

COUNCIL OF STATES

Thursday, 14th August 1952

The Council met at a quarter past eight of the clock Mr. CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

SHORT NOTICE QUESTION AND ANSWER

FOOD SCARCITY

BEGAM AIZAZ RASUL : Will the Minister for FOOD and AGRICULTURE be pleased to state whether scarcity conditions prevail in the country, especially in the following States :

- (1) West Bengal,
- (2) Madras,
- (3) Travancore-Cochin,
- (4) Hyderabad, and
- (5) Uttar Pradesh ?

If so, will he please state the steps that have been taken or are proposed to be taken to alleviate these conditions, and also inform the House of the general policy of Government in regard to food ?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (SHRI P. S. DESHMUKH) : Scarcity conditions prevail in certain parts of West Bengal, Madras and Uttar Pradesh. A statement is placed on the Table of the House indicating the steps taken to relieve distress.

The general policy of Government in regard to food remains one of control but modifications have been made and will be made from time to time to suit changing conditions. Two of the more irksome features of the present system of control, viz. inter-district bans on movement and the confining of rationed populations to rationed-food grains have been relaxed in certain States. It has been possible to make these relaxations as bulk of the procurement has already been made and the State Governments and the Centre hold sufficient stocks and reserves to meet all demands till the next 39CSD

procurement season begins. Fair price shops and ration shops continue to operate and thus the modified system of control on the one hand gives much desired freedom to the consumer and to the producer and, on the other, enables needy consumers to obtain their requirements at reasonable prices.

STATEMENT

Scarcity conditions in West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Madras and steps taken to relieve distress.

WEST BENGAL

According to the information supplied by the Government of West Bengal the total population affected by distress resulting from failure of crops is estimated to be about 45 lakhs. This estimate includes not only those who are utterly destitute but also those who are in difficulty on account of temporary absence of agricultural employment. About 80 families have been affected by floods in Malda and on account of communication difficulties, it has not been possible for the Government of West Bengal to obtain from their District Officers an estimate of the population likely to have been affected by floods in Jalpaiguri, Cooch Behar and West Dinajpur.

2. Steps have already been taken by the Government of West Bengal to provide relief to the affected population in the following ways :

(a) Free distribution of 15,000 maunds of rice and 15,000 maunds of wheat at the rate of 3/4th seer of rice and 3/4th seer of wheat/wheat products per adult per week through nonofficial organisations ;

(b) Fifteen thousand tons of rice and 15,000 tons of wheat are being sold at the subsidized rate of Rs. 15 per maund to people having extremely low purchasing power through modified rationing shops at the scale of 3/4th seer of rice and minimum 3/4th seer of wheat/wheat products per adult per week. Wheat/wheat products can be issued up to a maximum of 1½ seers. During the discussions with West Bengal Government last week, it was agreed that in consultation with the Government of India, West Bengal Government may, if they think it necessary, increase the limits of sale of subsidized grains from 15,000 tons each of rice and wheat/wheat products to 30,000 tons each. The limits of gratuitous doles may also be raised above 15,000 maunds each of rice and wheat/wheat products as needed. At present about 1,50,000 people are receiving gratuitous relief and besides the free distribution of wheat and rice referred to in (a) above, Rs. 3,39,000 has been sanctioned for gratuitous relief ;

(c) More than 100 relief work centres have been opened and the latest report received from West Bengal indicates that about 50,000 people are engaged in test works. The scale of payment is as follows :

Nadia	Re. 1 to Rs. 1-8-0 per labourer per day.
24-Parganas	Rs. 10 per labourer for cutting and carrying 1,000 c. ft. of earth.
Bankura	Rs. 10 to Rs. 20 per labourer for cutting 1,000 c. ft. of earth.

(d) The following expenditure has been sanctioned by West Bengal :—

	Rs. (lakhs.)
(i) Test work	8.7
(ii) Agricultural improvement loans	15.85
(iii) Land improvement loans	18.11
(iv) Cattle loans	1.5
(v) Gratuitous relief doles, etc.	6.5

Government of West Bengal have also sanctioned expenditure for purchase of 4,032 lbs. of milk powder for distribution in the affected areas. A sum of Rs. 10,000 has also been given to West Bengal from the Prime Minister's Fund.

3. The following steps have been taken to provide relief in the flooded areas in North Bengal :

Jalpaiguri.—Rs. 20,000 have been sanctioned for gratuitous relief, one bale of *dhoties*, one bale of *sis*, 2,000 pieces of children's garments, 900 lbs. of milk powder, 20,000 multi-vitamin tablets and 50 lbs. of biscuits have been sent for free distribution. 480 maunds of foodgrains air-dropped in Alipore Duars and further 520 maunds of foodgrains flown to Cooch Behar and transported from there to Alipur Duars by train after restoration of train communication.

Cooch Behar.—Rs. 10,000 have been sanctioned for gratuitous relief. 340 pieces of cloth, 2,000 pieces of children's garments and 960 lbs. of milk powder have been sent for free distribution. 15,000 maunds of foodgrains flown to Cooch Behar.

West Dinajpur.—Rs. 15,000 have been sanctioned for gratuitous relief and Rs. 1,00,000 for distribution as agricultural loan. One bale of *sis*, 1,500 pieces of children's garment and 960 lbs. of milk powder are being despatched for free distribution.

Malda.—Rs. 2,200 have been sanctioned for free house-building grants to the flood affected people.

4. During the first half of July for which information is available, out of the total population of 24.8 millions in West Bengal, 11.2 millions were covered by Government distribution of foodgrains. Under statutory rationing, the population was 6.5 millions and

under modified rationing 4.7 millions. According to a recent statement made by the Food Minister, Government of West Bengal more than half of the total population is now covered by Government distribution. The areas covered by statutory rationing are Calcutta industrial area, Darjeeling district, Kharagpur and Asansol. Elsewhere distribution of foodgrains is in accordance with the scheme of modified rationing which means that a free market is allowed. In statutorily rationed areas, the quantum of ration is 2 seers and 10 chhataks per adult per week composed of 1 seer rice and the balance in wheat/wheat products. In other areas the quantum is 2 seers composed of 3/4 seer of rice and 1 1/4 seer of wheat/wheat products.

5. In areas covered by modified rationing, the population is divided in two classes, "A" and "B". In rural areas, families which are utterly poor, have no land and are exempted from payment of union rates or *chowkidari* taxes, and families paying union rates or *chowkidari* taxes amounting 0-8-0 come under "A" class. Families paying union rates or *chowkidari* taxes up to Rs. 2 are placed in "B" class. In urban areas, families having an income of Rs. 100 per month come under "A" class and families with an income of Rs. 150 per month come under "B" class. Modified rationing is introduced for all "A" class people wherever the minimum price of rice is above Rs. 25. The benefit is extended to "B" class where the minimum price of rice is above Rs. 35.

6. To popularise wheat and wheat products, the Government of West Bengal have distributed rolling boards and pins for making *chapatis*. It appears from a recent statement of the Food Minister, West Bengal, that there is evidence of increasing popularity of wheat/wheat products in the mafussil now.

7. The position of stocks of foodgrains with the Government of West Bengal on the 19th July for which latest information is available was as follows :

	Rice (tons)	Wheat (tons)
Present rate of weekly issues	85,200	134,000
	10,000	13,820

The present stocks are thus good for 8 and 9 weeks for rice and wheat respectively.

8. As has already been stated in the House, apart from the allotment of 1 lakh tons of rice towards West Bengal's ceiling quota the Centre was also prepared to supply 1 lakh tons of rice which was to be sold by the Government of West Bengal at no-profit-no-loss, so that consumers in the Calcutta industrial area could supplement their rice ration by purchases through these Economic Price Shops. The Centre has already agreed to supply all the wheat that may be required by West Bengal for Government distribution. During the recent discussion of the Union Food Minister with the Government of West Bengal it was decided to supply larger quantities of rice from

Orissa to West Bengal, so that the present issue price of Rs. 17-8-0 per maund in West Bengal could be maintained.

UTTAR PRADESH

Extent of area affected.—Eastern U. P. comprises the districts of Basti, Banaras, Gorakhpur, Deoria, Jaunpur, Mirzapur, Azamgarh, Gonda, Ballia, Ghazipur and Bahraich. Owing to prolonged drought over the last 2 to 3 years and the consequent failure of the crops, the food and economic position in these districts, which are normally deficit, has worsened. There is real scarcity in these districts especially in the extremely deficit pockets of Banaras, Deoria and Gorakhpur districts, but there are no famine conditions as such.

Rainfall in 1952.—The rainfall in these districts has been below normal up to the end of July. The latest report received from the Government of U. P. for the week ending 22nd July 1952 shows that weather continued to be cloudy with sporadic showers and generally speaking, there is a break in the monsoon and if the break continues there is likelihood of damage to the standing paddy crop. At the present moment the condition of the crop is healthy and prospects of the *harif* crop are fair.

Food situation.—The Government of U. P. had in stock on 7th July 1952, the latest date for which information is available, 5,05,072 tons of foodgrains comprising 32,476 tons of rice, 2,96,801 tons of wheat and 1,75,795 tons of other foodgrains. These stocks are sufficient to meet any situation that may arise in the eastern districts and the Government of India are in a position to supply whatever additional quantities of foodgrains are required by them.

The Government of U. P. have introduced in the eastern districts an Austerity Provisioning Scheme from 1951 under which 4 chhataks of foodgrains are issued per person per day with effect from 16th June 1952. This is in addition to what the consumers can purchase in the open market. The population affected is about 71.89 lakhs and the number of villages is 21,999. A total of 1,605 shops have been opened to distribute rations under the Austerity Provisioning Scheme. (These figures relate to July 1952.) Since 1st May, 1951, the total quantity of foodgrains distributed by Government in these areas up to 15th July 1952 amounted to 27,01,870 maunds. The consumption of foodgrains under the Austerity Provisioning Scheme is increasing and during the week ending 15th July 1952, 2,19,000 maunds of foodgrains were distributed. The State Government had on the same date stocks amounting to 3,26,000 maunds in these districts. Further supplies are being arranged and despatches of 40,000 tons has been programmed, and arrangements made for its immediate movement. Of all the scarcity-hit eastern districts Gorakhpur has received the largest quantity of foodgrains for distribution in the rural areas.

Issue Prices.—The Government of U. P. have maintained the issue prices approved for last year and are meeting their expenditure on subsidizing the issue of imported foodgrains out of their own resources. A statement of issue prices in U. P. is attached herewith.

Reports of starvation deaths.—The U. P. Government have been particularly vigilant in these areas and have been a looting prompt measures to relieve the distress there. They are determined to see that not a single person dies of starvation and in this they had achieved success as no starvation deaths have occurred so far. Rumours and statements about some starvation deaths in the eastern districts of U. P. have been appearing in the Press of and on and the State Government have contradicted them in a Press Note dated the 28th July 1952.

12 Members of the U. P. Legislative Assembly have issued a joint statement characterising as fantastic and untrue the reports of starvation deaths, and have expressed their gratification that the eastern districts of U. P., so much neglected during the British regime, have now begun to receive particular attention of the Government for the speedy implementation of works of permanent utility so as to ensure peace and happiness to the masses and to relieve distress caused by scanty rainfall or floods or diseases in future.

Steps taken to relieve distress.—The distress of the population of the eastern districts of U. P. is due not so much to lack of foodgrains as to the lack of purchasing power. To provide purchasing power to the masses Relief Works have been sanctioned and are undertaken on an extensive scale. The amounts sanctioned up to the middle of July are detailed below :

	Rs.
(i) Test and relief work	41,18,000
(ii) Construction of roads under the Five Year Plan sanctioned by C.P.W.D.	40 04,000
(iii) Grants for famine relief works for constructions of roads (not included in the Five Year Plan)	3,80,000
(iv) Advance for the Banganga Canal Project in Basti District	4,00,000
(v) Plantation of roadside avenues and nurseries	1,35,000
(vi) <i>Taccavi</i> loans under the Land Improvement and Agricultural Loans Act and for purchase of seed, cattle etc.—a very substantial sum has been provided	88,00,000
(vii) Expenditure on gratuitous relief doles, etc.	1,31,000
(viii) Expenditure on drinking water	10,000

A total expenditure of Rs. 47,47,100 has been incurred on famine relief measures since 1st April 1951 up to 15th June 1952. In addition the U. P. Government have remitted Rs. 8.86 lakhs as land revenue and Rs. 28.64 lakhs as rent. They have sanctioned a further amount of Rs. 34.87 lakhs from 1st April 1952 to 15th June 1952 for distribution as *tabbavi* loans for the purchase of seed and bullocks. The realisation of *taccavi* instalments and seed store dues have been stayed where necessary. For the last *kharif* and *rabi* sowings 1.89 lakhs maunds of seeds were distributed and the State Government have a programme for the supply of paddy seed to the extent of 2.5 lakh maunds for the ensuing *kharif* season.

With a view to improve the irrigation facilities on a permanent basis a survey of the terai area has been undertaken to find out where water reservoirs and channels can be constructed and these when completed will go a long way in providing irrigation facilities on a permanent basis. A special well sinking programme has been planned under which 6,000 wells are being constructed to provide irrigation facilities at cheap rates. A project for the construction of Banganga Canal has been sanctioned in the Basti district which will cost Rs. 24 lakhs and estimated to irrigate every year nearly 22,000 acres of land.

With a view to afford greater facilities for the population to secure foodgrains required by them from Government sources arrangements have been made to open Government shops as in Mirzapur district, godowns opened in the interior of Mirzapur and Gorakhpur districts where transport was difficult and expensive. The ration limit under the Austerity Provisioning Scheme has been raised from three chhatacks to 4 chhatacks per person per day from June 16, 1952. The ration limit in Dudhi, Singrauli and Agori areas of Mirzapur district and the areas of Banaras district adjoining Dudhi and Robertganj Tehsils of Mirzapur district has been increased from three chhatacks to five chhatacks per person per day.

Fodder Position.—Arrangements have been made by the U. P. Government for the supply of forest hay to those districts where the fodder position is difficult. Government forests have also been thrown open for grazing of cattle. No migration of cattle has been reported from any affected district except from the Dudhi and Singrauli areas of the Mirzapur district to the neighbouring States of Bihar and Madhya Pradesh.

Help given by the Central Government.—
(a) *Foodgrains.*—The Government of U. P. has an import quota of 2,18,000 tons of foodgrains for the year 1952. This quantity has already been supplied to them. In addition a quantity of 15,000 tons of bajra which they offered for export under the Basic Plan has been left with them for internal consumption. If any additional quantities of wheat or other coarse grains are required for distribution in the affected areas, the quantities desired will be

made available to U. P. by the Central Government without any difficulty.

(b) *G. M. F. Schemes.*—The Government of India have sanctioned the following grants and loans for minor irrigation works in U. P. during 1951-52 and 1952-53 :

	Grants Rs.	Loans Rs.
1951-52	42,40,500	2,16,69,000
1952-53 (Up to date)	Nil	1,19,60,000

This includes a grant of Rs. 24 lakhs as the Government of India's share towards the cost of sinking 6,000 wells during 1952-53 under an arrangement by which the cultivators will contribute 1/3rd of the cost of the value in the form of labour, the remaining 2/3rd being shared equally between the State and the Central Governments. It also includes Rs. 74 lakhs given as loans and Rs. 16.77 lakhs given as grants for the following two schemes intended to serve the eastern districts of U. P. :

(i) 1,062 miles of Sarda Canal extension.

(ii) 100 tube-wells in Gorakhpur. A further 995 tube-wells have been allotted to U. P. under the T. C. A. programme out of which 655 tube-wells are intended to be constructed in the eastern districts.

A scheme for boring 3,000 wells in the scarcity areas involving a loan of Rs. 11.85 lakhs and a grant of Rs. 5.92 lakhs has been forwarded by the State Government as part of their 1952-53 G.M.F. Plan and it is still under consideration.

The urgency in the problem of improving irrigation facilities in the eastern districts of U. P. has been the subject of correspondence between the Chief Minister of U. P. and the Central Minister of Food & Agriculture. As a result, a request for a subvention of Rs. 4 crores has been received from the State Government and the proposal is under consideration.

Wholesale issue rates of foodgrains for the month of June 1952

Commodities	Wholesale issue rate per maund		
	Rs.	A.	P.
Wheat	15	5	9
Ata I	17	1	0
Ata II	11	9	5
Maida (locally produced)	30	11	6
Suji	30	11	6
Rice Arwa I	38	6	5
Rice Sela I	34	2	2
Rice Arwa II	27	14	10

Commodities	Wholesale issue rate per maund		
	Rs.	A.	P.
Rice Sela II	25	9	7
Rice Arwa III	23	10	1
Rice Sela III	21	15	1
Rice Arwa IV	19	3	2
Rice Sela IV	18	1	1
Rice V	15	5	9
Rice VI	12	12	10
Gram	12	12	10
Juar & Maize	10	3	10
Milo	10	3	10
Barley	9	9	7
Bajra	10	15	6
Gojai	12	4	8
Bejhar (Gram & Barley)	10	3	10
Bejhar II (Barley & Peas)	9	5	0
Gochana	13	5	8
Gramdal	14	15	9

MADRAS

The north-east monsoon failed in Madras for the fifth year in succession and there was consequent distress particularly in the Rayalaseema districts where water supply became very scarce. For providing immediate relief, the State Government have been running rest works in the affected districts and assistance is being given also by philanthropic non-official agencies like the Ramakrishna Mission and the Servants of India Society. For improving the position of supply of drinking water, considerable assistance has been received from the Army. So far 963 wells have been deepened by the State Government and the Army has also helped in respect of deepening of another 134 wells. The position of water supply has substantially improved in Rayalaseema recently as a result of heavy rains. The assistance of the Army Units is now being utilised in other districts.

The State Government have opened 4,965 fair price shops in the affected areas and gruel centres are also being run where destitute persons can get one meal each day free. So far a sum of Rs. 16 lakhs has been spent on these gruel centres.

The Madras Government arranged the supply of fodder in the affected areas of Rayalaseema. The Central Government have agreed to meet 50% of the expenditure on gruel centres not exceeding Rs. 48 lakhs being the Centre's share. Also, to help the State Government to issue loans, the Central Government have agreed to find ways and means accom-

modation to the extent of Rs. 2 crores. Recent rains especially in Rayalaseema are reported to have somewhat reduced scarcity conditions and some agricultural operations have started.

About 5,000 relief works were started by the Madras Government where work was found for 3 lakh persons. *Taccavi* loans amounting to 175 lakhs have been given, as also for pumping sets amount to 12 lakhs.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Under the Rules questions should not be of excessive length. They should not ordinarily exceed 150 words. But no such limits are prescribed for answers.

SHRI C. K. G. REDDY : You are aware, Sir, that we had been anxious to have really a discussion on this matter, but since it has been restricted to a short notice question, I would only request that the number or the variety of the supplementary questions should be very liberal. After all, we have only one Bill before us which we can finish in about 1½ hours or two hours. We have plenty of time, and so restriction of time does not come into the picture here.

MR. CHAIRMAN : He has covered so many fields, Madras, Uttar Pradesh and other provinces. People interested in those provinces are bound to raise questions, but I would like to see that they are brief.

BEGAM AIZAZ RASUL : May I know, Sir, what arrangements have been made for the districts that have been cut off and are stranded in the eastern part of U. P. ?

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : As the hon. lady may know, the eastern districts of U. P. are complaining of shortage of rains and not of floods.

MR. CHAIRMAN : We have only limited rains there.

BEGAM AIZAZ RASUL : What arrangements have been made for those areas that have been cut off by floods ?

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : Arrangements will be made when the areas are cut off by floods.

श्री डी० पाण्डे : मैं मन्त्रीय मंत्री से यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि पूर्वी जिलों में, खास तौर से बलिया और गाज़ीपुर में अभी तक सरकार की ओर से सिंचाई का कोई प्रबन्ध किया गया है या नहीं। मैं यह भी जानना चाहता हूँ कि ट्यूब वेल तथा नहरों की जो व्यवस्था की जा रही है वह कब तक लागू हो जायगी और उस से कितनी जनता को फायदा पहुंचेगा ?

*[SHRI T. PANDEY : I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether any arrangement for irrigation has so far been made on behalf of the Government in eastern districts, particularly in Ballia and Ghazipur. I would also like to know as to when the schemes regarding tubewell and canals will be implemented and how many people will be benefited thereby.]

श्री रफी अहमद क़िदवई : सरकार की ओर से जो भी इन्तजाम सोचे गये हैं उन को पूरा करने में थोड़ा समय लगेगा। यू० पी० सरकार स्कीम बना रही है और हमारे यहाँ से एक स्पेशल आफिसर स्कीमों को जल्दी से पूरा करने के लिये चला गया है।

*[SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : Whatever schemes the Government has thought of, will take some time to be implemented. The U. P. Government is preparing certain schemes and a special officer from centre has already left Delhi to expedite the implementation of the schemes.]

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU : Are Government aware that in the circumstances that exist in the U.P., the giving up of statutory rationing has led to an increase in the price of wheat ?

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : Of course, in eastern U.P., the price of wheat has increased, but the ration shops are functioning as before and in those shops one can get wheat at the

control prices. So far as rice is concerned, I had recently visited some districts in eastern U. P. and I was told that, while in the ration shops, rice is available at 1 seer 5 chhataks per rupee, in the open market it is available at 1 seer 10 or 12 chhataks per rupee.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU : As regards wheat, are Government aware that the price of wheat has risen in the western districts also ?

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : Government are aware that in the western districts also, wheat is being sold at fair price shops at the control rates. I hope the hon. Member knows that in the U.P. during the rains, the cultivators are engaged in their cultivation and therefore do not bring their stocks to the market, and in the past two years even the procurement had to cease during these months. After these months, the situation will again improve.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU : Can the hon. Minister point out to anything in the statement of either the Chief Minister or the Food Minister of the U. P. to show that they expect an improvement in the price of wheat after the rains have set in—and in fact rains have set in over a large part of the U. P. ?

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : That is why the cultivators are not bringing their wheat to the market. The price will improve after the rains are over, and if the hon. Member goes through the figures that were available before this control, he would find that in the rainy season the prices were affected, because the cultivators did not bring in their stocks to the market.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU : If this is a complete explanation of the matter, how is it that the Chief Minister of U. P. Government said in a strong speech a few days ago that unless the prices of wheat came down, he would see to it that the stocks of the food-grain merchants were requisitioned at a price much below that prevailing in the market ?

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : I think, so far as my reading of the situation is concerned, the grain merchants are trying their best to bring down the prices and I am perfectly satisfied with the working of the control.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU : Is it a fact that the grain merchants agreed in a conference with the Chief Minister or the State Food Minister that the price of wheat would be brought down to Rs. 17-8-0 per maund in the western districts and that it is Rs. 20 now ?

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : I take it that the hon. Member knows that as soon as the controls were imposed, the rolling mill proprietors rushed to the market—and their chief markets are Hapur and Sidhohi—and started purchasing large quantities. Now this was the ground for decontrol and the U. P. Government ordered the licensing conditions of the rolling mills. As soon as I came to know about it, I telephoned the Chief Minister drawing his attention to this and that has been remedied because the rolling mills were under instructions not to produce *maida* and *sooji* at such high prices. They have now been instructed that for *maida* and *sooji* they can purchase any quantities of wheat from the Central Government of imported wheat and this has been done and the prices have come down to Rs. 17-8-0 or Rs. 18-8-0 and in the rural districts like Aligarh and other places, wheat is now available at Rs. 17 a maund.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU : May I draw the attention of the Food Minister to the fact that today's papers say that the price of wheat is Rs. 20 per maund in the western districts and Rs. 22 per maund in the eastern districts ?

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : I hope the hon. Member knows that there are two opinions about the control and certain people and certain classes had vested interests in the control. The hon. Member may compare the statements that were being issued from Madras and statements that were being issued from Lucknow.

In Madras the Government is perfectly satisfied although the prices have risen and they don't want to put any check on the merchants and one day the price go up and the stockists rush to the market and then the prices go down. The hon. Member must have noticed that from Lucknow from the very next day statements started to issue that prices are going up and in one or two places like Sidhohi which is a centre for wheat, where the wheat was never controlled, it was stated from Lucknow that the prices are 1 seer 10 chhataks per rupee while actually it was more than 2 seers per rupee.

SHRI B. B. SHARMA : Is it not a fact that everywhere in eastern U. P. the people have welcomed this decontrol ?

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : Everywhere I went, even in spite of all this fuss that has been made about the rise in the price, I have not met a single person, except those who were interested in these controls, who was wanting the control.

SHRIMATI VIOLET ALVA : May I know whether the Government is aware that wheat is sold at lower prices outside than in the ration shops in Bombay and may I know whether wheat is plentiful in Bombay City ?

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : It is so reported but if it is decontrolled wheat prices are bound to go up.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : May I know whether there is any intention of removing inter- and intra-district restrictions in the mofussil areas of West Bengal ?

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : When I was in Calcutta this question was raised in a meeting when the State Food Minister was present and he said that from 1st January he will remove this inter-district ban.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : Will the hon. Minister state whether it is the intention of the Government of India to take up the responsibility for rations in Calcutta and the neighbouring industrial areas ?

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : If the hon. Member means by taking up the responsibility that Government should start its own administration for distribution of foodgrains, then there is no such intention but all that we are committed to is whatever quantity of wheat and rice will be required for Calcutta, the Government of India will supply either by internal procurement or by import from outside the country.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : With reference to the statement made by the hon. Minister, will he kindly state as to what are the non-official organizations through which free distribution of foodgrains are being made ?

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : I don't exactly know but I think in some districts some Food Committees have been formed through which such distribution is taking place. When I visited, I saw that relief societies were also working.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : Is it only through the Congress organizations that all this arrangement is being made or are any other organizations like the United Food Resistance Council or organizations like that associated with it ?

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : I think it has been recently decided that food should be above politics and all parties will be associated with it.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : That is exactly why I ask the hon. Minister as to whether it is being distributed through non-political organizations only.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : As I explained, when I was first in Calcutta and visited the rural areas, I had suggested to the State Government that in their relief measures, all parties should be associated and this time when I went there I saw that the Bengal Chief Minister and the Food Minister were consulting all parties in the measures that they were adopting for relief.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY : Regarding Madras, the hon. Minister stated something about Rayalaseema. Is it a fact that similar conditions, which exist in Rayalaseema, also exist in the contiguous areas in the Mysore State, viz., the Kolar and Chitaldrug districts and if so, what are the measures that the Government of Mysore or the Government of India have taken to contend against this scarcity ?

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : In the contiguous area of Mysore the conditions are similar and we received reports from the Chief Minister that they need the Central Government's help. A special delegation has been sent from here yesterday morning to study the situation and suggest the relief measures in which we can participate.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY : It has been stated here that due to some rains in Rayalaseema, scarcity conditions have been greatly relieved and agricultural operations have started. May I know from the hon. Minister when he got this news and whether this state of things are existing today ?

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : I admit that this is an old report and there is no rain usually during this season. They used to have this even in the rainy months. But there has been some complaint at one stage of scarcity and therefore all these measures are being continued.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY : I am surprised that the statement that an answer should be given based on conditions which existed 2 months ago.

MR. CHAIRMAN : That is an expression of opinion.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY : May I know whether the hon. Member is aware that during the last week in Madras the prices of foodgrains have risen, say for instance the price of rice has risen from Rs. 54 to Rs. 60 per bag of two maunds and if so, whether he foresees scarcity conditions would

exist in the State of Madras due to these conditions and if so, what precautionary steps he would take to contend against these conditions ?

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : The precautionary measures are the Government shops where rice is supplied at the controlled rates, rates that were prevailing during the control. I went to Madras recently and I read a speech there that was delivered in this House that on account of decontrol people were starving there. I met members of all political parties, including the Communist Party and they told me that decontrol had brought relief to the people and therefore they are not opposing it. But they wanted to be assured that the cheap grain shops will continue so that anybody who did not want to pay higher prices may purchase his grains from these shops. I assured them that as long as it was necessary, these shops will be continued.

SHRI RAJAGOPAL NAIDU : Is the hon. Minister aware that in the Tamil districts of North Arcot, Salem and Coimbatore, even drinking water for human beings is not obtained ?

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : Yes, I saw this in Chittoor and I was told that similar conditions exist in other districts also. Therefore, I am making certain proposals to the Planning Commission for taking up this question of drinking water as early as possible. The other day I also consulted the Members of both Houses of Parliament representing these areas as to what measures should be adopted to bring relief to these areas because it seemed that depending on rains will every now and then create the present day situation there. Therefore, we have to adopt other measures.

DR. RADHA KUMUD MOOKERJI : Will the hon. Minister for Food be pleased to throw some light on the conditions of famine created in the Sundarbans area of West Bengal by saline inundation ?

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : I do not know what the hon. Member means by conditions having been created. But when the flood breached several places, the whole area was flooded by saline water ; but I learn that the *bunds* have been repaired and measures are being taken to supply special manure that will counteract the effects of the saline water.

SHRI B. GUPTA : Is the hon. Minister aware that large scale hoarding and profiteering by landlords and *Latdars* as they are called in these areas, is largely responsible for the acute distress in Bengal ?

And Number Two.....

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : No, one by one.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY : It will obviate the Minister having to stand up and sit down so often.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : But I may forget the question. Well, when I was in Calcutta this time, some such complaints were made. Then we had a joint meeting of the parties that were complaining of hoarding and myself, the Food and Chief Ministers, and some officers of the Bengal Government, and it was agreed that whenever any such information was supplied to them, they will take immediate measures to bring it to a stop and prevent the hoarding.

SHRI B. GUPTA : Is the hon. Minister aware that things have been rendered difficult because a big landlord of that area has been taken in the Ministry.

MR. CHAIRMAN : No, no. Mr. Krishna Moorthy Rao.

SHRI KRISHNA MOORTHY RAO : My question has already been put by Mr. Reddy, Sir.

SHRI GOVINDA REDDY : May I know whether any arrangements have been made for relieving the shortage of fodder in Madras ?

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI: The Government of Madras itself has taken measures in this regard. We have received some complaint from some Mysore areas and our Special Officer has gone there to see what measures can be taken and what help can be rendered.

MR. CHAIRMAN : I think the questions will stop there. We have had 45 minutes.

KHWAJA INAIT ULLAH : Sir, only just one more question.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY : Out of the 45 minutes about 25 minutes were taken by the Minister himself.

MR. CHAIRMAN : What I would like to say is this. It is quite true that the Minister took about 20 minutes to read his statement.

AN HON. MEMBER : More than that.

MR. CHAIRMAN : And I have given, instead of the half-an-hour discussion, 45 minutes discussion, including the time taken by the Minister. Anyway, I give five more minutes. (*Several hon. members stood up*) One at a time, please. Dr. Srivastava.

DR. J. P. SRIVASTAVA : May I know what the foodgrain deficit of the country is in 1952-53 and 1953-54.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : The hon. the questioner was the Food Minister at the time when all this trouble arose. Then he himself at one time confessed that there were no statistics available and therefore he had to engage some special staff experts to prepare statistics. We have inherited these statistics, and according to the confession of the hon. Member they cannot be relied upon. But all the same, I can give some indication here. Last year we imported more than 4 million tons of foodgrains. I

find that we will be carrying over to the next year about 24 lakh tons. Therefore we propose not to import this quantity next year but only about half of it and we think we will be able to carry over to the next year also half of the total quantity of this year's carry-over and next year's import.

श्री आर० पी० टामटा : क्या गवर्नमेंट को मालूम है कि उत्तर प्रदेश के पहाड़ी जिलों में अनाज की बहुत कमी है ? इस कमी को पूरा करने के लिये सरकार क्या कर रही है ?

***[SHRI R. P. TAMTA :** Is the Government aware of the fact that there is a great scarcity of foodgrains in the hilly districts of Uttar Pradesh ? What is the Government doing to remove this scarcity ?]

श्री रफी अहमद किदवाई : उत्तर प्रदेश के चीफ मिनिस्टर पहाड़ी जिले के हैं। हम को इत्मीनान है कि जो कार्यवाही उन्होंने की है वह काफी है।

***[SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI :** The Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh belongs to hilly regions of the State. I am sure that the steps taken by him in this connection are adequate.]

خراجہ عنایت اللہ : کیا گورنمنٹ کو معلوم ہے کہ گورنمنٹ شاپس میں جو غلہ بیچنا جانا ہے اس میں بہت زیادہ ایڈالٹیریشن (adulteration) ہونا ہے ؟ عام لوگوں کو اس کی بڑی شکایت ہے - گورنمنٹ نے اس کے بارے میں کوئی خاص انتظام کیا ہے یا نہیں ؟

***[KHWAJA INAIT ULLAH :** Is the Government aware of the fact that there is too much adulteration in the foodgrains that are sold at Government shops ? There is a general complaint about it. Has the Government taken any special steps to remove this complaint ?]

*English translation.

شری رفیع احمد قدوائی : ایسی شکایت ہے اور اس کی وجہ سے کچھ لوگ وہاں سے مستغابہ نہیں خریدتے ہیں اور زیاد قیمت دے کر اپنے شاپس سے خریدتے ہیں اور اسی وجہ سے ان کو قی کنٹرول پسند ہے۔

*[SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : There is such complaint and because of this some people do not buy foodgrains from Government shops and prefer to buy them from open shops at a higher price. That is why they favour decontrol.]

SHRI B. C. GHOSE : With regard to the general food problem, is the Government's policy now to decontrol food wherever that is possible ?

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : That is the policy we are pursuing—wherever it is necessary. For instance in those areas which are deficit decontrol is not possible unless we can ensure the supply of cheap grains in sufficient quantities to the market, to flood the market. But wherever relaxation can be made without raising the prices very high, we are trying to do it.

KHWAJA INAIT ULLAH : Sir, my question has not been answered.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Not answered ? It does not matter.

SHRI K. C. GEORGE : May I know why the Travancore-Cochin State has been left out from the reply though the question related to this State also ?

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : I have not received any report from Hyderabad as I said....

MR. CHAIRMAN : He asks about Travancore-Cochin.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : Sir, I am coming to that. And about Travancore-Cochin also there is no special condition today. There they grow more commercial crops than

paddy and therefore we have to supply them large quantities from outside. This is not a speciality this year, but it is a perpetual thing and this area will always have to depend on imported foodgrains.

SHRI B. RATH : What is the agency that receives rice from Orissa for West Bengal and at what rate is it bought in Orissa and at what rate is this rice sold in Bengal ?

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : I do not exactly know the procurement price of rice in Orissa, but I think it is about Rs. 9 per maund. I speak subject to correction. And then it is sold outside the province after meeting their expenses at about Rs. 12 per maund. As I said, I am not sure of the figures, but I will supply them to the hon. Member later on if he so desires.

Shri B. RATH : I want to know what is the price at which the rice is being sold in Bengal, because there is profiteering going on.

MR. CHAIRMAN : He will give the information when he gets that.

SHRI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI : It is being sold at Bengal for Rs. 17-8-0. Locally procured rice is also being sold at that rate as the prices of locally procured rice, rice imported from other States and rice imported from abroad are pooled. They get the imported rice for Rs. 26 a maund. Therefore, there is no question of making any profit.

SHRI TAJAMUL HUSSAIN : Do Government realise that the population is increasing in such a manner that it will be....

(Time bell rings.)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Order, order.

KHWAJA INAIT ULLAH : My question has not been replied.

MR CHAIRMAN : Order, order

DISTURBANCES IN KANPUR

JANAB M. MUHAMMAD ISMAIL SAHEB (Madras) : Sir, before we begin the discussion on the subjects in the list of business, I want to make a submission.

You may be aware, Sir, that distressing news of certain unhappy happenings is coming from Kanpur in U. P. for two days now. It is unfortunate that the feelings of the people, the Muslims, have been wounded and roused in this manner. While I want the people to obey the law and maintain law and order, I request the Government to take adequate steps to redress their grievances and soothe their feelings. In this connection I want to know whether the Government has got any information about the present position and what steps they are taking to give relief to the wounded feelings of the people.

THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL (SHRI N. GOPALASWAMI) : Sir, this surprise has been sprung upon me this morning. The incident is really one within the sphere of the State Government. I understand that the State Government is taking adequate action but whatever fell from my hon. friend, I will pass on to my hon. colleague, the Home Minister.

THE RESERVE AND AUXILIARY AIR FORCES BILL, 1952—(continued).

MR. CHAIRMAN : Further discussion on the motion moved by Shri N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar on the 12th :

That the Bill to provide for the constitution and regulation of certain Air Force Reserves and also an Auxiliary Air Force and for matters connected therewith as passed by the House of the People, be taken into consideration.

SHRI RAJAGOPAL NAIDU (Madras) : Mr. Chairman, I should really congratulate the hon. the Defence Minister for having brought

forth this enactment. Of course, it was long overdue and we know, Sir, that in these days when wars are won mainly by Air Forces, and when countries are devastated only by Air Forces, no amount of having any territorial force would do good to our country and I feel sure that India is getting air-minded.

The Indian Air Force came of age during the War when it won the reputation of being the "Eyes and Ears" of the 14th Army in Burma. We have also seen, Sir, recently when the hon. the Prime Minister addressed our House on Kashmir, how our Indian Air Force had played a great part in capturing an air-field at Srinagar in time, and but for our Air Force we would have certainly lost Kashmir. I am really grateful, Sir, to the hon. the Defence Minister for having brought forth this legislation at this stage. In these days, oceans are no barriers for enemies and mountains are also no barriers. We have got to forget our Himalayas and we have got to forget the vast oceans surrounding our country and unless we have got a strong Air Force, unless we have got a strong Air defence, I do not think we can successfully protect our country from future wars.

I would only read a few passages from the small book "Defending our Frontiers", at page 4 :

"Hardly had the internecine upheaval in the Punjab subsided when our soldiers and airmen were called upon to defend Jammu and Kashmir against invaders. And while they were still engaged in the Kashmir operations, the Indian Army and Air Force had to fulfil another obligation in Hyderabad State. Some of their achievements during this period will rank among the outstanding feats of arms in the long course of our military history."

And, again, in the same book at page 27 :

"This was immediately followed by an unexpected call to action in Kashmir. Despite unfavourable flying conditions and mountainous terrain, the I. A. F. carried out some of the most difficult tasks assigned to it during the Jammu and Kashmir operations. From the besieged town of Poonch alone nearly 35,000 refugees were flown out to places of safety. In flying to Leh, the Dacotas negotiated heights of 20,000 feet and over with improvised flying facilities. The I. A. F.,