in October. It would appear from these figures that prices have had no great effect on production,

which will be against the normal economic laws and, I should like to know from the hon. Minister if he has an explanation for this fact. Sir, I do not want to say anything more on this aspect of the problem, but shall go on to the other one, namely, the food policy.

And here, as in the other case, we have more confusion than light. What is the Government's policy at the moment? It would appear from the statement made by the hon. Food Minister in the other House and also from what he stated here, that there have been changes in the policy. Certain changes and relaxations have been introduced. I was looking through the debate in the other House and I found—I am not taking the observations of the Planning Minister because I feel that his observations have really no relevance to the actual situation which existed—that the controls were being made more stringent, which apparently was not a fact. But, Sir, the Finance Minister stated that there can be no relaxation of controls. He said that there are some people—fortunately very few—who say that we could run a plan with a thread of de-control running eternally in our minds. And the Prime Minister stated—it is difficult for me to make out what he means, but these are his words :—

“Certain changes are certainly suggested, but they have nothing to do with the basic policy that Government has attempted to follow and intend to pursue in future. You may change the method of approach, you may change many things, but the basic approach will have to continue”.

You can change, Sir, everything but I understand that the basic approach still remains.

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI : That is true.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : That is true probably, but we find it difficult to explain it. In words everything may be stated.

And then, Sir, I consulted the Five Year Plan of the Planning Commission with a view to find out if any light could

[Shri B. C. Ghose.]

be obtained as to what the basic policy of the Government is. The Five Year Plan at one place says that the basic policy is to keep down food prices at a reasonable level and to ensure that the available supplies of foodgrains are mobilised effectively for meeting the needs of the vulnerable sections of the community. At another place it says that if food for all has to be the effective basis of policy and if the investment targets in the Plan are to be adhered to, the basic structure of food controls has to be kept intact during the period of the Plan. Now, what is the basic structure of food controls? I wanted to find out and I read the whole chapter and I could find no explanation as to what constituted the basic structure of food controls. Now, Sir, it appears that there is confusion in this matter at the headquarters on account of the fact that there is not an adequate appreciation of what we are doing in connection with the Plan in this country. Our Plan is not a total Plan. (*Interruption.*) I believe, Sir, that introduces a very important difference that should have a bearing on our attitude towards the question of control.

When we have total planning, there must be total control as is the case in many other countries, but there is no total control in this country. In such an economy, what is it that should be the objective of these control measures? The most important measures to be adopted in connection with control are for the purpose of augmenting supply, because we want to increase the supply, so that it may catch up with the demand. Price control and rationing are also necessary, but since they are only necessary until such time as supply can be augmented, they are subsidiary to measures that augment the supply, and the efficiency of planning is to be judged not by the excellence of the system of rationing and price control but by the speed with which shortages are eliminated and price controls and rationing rendered unnecessary. We are operating a plan which has received general acceptance. I do not say,

Sir, and nobody would suggest that there should be no controls, but the question is that there should be controls with a view to achieving certain desired objectives. It is also sometimes stated that there should be some measures, as we are a welfare State, to see to it that we achieve the objectives of a welfare State. Now, there is some difference of opinion as to whether we are a welfare State or still continue to be a Police State, but still we must see how far these measures can be justified, but by and large I believe that the main point about the food policy is to maintain sufficient stocks—that is the king-pin in the food policy—so that whenever there may be any shortage in any place, supplies can be rushed, and with a view to maintaining that stock, certain measures have to be taken. Procurement has to be taken recourse to and if necessary, imports have also to be obtained. But if that is accepted, then the Government should tell us plainly, “We consider that this is the stock that we should build up” and when that stock is built up, the policy should be to make a change in the food policy. Or will this policy be persisted in even if sufficient stocks are built up? There should also be certain measures of control in regard to the vulnerable areas like the heavy industrial areas and other areas which are not accessible on account of transport difficulties. We have to remember when we are discussing the food situation that we are rationing only about 12 to 13 per cent. of our population under statutory rationing.

SHRI S. C. KARAYALAR (Travancore-Cochin) : Is there any time-limit to speeches, Sir?

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : I will finish soon.

SHRI RAJAGOPAL NAIDU (Madras) : It is better to have a time-limit.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : I have not taken more than 20 minutes.

MR. CHAIRMAN : You have taken more than half an hour.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : I wanted to take only about 20 minutes, but I

will finish soon. As I was saying, the balance of the population, nearly 88 per cent., is not rationed, and therefore the food policy has to be evolved which would be conducive to all sections of the people, and we have not had from the Government as yet any indication of that policy, and I hope, therefore, that in his reply the hon. the Food Minister will give us an indication of what the present food policy is, particularly in regard to controls, and also as to how and to what extent they can achieve any increase in the food production of the country.

(*Shri N. Sanjiva Reddy
rose.*)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Fifteen minutes is the maximum, but it does not mean that you should take the whole of it.

SHRI N. SANJIVA REDDY (Madras): I will try to finish my speech as soon as possible.

The food problem is the greatest problem before the country. Madras is a deficit State and we are having the greatest difficulty in regard to food. Having moved the amendment approving of the action of the Government, I would be failing in my duty if I do not say that the present food policy is the one which has created a lot of confidence in the whole State of Madras. It is not that our food problem has been solved, not that we are out of the wood, but we are certainly in a position to feel that we will be able to cross the danger zone and then to achieve complete normality in the course of the next few years. Before this new policy was adopted, the method of procurement in Madras State was so stringent and bad that it was condemned by all. The most rigorous procurement was made only in the Madras State in a way that was not done in any other State in the country. Most of the grains produced by the middle class agriculturists were procured by the officials, there were no ration shops or fair price shops in any of the villages, these people were not allowed enough by the officials and

there was a good deal of suffering. Thanks to the policy of the Food Minister, we have now stopped that kind of procurement and have thus saved the prestige of the Government and also the prestige of the Congress. We must all thank him for that. Every man was being allowed only six ounces—nobody was allowed to get more—and having exhausted this in four days, everybody had to go to the black-market to get his rations for the other three days, for which he had to pay a much higher price than what he would have to pay in the ration shops. The Food Minister has saved us from that situation and now we are encouraged to be more hopeful. People will now produce food crops instead of commercial crops and I think we will soon be able to stand on our own legs. Even the season began well this year. Rains started; probably the prayers of Rajaji had been heard. The rains began very well but in May, when we were thinking that we would be able to get out of a nasty situation our hopes were shattered. Unfortunately the rains stopped. Rains did not come till September. There was an interval of four months between May and September. At this stage came the announcement that Panditji would be visiting Rayalaseema. He had a strenuous tour. He covered hundreds of miles in that area. As though even the rains feared the announcement of his arrival, rains came. There were heavy showers and everything looked green instead of being dry.

Since you, Sir, come from that area you will have noticed from the condition prevailing in Rayalaseema, that it was the worst hit spot in the whole of India. Granting that, Sir, I will be failing in my duty if I do not thank the Government of Madras and the Central Government for the good work they have done to tide over the famine days. They opened gruel centres in each and every area in all the districts and many people who would have otherwise died were kept alive till the showers came. There were many gruel centres and a good number of people, particularly, the poor people and the disabled people

[Shri N. Sanjiva Reddy.]
 went there, fed themselves and slept there, waiting their next turn. Like that, many people are living. I do not want to say that we have crossed the danger zone so far as Rayalaseema is concerned. But I wish to point out that the Government came to the help of the poor people and gave subsistence loans to the middleclass people. Now, Sir, whatever the Government may have done, there are certain people who still complain that the Government have not done anything. They are, I am afraid, more destructive than constructive in their criticism. Such people will say that there are many who died in these areas on account of famine conditions and lack of help from any quarter. They even take out processions of some two hundred people and call them hunger-marches and go about crying aloud that many people have died. Government cannot satisfy such people. I may say that the food problem is used by these people for political or party propaganda. But I hope that they will give it up. I hope that every party in this country will co-operate with the Government to solve this problem. If you say that some people have died in spite of the Government help, I will only say that they were not perhaps taking the food that the Government were giving. They refused perhaps to eat because the food has come from the American bloc. It is not because the Government are not doing anything to relieve the suffering of the people. They want to scandalize this Government and to bring down its reputation. For that, they are taking advantage of this situation.

Sir, I wish to refer to another matter in this connection. More than the food problem, there is the problem of water to be solved. If we do not solve the problem of water scarcity, we would not be able to improve our condition. It is true that Government have given loans. They are giving Rs. 150 for each well in a village. And it may be noted that it is not a loan. The villagers could freely take the money and deepen the well and get over the

problem of water. But it must be noted that not only Rayalaseema, but the districts in and around North Arcot, Chingleput and Nellore are also badly hit. They are as bad as Rayalaseema. If you visit those areas, you will realise that famine has become a permanent feature of these areas. What is needed is some permanent measure which will ward off this disaster. I do not know whether some permanent measures are being considered so that we may banish famine from these areas for ever.

AN HON. MEMBER : How is it to be done ?

SHRI N. SANJIVA REDDY: If I am given time during the discussion on the Planning Commission's Report, 12 NOON I shall deal with that. But here the time at my disposal is very short. However, I may say that a good number of times, famine has visited these areas. People have been expressing sympathy for those who are suffering. But sympathy alone will not be enough. If sympathy alone could fill our bellies, then we would have died of indigestion long ago. The food problem will have to be solved in a black spot like Madras. But the blackest spot is Rayalaseema and I hope that the Food Minister will tackle this problem in this area. Some people are feeling doubtful whether the food problem is going to be solved by this Government. To them, I would say that the Food Minister is not a magician. The problem cannot be solved overnight. I hope that within one or two years this country will also be able to solve her food problem. There are methods to solve it. Other countries have done so. But we do not want to adopt them. If the other party comes into power today, they will declare Mr. Kidwai as an arch-traitor and hang him because by giving food to the people he prevented a revolution. If still anybody complains about the food problem, they will simply say, "there is useless manpower in the country and let us liquidate a few millions", and in that way they will solve the problem. As long as we have responsibility, we cannot

solve it that way. The food problem is there and it will be solved. There is no doubt about it. I am sure the hon. Minister will be able to do it. We have one of the most daring Ministers here to solve it. He is there to solve it and get us out of the difficulty.

About the figures he has given, particularly in the backward district of Cudappa, the black-market price last year was about Rs. 50 and today it is Rs. 20. In Bellary, it is Rs. 28 and in Cudappa Rs. 24, while it was Rs. 45 last year. Yes, Sir, even this is a little higher. The Government have sustained a great loss by supplying milo at a cheap rate. The prices have gone down in millets because of the good work done by Government.

Sir, there are certain other things which I would like to refer to, but I have neither the time nor the opportunity to discuss all those things. I have dwelt on the problem of Rayalaseema, because it is a serious one. As I said, breaking of stones or laying roads will not solve the problem. What is needed is to construct the Tungabhadra high-level channel which would help irrigation. Last year, the Madras Government spent Rs. 6 crores in one small area to save the people from famine. But nothing was spent on this area to give permanent relief. So, what I would suggest is this. They must give relief to the famine-stricken people, but the relief should be given in such a way that it would be useful in the future to help irrigate a few acres of land. The high-level channel is there. Everything is ready. If they had only taken up that channel, the people would have appreciated that. I really thank the hon. Minister for Food for having gone to Madras, and whatever others may say, we at least on this side completely agree with him and thank him for the policy that he has adopted, call it decontrol or partial control, or by whatever name, I do not mind. The method that is now adopted has given great encouragement and great impetus for

the agriculturists to grow more food and I wish him all success.

SHRI H. D. RAJAH : Sir, I am indeed grateful to my hon. friend Mr. Kidwai and brother-in-law for coming out with a truthful statement, namely, that the statistics are all wrong.

That is one true statement I extracted from this Government. When the India of original size was partitioned, the country had 167.1 million acres and the food production was 45 million tons. Out of this the share which India minus Pakistan got was 69% of the total. Therefore to start with we had 115 million acres of land producing food to the extent of 32 million tons. The acreage in 1948 according to the statistics had risen to 185 millions and the production was 43.7 million tons. Now in 1951 the acreage is 193 millions and the wheat and other food products were 41.7 million tons. According to these statistics assuming that an acre per season gave a moderate scale of 500 measures of paddy or wheat, an acre should yield not less than half a ton of foodgrain. We have a statement by the Grow More Food Enquiry Committee that there has been a tendency in the States to estimate the production on a conservative basis. I may say that the figures supplied by the States are not only conservative but totally untrue as no State can get a correct data of what every agriculturist gets exactly out of every acre. It is more so.....

KHWAJA INAIT ULLAH : On a point of information. Can a Member read a written speech ?

SHRI H. D. RAJAH : I am not reading.

MR. CHAIRMAN : What I feel is, if he reads, he will be more temperate.

SHRI H. D. RAJAH : It is more so when control and compulsory procurement are in force. Now let us go on the assumption that 193 million

[Shri H. D. Rajah.]

acres are available for food production and assuming that the weather conditions are good—I have given allowance for the vagaries of nature—out of this 193 million acres we should not get less than 72 million tons of rice and wheat. Our population is 36 crores in the divided India. Assuming that an increase of population has taken place and there are more than 36 crores of people in India today, the requirements according to your 12 ounces a day, leaving aside the other foods like tapioca, potato and cocoanuts will be a little over 43 million tons of food. This is mathematics.

MR. CHAIRMAN : You may read.

SHRI H. D. RAJAH : I am grateful to you. Sir, the total amount of food that is required for these 36 crores of people on the basis of 12 ozs. of rice or wheat or any other product a day is 43 million tons. Now, Sir, this country, according to the statistics which the Government have published, has already produced 43 million tons. Therefore, the statistics are either true or Mr. Kidwai is false. If it is a contradictory statement, then we have to go into food import policy. Now I am coming to the food import policy. I don't mind my friend objecting because I have to read out the statistics.

We imported in 1948, 8,67,000 tons of rice worth about 50 crores, in 1949 7,67,000 tons worth about 41 crores, in 1950 we imported 3,53,000 tons worth about 19.93 crores, in 1951 we imported 7,49,000 tons valued at 43.3 crores. We also imported wheat in various years in various quantities. I will only come to say ultimately that the Bhargava Report has lamented on this country having wasted a sum of Rs. 1250 crores on import of food alone. According to Mr. Bhargava it is Rs. 1250 crores. According to the Planning Commission's Report we have imported since 1948 food of the total value of about 800 crores and odd and according to the statis-

tics published by the Government we have spent 571.27 crores. I don't know which to believe and which not to believe. It is just like four blind men assessing the size of an elephant. The Planning Commission says we have spent 800 crores, the Government statistics say we have spent 571 crores and the Bhargava Report says we have spent 1250 crores. Assume for a moment that I mortgage my house and borrow money and start eating. How long shall I eat? What will be the fate of my children and how will I ultimately be responsible to the people whom I bring up? This Government, which has no policy of its own, which is just guided like the blind men and the elephant, has no policy with regard to import of food. They have mortgaged our country to Uncle Sam. They have taken a loan to the extent of 25 lakhs of tons of wheat on which they have spent Rs. 149 crores and they say that no strings are attached. A borrower whoever he may be is a low man in the estimate of the lender. Neither a lender nor a borrower be. If you had proper statistics, this country need not have imported one ton of food and you can stand aloft. You have done a fundamental mistake in killing the peasants who are responsible for producing this food by your stupid controls, unwanted interference and your putting every sort of impediment to the grower. You have destroyed yourself and you have brought this country on the verge of ruin. You want 2000 crores of rupees for the Planning Commission's plans. I am not going to refer to it now but you have spent Rs. 1250 crores for the import of food alone. Now I shall deal with the price structure. When Rs. 15 per maund was the price in Madras, you imported rice from Siam at Rs. 22 and our *bhayyas* of U. P. obliged the Madrasis by giving us rice at Rs. 25 per maund and the result was that the U. P. *bhayyas* swallowed one crore eight lakhs of rupees at the Madrasis' cost. The Government of Madras squealed and whined and protested but was kicked out of court by the demi-gods of Delhi.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Be temperate.

SHRI H. D. RAJAH : It is a correct statement. The Madras people had to spend one crore eight lakhs by way of additional price at the rate of Rs. 25 meanwhile keeping down the price of rice in that area at the rate of Rs. 15 per maund. Imagine in one place this price level was ruling, in another place.....

KHWAJA INAIT ULLAH : In which year was it ?

SHRI H. D. RAJAH : It was in 1951. In another place the price was almost double. Where is the equity ? The statistics will again show.....

MR. CHAIRMAN : They are wrong, don't quote them.

SHRI H. D. RAJAH :that 12 crores of people are under ration according to them and they require 15 million tons of food. The rest of the people are not under ration even according to your control. If you want to feed these 12 crores.....

DR. R. B. GOUR : Not 12 crores.

SHRI H. D. RAJAH : That is their calculation.

SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI : It is 13 crores.

SHRI H. D. RAJAH : Well I may add another crore. If about 13 crores of people are to be under ration, they require food to be given to them at reasonable price. And if reasonable price is to be had, we must remove the control and there will then be, as Mr. Kidwai says, open market prices. The merchants who deal in large quantities of these foodgrains will bring the price into their books which then will be subjected to income-tax. Now the black-market price is very high and the merchants take all that money and pocket it. They do not let them come any-

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where in their books, so much so that our friend Shri Tyagi loses so much money. Now, if it is an open market operation, the price that is charged for the foodgrains will go into the books which are subject to tax. You are registering people for selling foodgrains. On the basis of registration, I ask the Government to keep an eye on these transactions and take the excess money and utilise it for paying the subsidies and for feeding these 12 crores of our population, if they like. That is the way in which a sane Government will do things. But you tie the hands and feet of a man and then ask him to run !

I really wonder on what basis the Prime Minister said we had turned the corner with regard to the food situation. It is only a question of controls. But so long as the civilians, the desk-workers who have not known how to grow two blades of grass all their life, so long as they control and advise the Government, this Government can never come to its proper senses. If you go in the mud, mix with the people and understand their difficulties and problems and encourage them to produce food, without your controls, then you will get more food and you will understand the problem. Sir, look at the pathetic state in which the women and children of my country were harassed by the police. These poor folk go and work in the fields and produce the paddy and when they go with a few measures of rice or paddy on their heads, the police waylay them and harass them.

AN HON. MEMBER : Where ?

SHRI H. D. RAJAH : They were harassed and oppressed.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Only two minutes more.

SHRI H. D. RAJAH : I will just refer to two important matters, Sir. They were harassed like that and the rice went into the police hands. In addition, the poor people were sentenced by the magistrate, and fined.

[Shri H. D. Rajah.]

Similarly, Sir, they banned *iddilies* in my part of the country. *Iddily* is one of the finest discoveries of civilised mankind. If Mr. Kidwai were to take to *iddilies*, he would give up beef and the cows in India would be safe. Well, the police banned *iddilies* in my part of the country and *iddilies* went underground like the Communists and the police were having a free feed and we had to pay one and a half annas for an *iddily* that used to cost us only half an anna. But when the controls were removed, we felt happy and our *iddilies* came to the surface. Therefore, I say, do not try to catch the horse by the tail, allowing the string to be let off. I would request the Government to consider the question in all its aspects and find out the scientific basis on which the Government should be run. You can never bring thirty-six crores of people under totalitarian dictatorship and that is what control means. You cannot be telling them what they should grow and how they should grow and all that. You give them the wherewithal to produce and then they will help themselves and produce more and more. After all it is their responsibility to feed their kith and kin.

Sir, you know as a philosopher that in this country the saying is—“Sarva Dama Anna Danam Pradhanam”. The gift of food is the greatest of gifts. But as a result of controls, you have made the people, even generous minded people, into selfish brutes. You should see that you remove controls from the country. Then the people will work more, produce more and this food scarcity will be completely removed.

PROF. N. R. MALKANI (Nominated): Sir, we are very grateful to the hon. Minister for giving us the assurance that the foodgrain situation in the country is easing. I am also grateful to hear that the situation in the States is also easing. But I wish the hon. Minister had told us something about the food policy of the

Government. However, we are aware in a way, of the salient features of that policy, and I draw on my knowledge of it in what I say.

(MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair.)

Sir, I am in broad agreement with the food policy of the Government. I am in broad agreement because the Government seems to have realised the vastness of the problem, the comprehensiveness of the problem, and has tried to find out the proper approach to the solution of that problem. Not that the Government has not committed mistakes—quite a number, but is now committing fewer and fewer mistakes. Not that the problem is near solution. I did not quite appreciate the rather high note of complacency in the speech of the hon. Minister. We are not near the solution of our problem. The situation is easing, but the situation at any moment may become dangerous. We are not yet out of the wood. I say this because this problem cannot be solved by the production of more food by itself, but by tackling the problem on the educational and technical side, on the agricultural and social side, on the village side and from all aspects. Government has realised the fact that the food problem can be solved only by integrating our efforts on all fronts and by reaching down to our villages. But have we made a real start in that direction? I hope we will soon make such a start.

SHRI M. GOVINDA REDDY (Mysore): The community projects.

PROF. N. R. MALKANI: We are making a start; that is all that I can say. It is also good that the Government has realised that we have to produce not only food, but also other crops, *viz* cotton, jute, sugarcane, oilseeds and all that. We are less dogmatic than before. I am glad to note also that the Government is less dogmatic about what is called self-sufficiency. We began by saying, by asserting that we will secure self-sufficiency in food in one, two or

three years. But I don't think self-sufficiency will be reached even within the next ten years. I wish Government went somewhat slowly about this matter. The time for self-sufficiency is not yet. You know the figures better than I do, Sir, and I am afraid to quote them, but yet I must quote a few. According to the plan, if we want 13·67 oz. per head per day, we must have an additional production of 7·5 million tons. I hope I am right. If it is to be 14 oz.—the minimum cereal diet and it should be more and not less—then the additional production should be 8·5 million tons. Let us hope that we have made a good start in that direction. Let us hope that by 1955 we will have an additional 7·5 million tons. But it is yet but a hope and not an achievement. I do hope that it will be an achievement. But shall we be satisfied with 13·67 oz. or even 14 oz. ? Have we any non-cereal food ? Are we to munch only grain and drink water ? According to a balanced diet, we should have at least 34 oz. of non-cereal food. If you want details of meat, fish and so on, I have got them with me in my book here. According to a balanced diet, we should have 4 oz. of meat, fish, eggs, etc. But we have only 1·04 oz. in India now. And Sir, what about animal foods ? America spends, they say, half her food dollar on animal food. What do we spend ? What do we get as animal food ?

KHWAJA INAIT ULLAH : We are vegetarians.

PROF. N. R. MALKANI : You may be, most are not. Do we spend anything on that ?

KHWAJA INAIT ULLAH : The majority of the population are vegetarians.

PROF. N. R. MALKANI : What do we spend ? Very little, indeed. Self-sufficiency does not consist in eating only cereal foods. For self-sufficiency it is not enough if we give only cereals. We must be able to give the people at least 48 oz. of food,

14 oz. of cereals and 34 oz. of non-cereals. Are we aware—you must be aware—that today we have only 5 per cent of our cropped area under these non-cereal products ? When shall we make up this serious deficiency ? The time for complacency is not yet. Mere cereals are not enough. Animals may have only cereals but man must have a balanced diet. To have self-sufficiency is, to my mind, a far off cry. There has been a good deal of talk about controls. The hon. Minister was happy to tell us—and I am also happy to hear it—that because of the relaxation of the controls, the situation has slightly eased. But why should there be all this hair-splitting about controls, about controls being relaxed, controls being modified, of controls being intensified ? Sir, I believe that controls have come to stay, and controls have come to stay not only in our country, but probably in most other countries as well. So let us get used to these controls, because we cannot get away from the fact that this is a deficit region. The whole of India is deficit and the whole of South-East Asia is deficit and it is becoming more and more deficit. So we must have control, at least "Overall" control for the whole of India. We cannot do away with all-India and overall control. For instance we must have some procurement, may be more or less by the State. So also the State must have the monopoly to import food.

We cannot do without the two, procurement and imports by the States. Overall controls have come to stay; let that be as easy as possible, as light as possible, but, we cannot do without them. I must thank warmly the hon. Minister for taking the local controls into his hands. He is very energetic and very adventurous and I am very very thankful to him from the bottom of my heart for his courageous drive. He has given us a push when a push was necessary and at a time when the push was possible. The hon. Minister has given us that push by liberalising, modifying, relaxing the local controls with

[Prof N. R. Malkani.]

regard to movement, with regard to prices and holdings of stocks. The hon. Minister gave us an assurance that the position of rice was becoming easy. I do not know. I know this, Sir, that the whole of Asia is a rice eating region. There were about 8 million tons rice for free movement from one country to another. Today, Sir, as far as I know, it is only 4 million tons and the demand is for 9 million tons. I am not quite sure that we can depend on our own rice supply and, as long as we are not sure of our rice, controls have to stay.

Sir, proceeding further, should we not be aware of the fact that the food problem cannot be solved in an isolated manner? Well, we know, Sir, that the problem of the growth of population is growing acute. All of us are aware that our growth is at the rate of 1.3% per annum, i.e., 13% in every ten years. According to the Plan we shall produce more food, at some rate, 12% or 10% as the case may be. If we multiply at the rate of 13% every ten years, can we keep up our food supply at the same rate? We know, Sir, in Asia there is a great disparity in this; the growth of population is at 1.3% or 1.4% per year and food production is at .3% and this great disparity has got to be removed. Unless that is resolved, the problem is not really solved. As it is, the rate of mortality is decreasing. Possibly our birth rate is fairly high, but, it is surprising to learn that the birth rate is not high as compared to many other countries, eastern as well as western. The death rate was considerable and it is being reduced very rapidly. So, we cannot be very sure of the situation unless the population problem is taken up far more seriously than it is done at present.

Sir, proceeding further, though it is a small matter, yet we have all agreed that there should be planned cropping, that wheat or rice or millets should not take all or most of the acreage. I find we have made good progress about cotton. In 1947-48 we had 21.9 lakh bales and in 1951-52

it is 33 lakh bales i.e., 50% increase. For jute, in 1947-48 we had 16.6 lakh bales and now it is 46.8 lakhs, a rise of 300%. In sugar, we are thinking of exporting about 5 lakh tons. Sir, it appears to me—I may be wrong and I stand subject to correction—it appears to me that the rise here is phenomenal. Why should not some such similar rise be registered with regard to cereal or non-cereal crops? Why should we not have such a phenomenal rise with regard to fish, eggs, fruits and vegetables? Why do we have that only in cotton or jute or in sugar? Perhaps there are many cotton, jute and sugar factories and, of course, they are all highly industrialised businesses. Vested interests are there and so, their needs are met quickly, but, so far as food-grains are concerned, Sir, I rather think we should pay more attention to them than we have paid to sugar and the rest of it.

Sir, I come next to fodder crops. It is true that man comes first but can man live without animals, without cattle? Can we do so? But are we giving them a fair deal? It was a surprise to me to learn that in India only 4.2% of the net cropped area is growing fodder for animals and, so far as man is concerned, he has appropriated, I will say misappropriated, to himself 80% of the net cropped area for foodgrains and others. I think our cattle population numbers slightly less than that of man. We are about 36 crores strong and they may be 30 crores, something very near us in number and we appropriate 80% of the cropped area leaving only 4.2% for our cattle. We can have rice and wheat. But what about jowar and bajra? What about green crops? What about bran? I learn, Sir, that bran is now not separated from *atta* and is given to man, which should really have gone to the animals. We are neglecting our cattle completely. In India, cow is worshipped; it is considered sacred, whatever be the reason, economic, social or religious. I think the cow stands next to man in India and is this the treatment we should give to our own cattle? Sir,

this is a big gap which you will kindly attend to and repair.

A word about another small matter—planting of trees. I learn that we are planting now, say, 3 crores of trees annually. How many trees remain and how many die, I do not know, but, we do need to plant 300 crores. I may be wrong, but it appeared to me phenomenal to have to plant 300 crores of trees per year.

The policy of the Government is good as far as it goes with several gaps, as I have shown, and, I am hoping that the hon. Minister will fill them up as early as possible and as efficiently as possible. But, Sir, I have very grave doubt in my mind about the organisation in food or elsewhere as to whether it will come up to our expectation in implementing our policy. Sir, I have very grave doubts about that. Our intentions are good and your efforts may also be intense, but, what about the machinery, what about the agency, the organisation? Sir, you are aware of its deficiency perhaps much more than I am, only I cannot help expressing it while you perhaps cannot help suppressing it. I do believe that this organisation will be touched up, brushed up and pulled up to come to our expectations. This can be done only when we go to the village areas.....

(Time Bell rings.)

treat each village as a community unit and put the burden squarely on the shoulders of the villagers, and make the villagers feel as a community, make them feel that the country belongs to them, that we belong to the villages and not to the towns.

SHRI S. MAHANTY : Sir, I am sorry to confess that the Minister has sought to make a substantial subject like food as delightfully vague as possible. Sir, 'deficit' or 'surplus' might have been plain words in English but, in the Food Ministry they are metaphysical entities. You do

not know what they really mean. We use those terms as it suits us.

Sir, even the Planning Commission has indulged in a sort of agnosticism. They do not know whether India is surplus or deficit. Here are their observations : "Apart from the fact that it is not possible, from available data, to see how much precisely is the total food production in the country, there is also some doubt whether this data could safely be used for framing a judgment as to whether or on what rate food production in the country has been increased." In this context any talk on food is bound to be a leap in the dark. I am not going to venture it. Therefore, I will confine myself precisely to the subject of my amendment. In this context I cannot also help remarking that though we have spent to the extent of Rs. 75 crores on the grow-more-food campaign we have not been able to produce food in an increasing measure commensurate with the expenditure that has been incurred. Last year, Sir, every newspaper reader might have been aware that there was a cry of deficit everywhere. But suddenly, before the general budget was presented this year, it could become a surplus. Students of cultural anthropology might have known about what is called "sympathetic magic". That means, by imitating certain actions we achieve our ends. Some time back we had a Food Minister who was the symbol of deficit, who was the symbol of starvation. And now we have substituted a Minister who is a symbol of surplus. Therefore, overnight there has been a change : last year it was a deficit, and now it is a surplus.

Now, Sir, there is no gainsaying the fact that there is need for some sort of control, because we know that whatever our figures may tell us, we are going on importing and importing, and that means that there is dearth of production. Production is going down, and we have to depend on imports. And in this context we are going to launch upon the Five Year Plan. During this period prices

[Shri S. Mahanty.]

have to be kept down. Therefore, I have no quarrel with the proposition that there should be some sort of controls. Whether they are progressive controls or strategic controls or progressive decontrols, I leave them to my hon. friend the Food Minister to define. But having said this much, I would say that if you analyse the production figures of the various States in India, you will come to the conclusion that such highly industrialised States like U. P. or Madras or Bombay are as a rule deficit. Here are the figures. I do not know, of course, how far these figures are accurate. According to them in Assam the production per head is 365 lbs. that means, surplus. In Bihar, which is also industrialised to a great measure, the production per head is 228 lbs. Then we come to Bombay. It is deficit according to the Food Minister. Then, Madhya Pradesh ; it is a surplus State. There is no industrialisation there. There the production per head is 483 lbs. Madras, also a highly industrialised State, shows a production per head of 284 lbs. In Orissa, a highly agricultural State, the production per head is 543 lbs. ; Punjab, 370 lbs. ; U. P., 291 lbs. ; West Bengal, 378 lbs., and so on. Therefore, if you care to analyse the figures, you will find that highly industrialised States are generally deficit in food production.

Now, if we come to that conclusion, what is the position ? We find that in order to supply food at a cheap rate to these deficit areas which are highly industrialised, we have to import food from certain areas, which are not naturally advanced, whose people are called 'backward', and as the hon. Deputy Finance Minister characterised the other day 'down-trodden'. Sir, while the Food Minister was paying left-handed compliments to Orissa by saying that Orissa last year gave 3 lakh tons of rice and this year has promised to give some more, I put a question "at what cost ?" but probably he misunderstood it. Probably I might have asked him, "At what sacrifice ?" Well, he does not

know it. I shall quote something to show how Orissa feels about it. The present Finance Minister of Orissa has observed :

"To state frankly, the people of Koraput who supply a large bulk of foodgrains to the deficit provinces do so by half starvation."

Sir, in the course of my election tours during the last year, I visited Koraput which supplies the bulk of rice to Madras and other deficit areas. There I have seen people living like beasts, eating grass and leaves, and dying in hundreds of cholera. When an agricultural State like Orissa or Madhya Pradesh supplies rice, what happens is this. Take the case of Balasore. Balasore district adjoins Midnapore in West Bengal. There the producer's price for a maund of superfine rice is Rs. 13-14-0, but the producer's price in Midnapore is Rs. 16-12-0. I do not know at what price this rice is sold in Midnapore, but my report is that it is sold at a much higher rate. Similarly, the Koraput superfine rice which is procured at the rate of Rs. 11 a maund is sold in Vizagapatam at the rate of Rs. 23 a maund. From this you can well analyse how the 3 lakh tons of rice has been supplied by Orissa and what loss Orissa has sustained on this account. I do not mean to suggest that there should be discrimination between State and State ; the result of certain States increasing the floor price for procurement will result in an all round increase in prices which will jeopardise investment in the public sector and in the private sector. I do not mean to suggest anything of that sort. What I mean to say is that there should be integrated justice, there should be comprehensive justice and the economy should be an integrated economy. When the *per capita* income of Orissa is Rs. 7, you cannot expect that State to suffer and to starve by supplying food at a cheap rate. The *per capita* income of Bombay is Rs. 20. If you equalise the *per capita* income of the people as a whole and have an integrated economy, we would not be jeopardising the interests of any State, and we would not be benefiting the people of one State at the

cost of another State or a group of States. The Planning Commission also has observed very pertinently that the policy to be followed does not mean that the producer of food grains should not get a reasonable return on economic as well as social grounds. It is there in a major policy statement like the First Five Year Plan. The Government has accepted that proposition that the producer should get a fair price. And now what are producer States like Orissa and Madhya Pradesh asked to do ? You have not the slightest compunction in coming here and saying, "you are downtrodden ; you are backward." I have already told you how the people of Koraput are dying in hundreds. But you are giving the other States utmost help so that they might be able to develop themselves in other sectors. You have expressed your ambition that India will be self-sufficient in rice. But let me tell you that if you can extend to us a little bit of sympathy, we can make Orissa not only a granary of rice in India but in the Far East. Remember that in pre-partition days the province of Sind was charging Rs. 2 as export duty on every maund of food grain that was exported. As a result of that, it was able to pay up its loan which had accrued out of the Sukkur Barrage. We are not supplicating for money. We are not begging for money. What we want is justice. Therefore I have suggested in my amendment that the procurement of rice and other food grains should be done at the State level ; the State, taking into consideration its own requirements, will fix a price, and then it will be up to the Central Government to accept it or not. If the Centre argues that if such a price is charged it would upset their plans, then we will accept from the Centre a subsidy which will compensate us for our loss. The Central Government is incurring a loss of Rs. 35 crores in giving food subsidies on the rotten foodstuffs imported from the United States. Why then should you not subsidise these golden particles of food which our people produce in the rice

bowls of coastal Orissa, for whom life is all a big tragedy, an ocean of tears and mud ? It is their moral right, and you cannot deprive them of that right. Therefore, Sir, I have suggested this most innocent and innocuous amendment and I hope that the hon. Food Minister will kindly take it into consideration while he pays his left-handed compliments to Orissa:

SHRI B. GUPTA : Mr. Deputy Chairman, it is in the very fitness of things that we should have taken up here for discussion the food situation in the country, but it is equally lamentable that our charming Food Minister should not have come here to recount tragedies and miseries and agonies that have beset not only Rayalaseema, but countless other villages of India.

Sir, it is five years since the Congress came into positions of power and it was on the 29th of June 1949 that our hon. Prime Minister gave an assurance to the country over the radio that by 1952 the country would be self-sufficient in food. Today, Sir, three years have passed since that assurance was given by no less a man than the Prime Minister of India. We are in the dark today. Famine and scarcity stalk the country bringing in their wake hardships and sufferings which it is impossible to recount within the time allotted to me. It is no use, Sir, giving us statistical figures—dry figures—here. It is necessary today for the men in power to have human sympathies and a proper approach to the problem with a broader vision to solve the basic conditions that need to be tackled.

Sir, the food situation continues to be as acute as it ever has been. In fact, Sir, it is much worse today than it was in the days of the British. Before the war the total imports amounted to 1.5 millions and the deficit was more or less of that order. Today, Sir, as the hon. Minister himself has said, the average imports over the last five years have come to about 3 million tons.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI
I never said it.

SHRI B. GUPTA : And if we look at the deficit, the deficit in the food items is as great as the deficit in the items of Congress politics. This is the position, Sir, today. After five years of so-called independence, we find ourselves in a state of mounting deficit. This is not the time for complacency. This is not the time to regale a country with fatuous figures trotted out by this or that Statistical Department. This is not the time for the hon. Ministers to compete with each other in initiating gambles in regard to the food policy. This is not the time, Sir, for the hon. Food Minister to quarrel with the Prime Minister and *vice versa* leaving the people alone, about the food situation. The time has come when the issue has to be frontally faced. The time has come when you must rise above petty considerations and grapple with the problem with the courage that it requires.

Sir, we come from a land—West Bengal—which is in the grip of famines—famines created not by malevolent nature, but created by the enemies of the people. It is therefore, Sir, that we call it man-made famine. Now, Sir, we wish the hon. Prime Minister of India, who, after his release from prison, declared to the country that he would have taken strong action against profiteers and black-marketeers if he had been in power, to take such action against those profiteers who have brought about this havoc in this country. We wish him to try his hand a little against the landlords and *jotedars* that lie at the root of this man-made famine and scarcity. But nothing of the sort has been done. We here talk about control and decontrol and nothing else. Now, Sir, I would not go into that controversy at this stage. We know, Sir, the conditions that necessitated the introduction of control still remain. But we want a proper approach to this problem of food. For instance, Sir, it is a great and monumental scarcity that exists today in the country in terms of our needs. Again, Sir, we find that the landlords and profiteers remain as unbridled as they have ever been before. We find that when these two

factors remain intact, untouched, unsubdued and untamed it is sheer gamble that one should moot the question of introducing decontrol. I know the hon. Food Minister introduced the slogan of 'progressive decontrol'. He tried to implement it. He was backed by the hon. Chief Minister of Madras who suddenly discovered that the profiteers had become God's own children. I know, Sir, that view is not, in that language, shared by the hon. Prime Minister, who calls it 'progressive readjustment'. The idea behind all these policies is to shirk the responsibility of feeding the people—the people who are famine stricken, the people who have been plunged into the bottomless pits of human degradation and suffering and the people who have been driven to all kinds of unimaginable destitution. That is the responsibility—the responsibility of feeding the people—that they are not accepting, they are shirking it.

MR. Deputy Chairman, the hon. Food Minister is very happy with the state of affairs in the various States. He thinks the price has gone down from Rs. 40 to Rs. 30 or from Rs. 30 to Rs. 20. May I ask him, Sir, through you, one question? How does it help the people who do not have any purchasing power at all? How does it help the people of a country whose national *per capita* income comes to about 20 or 25 rupees a month? It is understandable for the hon. Ministers and Deputy Ministers and their camp followers to rejoice when the price comes down from Rs. 50 to Rs. 40. But how does it console those persons who are dying every day in the countryside? How does it help those people who have no money to buy anything on earth at all? Still it is being claimed that the food price has fallen from 40 to 30. It is absolutely impossible for the majority of our countrymen to pay for food at that price. Therefore, let us not talk about this fall in food prices. We also know that your claims are false. In West Bengal, for instance, the prices, after the abolition of this so-called modified

rationing, have gone up. The same has happened in other States. So, let us not have that kind of illusory figures, fantastic ideas about the fall in prices. If you keep in mind the purchasing power of the people, the capacity of the people, you will accept that, even if the prices have slightly fallen in some places, it does not mean anything to the people.

Sir, I should like to come to this import business. I understand, Sir, why this import is going on, but I would not go into that story at this stage. Imports have piled up, and for that, according to the report of the Planning Commission, India has been drained to the extent of Rs. 720 crores.

SHRI M. VALIULLA (Mysore) : In how many years?

SHRI B. GUPTA: For a poor country like India to be robbed of so much money is unimaginable.

KHWAJA INAIT ULLAH : In how many years ?

SHRI B. GUPTA : But these imports are not going to solve the problem, they will not arrest scarcity. Unless the peasantry is given land free, you cannot solve the food problem ; you cannot get away from scarcity and want. You cannot climb out of the necessity of these tremendous imports which cost the exchequer so much money.

I want to take up the procurement policy. They have given up the responsibility of feeding the people. They have introduced the levy system. The levy system is extortion so far as the peasantry is concerned.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : May I say that this system of levy was suggested to me by the Communists when I had gone to Bengal so that the poor people may not suffer from procurement.

SHRI B. GUPTA : Very well, Sir. I hope, Sir, that the hon. Food Minister will be mindful of protecting the poor. But I tell you that the Communist Party has never said that they should

have a levy so far as the peasantry is concerned. The Communist Party of Bengal said—and I take full responsibility for this statement—“Go and catch the landholders, the *jotedars*, who hoard rice. Impose the levy system on them.”

SHRI GOVINDA REDDY : They say one thing in towns and another thing in villages.

SHRI B. GUPTA : Hon. friends on the other side should not be forgetful of the fact that the peasants and the landlords are not the same categories of people, that these two terms are not interchangeable. It is true we said, levy, but levy not against the peasantry, but levy against those people who make it their business to bloat themselves on human suffering, by hoarding stocks of foodgrains.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : The suggestion about the *jotedars* was made yesterday after we had accepted the suggestion in Calcutta.

KHWAJA INAIT ULLAH : They are not satisfied with anything.

SHRI B. GUPTA : We have a daily paper. We have many other publications. I do not know where the hon. Food Minister got his information from. He is a very charming person and if he had cared to ascertain properly, he would have seen that we also mentioned *jotedars*. Let us not confuse ourselves. *jotedars* and zamindars are all landlords. There is no difference between tweedledum and tweedledee. It was said that the Bengal Government wanted to have 4 lakh tons of foodgrains.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : You have only three minutes more, including the time you have taken in the lunch interval.

SHRI B. GUPTA : That is why we said, Sir, that it was possible to procure 4 lakh tons of foodgrains from the landlords of West Bengal, whether you call them *jotedars* or zamindars, I do not care. They control nearly 50%

[Shri B. Gupta.]

of the total cultivable land in West Bengal. They are also cornering about 30% of the food grains that are produced there. When you consider that we produce nearly 40 lakh tons of food grains, it is quite possible to get that quantity from the hoarded stocks of that section of the population. I would like to have an assurance from the hon. Minister that this kind of predatory procurement against the peasantry will be stopped immediately. At the same time, I want to have an assurance from him that the rationing responsibilities of the city of Calcutta will continue to be shouldered by the Central Government. Also I want an assurance from him that he will see to it that the people of Asansol and Kharagpur, if rationing is going to be stopped there, will be fed by the Central Government. Rationing should not be abolished but if it is still abolished, then it is his duty to ensure that the people get food at the prices they can afford. Sir, I would like to tell the hon. Minister that his policy may be a fine gamble of the Cabinet Ministers, but it will spell disaster to the country, as it would throw the famine-stricken people into the clutches of hoarders and blackmarketeers and profiteers still further. Be true to your own pledges. Before they came to power, they said they would take the responsibility of feeding the people. Let them live up to their own past pledges. Their own pledges have been broken. I hope, Sir, that they will now reconsider the whole matter and assume responsibility for feeding the people. Everything else is secondary. It is only the human life that is cheap in the present regime, every thing else is dear. The present state of affairs has got to be put an end to, and without doing it, there is no point either in his smiling or in his nodding.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : We will meet again at 2-30 P. M.

The Council then adjourned for lunch till half past two of the clock.

The Council re-assembled after lunch at half past two of the clock.

(MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair)

SHRI H. P. SAKSENA : (Uttar Pradesh) Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, before I start, I make out of the time allotted to me, a voluntary cut of 30 seconds for the benefit of the gentleman who may follow me. Sir, I deem it my duty to congratulate the hon. Minister for Food for the marvellous improvement that he has made in the position of Food today, as compared with the position when he took up the portfolio in May last. There has been a psychological change, and people have their confidence restored and we hear it said that since Mr. Kidwai is at the helm of affairs so far as food is concerned, everything will go well. It is a great gain that we have achieved so far as food is concerned. The entire atmosphere has been changed. There is a talk in the streets ; there is talk in the market place that since Mr. Kidwai is in possession of the Food Department, all will go well. Hopes have been raised in the minds of the people that these controls will be waived. The process started with the abolition of controls in Madras. Unfortunately, he started with the benighted State of Madras. Had he started with his own State of U. P. things would have been better and more glorious. I am sure, Sir, under the guidance of the present hon. Minister for Food, no tragedy like that of the year 1943 can ever happen. I have my own quarrels with him so far as the procurement price is concerned. I am not in favour of this high procurement price which he has allowed the various States to fix. I would like the prices to go down and they cannot go down unless the procurement prices are also brought down. I am all sympathetic towards our tillers of the land, the growers of foodgrains. But then, there must be a proportion between the prices and the existing level of economic factors. You, know, Sir, that many a gentleman before this, tried his hand at the solution of the food problem. They ~~are~~ all

properly diagnosed the disease but provided no remedy. It was stated that we were in the midst of a vicious circle of rising prices and rising wages. This circle still continues and it can never be brought to an end unless the prices go down.

Sir, the hon. Minister says that the purchasing power of the people has gone up. I have a quarrel with him on that score.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : Have I said anything like that ?

SHRI H. P. SAKSENA : I thought so ; I inferred it.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : That is not fair.

SHRI H. P. SAKSENA : I am definite that the purchasing power of the people has not gone up. It is going down. If you take into consideration the price of any of the commodities of life in these days, you will find the truth of my statement. If the Congress Government, or for that matter, any Government, wants to be popular, if it wants to be called a Government of the people, if it wants to be a welfare Government, it must be able to bring down the prices. I shall never be satisfied unless the prices are brought down.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : Our income is going up.

SHRI H. P. SAKSENA : But the income cannot be increased artificially. You cannot raise the standard of living of the people by raising the prices and raising the wages. We must produce more wealth and then the standard of living of the people will rise automatically.

The hon. Food Minister compared the prices with the prices that were prevailing in May 1952 and assured us that the abolition of rationing has not adversely affected the people of Madras. That is all very good. It is an indicator of the fact that similar controls can progressively be abolished in every State in India. It will be a happy day indeed for many people

when these controls are abolished. I say that this Control system has always been a controversial matter. Some people like it very much. Others do not. But then, it is for the Government to determine whether controls are to be maintained ; and if and when controls are abolished, I request the Government to see that before that abolition takes place all that army of people who man the Control Department are properly provided for in other Departments. They should not be thrown away on the street.

SHRI GOVINDA REDDY : That will be another colossal problem.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY : It will probably reduce the expenditure.

SHRI H. P. SAKSENA : The hon. Minister for Food said that more people are being fed today by fair price shops than before. That indicates the low purchasing power of the people. Had they more money they would certainly have gone to the open market and not taken the trouble of standing in queues at the ration shops. So, my theory that the purchasing power of the people has not gone up has been proved.

Now, coming to U. P. Sir, the hon. Food Minister claims that the prices of food grains have considerably gone down. I do not know what he means by it. If it means his own district of Barabanki it may be correct. But so far as Lucknow is concerned, unless things have materially changed during the last three weeks since I left the city of Lucknow, I found that the food grains were selling at the same exorbitant prices at which they were selling before in the open market. In the ration shops, the wheat that we used to get at 2 1/2 measures a rupee has been cut down to 2 1/4 measures. Of this, I complained before and I complain about it once again.

The hon. food Minister also tried to make out a point asking why, if prices are not going down, there was no agitation.

SHRI RAFI AHMEDK IDWAI : I did not say that.

SHRI H. P. SAKSENA : Very well, I accept that you did not.

KHWAJA INAIT ULLAH : But somebody said it.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : No, nobody has said it.

SHRI H. P. SAKSENA : I am sure somebody has said that. I do not mean the Food Minister. Somebody has said that if prices had not gone down, there would have been agitation. So far as agitation is concerned, we are not used to agitate. We remained under a foreign Government for more than a hundred years. We did not raise our little finger to throw it off all those years. Therefore, what does it matter if the prices are a little higher. We are used not to agitate.

KHWAJA INAIT ULLAH : You agitated for more than 30 years against the British Government.

SHRI H. P. SAKSENA : Now one salient feature and one hopeful sign in the statement of the hon. Food Minister was that he said that production was rising, and I am a believer in this that our production is actually rising. This is a very hopeful sign and I congratulate the hon. Minister if he has had any share in the development of that production.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : I have not.

SHRI GOVINDA REDDY : Have you any share in the production ?

SHRI H. P. SAKSENA : None. There was another encouraging remark by the Food Minister and it was that the imports were decreasing. I am deadly against these imports. I wish we did not import even a single ounce of foodgrain. For an agricultural country like India, to be importing food grains from outside is a disgraceful thing. So I am very glad to learn that the import of food grains is decreasing and that there is a carry over of 18 lakh tons which I hope will sustain us for a few months. Now this is all I had to say about the statement of the hon. Food Minister.

I now come to the speech of my hon. friend Mr. B. C. Ghose with whom it is very painful to disagree because of all the Members on the Opposition, he is one of those few who always take a sane and reasonable view of things. He complained that the Government had no policy for food. I humbly submit that the only policy that the Government of India has for food is the policy of self-sufficiency. That is all. That can be described in one word. Whatever you mean by it, if your country is self-sufficient in the matter of food, that is the policy of the Government. He also complained that the figures given by the Government were not dependable.

Now if they were not dependable, the figures quoted by my friend were also not dependable. So we are quits on that matter.

Mr. Rajah has also made some complaint. He is very weak in mathematics and all the figures that he quoted are wrong. Previous to this also he quoted some figures, left the House, came back and corrected his own figures. So I don't take his figures into account. Now Mr. Rajah says "never a borrower nor a lender be" but I don't know what else to be then. I think he wants us to be a broker in an insurance company. That I am not going to be.

Mr. Malkani's speech was the speech of a displaced person who is afraid of his own shadow and suspects all and everything that comes around him.

Mr. Mahanty's amendment I oppose.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Your time is up. Prof. Ranga.

PROF. G. RANGA (Madras) : Mr. Deputy Chairman, as I heard some of the speeches delivered in the morning, I began to feel whether our friends were still under the impression that there was a British Government on that side and they were arraigning it for all its commissions and omissions during the past 170 or 180 years. But at the same time one of them gave the impression that he was conscious of

the fact that the Government has come in only during the last 5 years. But he began to ask what it is that this Government has done within the first 5 years of its existence. I would answer it by just giving this information that there were several Governments which came into existence more through violence than through peaceful revolution which during the first 5 years of their regime had to witness the starvation of lakhs of people, if not going beyond a million, and that is happening even now. Secondly, I had had complaints to make against the food policy of this Government during the last 5 years and also when its predecessor was here—the British Government,—but on this score that you should certainly, as at present the basic policy indicates, take up the responsibility of feeding the people of vulnerable sections of our population and also of areas. No objection to that. Secondly, in order to feed them you must naturally procure some grain. Therefore get it from the people—that also is their policy. We know the Planning Commission at long last has come to say on behalf of this Government as well as the State Governments that when you get this grain from the peasants, you should agree to pay a remunerative price, not the price which my friend wants to be paid whether it is remunerative or not in order that the consumer would get it cheaply, but a price that would encourage those people to go on producing more and more food. These are the three tenets of our basic food policy. I am in agreement with these three but in the process of implementation of this policy, there has been disagreement between the former incumbents of the Food portfolio as well as the Prime Minister who was then agreeing with them and myself because they first of all would not accept the responsibility of having to pay a remunerative price to the producers. Secondly they would not think of procuring only that much as would be needed in order to feed those people who were to be found in a vulnerable position. They would not leave the primary responsibility with the State but they took up

on themselves the general control over the whole situation and began to dictate to them. What was the consequence? The Government of India is far removed from the places where the people have got to live, hundreds of millions of them. They are also removed from the State Governments too and their officers. They had to depend upon their own civil service here who work up all these and who are to depend upon the statistics. These statistics, as Mr. Sidhva used to tell us again and again in the previous House, as many of our own friends have told us today and several friends had mentioned in the other House also the other day and these Ministers told each other on the previous occasion—these statistics are of different colours and different types and different magnitudes and come to different conclusions; so much so that these statistics ought not to have been relied upon to the extent that they had come to be relied upon by some of our own friends in Parliament and also by the Ministers. I was telling them but they would not listen to me. When they depended upon the statistics alone, they began to confuse the State Ministers when they came over here for their own conferences and used to dictate policies that they should pursue in their own States according to the statistics that these people had from the ICAR or whatever it is. So all these confusions had arisen. But the State Ministers also were not prepared to resign, were not prepared to threaten the Central Government because they were given this bribe of a subsidy from the Central Government. If you were to look into the facts of the subsidy, you would find that it was going on growing and growing. States which were surplus came to declare themselves to be deficits, less surplus and so on. The States which were deficit began to say they were becoming more and more deficit. The Central Government was depending upon the statistics which were sent up by these people who were interested in getting more and more subsidy. This game was going on I have been telling the Food Ministers about this thing. Some of the Food Ministers were in agreement with me

but they were helpless because they were being confronted by the statistics, placed before them by the highly specialised experts, and we had a Prime Minister who showed such implicit faith—most unfortunately for us—on these statisticians and the highly styled experts. There was a time when Mahatma Gandhi warned these People as well as the administration here, “Do not depend on the experts on all questions. Look at the condition of the people all over the country, at the producers and the consumers.” “Therefore he advised the people to give up control. They gave up control. When they gave it up one Minister suggested or asked—just as my friend here asks—“If the prices are not remunerative why all this production?” Well they seem to forget that there is what is called production under duress. The peasants have to produce, for they have no other choice. Otherwise they would not get a living. That happened in other countries also. There they did not produce and so they died, as well as the consumers. They died much earlier for the government came down upon them and finished them. They suffered even before the consumers began to suffer.

Well, then; as a result of the experiment of decontrol for ten months, they said, “The prices are going up.” A crisis had arisen. From the towns, the political parties, people who were catering to these people, who were holding vulnerable position in our industries, came to the Prime Minister and they had his ear. I was alone in that conference that they had called. I wanted a reorganisation of the controls but no, the Prime Minister agreed with those people and the controls were brought in again. In the other House I had the opportunity of listening to the speeches as well as to the statement of the Prime Minister while the debate on this subject was going on. I heard it from the Minister himself, that prices rose even after the controls had been imposed. That is a wonder of wonders. That was a telling argument that he pro-

duced. He gave all the facts and figures and they are there in the records of the debate. Prices went on rising. They could not help. On the other hand, these controls and the manner in which these controls were enforced, came in the way of peaceful procurement. It came in the way of voluntary co operation of the people in the procurement and thirdly it came in the way of even additional production also. Therefore the time had come, the time was ripe for a revision not of that policy, but in the programme of enforcing it. There were the previous Ministers also, but most unfortunately for us, either they allowed themselves to be guided by these experts or they were not able to convince the Prime Minister or they did not have sufficient strength within their cabinet or Governments. But fortunately Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai came to be in charge of this Ministry and soon as he came to be in charge of it, I knew that he would certainly try his best to bring back these things to the level not merely of commonsense, but to the level of reality and realism. What did he do? Instead of concentrating all this power here in the Centre, he simply told the State Governments to look after their own interests first of all with regard to this particular matter of feeding the people. Then he went round the country, visiting State after State. We all know what happened. Instead of trying to strike a balance for the whole of India, he tried to strike a balance for each State, in the light of their own experience. He wanted to know what the people felt. How much did they need? How many shops had been opened? How much was distributed? What was the total production from the locality? How much was met from within the State and how much from the Union Government or from some other State, out of imports? Having got all these figures, he came to an agreement with these people, as I understand it—I speak subject to correction—he came to an agreement with these people, a tentative agreement. He said, “So much is your surplus. Do you agree? Or so much is your deficit. Do you agree? If this is your surplus, if you get a decent

price, will you let it go to other deficit areas? Or if this much only is your deficit, I give this much quantity of grains. For the rest of it, can you make yourself responsible, your food administration?" That is how he, I think, came to agreements with these States, and on that basis, he has been placing the facts before this House and the other House. This might have given the impression to my friends here that the Minister has no policy. But that policy was already stated by the Prime Minister and the Planning Commission and in pursuance of that policy a programme had to be worked out. In the course of that programme, he has suggested certain modifications or alterations. In the implementation of the programme, instead of taking all the responsibility on the shoulders of the Centre, he has shifted the responsibility on to the State Governments where it ought to lie, to make good their deficit. He has done so by making it possible for the more deficit provinces to approach the surplus provinces directly, without having to come through the expertwise Central Government, to go to them directly with their permission and their knowledge and collect as much as they possibly could, with their permission and of course, with the co operation of the concerned surplus State Government, to take their grain to their own States and distribute it to their people. As regards the question of procurement, instead of having monopoly procurement whereby those people who had surplus had to surrender it to the Government and then take the risk of being asked even when they are not having any surplus at all to deliver just as much as they did when they had a surplus, now they have adopted this policy—a sensible policy I should say—evolved during the course of the tenure of the hon. Minister's predecessor—Shri Munshi—so far as sugar was concerned. You procure a certain quantity and the rest of it, you leave to the producers to sell in the free market. This policy has given us results on the sugar front. We know that. Instead of having, as we thought we would have, 11 lakh tons, we have now had as much as 15 lakh tons of

sugar. We are now faced not with a deficit but with a surplus. Therefore, is it not reasonable to say that the same policy should be adopted on the food front also? As soon as it was announced earlier, I was asking the Food Minister to extend it to the food front also. Unfortunately it was not accepted and now here is the Food Minister who comes and says, "I am prepared to give this freedom to the State Governments." Now, so much is said about partial or complete decontrol. Partial decontrol the people do not want. What they want is progressive decontrol, because they do not want it to be a reactionary thing, stultifying them. Then our friends ask the question, "When you have given up control, and your responsibility to feed the people, why do you procure anything at all?" This is an extraordinary argument, Sir. If they want Government to feed the people, there should certainly be procurement. What does the Government say? Does it say, "We give up the responsibility of feeding the people, the people in the vulnerable sections of our society and in our country?" From the fair price shops, at reasonable prices.....

SHRI B. GUPTA : Does the Government feed them now?

SHRI GOVINDA REDDY : They are living on air.

PROF. G. RANGA : I am glad the answer has been given. People are not dying.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Only two more minutes.

PROF. G. RANGA : I am glad my hon. friend has said it. There is the responsibility and Government does not want the people to die.

SHRI H. D. RAJAH : Nobody dies.

PROF. G. RANGA : They are not dying. Nobody can deny and say that people are not being fed. As was referred to this morning, they are feeding more than one million people

[Prof. G. Ranga.]

in Rayalaseema. Not only in Rayalaseema but also in other districts of Madras they feed people with gruel and other things. (*Interruption.*) It is no good interrupting me when I am just concluding. Let me complete my argument. We cannot expect the Government to straightaway pay remunerative prices to the producers, because they are not in a position to know what the remunerative prices are. So they have reached a particular price and agreed to pay that price to them and they say to our peasants, "Fifty or sixty per cent. of your surplus, you give to us at this price. In the past we used to take the whole of it. We now ask for only sixty per cent. of your produce. The rest you are free to sell at prices which would be reasonable, which would be found to be reasonable in the market by the people who want it, who want to purchase it." Now the peasants are satisfied and the consumers are satisfied too, because they find the stuff being made available to them. He said in one of the States more stuff was being made available and more people purchased even before the policy ~~that~~ came into force, because they wanted grain. Therefore, on all these three questions, vulnerable sections, remunerative prices and the total quantity, I am convinced, Sir, that the policy that my friend is pursuing stands justified, vindicated and all this long-winded and strong-worded speech that my friend has made is completely out of place, and is certainly out of place with this Government. May be, it could have been excusable or justified when the other Government was here.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN :
What time will the hon. Minister take for replying ?

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI :
I think, about 30 to 40 minutes, Sir.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN :
Mr. Deogirikar.

SHRI T. R. DEOGIRIKAR (Bombay) : Mr. Deputy Chairman, the House of the People has passed a motion that the general policy of the Government will be one of controls but, in particular areas and particular circumstances, there will be de-controls. In effect, it means that there might be controls wherever necessary and de-controls wherever possible. To me it appears that there is a war between scientists and psychologists. The scientists never care for the results their achievements will have on mankind ; the psychologists on the other hand are unconcerned about regimentation in life. Our food policy is subject to diagnosis ; there are surgeons on the left side and physicians on the right side and our Government is sandwiched between them. India could successfully or fairly successfully get over the food crisis not because of our efficient controls but because of our enormous imports. So long as our imports are dependable, there is no fear of death from starvation but, is there no humiliation in this dependence ? The Planning Commission will have to wage a war not against decontrol as such but against imports. Controls cannot shield them. Are controls and imports going to make planning successful ? One has humiliated us and the other has demoralised us. Either have controls, strict controls with austerity and stop humiliation or have imports and stop demoralisation. We cannot, unfortunately, fight both the evils simultaneously. May I ask one question, Sir ? Has our so-called policy of controls been successful ? Many of us, in fact, know that the haphazard controls have demoralised the country. So, at one end there is demoralisation and, on the other, there is humiliation. We are subjected to both the evils. If some great person comes forward and says that he will save the country from either of these evils, I will certainly bow my head before him.

The problem today according to me, is not pressing shortage of food in the country. People want work. The spectre of unemployment is slowly

marching upon us. I know there is famine and scarcity in many parts of our country. Maharashtra, for instance, is now in the grip of famine. I know that Government will supply food to those that are affected by famine, but, I fail to understand how Government will be able to give them work. Whether we import or not, whether we enforce our controls strictly or not, the problem of unemployment remains unsolved. Famine, combined with unemployment, is a catastrophe. War gave employment to many, deserving and undeserving. But, war-time employments have stopped and swelled, the army of the unemployed. Famine has added to it. I cannot imagine how the Planning Commission is going to make their plan successful under the circumstances which I have narrated. Our demoralisation has stabilised; the other friend, in the morning, said that controls have stabilised: I say that our demoralisation has stabilised and how, in the stabilised demoralisation, is our planning going to be successful? Even if it becomes successful physically, how it is going to add to our strength, I cannot understand. If an educated man becomes unemployed, he becomes class conscious all of a sudden and probably he becomes red; but, if an uneducated man becomes unemployed, he becomes lawless and a beggar. I am not afraid of the former but I am afraid of the latter.

We are told that our food statistics are unreliable. Does it mean that our production is more and is not accounted for or does it mean that our production is less and is shown as more? The latter cannot be the case when there is so much talk of shortage of food in the country. The food that is un-accounted for goes into the black market and rot sets in. I have no idea as to the amount of that black market food but it can very well be proved that even today ~~that even to day~~ we are better off as regards production than we were three years back. The reclamation of land, the fertilisers, the improved seeds, the minor irrigation schemes

and the abolition of zamindari have certainly added to our production in spite of the fact that our population is growing and the refugees have come in. It cannot be said that our Grow More Food Campaign has failed. In U. P., Bengal and Punjab, this year, we have got surplus production.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : No.

SHRI T. R. DEOGIRIKAR : Our reserves are good and our imports from countries with which we have entered into agreements are unavoidable. The inflationary trend has stopped and even today in some parts the free market prices are lower than the control prices. The purchasing capacity of the people has gone down. If you go into the market, you will find that merchants are complaining that articles other than food are not sold. The sale is reduced by 50%. Considering all these factors, I think, the time has come when Government will have to revise its policy. If, on the other hand, you are going to have controls in deficit areas and de-controls in surplus areas, there will be bad blood between State and State. Unfortunately, the South is deficit and the North is surplus. Let us try to avoid this conflict as soon as possible; let us share our difficulties, our worries and our sorrows equally.

SHRI H. P. SAKSENA : As brothers !

SHRI T. R. DEOGIRIKAR : Controls on millets are going, I am told; but, why they were kept so long, I cannot understand. Even if the controls on millets are going, they are going to remain in one form or the other. The inter-State barriers are not removed. I request the Government to take precautions as much as they like and do away with these barriers and allow the deficit States to make their purchases in the surplus States. It will be a great and good step towards equalisation. Controls have great potentialities, no doubt; but, are we prepared to have uniform

[Shri T. R. Deogirikar.]

and all pervading controls ? Are we prepared to have controls on birth ? Are we prepared to have controls on education, higher education which is turning out armies of potential unemployed ? Are we going to have control on production of food, cloth and the like ? Are we prepared to have controls or uniform policy as regards procurement, distribution and consumption ? Are we prepared to give employment to all ? If that is not possible, I request the Government to take all precautions they like and let the people be made to realise that they are responsible citizens of this country and must adjust for themselves. That will be a wise step, though a bold step. I know our people have got a wonderful capacity for adjustment. Our sugar problem was solved that way, and I am sure our food problem will be solved in a similar way. I am not an exponent of this theory or that theory. All I wish is that my country must progress peacefully and in an orderly manner. We have suffered sufficiently for its liberation. Government has no doubt protected the sapling of independence planted five years ago from cattle and reptiles, from elephants and tigers ; but it has not protected this sapling from worms and cankers that are sapping the juice from within. Everything is being done at the top. Lawlessness has resulted in gangsterism, in dacoities, in robberies, in thefts. It is increasing every day. I warn the Government that the time has come when you will have to look at the bottom and not at the top. Mahatmaji had advocated decontrol, and he was prepared for any exigencies that might come. Unfortunately his advice was not accepted.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY : It was given effect to.

KHWAJA INAIT ULLAH : It was tried.

SHRI GOVINDA REDDY : It was not accepted in the right spirit.

SHRI T. R. DEOGIRIKAR : He is no more, and there is no one to take up the responsibility. I request the Government not to put our people to hard trials. They have no capacity and no training for such ordeals. They have to be pardoned for their sins. I would ask the Food and Agriculture Minister to concentrate all his attention on production. Let us change our attitude. I was amazed the other day when I was told in a reply that more than one crore acres of cultivable land are lying idle in this country. Is it excusable, I ask ?

(Time Bell rings.)

Our food problem is capable of solution, not by controls and imports : controls are like a curfew order, and imports are like oxygen administered to a dying patient. Our food problem will not be solved by this artificial respiration. Ceaseless efforts must be made. All our activities must be directed towards one end—not only the activities of the Food Ministry but of all of us who claim to be representatives of the people. We must direct all our energies towards production and greater production. That way alone our food problem will be solved and by no other.

Mr. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Before we proceed further, I want to know how many hon. Members feel that it is absolutely necessary for them to speak.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY : May I make a submission, Sir ? I am sure the House will agree to sit longer. If the Minister would start at 5 o'clock, we could sit longer.

KHWAJA INAIT ULLAH : We have to go to a party meeting.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY : It is a very important debate, and I would make a request to the hon. Whip in this connection.

SHRI GOVINDA REDDY : It is an important meeting, and it is after five o'clock. It is the Party's General Council meeting.

AN HON. MEMBER : As the matter is important, we can extend the debate till tomorrow.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : No. We have to close the debate today. I would request Members to take 10 minutes each. Mr. Sundarayya.

SHRI P. SUNDARAYYA : I want 15 minutes.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : No. There are a number of Members wishing to speak.

SHRI P. SUNDARAYYA : I have been standing up since the morning.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : I know but I had to call the Members who had given notice of amendments.

SHRI P. SUNDARAYYA : I do not want to speak.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : Would you not reconsider your decision, Sir? It is not possible to do full justice to the subject within ten minutes, because there are certain speakers like Pandit Kunzru, or Mr. Sundarayya, who happens to be the Leader of a Party.....

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : What can I do?

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY : The Congress Party, I am sure, can accommodate the House in this matter. All the Members are not of the General Council. The whole party need not go there.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU : We are not bound here to take note of the fact that the Congress Party is meeting. Would you have granted a request from this side if some of us had said that members of the party were going to meet at five o'clock and therefore the meeting of the House should not be prolonged?

KHWAJA INAIT ULLAH : At the same time, we are not bound to sit after five o'clock.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : The House will meet for half an hour

more but hon. Members will take only 10 minutes each, because there are a large number of Members wishing to speak.

SHRI J. R. KAPOOR (Uttar Pradesh) : We fixed up our programmes in the definite knowledge and belief that the Council would not sit beyond five o'clock.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY : We are here at the Council's service for twenty-four hours.

SHRI J. R. KAPOOR : This is an important programme, which we fixed up in the definite belief that we would be free at five o'clock.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Such of them as feel that it is absolutely necessary to go there can certainly go. I hope the Minister will be here.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : I will be here as long as the House sits.

PROF. G. RANGA : Sir, may I make a small submission? Even when in the past the Chairman fixed any time limit, he used to keep to himself the right to extend it in the case of a few—such of them whom he considered to be deserving of such extension of time.

SHRI B. GUPTA : May I make a submission?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Hon. Members are losing time.

SHRI B. GUPTA : I will be very brief. The Congress side has spoken. They all belong to the same bat and their Leader on the front is there to speak. (*Interruptions.*)

SHRI GOVINDA REDDY : Is it not so on that side also? They can also put up one from among themselves to speak.

SHRI B. GUPTA : Let me explain the position.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Order order. Please avoid offensive words.

SHRI B. GUPTA : We would like to hear the views of all the parties. I spoke for fifteen minutes on the assumption that the Leader of our Party would be given more time. Otherwise at that time I would have disturbed you by insisting on more time. I did not do so in that expectation. I hope you will kindly reconsider your ruling, considering how important it is to allow this side to represent its point of view much more adequately than it is possible to do within the very limited time that you are going to allow.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : The hon. Member has taken three minutes of that time. Mr. Ranawat.

SHRI M. S. RANAWAT : Mr. Deputy Chairman, I have not much to say, particularly when our time is limited ; I will simply give expression to some of my feelings on this subject. Policy or no policy, statistics or wrong statistics, the basic facts are there. We started these controls in 1942, and I happened to be on the Rajputana Advisory Committee. And a time came when control and rationing had to go to every possible town, and we were told that we had to ration every town, with a population of 10,000 or 5,000. I remember that in my state I had to ration about two lakhs of people. At that time there were various factors to be taken into account. Then the decontrol business came. But I believe Gandhiji's theory was not given a full chance, because psychologically the country at large or the officials at that time were not prepared to follow it. Fortunately now we are at a stage when generally the idea of decontrol is favoured. But the whole point is this. If we stick to files and records we are led nowhere. And I have to congratulate Mr. Kidwai on his having gone beyond these papers. He has what I call the "horse-sense" to see through the problem, and therefore he has given this latitude of decontrol.

And it is safer that we proceed this way. Ultimately this thing will bring good results.

Then, Sir, the prices are at the present time coming down and lately the banks have refused to advance loans for a number of agricultural products. And that was one factor that suddenly the agricultural prices came down. The food prices are not coming down at the same level as the other prices. There is a big gap yet and therefore that risk is there. But that risk we have to face.

Now, Sir, another trouble that is there in the villages is that the purchasing power of the people is certainly going down and unemployment of agricultural labour is definitely increasing.

Another thing that is important is that in the States the machinery was not strong enough and the people can do anything they like, because your controls are not so rigid. That is, State Governments' machinery was so loose and perhaps corrupt that people somehow or other could escape out of it. Otherwise if things were allowed to take their natural course there would have been great trouble in the country. So, now we are on a correct path and it is for the State Governments and Central Government to find ways and means for the employment of village labour and unless we tackle that problem properly, there will be another trouble coming up.

Now, another thing about our plans and policies is this. No plans will work and no policies will work unless you have got a trained and reliable machinery to carry them out. Today my son is a farmer, I am a farmer and what do I find ? I find that at the village level there is no Government existing at all. If any one wants his canal trouble removed, there is no machinery for that. No remedy. So my complaint is that we are very short of experienced officers, of reliable officers. I do not know why in our country the army officers or the army people have not been put on this kind of work. My own suggestion to

you is that you have got a large number of army officers, colonels and brigadiers and other pensioners. There are Indian officers and jamadars. My suggestion is that if Government puts those people on this work in connection with the plans of Government which are to be executed your plans will work properly. After all these are the people who have got training in obedience and in carrying out things justly and properly, although they would not be able to produce files or write long reports.

The third thing I suggested is this that our whole Hindu society is a planned society. Our ancestors have planned this country for millions of years in such a way that we are somehow or other able to get through all kinds of troubles and difficulties. There is a natural traditional plan. That institution is there. Instead of destroying it, you have to bring it back again. You have to revive it. Now look at our old system of rents and revenue. The Government partly took in cash and partly in kind. But the old Moghul Emperors because they wanted cash for paying their mercenary armies, tried to introduce these cash revenue settlements. So the Government had nothing to do with that thing. And the Britishers again introduced it further. In the old days in all States the amount was paid in both cash and kind. If we go back to our old traditional methods of collections, cash and kind both were in practice. My friends will say 'Oh, it is colossal, it is impossible'. Well, nothing is impossible. Today we have been doing it in a different way. You have got so many systems today. You have one system of collecting cash. Then you have the other system of collecting in kind. Then you have still another system to sell it back. Now that institution fortunately was in existence in my part of the State, Sir, about 10 years back. It was actually a living institution. But the Englishmen or some other people, in order to increase cotton or jute or all these commercial commodities, got all these things destroyed. And that institution may now be studied by

our experts and it may be brought into force.

Then I might again repeat that unless at the village level all your officers or the men you engage are experienced people, honest people, no plan will succeed. In fact, all your plans will be in the Parliament House, Legislatures, books and literature and then there will be chaos. If you want to save yourself from that situation, you have to work according to the old methods and in our own traditional ways.

Now take for example my own State of Rajasthan where there is a chronic food shortage. How have the people lived there through centuries? I can explain. The whole life of the country is balanced and planned over hundreds of years. Every man in the country knows when a bad time comes, where to go, how to manage, where to take the cattle and so on and so forth. The whole thing is a planned thing. These planned things were all disturbed when your laws came in. You said "You cannot bring food from U. P. or this place or that place".

(Time bell rings.)

So first of all, all that we have to do is to study the traditional methods of planning and you will find there is much in them which you can understand, study and put into practice.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN :
Dr. Kunzru.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU : I regret, Sir, I cannot complete my arguments in ten minutes.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN :
I will give you fifteen minutes.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU : Mr. Deputy Chairman, we shall do well to remember, when considering the new food policy, the reasons for which the Government of India decided to secure proper distribution of the available food. Our food economy, as the war showed, depended on the

[Shri H. N. Kunzru.] import of about $1\frac{1}{2}$ million tons of rice from Burma. When Burma passed under Japanese control, these imports ceased and concurrently the prices of food grains began to rise. It was then felt that it was necessary to control the policy with regard to the procurement and distribution of food grains so that the poorer classes might not be hard hit.

SHRI B. B. SHARMA (Uttar Pradesh) : In cities only.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU : The problem was one in the cities only because it is there that the producers and traders make large profits.

PROF. G. RANGA : Question.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU : When food movement was stopped, when food could not be moved from one place to another, it was obvious that the people living in the villages would be far better off than the people living in the towns. This policy did serve its purpose. This policy of procurement and distribution of food grains was based, in a way, on the policy of social justice.

Now, what is the position with regard to the production of food grains in our country. We imported in the year 1951, 47 lakh tons of food grains and in the year 1952, 39 lakh tons of food grains. That is, in these two years, we have imported 86 lakh tons. At the end of the year we shall have a closing balance of 18 lakh tons. Now, this shows, Sir, that during these two years, leaving aside the opening stocks, at the commencement of 1951, we have consumed about 68 lakh tons or nearly 35 lakh tons every year. If we review the figures with regard to the absorption of food grains during the last three years, we shall come to the same conclusion. Now, what is the reason why at this time the need should be felt for a change in our food policy? Formerly the deficit amounted to about $1\frac{1}{2}$ million

tons. Now, it seems that it amounts to $3\frac{1}{2}$ million tons. It was said by the hon. Food Minister in the recent food debate in the other House that production had risen since 1947-48. He compared figures that could not properly be compared. It has often been pointed out that the figures for 1947-48 and 1948-49 are not comparable with later figures. He nevertheless compared those figures, but whatever that may be, whether he is right or wrong, what we have to ascertain is the total increase in food production. It was claimed on behalf of the Government that this increase amounted to about $3\frac{1}{2}$ million tons i.e., about 35 lakh tons, but the Krishnamachari Committee has come to the conclusion that the total increase in production amounts to 27 lakh tons and it is after taking this increase into account that we find that we require to import about $3\frac{1}{2}$ million tons annually, in order to provide for a fair distribution of food grains among the people. The Food Minister said in another place in the debate to which I have already referred that a change in the food policy had become necessary because the present policy hindered production, and in order to prove his point, he compared the figures with regard to acreage cultivation for Northern India and Southern India. Assuming that his figures were correct, they showed that cultivation had increased in Bihar, the Punjab and in the U. P. and that it had gone down in Madras and Mysore. If that is correct, then there is no doubt that the stringent procurement policy such as was followed had been an obstacle in the way of increased food production in the country and that the looser policy as he called it followed in the North had proved to be more successful. But here again, Sir, he compares the acreage relating to 1946 and 1947 with the acreage for 1951 and 1952. Now, these figures are not comparable as has been repeatedly pointed out, because the coverage for these years is not the same, there were non-reporting areas then and reports are received from those areas now. Consequently no conclusion can be drawn

from those figures relating to the acreage under cultivation. If you take the total production, then, too, it does not appear that the North had any decided advantage over the South or that the production in the North had recently gone up. This point was dwelt upon by the Finance Minister in the other place and I do not think that he has yet been controverted either by the Food Minister or by any other Member of either House.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : It had been.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU : My hon. friend states that it was controverted. He referred to the figures of procurement of food grains in Punjab and to the figure relating to the production of rice in Saurashtra. I shall take the figure relating to the production of rice in Saurashtra. He said that in Saurashtra, about four years ago, the production was only 5,000 tons and that it had gone up to 35,000 tons. I find from the figures provided in the official publications, even supposing that the figures given by him are comparable, that his contention is not proved. We find that in 1949 the production of rice amounted to only 5,000 tons. In 1946 it amounted to 38,000 tons. In 1947 it amounted to 34,000 tons and in 1948 to 17,000 tons. If, therefore, it increased after 1949 to 18,000 tons in 1950 and 25,000 tons in 1951—I do not find the figure 35,000 anywhere.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : It is for 1952.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU : I have got the figures from published statistics. Even supposing that for 1952 it is 35,000 tons, it does not prove anything.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : Why ?

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU : Because we see that in 1947 and 1948 the production was 38,000 tons and 34,000 tons respectively. As I have said,

these figures are not comparable. I hope, therefore, that I have shown that the contention that in the North there has been an increase in cultivation while in the South there has been a decrease is not established by the figures quoted by the Food Minister.

Now, Sir, we come to the question of prices. My hon. friend, the Food Minister, has referred to Madras and U. P. Well, one U. P. member has differed from him with regard to the prices of food grains in the U. P. We have to remember certain factors in this connection. One factor is that prices generally are falling at the present time. If you take sugar, cloth, shoes and other articles of general consumption.....

KHWAJA INAIT ULLAH : Even gold.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU :.....you will find that there is a decline in prices. Probably the taxes that are levied by the Government in order to provide money for the economic development of the country have had the result of decreasing the purchasing power of the people.

In any case, the decline in the price of food grains, if that is correct, need not surprise us because, that is part of the phenomenon of the general decline of the prices of the goods required for daily use. Again, Sir, it has to be remembered in the case of Madras that formerly a good amount of food grains was procured by the Government. In the year 1951, the Madras Government procured about 10 lakh tons of food grains. In 1950, they procured a little over 11 lakhs. They do not procure that now. That consequently remains with the traders. But what we have to see is whether the off-take from the Government shops has gone down or not. My hon. friend the Food Minister himself has said that in Madras a larger number of people were being fed from the fair price shops than was the case before. That does not show anything.

[Shri H. N. Kunzru.]

It only shows that in Rayalaseema we are feeding a large number of people who were not fed before. The fact remains that a smaller number of people is now required to purchase in the open market than before.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : Therefore it is a relief.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU : That is not the whole of the story. This price cannot be compared with the price in the black market. The black market prices were higher, precisely because the quantity that found its way to the market was small. The law of demand and supply.....

AN HON. MEMBER : No.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU : The law of demand and supply applies as much to the black market as to the open market. Had a large quantity been available to the black market, had they been compelled to sell the food grains which they could not lawfully sell, the price would not have been so high. But it is precisely because the availability in the black market is so very limited that the prices in the black market rose. Now, however, the higher prices have to be paid by a large number of people. (*Time bell rings.*) Have I a minute or two or no ?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Please conclude soon.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU : I should like to ask him what would happen to fair price shops. In Madras, both rationing and procurement have been given up. But the fair price shops are in existence. Of course, it may be possible to continue them.....

PROF. G. RANGA : Procurement is not given up. In addition to procurement open market is allowed.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU : Some Madras people tell me that procurement is not given up.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : Procurement is going on.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU : Is the monopoly procurement given up or not ?

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : It has been replaced by levy system.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU : That means that there is another kind of procurement. But, if there is neither compulsory levy nor any other method of procurement of food grains, except by purchases in the open market, I should like to know how it will be possible for the Government to continue the fair price shops.

I should like to know the policy of the Government in this respect. I have one more question to put and that is that I understand that the inter-district movement of food grains in Madras has again been stopped or is about to be stopped. I should like to have some information about it.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : I will give it in a minute. There has been a failure of rain and consequently there is a failure of the millet crop. Therefore the ban is being reimposed about the millet movement.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU : If that is so, the millets have to be procured for Madras. Where will they be procured from—in the Madhya Pradesh or U.P. or anywhere else—and if these food grains are to be procured, how will they be procured? By an increase in levy or by procurement at a price fixed by Government or in the open market? If they are going to be from the open market, will not the prices rise ?

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : No.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU : There is no time for me to develop the subject further but what I would like to say at present is that no one wants rationing for its own sake. Rationing was resorted to under compulsion. It was resorted to because

it was felt that it was the only way of dealing with an acute situation. Now my friend the Minister has not shown that any of the factors that operated in the past have ceased to operate. Some small changes may be made here and there but the bigger changes that have been made in the U. P. and in Madras do not seem to be justified by the facts that he has placed before us so far and he has to bear in mind that he must have placed all the facts mentioned by him in his speech this morning and many more facts before the Planning Commission. I have not the time to read the quotation. The Commission has strongly expressed the opinion that apart from minor changes, the controls should be continued. Otherwise there would be a serious interference with the execution of the the Five Year Plan.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : The Planning Commission's Chapter on Food Policy is the same as I am following exactly—not a word more or less.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU : It is a great compliment to my hon. friend that he should have succeeded in getting his policy accepted and my fear is that as he goes on making further changes in his policy, he will be able to get them accepted.

SHRI D. NARAYAN (Bombay) :

श्री डी० नारायण (बम्बई) : श्रीमान् सभापति जी, बड़ी खुशो की बात है कि हमारे अन्न मंत्री जी ने डिफिट की ओर अपना कदम उठाया है। उन्होंने आज सुबह यह बतलाया कि उन्होंने आज तक क्या कोशिशें की और किस प्रान्त में क्या हो रहा है। मद्रास की बात कही गई, उत्तर प्रदेश की बात कही गई, आसाम की बात कही गई, परन्तु अन्न मंत्री जी बम्बई को भूल गये। बम्बई एक ऐसा इलाका है जो कि डेफिसिट (deficit) कहा जाता है और आज भी डेफिसिट है, वह आज डेफिसिट नहीं हुआ है बल्कि कई

वर्षों से चला आ रहा है। मैं अन्न मंत्री जी को एक मुझाव देना चाहता हूं और वह यह है कि बम्बई जो डेफिसिट है इसके कुछ कारण हैं। पब से बड़ा कारण तो यह है कि बम्बई एक इंडस्ट्रियल (industrial) प्रदेश है। वहां की साढ़े तीन करोड़ जनसंख्या है और साढ़े तीन करोड़ में करीब पौने दो करोड़ इंडस्ट्रियल एरिया (industrial area) में रहते हैं और वह यहाँ इस कारण रहते हैं कि उन्हें देश का कुछ काम करना है और वह उसे कर रहे हैं। कपड़े का ही मवाल ले लीजिये। यदि बम्बई आपको कपड़ा न दे तो आप कपड़ा पहिन नहीं सकते। तो यदि बम्बई आपसे अनाज मांगता है तो आपका मेरे ख्याल से, यह कर्तव्य हो जाता है कि आप बम्बई की दिक्कों कम करें। परन्तु देखने में हर वक्ता यह आया है कि हमारे बगल के भी जो प्रदेश हैं वह भी हमारी सहायता नहीं करते। मध्य प्रदेश हमारे बगल में है और दूसरी तरफ हैदराबाद है। दोनों प्रदेश सरप्लस (surplus) हैं और दोनों प्रदेश से हमको मदद पहुंच सकती है। मगर वहां में अनाज तो पहुंचता नहीं बल्कि दिक्कों पैदा की जाती हैं और दिक्कों कौन सी पैदा की जाती हैं? वह यह कि उस इलाके से कुछ अनाज यदि इधर आ जाता है तो सिवाय प्रासिक्यूशन्स (prosecutions) के और कुछ नहीं मिलता।

गत वर्ष का उदाहरण मैं आपको बताऊं। गत वर्ष मध्य प्रदेश में जो ज्वार और बाजरे का रेट था वह हमारे बम्बई इलाके से बहुत कम था। बम्बई इलाके में वालंटरी प्रोक्योरमेंट (voluntary procurement) जारी था। इधर-उधर के कुछ लोग अनाज लाते थे और इधर गवर्नमेंट को बेचते थे और पैसा कमाते थे। बहुत से लोग पकड़े गये और बहुतों ने नफा कमाया। तो मेरे कहने का मतलब यह है कि यह हालत बदल जानी चाहिये। अगर

[Shri D. Narayan]

ज्यादा नहीं कर सकते तो हमारे अन्न मंत्री जी इतना तो जरूर करे कि मध्यप्रदेश, हैदराबाद और बम्बई को मिला कर एक रीजन (Region) कर दें, अन्नप्रान्तीय व्यवहार शुरू कर दिया जाये और मेरा विश्वास है कि यदि इन तीनों प्रान्तों में ऐसा व्यवहार शुरू हो जाये तो बम्बई प्रान्त की जो कमी है वह बहुत कुछ दूर हो जायेगी, बल्कि करीब करीब दूर हो जायेगी।

दूसरी बात जो मैं कहना चाहता हूं वह यह है कि मेरी यह राय है कि हमारा देश ही नहीं, हमारे प्रदेश ही नहीं बल्कि हमारे हर एक जिला अन्न के मामले में स्वावलम्बी और स्वपूर्ण हो जाना चाहिए। बम्बई का इलाका भी स्वपूर्ण हो सकता है यदि आप कुछ निगाह दें। बम्बई प्रान्त में कुछ जिले ऐसे हैं कि जहां हर साल या दो साल के बाद अकाल आता ही है। चार पांच जिले ऐसे हैं; अहमदनगर, सोलापुर, बीजापुर आदि ऐसे कई जिले हैं जहां यदि देखा जाय तो हर साल या हर दो साल के बाद अकाल पड़ता है। वह न हो तो मुझे विश्वास है कि वहां ही इतना अनाज पैदा होने लग जायगा जिससे कि हमारे बम्बई की हालत बहुत कुछ सुधर जा सकती है। इस लिये हमें देखना चाहिये कि हम अकाल पीड़ित जिलों को किस तरह से सुधार सकते हैं। मैंने प्लानिंग कमीशन की रिपोर्ट को भी देखा। बहुत कुछ कीशिश की गई है, बड़े बड़े इरीगेशन (irrigation) के काम उसमें हैं, बड़ी बड़ी योजनायें उसमें हैं परन्तु जो अकाल पीड़ित प्रदेश हैं उनके लिये मुझे कोई खास योजना दिखाई नहीं दी। इस लिये अन्न मंत्री का ध्यान मैं इस ओर खींचना चाहता हूं। बम्बई एक प्रब्लम प्राविंस (problem Province) है क्योंकि सब से ज्यादा डेफिसिट प्राविंस यदि कोई है तो

वह बम्बई ही है। दूसरी बात यह भी है कि यह इंडस्ट्रियल प्राविंस है, इंडस्ट्रियल शहर चिल्लाना भी बहुत जानते हैं। आपकी नीति भी बहुत जल्दी खराब कर सकते हैं।

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI

श्री रफी अहमद किदवाई : नहीं कर सकते।

SHRI D. NARAIN :

श्री डी० नारायण : कोई तकलीफ यदि बम्बई में पैदा होती है तो सारा हिन्दुस्तान उसका परिणाम उठाता है। इसलिये मैं तो यह कहूंगा कि बम्बई जो डेफिसिट प्राविंस है उसकी ओर आपको सबसे प्रथम ध्यान देना चाहिये। सबसे बड़ी बात इस बारे में यह होगी कि मध्यप्रदेश और हैदराबाद को उसमें मिला दिया जाय।

तीसरी बात जो मुझे कहनी है वह यह है कि आज आपकी जो पालिसी (Policy) है उस पालिसी को मैं मानता हूं। मेरी तो ईश्वर से यही प्रार्थना है कि यह कंट्रोल (control) की बीमारी जल्दी ही यहां से चली जाय और उसका एक मुख्य कारण है। कंट्रोल ने हमसे हमारी मनुष्यता छीन ली है, हमारा पड़ोसी धर्म जो था वह हमसे छीन लिया है। क्या हुआ है कि सरकार ने हमारे अन्न की जिम्मेदारी ले रखी है। हमारा किसान यह नहीं सोचता कि उसके ऊपर शहर वालों की कोई जिम्मेदारी है और न शहर वाले यह सोचते हैं कि गांव वालों की तरफ भी हमें कोई निगाह देनी चाहिये, दोनों परस्पर विश्वास खो बैठे हैं। न तो गांव वालों का विश्वास शहर वालों पर है और न शहर वालों का विश्वास गांव वालों पर है। होना तो यह चाहिये कि दोनों में बहुत अधिक भाई चारा हो, और आपस में एक दूसरे की मदद करने की भावना हो। आज हम देखते हैं कि किसान अपना स्वार्थ देखता है, मनी क्रप (money crop) पैदा

करता है और अनाज कम पैदा करता है। मैं आपको एक उदाहरण दूँ कि कुछ वर्ष हुए बम्बई प्रेसिडेंसी में यह नियम था कि पचास फीसदी एकड़ में अन्न पैदा किया जाय। क्या होता था कि जो हल्के दर्जे की जमीन रहती थी उनमें तो अनाज पैदा किया जाता था और जो कीमती और अच्छी जमीन होती थी उनमें किसान कपास, मूंगफली आदि चीजें पैदा करता था। उसे इस बात का ख्याल नहीं है कि वह दूसरे का हित देखे, वह हिसाब नहीं करता, उसे क्या परवाह है? वह तो सरकार जाने और उसका पड़ोसी जाने, शहर वाला जाने, वह यह नहीं समझता कि उसकी भी कुछ जिम्मेदारी है, उसके गांव की भी जिम्मेदारी है, उसके जिले की भी जिम्मेदारी है या उसके प्रान्त की भी कोई जिम्मेदारी है। यह जो मनुष्यता का भाव था, यह जो पड़ोसी-पन का भाव था उसको इस कंट्रोल ने मिटा दिया। इसलिये मैं तो बड़ी खुशी मानूंगा यदि किसानों के ऊपर यह जिम्मेदारी डाल दी जाय कि वह यह सोचने लगे कि यह हमारा धर्म है, यह हमारा कर्तव्य है कि हम अपने जिले की जिम्मेदारी ले लें। तो आज मुझे इस बात की खुशी है कि आप उस ओर एक कदम उठा रहे हैं और नैतिकता का मार्ग अपना रहे हैं।

आज करप्शन (corruption) को देखिये, यदि आज हमारे सामाजिक जीवन में और एडमिनिस्ट्रेशन में जो कुछ करप्शन है उसका कारण देखा जाय तो बहुत कुछ यह आपका कंट्रोल है। सामाजिक जीवन में देखा जाय तो आज किसान छोटी छोटी होर्डिंग (hoarding) करता है और उसका कारण यह है कि वह ब्लैक मार्केटिंग (black marketing) करना चाहते हैं। अपनी थोड़ी थोड़ी चीजें ब्लैक मार्केटिंग से बेचता रहता है और यही कारण है कि वह

छुपाकर होर्डिंग करता है। यदि आज तमाम किसानों का अनाज इकट्ठा किया जाय तो मैं समझता हूँ कि यह जो डेफिसिट कहा जाता है वह बहुत कुछ कम हो जाये। यह जो किसानों में छुपाने की आदत बढ़ गई है उसका कारण कंट्रोल है। व्यापार में भी वही हाल है। बाजारों में या शहर में जो चीजें कंट्रोल में पौने दो में मिलती हैं वही ब्लैक मार्केटिंग में ढाई रुपये में मिलती हैं। तो स्वाभाविक है कि किसान छिपाते हैं और ब्लैक मार्केटिंग करते हैं। यह छिपाना ही सब से बड़ी बुराई है। राष्ट्रपिता महात्मा गांधी ने कहा था कि "secrecy is a sin"। तो वह सीक्रेसी (secrecy) करना हमको किसी ने सिखाया है तो वह आपके कंट्रोल ने सिखाया है। इस लिये इस कंट्रोल को कम करिये।

रोज हमारे सामने यही कहा जाता है कि आप डेफिसिट में हैं, आपको खाना नहीं मिलेगा, आप मर जायेंगे, बंगाल में इतने मर गये, इससे हमारे में कुछ अदृष्टता पैदा हो गई है, हम कुछ विश्वास खो बैठे हैं। इसलिये मैं यह नहीं कहता कि आप कंट्रोल को फौरन एक ही मिनट में खत्म कर दें, जैसे कि इलेक्ट्रिसिटी (electricity) में स्विच का बटन नीचे किया और रोशनी हो गई, उस तरह से करें, यह मैं नहीं चाहता परन्तु आपका रास्ता, आपका ध्यान और आपकी दृष्टि वहीं होनी चाहिये जिससे कि स्वालम्बन बढ़े और यह देश सम्पूर्ण हो जाय। यदि इस रास्ते से आप जायेंगे तो मेरा विश्वास है कि बम्बई इलाका भी जो आज डेफिसिट दिखाई देता है वह भी डेफिसिट नहीं दिखाई देगा।

(Time bell rings.)

आपको नीचे से ऊपर जाना चाहिये न कि ऊपर से नीचे और नीचे के मनुष्य

[SHRI D. NARAYAN]

में उसकी अपनी जिम्मेदारी का ख्याल पैदा करना चाहिये और जो आपने सबको पालने का इनीशियेटिव अपने ऊपर ले रखा है उसके बजाय सबको पालने की जिम्मेदारी पैदा करने वाले को दे दीजिये ।

For English Translation see Appendix III, Annexure No. 54

PRINCIPAL DEVAPRASAD GHOSH (West Bengal) : Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I am sorry our hon. the Food Minister, Mr. Kidwai has not received the sympathetic treatment at the hands of most of our Opposition speakers that he deserved today. For, frankly speaking, though I have my differences with the political party to which he has the honour to belong, I have the greatest admiration for the courage he has shown in trying to chalk out a definite departure in the line of policy with regard to the food problems of India.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : The Food Minister does not agree with this.

PRINCIPAL DEVAPRASAD GHOSH : I suppose our Prime Minister would be angry if I insinuate that there is a departure from the food policy. I may modify my statement and say that the hon. Food Minister has made some modification, some readjustment or whatever it is : the English language is a very powerful one and we have got any number of words that we can use. In any case, I unreservedly convey my congratulations to him.

There has been talk in this House, and in the other House also the other day, about the dangers of complacency. Complacency has its dangers, no doubt ; but, I suppose these dangers are nothing compared to the dangers of the policy of drift and despondency. I always like the man who has got the dash and the daring, the vision and the imagination to strike out new paths or modification of old paths if circumstances

required such modification. I would congratulate him also on another aspect of his activities, inasmuch as the hon. Mr. Kidwai has plucked up the courage to cut through the tissue of cobwebs spun by the figures of professional official statisticians. I myself have been a professional mathematician all my life and I know something of statistics.

SHRI M. GOVINDA REDDY : You help the Minister.

4 P.M. PRINCIPAL DEVAPRASAD GHOSH : I know about its interpolations and corrections and random samplings, and loadings and weightages, and all that sort of thing. I do not imply that statistics by itself is undependable. But it all depends on the nature of the data which are collected. I hope you, Sir, and the hon. Members sitting here will excuse me if I tell you a story about it. Once upon a time a sub-divisional officer took it into his head to institute a census of asses in his sub-division. Naturally he asked his circle Officer to make the necessary enquiries, and the latter sent out chowkidars for the purpose. The chowkidars went round the countryside and asked the dhobis how many asses they had got. Now, naturally, our unsophisticated villagers are a bit suspicious. When Sarkar Bahadur launches upon some sort of statistics and census, they scent mischief : they think some sort of tax must be up the sleeves of the Sarkar Bahadur. They said, "We have got no asses." So the chowkidar went to his circle officer and reported, "There are no asses in my ilaka". Well, when the sub-divisional officer came and asked the circle officer, "What have you done about the census of asses in your circle ?", the reply was, "so far as my circle is concerned, there are no asses". Then the sub-divisional officer said, "You must be mistaken. There must be at least two asses in the sub-division : one is you, and the other is myself."

So much for the manner in which statistics are collected officially and then sprung upon our heads in a portentous manner. Their basis really

lies in the reports of the village chowkidars. Now, what I say is that if the figures collected through the activities of these agents are practically fake figures—faked on account of indolence or ignorance or prejudice or worse—then it is no wonder no reliable conclusions can be derived from them. And I suppose it is for this reason that it is not far wrong when people say that there are three kinds of lies : No. 1, lies proper; No. 2, damned lies and No. 3, statistics. Anyway, I would congratulate my hon. friend Mr. Kidwai on both aspects of his activities, on his having struck a new path in Food policy, and on his having cut across the cobweb of statistics.

Now, Sir, I should be very brief, on the main question of Food policy, because as a matter of fact most of the ground which I sought to traverse has been traversed by previous speakers. Only I want to point out one thing, and it is this, and in this matter I regret to have to differ to some extent from my esteemed friend Dr. Kunzru viz., as to the actual position about food deficit or surplus in India as a whole. Now, the Planning Commission has been very cautious about this. Even the members of the Grow More Food Enquiry Committee have been very cautious. They say that the statistics are unreliable and therefore nothing definite can be said as to whether there is a deficit at all. The only net inescapable fact is that previously 1 1/2 million tons had to be imported, and now imports have gone up to the extent of something like 3 million tons a year. They say the production is about 45 million tons, and the deficit must be 3 million tons, because the imports are 3 million tons. Now, we can easily frame figures of our food requirements on a common sense basis. Of course common sense is a commodity which, we all know, is very uncommon in these days of doctrinaire politics and economics for we always refuse to face facts. I should put it like this. An hon. Member was very enthusiastic about the quantum of food stuffs, cereals, etc., that is allowed. Now,

the rationed quantum, I suppose is something between 12 and 13 oz. We do not know much about English weights, but we know that the average food required in cereals is practically half a seer per day—one *pau* a meal. One *pau* per meal looks like the average. Possibly our working classes who have to do physical labour take more and desk workers take less. But averagely speaking we might say that half a seer per day is the average for people in India. And if there are 36 crores of people in India, a simple calculation will show that this population would require 60 million tons of foodstuffs annually. That is the figure that emerges on the basis of half a seer per day for 36 crores of people. I stress this particularly because in the matter of food it is better to err on the higher side than trying to starve people with a ration of 12 ounces and 13 ounces and compelling them to resort to the black market. Any way, if 60 million tons of foodstuffs are required for healthy normal life in the whole of India, then the question is about acreage under food crops. This acreage is about 180 million acres; and there is no reason why such an acreage should not produce 60 million tons of food crops, on the basis of at least a ton for 3 acres. But about acreage, a peculiar thing is noticeable in the figures. As some of my friends have pointed out, and that is very peculiar, it appears that as the acreage increases, the production diminishes. It is a sort of peculiar economic paradox, that is before us. My friends will remember that the years 1936-37 up to 1938-39 are pre-ration years—one might say "irrational" years, that is to say, those were the years when ration was not discovered in India. During these years the area was 167 million acres, and production of food crops was 45.2 million. In 1947-48 i.e., about 4 or 5 years after rationing had been adopted, the acreage was 172 million acres and the production was 43.7 million tons. In 1948-49 acreage was 185.18 million acres and production 43.3 million tons and the funniest thing about it is that the year before last i.e., 1950-51 when the area

[Principal Devaprasad Ghose.]

was 193·1 million acres, the production was 41·7 million tons.

(Time bell rings.)

So, Sir, that would unmistakably point to the conclusion that the rationing and control system has not encouraged production. It has given, to my mind, a distinct discouragement to production.

In any case, my submission would be this. We should not proceed upon the statistics that we have got, because they are more or less unreliable. Let us have a commonsense view of the matter, as I have outlined. This control business, this rationing business, as Pandit Kunzru has admitted, is an evil. It may be a necessary evil that has to be in extraordinary circumstances. But this evil should be given a go-by to as soon as possible. It should not be allowed to stay a day longer than is absolutely necessary.

I shall say one more thing before I have finished, and that is this. Apart from the economic aspect of the whole thing, the system of controls with all the attendant evils which have accumulated round about it, has sapped the morals of the entire nation and has practically made thieves and crooks of all of us, not merely the profiteers and the racketeers, the supply officers and the business men but ordinary honest householders as well, who are compelled to have recourse to the blackmarket and bogus ration law, and other things—a most deplorable state of things from the moral point of view. It is therefore high time that this control should be abolished and free trade with its normal channels should be established, of course under the general supervision of the Government as far as possible.

SHRI SUMAT PRASAD (Uttar Pradesh): Mr. Deputy Chairman, we inherited the food policy from the British Government. It was a muddle and it was not based upon any principle

or calculations. The rural population was left out. Even as far as the urban population was concerned, certain headquarters of districts or other important towns were selected for rationing and other smaller towns were left out. The people in those smaller towns had to manage their affairs themselves and they had to purchase directly from the countryside. Even in large towns, very few people depended upon rationing and they had to augment their requirements by going in the black market. Food grains from the countryside used to flow into the rationed towns and they used to be sold at higher prices. These prices increased on account of bribery which first started at the octroi barriers. The octroi people used to take something, and the middlemen also used to charge extra profit on account of the risks they ran. This was the position. This position continued even after independence. It was assumed that certain urban areas had to be fed and rationing was introduced. This was not based on any ascertained data.

Sir, it has been said that the present food policy is no policy. I say this is a realistic policy. What Rafi Kidwaiji has done is to stop the black market. All the grains which used to be sold in the blackmarket can now be had in the open market at fair and reasonable prices. The reserves of the Government of India are utilised for keeping the prices within proper limits and that is the proper use of the reserves. He has saved the people a lot of demoralisation and has encouraged the movement of food grains by combining deficit areas with surplus areas. Sir, I do not say that India is not deficit in food grains. This is due to historical causes, but food grains cannot be augmented in the twinkling of an eye. Irrigation facilities are being increased. Other steps are also being taken, but they will take some time to fructify. In the meanwhile, are we to sit quiet? Is all this demoralisation to be allowed to go on in the meantime? Under the circumstances, Shri Kidwai

has done the best he could. His policy is neither of control nor of de-control.

SHRI S. MAHANTY : What is it then ?

SHRI SUMAT PRASAD : The policy is one of adjustment according to the needs of the times. Wherever there is deficit, he tries to rush food grains to those places. Wherever there is surplus, by goodwill, by mutual discussion and adjustment, by inducing people, he persuades them to bring their food grains to the deficit areas. This is not a negative policy. Adequate food supply, according to the report of the Planning Commission, will take about five or six years. Every effort should be made to increase our food production. Under the present system, even the Planning Commission has not adopted the policy of all-out planning. There is planning so far as production is concerned. But in the Five-Year Plan, in the Report of the Commission, I do not find planning so far as distribution is concerned. Control to be effective must be efficient and it is in human nature that if a man gets some profit, he may resort to malpractice. By the present policy of the Government the inducement to resort to blackmarkets has been removed and as far as circumstances permit, without jeopardising the economy of the country ; they are giving them sufficient supply of grains to maintain themselves. Shri Kidwai is trying to start movement of grain under certain conditions and he is keeping his eye on the trend of the market. He is not allowing any hoarding. Recently, a measure was passed regarding control of future transactions. This will also help in stabilizing the market. The element of major and sudden fluctuations will be removed, he deserves all congratulations and all support. We can neither adopt a policy of control nor a policy of de-control. Under the present circumstances, we have got to make some adjustment or compromise according to the exigencies of circumstances to tide over this period of deficit. Within a

period of five or six years, when all these irrigation schemes, and all these schemes relating to the preparation of manure give proper yield and we become self-sufficient so far as food production is concerned, then it will be time to adopt a bold policy of decontrol so far as the distribution is concerned. The present policy of control has been adopted, so far as production is concerned because in a planned economy, you have to decide, how much area is to be set apart for food crops, how much for cotton, how much for jute and so on. That is the only right policy and we must give him our support and we must try to energise the entire nation to produce as much food as is necessary and sufficient for the country.

SHRI RAJAGOPAL NAIDU : Sir, I am not going to dwell on the figures which have been given by previous speakers. I want to talk on the practical side of the entire economic set up of food and agriculture. Our country has been deficient in food grains for some years. The separation of Burma and the partition of India, difficulty of imports—these are some of the several reasons that are responsible for the shortage of food grains in our country. With the advent of independence in 1947 our country was facing this huge problem of feeding the millions of our population. Our country is a country which can boast of several mighty rivers in the world. But all those natural waters of our rivers have not been harnessed. We may in a manner blame the previous Government which has left the country in this state. But from 1947, we have got our independence and I would like to see if the Government is aiming at very big projects to improve agriculture and to increase the food situation in the country. Sir, I just glanced through the Five Year Plan which was placed before us yesterday. I am glad to see that nearly 38·5% of the total sum of 2069 crores of rupees is devoted to agriculture, community development, irrigation and multi-purpose irrigation and power projects.

[Shri Rajagopal Naidu.]

I find that 361 crores of rupees is to be spent on agriculture and community development and for irrigation 168 crores, for multi-purpose irrigation, and power projects 266 crores totalling 795 crores of rupees. That comes to 38.5% of the total capital outlay of the 2069 crores of rupees. So I would congratulate the Government for planning this kind of measure and I am sure that at the end when all these multi-purpose projects, come into being probably in 5 or 6 years, we need not depend upon any foreign nation for our food. Well, I would like to suggest a few points with regard to the increase in production in our country. I am a practical agriculturist and I myself raise food crops. I find that we have got to increase the yield per acre in our country and unless we do that we will not get our objective. I find several things are being written and much more paper is being wasted in publishing about increasing the yield per acre but from the practical point of view nothing is done. The present policy of the Government, I can say boldly, is not helping the increase in the yield per acre but on the other hand it is decreasing the yield per acre. I may quote some examples. For instance when the price of fertilizers is being doubled, when the agriculturist cannot go in for the fertilisers to improve the fertility of the land, unless it is made possible for the agriculturist to get it at a cheaper rate the Government can never expect that there will be any increase in the yield per acre. In 1947 ammonium sulphate was sold at Rs. 220 per ton and the present price is double that. You had withdrawn the subsidy for superphosphates and what we were getting for Rs. 125 is now being sold at Rs. 300 or 350 per ton. Then agricultural implements we were getting at Rs. 300 per ton and they are now costing Rs. 450. Diesel oil we were getting at Rs. 6 or 7 per drum and it costs now Rs. 40 to 50 per drum. In Madras in certain areas electricity is distributed to the agriculturist in the night and to the industrialists in the day time. I have been agitating for this in Madras in

vain. How can the agriculturist use the current in the night? He can't get his labourers in the night. It is absolutely impossible. These are some of the things which the Government should look into and unless something is done to reduce the price of superphosphates and iron implements I don't think any agriculturist will be able to increase the yield per acre.

Then I would mention the enormous wastage of food grains. Of course what is being eaten by rats and rodents I am not taking into account, but the way in which these stocks are kept in godown—whether they happen to be Government godowns or whether they are maintained by the wholesalers or retailers—is really deplorable. I can say boldly that nearly 3 to 4 per cent. of our food grains are being wasted through not having proper storage facilities in the country. I find that for some years some subsidy was being given by the State Governments, by the Central Government also, to co-operative societies for the construction of rat-proof godowns. I do not know for what reasons, from this year, this has been stopped by the Central Government. And the State Government says “we have no funds”. They seem to think the construction of these godowns is a mere waste. On the other hand, I feel that we must provide proper storage facilities all over the country. If not, you store a hundred bags with about fifty measures of rice in each bag in a place and after two or three months find that each bag contains only 48 or 45 measures. Unless we have rat-proof godowns we cannot save this loss. Government should come forward with liberal amounts to enable the construction, by the various wholesalers and by the co-operative societies.

As regards distribution, I find a serious lacuna in the matter of the distribution of food grains. I can say that in the district of North Arcot in Madras State there is a particular variety of rice which was got in November 1951 from Orissa or some other place. We got some thousands of tons of this

rice and this rice has been lying idle without being sold, right from November, 1951. The hon. Minister can know the truth of it by communicating with the Government of Madras, and learn why this rice is thus being held up without being sold. I understand that the reason is this. They say its price is too high and so it cannot be bought by the common folk.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : Was it bought from Orissa ?

SHRI RAJAGOPAL NAIDU : Yes. They say that this rice costs Rs. 1-2-0 per Madras measure and people are able to get rice at Rs. 1-1-0 or Re. 1 per measure outside and they do not want to buy this rice. I repeatedly requested the Government to reduce the price of this rice a bit and see that it is distributed, but....

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : Where is it lying ?

SHRI RAJAGOPAL NAIDU : In Vellore, North Arcot.

I would like to refer to the muddle that has occurred in the distribution of milo in Madras State. When this decontrol policy was announced by the Government of Madras, there was a stock of about 50,000 tons of milo left with them. In some districts the Government had kept milo as State reserve. But immediately the new policy was announced, they reduced the price of milo to 6 annas.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : Not immediately, they took some months to decide.

SHRI RAJAGOPAL NAIDU : That is so. But suddenly, in the course of two or three weeks, without any policy, the Government of Madras simply announced that whoever goes and asks for it, if only he has a food grains licence, he can have any amount of milo and now the result is that the entire stock of milo has been cornered by a few wholesalers. This step has not benefited the Government. In fact, Government has lost, for it had lost Rs. 1 crore or so in subsidising the

milo. It has not benefited the consumer ; it has benefited only a few middlemen who have cornered the whole thing and this milo, I understand, is being sent out to Mysore and other States. Sir, these are the evils which Government should set right by having a proper method of distribution. If we have a proper method of distribution and if some sincere advice of some members—not necessarily Members of Praliament—some sincere advice from some persons who know the trade, and the proper method is decided upon, such things could be avoided. I am very sorry this has not been followed in Madras and the criss-cross movements.....

(Time bell rings.)

SHRI RAJAGOPAL NAIDU : Only one minute more.

(Time bell rings.)

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Shri Dwivedy.

SHRI S. N. DWIVEDY (Orissa) : Sir, I won't take much time. I only want to refer to one or two points. First of all, I have to say that the ambition of our Food Minister is just in the air. Just like the previous Food Ministers I am sure, his ambition also will remain merely an ambition, for.....

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : What ambition ?

SHRI S. N. DWIVEDY : The hon. Minister has declared that his ambition is to feed the entire population out of the produce of this country, by 1953.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : I don't think I said that. There is some misunderstanding. I said the rice position is better and rice produced in the country will be sufficient to feed the whole country next year.

SHRI S. N. DWIVEDY : If he corrects himself, I accept that.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI :
No, I never said that.

SHRI S. N. DWIVEDY : I have to say, Sir, that the food production, as has been pointed out by Dr. Kunzru, has not increased to the extent that was expected and the storage that he contemplates is not likely to come in order to enable him to rush food to places wherever there is want. As I find, not today, but, since 1942, Committees have been appointed, and suggestions have been made to increase food production by extensive cultivation. I was going through a book written by the Chairman of the Food & Agriculture Organisation and he says that in India today there are 330 million acres of cultivated land out of which only 50 million acres are irrigated and he adds that we have atleast 150 million acres of arable land which is not cultivated.

PROF. G. RANGA : 150 million acres ?

SHRI S. N. DWIVEDY : Yes. This is what he has written. I feel, Sir, that there has been no attempt made and the attempts that were made were just farcical, I would say. Exhibitions of cultivating more land were made, beginning with the Prime Minister down to the State Ministers, District Magistrates, etc., sitting on the tractors and cultivating Secretariat lands, and we know what has been the result. So, I don't believe, Sir, that this statement of the Food Minister....

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI :
What statement ?

SHRI S. N. DWIVEDY : that we have sufficient stock and sufficient production to meet the exigencies....

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI :
I was relying on your own statistics.

SHRI S. N. DWIVEDY : I am coming to that. I am glad you mentioned about Orissa. I would say that this 'deficit' and 'surplus' is a myth. I would take the specific case of Orissa. It has always been held that Orissa is a surplus Province.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI :
No, it is not.

SHRI S. N. DWIVEDY : I am not speaking on my own. This is a book to which my friend referred, written by the Finance Minister of Orissa and circulated amongst us, Members from Orissa in Parliament. He says—if the Food Minister has not got the copy, I would give him, it is on page 6—categorically that Orissa is not really a surplus province. 'We are in need of 4.90 crores of maunds of rice to feed our people whereas our production is less by about 1 crore maunds. We export food grains because....'

AN HON. MEMBER : Maunds of what ?

SHRI S. N. DWIVEDY : Rice....we have no other commodity to export for exchange of money.' But, how are we treated ? The price of superfine rice in the District of Midnapore in the north and Visakhapatnam in the south is fixed at more than Rs. 16-12-0 and Rs. 20 per standard measure whereas in the neighbouring District of Balasore it is....

PROF. G. RANGA : They want better prices. It is reasonable.

SHRI S. N. DWIVEDY : No, it is not only that. He has made a categorical statement that we are deficit to the tune of about 1 crore maunds.

SHRI ABDUL RAZAK : Why was it exported ?

SHRI S. N. DWIVEDY : It was exported because we wanted money and, exported, because this Government had played on this myth that Orissa is a surplus Province and it must supply to the others, at the sacrifice of the people of Orissa. This is the problem I want to stress. It may be news to many that in Orissa there have been certain cases of starvation. About a few months back in the district of Koraput, to which my hon. friend referred before, there have been cases of starvation. This was at first

denied by the Government, but later, when the wife of the Chief Minister herself went to the area and declared that such and such persons had died, then the Minister ran there and said that really there was some scarcity and some deaths had occurred. So, the way it is being handled here, the problem of food as we visualise it, will not be solved. I am not speaking about control or decontrol. I am not going into it. Much has been said about it. The Minister says that he is a practical man and is looking at the problem in a realistic manner. But I think that is mere imagination and it will not lead us anywhere. If I am permitted, I will just put one question and end my speech. I do not know whether it will be relevant or not, but I seek your indulgence because Orissa peasants are suffering on account of this. His predecessor Mr. Munshi in 1950 announced a policy of integrated self-sufficiency, and as a result of that, in Orissa alone, between 1950 and 1952, according to the Government figures, which I have got with me, the acreage under jute went up from 51,286 acres to 1,61,340 acres. This was done at the sacrifice of food crops. You will observe that the Food Grain Policy Committee and other committees have advised Government from time to time to discourage the increase of cash crops.

PROF. G. RANGA : That was in the past.

SHRI S. N. DWIVEDY : They had suggested that before, from time to time. But here, what happens ? The price of jute has gone down when the crop is ready. It has gone down by 33 per cent.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : The prices always go down when the crop is ready. This is not a new feature. That is always the case.

SHRI S. N. DWIVEDY : That is not always the case. And a demand was made that, as the Government encouraged this movement for increasing jute cultivation, the cultivators took to jute cultivation and the

acreage under jute be increased. It was the duty of Government at least to fix a minimum price so that the jute cultivators might be benefited. But that was not done. I want to know whether Government have any responsibility towards these cultivators who, under the inducement of Government, took to jute cultivation.

With these remarks, I would end by saying that I believe that the food policy, about which so much has been spoken, is the same old policy that has so long been followed without any change whatsoever in this country.

SHRIMATI MONA HENSMAN (Madras) : Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, this morning we have had a very long and useful and most interesting exposition on the food problem from the men's point of view. Sir, it seems to me that the gentlemen who have spoken have all had a wonderful time in their homes, because none of them has mentioned any shortage of food or any scarcity, Sir, or any domestic difficulties. Each man's wife or daughter has arranged everything very smoothly for the gentlemen who have spoken here.

SHRI M. GOVINDA REDDY : We thought that 'men' included women.

SHRIMATI MONA HENSMAN : Sir, may I tell the hon. Member that man included women only when women so wish it and though I am not trained in the legal profession, I maintain that 'man' does not include 'woman' unless she decrees it. Now, Sir, I have listened to the debate with great care and I am very grateful to the hon. Minister for the facts and figures that he has given us, because now we are in a position to go back to our constituencies and to answer the questions on the Five Year Plan that will be put to us. But today I would like very much to ask the hon. Minister when he is replying to the debate—for I do not wish to interrupt him now—to let us know something about the position of food other than rice, atta, millets and cereals. And we would also like to know what the future is about the position of things like chillies

[Shrimati Mona Hensman.]
spices, masallaas and potatoes—the prices of which, Sir, now in our part of the country have risen very much—and of all the things that we women have to use to make the food palatable to our men. The men give us money, Sir, but they won't eat money. We have to translate it into something tasty, Sir. And I think now a days there are various young gentlemen who think of marriage, and who intend to visit the homes of their prospective brides I know that it is a matter of pride if a father and mother can say "This food was made by my daughter" or "This savoury and sweet dish was made by your future daughter-in-law." And so, Sir, I would ask the hon. Minister to give us some assurance that food stuffs in general will also be supplied in the usual ways almost at a uniform rate and that prices will be within the public purse.

I would like also Sir, to mention something about the part of the country from which I come, where derationing was introduced in May last. One of the hon. Members, Mr. Saksena has already said that fair price shops sell grain at a low rate and it is not very wise of people, who can afford to pay more, not to pay more. Sir, that is how I understood this argument to be. But Sir, the ration price is a fair price and those of us who retain our ration cards, still go and get our rations in the Government ration shops. If we wish for more, we go to the market. The price of unrationed rice came down after derationing from Rs. 1/8/- to 14 annas when the fair price was 13 annas a measure. Sir, these things are very optimistic and hopeful signs for the future, and although at the moment the cyclone in Tamil Nad has indeed proved a menace and has washed out the crops, it has filled the rivers, it has filled the tanks and reservoirs and the wells and therefore, Sir, we look forward to a future much brighter than before because we will not lack water. I would just ask the hon. Minister in addition to the valuable information that he has given us, to give us the assurance that next year we will be able to feed our men as they should be fed

and send them here or to other parts of the country happy and contented.

SHRI M. MANJURAN (Travancore-Cochin) : Sir, democracy seems to me an eternal duel over time. My regret is very much for the Communist leader quietly bearing the House with his followers over a question of five minutes. I regret the move, as I expected him to tell us the step-up of production in Telengana owing to the land distribution they effected there. The statistics produced by the Food Minister or produced by the other side seem to be quite unreliable. That is what has been stated here. It is not my invention. I am concerned about my State far in the remote South. Here people are talking of 12 ounces; 14 ounces and 10 ounces. We used to get all the time during the last four years 6 ounces ration sometimes reduced to 4 1/2 ounces and at other times to 2 1/2 ounces. That is the part from where I come and our case is the strongest, because ours is not a food policy but a no food policy.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : I think people are entitled to 12 ounces, of which six ounces will be in wheat.

SHRI M. MANJURAN : No, 4 1/2 ounces of rice and 1 1/2 ounces of wheat, and wheat is not liked by the people there. There seems to be a deficit of wheat in U. P. We do not want wheat. Why not take it and give us rice ? The real position is that we are getting six ounces of rice sometimes reduced to 4 1/2 ounces and at other times to 2 1/2 ounces.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (DR. P. S. DESHMUKH) : He does not look like it !

SHRI M. MANJURAN : Now, you are shirking your responsibility by having decontrol. Four or five times we asked the Food Minister to give us the information of conditions in Travancore-Cochin as things are very bad there but he has not done so. You cannot supply us only the grains that you used to supply before and we are not producing more food than

we used to produce ; so we are continuing to get 6 ounces. The position has not changed.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : That was a little time ago, not now.

PRINCIPAL DEVAPRASAD GHOSH : Do they get the rest of their food from black market ?

SHRI M. MANJURAN : You are misinformed, probably because you are coming from a surplus area. The food situation in my State has always been bad. People have been unemployed and therefore without any purchasing power. You say that there is sufficient food because there is no agitation. I feel that the people have lost the capacity to agitate nowadays. That is the reason why there is no devastating agitation there. Eleven and a half lakhs of people are unemployed or under employed in the coir industry 3 1/2 in handloom industry. Where is the purchasing power ? The real position is that we are not getting more than 4 1/2 ounces or five ounces of rice even today. The Central Government follows a uniform policy in regard to the areas under its administration. Whether it is distant Kashmir or anywhere else, you have 12 ounces. In U. P. you have 14 ounces, 16 ounces or even 18 ounces as you like, but in Travancore-Cochin we have only 4 1/2 ounces to 6 ounces. There the problem is poverty and poor people procreate more than rich people. We have got the greatest population, because—I am not going into the details of the question—our productive energies are given in another direction. Other people can understand it better, but the fact remains that we are overpopulated. That too has aggravated our food problem. So under the circumstances the policy pursued by the Government is entirely wrong. They have not assessed the deficiency and found out ways and means by which the deficiency can be made good, if need be, by bringing supplies from outside also. When the U. P.—Government supplied us with rice, it was supplied at Rs. 14 more than the price which was obtaining in that area. Such is

the grabbing tendency of the U. P. Government. We export to obtain sufficient dollars. We produce everything else even though we do not produce food. We produce coffee, we produce tea, we produce pepper, cardamon, mineral sand.

AN HON. MEMBER : Cocanut ?

SHRI M. MANJURAN : What not ? Yes, we sell it and you in the other parts of India are benefited by the sterling or dollar that is earned in that way. You are not really facing the realities of the case. We have got a deficit in food. But in other items we are in plenty. We are producing rubber which goes so much to increase our national prestige. Even for the products required for war, much depends upon rubber. China wants rubber, Russia wants rubber. It is an essential commodity in the present civilized world. We produce all that in India and in return, what do we get ? Our workmen in the plantations and factories notwithstanding the fact that they are producing the rubber, tea, coffee, pepper, cardamon and ginger and soaps are being starved with a 4 1/2 ounce ration. Has the Government at any time taken care to see what their lot is ? Sir, the condition in these areas is very bad and unless you are going to give back something for all you take away from us, the position will only deteriorate. Sir, you have taken away our customs and our income-tax. You have fleeced us and you are now saying that “we are feeding you by decontrol.” You are in a dilemma, in a position between control and decontrol. What is the meaning of decontrol if people should starve ? There is no meaning in the word, unless you give them proper rations. I am not interested in these words, but only in what is actually happening in the country. Food is being sold at high prices. The worker cannot purchase it because his income is not sufficient. When in one part of the country they are suffering in the Centre, you are speaking of decontrol. This has no meaning unless it is integrated into an all-India policy. There is no fun in one part of the country

[Shri M. Manjuran.]

starving and another part gloating in luxurious food. As I understand it, the Report of the Planning Commission has not been based on any data. It has come out with certain basic principles which are copied from elsewhere, but the details we are advised not to discuss as they are almost unworkable. But, I may say that the food situation in Travancore-Cochin and also in the district of Malabar is very bad and unless it is attended to early, I am not sure what might take place, because we cannot be more prophetic than what the little human wisdom we possess tells us. So, we have to face realities and not be complacent. We are quarreling here with time and words. The facts are that people are starving and continue to starve, and matter has to be looked into early and improved immediately.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY: Sir, it would appear to me that the discussion that we had today mostly has centred round only one part or shall I say, a momentary aspect of a policy which was started by no other person than the hon. Minister himself. For a time I thought during this discussion whether the food policy in our country meant merely either decontrol or control or whether the food policy meant something more than that. Is it the policy for food for all? It would appear to me that the discussion that we have had, with very few and very good exceptions, has more or less raised up this infantile argument about decontrol and control which is going on even amidst the Treasury Benches.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI :
Is it ?

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY: The hon. Minister for Food asks 'Is it'? He ought to know better. I should like to quote for him one of things that he said this morning. I don't know shorthand but I have tried to take it down verbatim. His policy is "Whenever relaxation can give relief, we have resorted to relaxation and when this relaxation causes hardships, we have

given relief." Shall I repeat to the House because it sounded very strange and very humorous to me going through this sentence : "Whenever relaxation can give relief, we have resorted to relaxation and when this relaxation causes hardship, we have given relief."

It is a very wonderfully worded statement but I am unable to get the real meaning of the statement. But if this statement forms the basic approach or the basic policy or the modified policy or the relaxed policy or the more stringent policy for food in this country, I don't want to say anything more. But if the hon. Minister would agree with me that a policy for food should really mean a policy which is calculated to increase our food production, not merely by increasing the acreage under food crops but also to see that every acre produces more food, then I should like to pass a few comments that I have on the policies that the hon. Minister and his more or less eminent predecessors have put down for this country unfortunately.

There was a time when somebody suggested sometime in 1948 or 1949, that we should have a land army. People laughed at it. They laugh at him even today. The same person a year later suggested that we should have a food army. They laughed at him again but 2 or 3 years later, the same hon. Minister and the same Government which laughed at that individual.....

PROF. G. RANGA : Individuals ?

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY : Individual —there was only one who gave the idea to this country.....

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI :
Who was that ?

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY: I will come to him. The hon. Minister knows him and he has known him for a number of years and he knows also his worth, I am sure. But 2 or 3 years later the Government took up this idea but unfortunately caricatured it. They

confined the exploitation of this idea to the few newspaper pictures that we saw one early morning about the food army marching past the hon. Food Minister. Nothing more was heard about it and yet this morning I was a little pained to come across a slight dig by the hon. Minister for Food, perfectly proper, regarding the same person, I take it. He referred to a prophecy that was given out by the same individual.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : Who was that individual ?

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY : The individual is known to him—Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : I did not refer to that prophecy. I referred to an eminent economist.

5 P. M.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY : Dr. Lohia is not an economist, according to the hon. Minister ; but probably he knows more about economics than anybody else. What I want to say is this. I do not know whether the hon. Minister has studied the cycle of our rainfall and the cycle of our bad years during the last sixty years. Now we are going through that cycle, and that cycle shows that three or four years together we have bad years and then perhaps one or two years of good years, and immediately following that two or three bad years, very bad years again. This cycle has gone on like this for the last sixty years. Now let us see what was our deficit in 1951. Let us not depend on figures.

(Time bell rings.)

I will take only two or three minutes more. I will not depend on statistics or figures that we can call out from any books. I would like to characterise statistics as something like a swimming suit—a fully fashioned swimming suit, as they call it—exposing the obvious and least interesting and hiding the vital and most interesting. But leaving off statistics, his own

figures show, as the hon. Minister will agree with me, that in 1951 we had a deficit of something like 5 million tons. We have gone through these few years and we may have one more good year or we may have 1953 and 1954 also good years, but in 1955 we may have deficits again and—

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : That is Lohia prophecy.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY : We will have a deficit of even higher magnitude than 5 million tons. I want to know the food policy followed by the hon. Minister and what provision he has allowed in the basic approach to the problem. I want to know his policy or any other amendment that he may be able to bring about in the policy contained in the plan. I want to know what he has done to prevent a catastrophe overtaking us.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : Build up reserves.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY : Build up reserves, he says. But we had no indication in his speeches here or elsewhere and we, those of us who foolishly believe that there may be a famine, we want to know and we would like to be assured that Government is taking certain steps to ward off that possibility. That would, in my opinion, be an essential part of any sane policy. If food policy merely means that we decontrol or control with some relaxation here and there or with some modifications, then I have no quarrel. But if by food policy we mean that we foresee eventualities for our country and guard the country against any sudden catastrophe, then I should like to know from the hon. Minister for Food—and I may say he is an enigma in himself—what his policy is so that the country may understand it and may be reassured in this regard.

SHRI H. P. SAKSENA : Would it be like the prophecy of Paniwala Maharaj ?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Order. order.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : As I said at the very beginning, the food policy has been explained in the Planning Commission's Report. I thought hon. Members taking part in this debate would come after reading the relevant chapter there. As I have already stated, the food policy is to produce more so that we may stop imports after some years, and to arrange the distribution in a way that there is fair distribution at reasonable prices. Now, to achieve this objective, this policy has from time to time to be adjusted. I have shown that relaxation has helped, and in most of the areas in North India and also in Central India food grain is available cheaper today than it has ever been during the last five or six years. It is true that there is a downward tendency in the prices of commodities and it was to take advantage of that that this adjustment has been made.

What was the situation in U. P. when we relaxed controls ? In the District of Saharanpur, the off-take from the ration shops in the rationed area was only 53%. It was so, because, outside the rationed area, the prices of wheat were much lower than the prices in Government shops. Similarly, the off-take in the whole of Western U. P. had gone down at some places by about 20% and at others by about 30% and, as I have said, in Saharanpur, it is still more. This was the phenomenon and I have also stated that in Rajasthan the off-take of wheat from Government shops was reduced from 8,000 tons a month to a thousand tons a month. Similar was the situation in other places and it was also seen, as some Members have complained, that when Government procure any food grain, they added something for administrative charges and when they exported it to other States, the exporting charges were also added and also the administrative charges of the second State. Therefore, the food administration of Government raised the prices, and, so, it was thought

that if food controls were relaxed perhaps the producer will get a little more, and, also perhaps, the consumer will pay a little less and both the increase for the producer and the decrease for the consumer would come out of the administrative charges saved.

Now, I know a case where a State Government purchased at Rs. 28 and exported it to another State at Rs. 38. Now, the other State had to pay the transport charges and had had to add its administrative charges and the economic price came to about Rs. 43 per maund. Now, that a commodity which could be purchased in one State for Rs. 28 should be sold in the other State at Rs. 43 a maund was ridiculous. All that had to be kept under control. Therefore, these relaxations have been made. I can cite another case. The controlled price of gram in the producing areas was Rs. 12 per maund and in the consuming areas it was Rs. 14.

DR. P. C. MITRA (Bihar) : It was Rs. 22 in Ranchi.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : That was long ago; I am talking about recent cases.

Now, one State procured gram at Rs. 12 per maund and supplied it to the consuming State at Rs. 14/10/-. When this gram was taken to the consuming State, that State had to bear the transport charges and also add their own administrative charges and they found that they could not sell it at less than Rs. 18 per maund. Therefore, they had to keep it in stock and when it started deteriorating, then, to enable them to realise their price, I had to remove the ceiling price, as otherwise it would not have been possible for the State to sell it at a higher price than the controlled price.

These were the difficulties that we were faced with and I thought that it was time we tried other methods, and that is why these relaxations have been brought in.

I think, I have tried to state in a few words the Food Policy, the lack of which has been complained of by many. Although hon. Members have said that our statistics are not to be relied upon, still, to attack the policy, they have quoted from those very statistics. As hon. Members know, when I studied the statistics and found that Rajasthan people are supposed to live on less than 5 oz. a day throughout the year, it was difficult for me to believe. But, if you see the production figure of Rajasthan and add to that, whatever was supplied from the Centre, then, the per head supply comes to less than 5 oz. a day.

SHRI M. S. RANAWAT : Wheat only in Rajasthan; the other food grains were never controlled in large areas.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : I am talking of the total productivity of the State—wheat, rice, jowar, or whatever it is—and, adding to it whatever was supplied to them by the Centre, it seemed that they were living on less than 5 oz. a day. And then, next year, I found that they were not able to...

SHRI M. S. RANAWAT : The Rajasthan Government was probably trying to deceive you by giving you wrong figures.....

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : It was not the Rajasthan Government which was giving wrong figures. There was then the jagirdari system. The jagirdars did not allow any patwari to record the acreage that was under cultivation, and therefore it was all guess work. Now that has been abolished and I hope correct figures will be available. The same was the case with Madhya Bharat. Madhya Bharat was supposed always to be surplus in food production. But if you look into the figures, you will find that there also the people were living on 6 oz. a day.

These instances led me to discard statistics. Then we had to rely on the statistics which cannot be ques-

tioned : that is, the food grains that we procured locally ; the food grains that we imported ; and the stock that was left. That gave us some idea as to what was the deficit.

Another friend has said that the control is not total control. I hope hon. Members will realise that we have got a democratic Constitution. It is difficult for us to assume the role of a totalitarian.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : Is the hon. Minister referring to me ? I did not say that. I said that those who asked for total control felt that we had total planning here. We have no total planning here, so there cannot be total control. That is what I said.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : But, as I said, we can control only to the extent to which we can persuade our population. People are tired of this sort of control that we have. They were very irksome. There was the instance of a certain producer : because his production fell in another village, he was not allowed to take it to his own village. Such difficulties were there. They are still there, but they have been very much reduced. And the sort of controls that we had—I wonder how people thought they were working wonderfully well. In Punjab we are supposed to have monopoly procurement. That is, the producer cannot sell to any one but to Government. And still a very small proportion of the population is being supplied by Government. We have to consider how the other people are living. When private trade is going on, we live under the impression that Government has the whole trade.

Pandit Kunzru referred to some dispute about figures between me and the Finance Minister. I think he is under some misapprehension. I quoted from the production figures all over India, and said that because the procurement was less in this area, the production had increased. Now, when I was speaking, somebody supplied figures to the Finance Minister showing that procurement in Punjab was very substantial, and therefore there was

Shri Rafi Ahmed Kidwai.]
no leakage, and production there had also increased. Now, I showed to the Finance Minister that although he had been supplied with correct figures, the case had not been explained. And I showed him the figures of production year by year.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU : May I correct my hon. friend ? When I referred to the Finance Minister, I referred to what he said about the production of food in Northern India and in Southern India and I said I agreed with him. The other thing that I said was that there was no evidence to show that the acreage under cultivation had increased in Northern India by a comparison of the acreages relating to the years 1945-47 and 1947-48 with those for the years 1949-50 and subsequent years.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : I was just pleading and I referred to Punjab also and said that because procurement was loose and leaky, therefore the production had increased.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU : Not the production, but the hon. Minister said 'procurement'. Procurement is very different from production.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : I said that because the procurement was loose and leaky, the production had increased.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU : That was a general statement. But what the hon. Minister said—if he will look into his own speech with regard to Punjab—was that on account of the controls being leaky or something like that, the procurement there had increased recently.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : That is what I explained—that although there was the same system of procurement, i. e., monopoly procurement (*Interruption*) yet in two years while the production was high, the procurement was 47 thousand tons and 46 thousand tons. In the following year, while the same system was

followed, the procurement was over 2 lakh tons. The prices in the earlier years were higher than the procurement prices. I had explained this to the Finance Minister, that because the outside prices were higher than procurement prices, therefore for the first two years the procurement was only 45 thousand and 47 thousand tons. Then the Moga prices which are daily published in the papers came to 12 rupees and the procurement price was 13, naturally the procurement went up but procurement remained loose and leaky. The procurement prices were higher than the outside Moga prices according to the standard of prices.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU : Will not my hon. friend recognise the difference between production and procurement ?

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : No, I will not. Because I said that when the producer gets a higher price, he produces more and that is why I said that when Madras and Mysore had a more restricted system of procurement, naturally the people diverted land to commercial crops while here, in Northern India, they produced more and more cereals.

Now I am coming to that point which my friend Mr. Kunzru raised because really he advanced it as a criticism, but it was my own point. Now in Madras they were feeding a small proportion of the population from the ration shops, but they procured so heavily that a very small quantity was left for the larger number of people. Therefore, prices were high. Naturally this change in the policy left more for the open market and prices came down. I tried that in Calcutta itself. When I went to Calcutta, there I was told that about 7000 maunds a day were smuggled and it was being sold in Calcutta city at a price of about 60 rupees a maund and the result was that in the mofussil area, from where it was smuggled, prices had risen to Rs. 45 and 50. Therefore I say : Why should I not supply the rice at reasonable rates ? That way the rural prices will come down. And we tried it.

We opened economic price shops from which the people who wanted extra rice were supplied rice at 32 rupees a maund and the prices in Nadia and other places where they had risen to Rs. 45 or more, came down to Rs. 32 or 28. Today I am told that the prices outside the Calcutta area in the open market are so low that the consumption from our economic price shops which had gone up to 5000 tons has come down to 3000 tons.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : That is because of the quality of rice supplied in the economic price shops.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : It is of very good quality. I think my hon. friend does not know the position.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : I come from Bengal and I know the position.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : Sometimes people come from Bengal and yet do not know what is happening in Bengal.

SHRI H. D. RAJAH : Is it not a fact that complaints were received from Madras that the off-take of rationed rice was coming down because people were not taking the supplies from the ration shops because of bad quality ?

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : That was when there was rationing. It was being mixed up. Now better quality rice is being supplied.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : The quality is bad definitely in the economic price shops.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : An hon. Member from Orissa complained, and rightly complained, though not in the right language.....

SHRI S. MAHANTY : You can correct it. The sentiment is there.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : There were two Members who spoke who were from Orissa. He complained that although Orissa was supplying rice to the Government of

India, the Government of India is not doing anything to help Orissa to develop the rice area. I myself am realising it and when I went to Orissa last time, I told them that I would give some special grant to them for the development of the rice-producing areas. It was open to us to offer higher prices for the rice that we procured but it could have hit hard the poor people of Orissa. Therefore, although this grant will not go directly to the producers, it will be used for giving facilities to the producers such as building up roads, improving irrigation and so on. I promised this to them and it has been agreed to and they will soon get a good grant this year and probably more grant next year.

AN HON. MEMBER : They are having the Hirakud Dam at the cost of several crores of rupees.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : I am sorry that I do not find my friend Mr. Gupta here in his seat. I was surprised not by his thunder but by his moderation. When I went to Calcutta, I consulted all the parties and the leaders of the Communist Party met me more than once. Before I left Delhi for Calcutta, the leaders of the Communist Party of Bengal here in Parliament also met me and I got their agreement before the scheme was finalised. Because they suspected that the Bengal Government wanted to delay the introduction of that scheme, they agitated for the implementation of what they called the Kidwai Plan. Now that the scheme is being implemented, they are agitating against it. Yesterday, they met me and suggested to me an addition. I said that I would try that also but now I am afraid that, if I accept it, they will find a third excuse.

Now, Sir, I have tried to reply to all the criticisms that I could remember.

Sir, there was some criticism that I do not deserve. There is my friend Shri Saksena from Lucknow. I had not thought of the question of purchasing power. He put that into my mouth. I think I was the first person

[Shri Rafi Ahmed Kidwai.]

who raised this question of purchasing power. When I went to Madras a group of men, a few Bengalees, and three or four Madras people told me that the people had no purchasing power. Therefore, "those of us, who have no work should be given work and those of us who do not have sufficient income should be enabled to purchase rice at the lower rates". I persuaded the Bengal Government to sell rice and food grains to the people of lower income at subsidised prices and to start work-centres. Therefore, I never said that the people have the purchasing power.

SHRI H. P. SAKSENA : Thank you for the favour.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : Then, there was the criticism from the other side that we are shirking our responsibility. On account of the failure of rains in one locality or another we are not having proper yield and therefore the number of people whom we are feeding in one sector is increasing. In 1949, it was 80 million people. These are the statistics we have got. On 1st December 1948, we were feeding 80 million people. Next year, up to the same date, the figure was 119 million people. Next year, it was 124 million people. In 1951 the figure rose to 126,750,000. And this year, it is more than 130 million people.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : Is it under rationing ?

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : It is not under rationing—Just as Rayalaseema is not under rationing, just as the eastern districts of U. P. are not under rationing, but people who suffer from want of work are given work and then we supply them with grain to feed themselves and their families. Therefore, to say that we are shirking our responsibility is wrong.

Mr. Gupta has asked what will happen if rationing is given up in two or three cities in Bengal. Today, we have received information from the

Bengal Government that the demand from the different mofussil areas from the ration shops has gone down because the prices are low. Therefore, these shops will be closed. But as soon as prices rise I assure the House that fair price shops will be opened and the people will get the requirements at the price at which they are getting today.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Is the hon. Minister accepting any amendment ?

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : I am accepting Mr. Sanjeeva Reddy's amendment.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Mr. Mahanty, you want your amendment to be put to vote ?

SHRI S. MAHANTY : Before I withdraw, I have only one question to ask the Minister. I want to know what amount the Centre is going to grant to the Government of Orissa ?

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : It is still under calculation.

PROF. G. RANGA : What is the position in regard to Travancore-Cochin ? Is it complete derationing ?

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : No, it is not complete derationing. But the producer has some difficulty in taking his produce from one market to another and therefore, after paying the levy, he is allowed to take any place he likes. When I went there, I was told that every consumer who holds a ration card is expecting the abolition of it. I was told that everybody does not take the wheat portion of the ration. Therefore, the wheat portion is only optional.

SHRI S. MAHANTY : I withdraw my amendment.

The *amendment was, by leave, withdrawn.

*For text of the amendment vide column 1552 of the Debates.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Next is Mr. Rajah's amendment.

SHRI H. D. RAJAH: Before I decide about the fate of my amendment.....

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You would like to ask a question?

SHRI H. D. RAJAH: Yes. I should have expected in the reply from the hon. Minister for Food that a minimum price to these poor peasants would have been guaranteed in terms of the Grow More Food Enquiry Committee Report but our Minister was wonderfully ignorant or blissfully silent about it. He has not spoken a word in regard to that. If he will enlighten me about that, it will be better.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI: Some of the relaxations that we have introduced are to ensure that the peasants get a better price. Now in the Madhya Pradesh the bajra prices came down very low—so low that in one market—it was in the Wardha market—it was quoted at Rs. 6-4-0 a maund which means when the price was so low in the mandi, the producer must have been selling it at Rs. 5 or Rs. 5-8-0. Therefore we introduced this new departure that any other State may go there and purchase it and as soon as this announcement was made, the prices have come up to about Rs. 8 or Rs. 9.

SHRI H. D. RAJAH: I withdraw my amendment

The *amendment was, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Gupta is not here and so I put his amendment to vote.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is:

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

“and having considered the same, this Council regrets that Government should not have assumed the responsibility of feeding the people but should have at the same time imposed compulsory levy on the peasantry.”

The motion was negatived.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Sanjeeva Reddy's amendment has been accepted by the hon. Minister.

The question is:

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

“and having considered the same, this Council approves of the policy of Government regarding general control of food grains and welcomes the desire of Government to adjust the same to suit local or temporary conditions without prejudice to the basic objectives.”

The motion was adopted.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now I shall put the amended Resolution to the House.

The question is:

That the food situation be taken into consideration and having considered the same, this Council approves of the policy of Government regarding general control of food grains and welcomes the desire of Government to adjust the same to suit local or temporary conditions without prejudice to the basic objectives.

The motion was adopted.

The Council then adjourned till a quarter to eleven of the clock on Saturday, the 13th December 1952.

*For text of the amendment *vide* column 1552 of the Debates.