

THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY DEBATES

Official Report

Volume IV, 1943

(8th to 19th November, 1943)

NINETEENTH SESSION OF THE FIFTH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, 1943



Dy 20/11/43.
PUBLISHED BY THE MANAGER OF PUBLICATIONS, DELHI
PRINTED BY THE MANAGER, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PRESS, NEW DELHI
1944.

Price Rs. 1 As. 2 or 1s. 9d.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

President:

The Honourable Sir ABDUR RAHIM, K.C.S.I.

Deputy President:

Mr. AKHIL CHANDRA DATTA, M.L.A.

Panel of Chairmen:

Syed GHULAM BHIK NAIRANG, M.L.A.

Mr. K. C. NEOGY, M.L.A.

Mr. HOOSEINBHOY A. LALLJEE, M.L.A.

Sir HENRY RICHARDSON, M.L.A.

Secretary:

Mian MUHAMMAD RAFI, Barrister-at-Law.

Assistants of the Secretary.

Mr. M. N. KAUL, Barrister-at-Law.

Khan Bahadur S. G. HASNAIN.

Marshal:

Captain Haji Sardar NUR AHMAD KHAN, M.C., I.O.M., I.A.

Committee on Petitions:

Mr. AKHIL CHANDRA DATTA, M.L.A., *Chairman.*

Syed GHULAM BHIK NAIRANG, M.L.A.

Mr. GOVIND V. DESHMUKH, M.L.A.

Sardar SANT SINGH, M.L.A.

Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.

CONTENTS

Volume IV—8th to 19th November, 1943.

	PAGES.		PAGES.
MONDAY, 8TH NOVEMBER, 1943—			
Members Sworn	1	lection of Members to the Standing Committee for the Food Department	190—95
Starred Questions and Answers	1—22	Election of a Member to the Council of the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore	195—96
Unstarred Question and Answer	22	Motion <i>re</i> the Food Situation—Discussion not concluded	196—224
Statements laid on the Table	22—26		
Message from His Excellency the Governor General	26	SATURDAY, 13TH NOVEMBER, 1943—	
Statement <i>re</i> method of taking votes by division	26—27	Starred Questions and Answers	225—48
Motion for Adjournment <i>re</i> Non-official Delegation to Great Britain and United States of America to speak on India's War Effort—Adopted	27—28	Unstarred Questions and Answers	248—49
H. E. the Governor General's Assent to Bills	28	Motions for Adjournment <i>re</i> —	
The Hindu Code, Part I (Intestate Succession)—Petitions laid on the Table	29	Arrest of Mr. Pardiwalla, Barrister of Lahore—Ruled out of Order	250
Amendments to the British Baluchistan Motor Vehicles Rules	29	Alleged inhuman Treatment to Mr. Jalprakash Narain—Ruled out of Order	250—51
The Hindu Code Part I, (Intestate Succession)—Presentation of the Report of the Joint Committee	30	The Victoria Memorial (Amendment) Bill—Passed	251—52
The Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill—Presentation of the Report of the Select Committee	30	The Code of Criminal Procedure (Second Amendment) Bill—Passed	252
The Criminal Procedure Amendment Bill—Presentation of the Report of the Select Committee	30	The Indian Trade Unions (Amendment) Bill—Circulated	252—78
The Indian Tea Control (Second Amendment) Bill—Introduced	30	The Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill—Passed as amended	278
The Code of Criminal Procedure (Second Amendment) Bill—Introduced	30	The Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill (Amendment of section 503, etc.)—Passed as amended	278—79
The Victoria Memorial (Amendment) Bill—Introduced	30	MONDAY, 15TH NOVEMBER 1943—	
The Indian Trade Unions (Amendment) Bill—Introduced	30	Member sworn	281
The Indian Companies (Amendment) Bill—Introduced	31	Starred Questions and Answers	281—96
Election of Members to the Delhi University Court	31	Unstarred Question and Answer	297
TUESDAY, 9TH NOVEMBER, 1943—		Declarations of Exemption and Notification under the Registration of Foreigners Act	297—99
Member Sworn	47	Motion <i>re</i> The Food Situation—not concluded	299—343
Starred Questions and Answers	47—80		
Unstarred Questions and Answers	80—82	TUESDAY, 16TH NOVEMBER, 1943—	
Motions for Adjournment <i>re</i> —		Member sworn	345
Banning Publication of Bengal Governor's Order against the <i>Amrita Bazar Patrika</i> —Ruled out of Order	83—84	Starred Questions and Answers	345—58
Failure to give Publicity to Mortality due to Starvation in Bengal—Not moved	84	Unstarred Questions and Answers	358—59
Failure to take Timely Action for preventing Acute Food Crisis in Bengal—Disallowed	84	Motion for Adjournment <i>re</i> Failure to implement their Guarantee of Independence to Lebanon by the British Government—Ruled out of Order	359
Failure to consult the Legislature <i>re</i> Agreement for United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration—Ruled out of Order	84—85	Reconstitution of the House Committee	359
Hunger-strike of Political Prisoners in Bangalore Camp Jail—Ruled out of Order	86	Motion <i>re</i> the Food Situation—Discussion not concluded	359—401
Continuance of Central Government's Subsidy to Sind—Ruled out of Order	86	Statement of Business	401
Nomination of the Panel of Charman	86—87	WEDNESDAY, 17TH NOVEMBER, 1943—	
Resolution <i>re</i> Stabilization of Prices—Adopted as amended	87—105	Member Sworn	403
Statement of Business	105—06	Starred Questions and Answers	403—38
WEDNESDAY, 10TH NOVEMBER, 1943—		Unstarred Questions and Answers	438—40
Starred Questions and Answers	107—37	Point of Order <i>re</i> Motion proposing communication of formal address to H. E. the Governor General	440—41
Unstarred Questions and Answers	138—39	Election of Members to the Delhi University Court	441
Committee on Petitions	139	Statements laid on the Table	441—42
The Hindu Code, Part I (Intestate Succession)—Petitions laid on the Table	139	The Indian Tea Control (Second Amendment) Bill—Passed	442—43
The Code of Civil Procedure (Amendment) Bill—(Amendment of section 100)—Motion to continue adopted	140	The Indian Companies (Amendment) Bill—Passed	443—44
The Disolution of Muslim Marriages (Amendment) Bill—Motion to continue adopted	140	The Central Excise Bill—Referred to Select Committee	444—45
The Aligarh Muslim University (Amendment) Bill—(Insertion of section 12B)—Motion to continue adopted	140	The Hindu Code, Part I (Intestate Succession)—Circulated	445—46
The Muslim Kazis Bill—Motion to continue adopted	140	Motion <i>re</i> the Food Situation—Discussion not concluded	446—73
The Indian Evidence (Amendment) Bill—Motion to continue adopted	140		
The Indian Merchant Shipping (Amendment) Bill—Referred to Select Committee	140—43	THURSDAY, 18TH NOVEMBER, 1943—	
The Hindu Marriage Disabilities Removal Bill—Motion to refer to Select Committee—Withdrawn	143—65	Starred Questions and Answers	475—93
		Unstarred Questions and Answers	493—94
FRIDAY, 12TH NOVEMBER, 1943—		Motions for Adjournment <i>re</i> —	
Starred Questions and Answers	167—83	Conviction of Mr. P. E. Pathur under the 'Pegging Act in Durban—Ruled out of Order	494
Unstarred Questions and Answers	183—89	Ill-treatment meted out to Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madni and other Muslim Security Prisoners—Ruled out of Order	495
Election of Members to the Delhi University Court	189	Election of Members to the Standing Committee for the Food Department	495
The Central Excise Bill—Introduced	190	Election of a Member to the Council of the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore	495
		Motion <i>re</i> Food Situation—Discussion concluded	495—541
		FRIDAY, 19TH NOVEMBER, 1943—	
		Member Sworn	543
		Starred Questions and Answers	543—58
		Unstarred Questions and Answers	554—55
		Statements laid on the Table	555—63
		Short Notice Question and Answer	563—64
		Resolution <i>re</i> Recruitment of Scheduled Castes to the Key Service of the Army—Adopted	564—79
		Resolution <i>re</i> Reform of the Cantonment Service—Withdrawn	579—88

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 9th November, 1943

The Assembly met in the Assembly Chamber of the Council House at Eleven of the Clock, Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim) in the Chair.

MEMBER SWORN

Mr. M. Ramachandra Rao Nayudu, M.L.A. (Government of India: Nominated Official).

STARRED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(a) ORAL ANSWERS

Sardar Mangal Singh: Question No. 24.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Is the Honourable Member in his place? He ought to be?

Sardar Mangal Singh: I do not know.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): If there has been reallocation of seats by the Party, of which no intimation has been given to me, the old arrangement will stand.

Mr. Abdul Qaiyum: In half an hour we will furnish the new seating arrangement.

DEATHS DUE TO STARVATION IN BENGAL AND ASSAM AND FOOD POSITION IN INDIA.

24. *Sardar Mangal Singh: Will the Honourable the Food Member please state:

(a) the total number of deaths due to starvation in Bengal and Assam from the 1st August to the 31st October 1943; and

(b) whether the Government of India has been sending reports regularly to His Majesty's Government about the food position in India with particular reference to Bengal; if not, why not?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: (a) I regret that I am not in a position to supply figures which I can regard as complete and accurate. Further reports have been called for.

(b) Yes.

Sardar Mangal Singh: May I know if the Government of India in their reports to His Majesty's Government said that the Punjab Government had hoarded foodgrains?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: That does not arise out of the question on the order paper.

Sardar Mangal Singh: It does. When the Honourable Member says that they have been sending reports regularly to His Majesty's Government, it does arise whether in the reports they have sent they said that the Punjab has hoarded foodgrains.

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: No; the reference is specially to Bengal in the question—not to the Punjab.

Sardar Mangal Singh: The reference is not only to Bengal, but whether the Government of India has been sending reports regularly to His Majesty's Government about the food situation in India with particular reference to Bengal. Obviously the Government of India has said somewhere in those reports that the Punjab is hoarding foodgrains or withholding from Bengal, because in the House of Lords it has been said that the Punjab is not coming forward with their foodgrains. I want to know what was the foundation for that report which the Government of India sent to His Majesty's Government?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I would like to have notice of the question.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Has this Government been sending any reports regarding the food situation in India or not?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: Yes. I have answered that in the affirmative.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: Is the Government in a position to lay those reports on the table?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: No; the reports are confidential, I am sorry.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Can we take it that the statements made by the Secretary of State or other official spokesmen in Parliament from time to time are based on such reports?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: They may be partly based on those reports.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Have they any independent sources of information, to the knowledge of the Honourable Member?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I believe so; I could not say definitely; but he has got so many sources of information.

Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani: Will the Government be pleased to lay on the table that portion of the report which has been used in the Parliament?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I am afraid not; I do not know what report he has used.

Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani: About the food situation in Bengal?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: We have been sending to the Secretary of State weekly telegrams about the food situation in India; and I do not know which of these telegrams or what portions of them he has used and what other sources he has drawn upon.

Sir F. E. James: Will the Honourable Member say how it was, at any rate in the earlier stages of this crisis, that the Secretary of State made such grossly inaccurate statements in regard to the food situation, which every one in this country knew was not in accordance with the facts?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: That question ought to be addressed to the Secretary of State, I am afraid.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: Will the Honourable Member kindly enlighten the House since when he started giving His Majesty's Government information about the food situation in India?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I would like to have notice of the question. This has been going on for some time; I could not tell you from what time we have been sending him reports.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Is the Honourable Member in a position to indicate in regard to what points the Secretary of State or other official spokesmen of the Government departed from the reports sent by the Government of India, particularly on material points?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: It is very difficult to answer that question.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Is the Honourable Member in a position to supply this House with a copy of the recent White Paper on the food situation in India? Has the White Paper been received in India?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: No; we have not yet received it. I have not seen it yet.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Is the Honourable Member in a position to say whether the White Paper is based on the information supplied by the Government of India?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: No; I am not in a position to say whether it is entirely based on it, or not.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Did the Government of India supply information for incorporation into the White Paper, particularly the appendices to the White Paper?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I have not seen the White Paper yet.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Do I take it then that the Government of India was not consulted in regard to the issuing of the White Paper or asked specially to supply materials for the purpose of enabling His Majesty's Government to issue the White Paper?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: Statements were given from time to time and the Secretary of State may have based the White Paper on those; but I could not say for certain; I have not yet seen the White Paper and I do not know what it contains.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: May I ask whether the Government of India propose to lay before this House a white or blue paper or a paper of whatever colour, giving information to this House regarding the food situation?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: Yes; it will be done in a day or two.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Will the Honourable Member tell me if the reports that are sent to England are based on reports received from the provinces or from the public of India?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: Reports received from the provinces and also our own appreciation.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: As regards the reports of deaths from starvation, is it the practice of the Honourable Member to submit such reports to the scrutiny of Mr. Conran-Smith before they are sent to the Secretary of State for India?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: No.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: How does the Honourable Member then assure himself that such reports do not suffer from overdramatisation of the situation?

(No answer was given.)

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE LONG RANGE FOOD POLICY COMMITTEE.*

25. *Sardar Mangal Singh: Will the Honourable the Food Member please state:

(a) what recommendations of the Long Range Food Policy Committee have been accepted by the Government of India; and

(b) whether, in view of the seriousness of the food situation, Government propose to allot a day or two for discussion by this House of the food situation during this session; if not, why not?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: (a) The Government of India have generally accepted all the major recommendations of the Foodgrains Policy Committee relating to the Basic Plan, Procurement, Price Control, Rationing and Imports and Exports. All the subsidiary recommendations are being examined and many of them have been accepted.

(b) Government have already agreed to allot two days for discussion of the food situation.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: May I ask whether the Government of India propose to circulate to Members of the Legislature the report of the Long Range Food Policy Committee?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: We have not yet been able to get sufficient copies printed, I think, but I will endeavour to supply Members with as many as I can. Three copies of the report have been placed in the Library of the House.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Is the Honourable Member aware that the proceedings of the First Food Conference which was held I suppose in December 1942 are not available in the Library of this House although proceedings of the Second and Third Food Conferences are available, and that, although requests have been made by the Librarian as well as by non-official Members for being supplied with copies, no response has yet been received?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I will look into the matter. It may be due to scarcity of paper.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee: Is the Honourable Member prepared to place a copy on the table of the House or in the Library—I mean the First Food Conference Report?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I will endeavour to do so.

Sardar Mangal Singh: May I know if the Government of India are importing half a dozen experts on food, because that was one of the recommendations of the Committee—that experts should be imported from England?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: No. We are not importing any just now so far as I know.

Sardar Mangal Singh: You are not importing now. Then next week?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: No.

Sardar Mangal Singh: People want food, not experts.

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan: Will the Honourable Member kindly explain what he means by just now?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: Well, at present.

Mr. Hooseinbhoj A. Lalljee: Has any indent been made?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: Not that I am aware of.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: May I know when those two days will come?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: The Leader of the House will make an announcement about it.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: May I know what are those two days so that we may be prepared?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: The Leader of the House will make an announcement.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: It has not yet been announced.

Mr. G. Rangiah Naidu: May I know from the Honourable Member if there are any food experts in India?

An Honourable Member: Experts or exports!

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I expect all Honourable Members are food experts.

Mr. G. Rangiah Naidu: May I know from the Honourable Member whether there are any food experts in India

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Order, order. Next question.

HOLDING OF A SECRET SITTING OF LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY DURING CURRENT SESSION.

26. ***Sardar Mangal Singh:** Will the Honourable the Leader of the House please state whether, in view of the fact that the secret sitting of the Legislative Assembly during the last session was adjourned after the lunch interval for want of a quorum, thereby depriving the non-official members of an opportunity to elicit valuable information from His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief about the war situation, Government propose to allot a day for a secret sitting of this House during this session? If not, why not?

The Honourable Sir Sultan Ahmed: No. His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief's speech on the occasion to which the Honourable Member refers was fully informative and I have ascertained that His Excellency has no further information of importance to impart to the House at this juncture. In these circumstances Government do not consider that any useful purpose would be served by a continuance of the debate.

HOLDING OF FRESH ELECTIONS OF THE CENTRAL LEGISLATURE.

27. ***Sardar Mangal Singh:** Will the Honourable the Law Member please state:

(a) when the electoral rolls of the Central Legislative Assembly were prepared last time;

(b) when Government propose to hold fresh elections of the Central Legislature; and

(c) whether Government propose to continue giving extensions to the present Legislative Assembly till the termination of the war?

The Honourable Sir Sultan Ahmed: (a) The preparation of the current electoral rolls was completed on dates varying in different provinces from the 1st September, 1941 to the 31st October, 1942

(b) The Honourable Member is referred to sub-rule (1) of rule 27 of the Council of State and Legislative Assembly Electoral Rules, from which he will observe that a general election to each Chamber must necessarily be held on the expiration of the current extension of the Chamber, or, if further extensions are effected, on the expiration of the last extension so effected.

(c) Under clause (b) of the proviso to sub-section (1) of section 68D of the Government of India Act as set out in the Ninth Schedule to the Government of India Act, 1935, the decision with reference to the effecting or otherwise of further extensions will rest with the Governor-General, and I am not in a position to anticipate the decisions at which His Excellency may from time to time arrive.

REPORTS BY MESSRS. H. R. HUTCHINGS AND A. K. CHANDA ON THE EVACUATION OF INDIANS FROM BURMA.

28. *Sardar Mangal Singh: Will the Honourable Member for Indians Overseas please state:

(a) whether the reports of Mr. H. R. Hutchings and Mr. A. K. Chanda regarding the evacuation of Indians from Burma will be placed on the table of this House; and

(b) whether Government have taken or contemplate taking any action thereon; if so, what?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: (a) and (b). As the House is aware, the Government of India have received a number of reports on the evacuation of Burma. As promised by my predecessor, these reports were collated and scrutinised and the preparation of a consolidated report undertaken, the work being entrusted to Mr. A. K. Chanda. As this work neared completion, it became apparent that it would be impossible to present a clear picture of the whole operation without including matter that might be of great value to the enemy. The question has therefore been re-examined in the light of the existing military situation and after detailed consideration the Government of India have decided not to publish any report on the subject for the present.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: Did the Honourable Member say that this report would not be published for the duration of the war because it will give information to the enemy?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: I say for the present.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: When Mr. Chanda was appointed specifically for drafting the report, did not Government anticipate that the report when made might be of use to the enemy? Why did it not occur to the Government at the initial stage?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: It is for the Government to decide. It is confidential.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: I wanted to know whether it did not occur to the Government at the early stage that such a document would not be worth publication, that the report need not be drafted at all when it was not going to be published as it was likely to give information to the enemy?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: Government could not anticipate the war situation.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: When Mr. Chanda was deputed to undertake this work of drafting the report on evacuation from Burma, did it not occur to Government that it would not be advisable to have the report drafted?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: It is a matter of opinion.

Mr. Hoosinbhoj A. Lalljee: May I take it that the report is ready and will remain with the Government?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: Of course.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: Is it the case of the Government that the fact of publication of the Report should not be made known to the enemy though he knew the way in which Indians were evacuated from Burma? Is that the contention of the Government?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: That is also a matter of opinion.

CONTROL ON PAPER OTHER THAN NEWSPRINT.

29. *Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: (a) Will the Honourable Member for Industries and Civil Supplies be pleased to state whether any control exists on paper other than the newsprint? If so, what are its main features and what powers have been delegated to the Provincial Governments?

(b) Is it a fact that Provincial Governments requisition paper for their use as well as for sale on permits issued and for assisting essential consumers? If so, under what provisions are these functions carried out?

(c) Has the term 'essential consumer' been defined? If so, where? If not, are registered associations essential consumers?

(d) Which associations in Sind have been given permits or otherwise assisted in obtaining their paper requirements during the current year, and which associations have been refused such assistance?

(e) What is the controlled price of paper at Delhi, Karachi, Lahore, Bombay and Calcutta?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: (a) Yes; statutory control exists on maximum wholesale prices of certain varieties of paper. Provincial Governments are competent to fix such retail prices in their areas as they may consider reasonable.

(b) Yes, some Provincial Governments have had occasion to requisition paper under the Defence of India Rules for Government use and for assisting certain essential consumers.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) The Central Government have not issued any permits or given any special assistance to any Association in Sind.

(e) The attention of the Honourable Member is invited to the Notification of the Government of India in the Department of Commerce No. Econ-Ad. (P.C.) 16/41, dated the 16th January, 1942 as amended from time to time, copies of which are available in the Library of the Legislative Assembly. The controlled prices at places other than those mentioned in the Notification are fixed by the Provincial Governments concerned.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: May I know from the Honourable Member if there is any price control over the paper which is required for courts, professional advocates and others who want to make applications to courts, etc.?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: I have lost sight of the professional advocates' requirements for some time and I have not been able to find anywhere in the file that there is any such.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: May I know from the Honourable Member if the Government do not propose to have any control over that paper which is required for the courts and that sellers can charge any price they like?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: Government has made its position quite clear and I have made it quite clear, that we exercise a certain amount of control only and not to the fullest extent, and as such any individual item is a matter which is not under consideration just now.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: Will the Honourable Member tell the House what percentage of Indian output of paper has been released for civilian consumption in India?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: 30 per cent.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: Is it the policy of the Government to review the needs of the civilians from time to time and to increase the quota of release?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: I may say that this 30 per cent. is as a result of the review of the whole position. I can assure Honourable Members that the position is being watched from day to day and if at any time Government feels that, consistently with other requirements, it is possible to increase the quota, Government would certainly be prepared to do so.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: Is the Honourable Member aware that last year a similar figure was quoted by the Member in charge that only 30 per cent. of the Indian produce of paper has been released for civilian use. If

so, will the Honourable Member tell us whether any further improvement has since been made?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: If my friend wants the actual date, I require notice.

Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani: May I know what kind of consumers of papers are included in the list of essential consumers?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: I have said that there is no definition of the term 'essential consumer' and as such I am not in a position to enlighten the Honourable Member except to say that they are required for essential consumers.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: Will the Honourable Member take note of the requests of Universities and educational institutions for increased quotas of paper?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: I am aware that certain Provincial Governments have taken special consideration of the requirements of the Universities but that is a matter for the Provincial Governments. So far as the Central Government is concerned, we have left it entirely to the Provincial Government to function.

Mr. Hoosseinbhoj A. Lalljee: Will the Provincial Government supply the list?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: The work is too vast for a continent like India.

BOMBAY GOVERNMENT'S APPLICATION FOR MANUFACTURE OF SULPHATHIOZOL.

30. **Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh:** Will the Secretary for Education, Health and Lands please state:

(a) if the application of the Bombay Government to the Government of India about a year ago for the manufacture of sulphathiozol which was referred to the High Court of Calcutta has been allowed; if not, the reasons for rejecting it; and

(b) if the Government of India intend to move in the matter instead of leaving it to the individual provinces; if not, why not?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: (a) The application was referred to the Calcutta High Court, but as the Bombay Government decided not to proceed with the case it was dismissed with costs.

(b) As the manufacture of Sulphathiozol in this country would require the importation of a number of chemicals, which would greatly exceed the weight of the manufactured product, it is not considered desirable to utilise the limited transport available in war-time in importing the raw materials instead of the finished product which will occupy much less space. I may add that the question is now being examined in connection with the Drugs Committee, as to what drugs we should try to develop in this country.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Last time it was said that the Government was making attempts to manufacture this and that it was a question of plant. Now that the war situation has improved, cannot the plant and the chemicals be ordered now with a view to manufacture this important drug?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: It is very difficult to answer the question with reference to an individual item. The Government has to take into consideration the demands of the country as a whole. I can assure the Honourable Member that the whole question is being examined. In many cases it is not merely the manufacture of raw materials. We have also to manufacture certain machines, tools and plants and that makes the position extremely difficult at times but we shall certainly carefully consider the situation.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Is the Honourable Member aware that this is not one of those things or articles which are required by everybody for ordinary consumption. It is one of the most essential drugs

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member is arguing.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: I am putting the question. Having regard to that, may I know whether the Honourable Member will give serious attention to this and try to secure all the necessary chemicals and plants?

(No answer.)

MANUFACTURE OF 'ATEBRIN' IN INDIA.

31. *Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Will the Secretary for Education, Health and Lands please state:

(a) if 'Atebrin' is manufactured, now in India; if so, on what scale; and
(b) if it is not manufactured, what are the obstructions in manufacturing it; and what steps Government have taken to remove them?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: (a) It is understood that two private firms in Calcutta manufacture a drug which is an exact equivalent of atebtrin. Their monthly output is estimated to be a few pounds.

(b) The main difficulty in the way of manufacturing atebtrin in India is the fact that it requires the importation of a number of chemicals which are not available in India and which together weigh about ten times the weight of the finished product. In view of war-time difficulties of transport and the fact that the manufactured product, which occupies much less space than the required chemicals, is available for export both in the United Kingdom and the United States of America it is considered desirable in the interest of economy in shipping, to import the finished product instead of the materials required for manufacture.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: What is this drug which is equivalent to atebtrin? Does the Honourable Member know about it?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: I do not know anything more about it than what I have said.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: What is the name of the drug?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: I do not know what they call it.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Is any such drug which is equivalent to atebtrin manufactured?

(No answer.)

AFFILIATION OF FORESTRY TRAINING INSTITUTE OF DEHRA DUN TO UNIVERSITY.

32. *Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Will the Secretary for Education, Health and Lands please state if the Forestry Training Institute of Dehra Dun can be affiliated to any university in the United Provinces? If not, what are the objections to its affiliation?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: There are two Forestry training Institutes at Dehra Dun—the Indian Forest College and the Indian Forest Ranger College. The question whether either can be affiliated to any University in the United Provinces has not been considered before. They are Government institutions designed primarily to train candidates selected for appointment to the Superior and Subordinate Forest Services of the Provinces and the Indian States and, if places are available, private students, who have a guarantee of appointment in a province or State after successfully completing the course. Forestry is a specialised subject and no University in India has on its staff the technical experts required to control all aspects of Forest Education. The Colleges at Dehra Dun, on the other hand, are self-sufficient, and staffed by practical forest officers on deputation from the Forest Services of the Provinces and by research officers of the Forest Research Institute, under the control of the President of the Institute. It is not obvious what advantage would accrue to the Colleges from affiliation to a University and it is not proposed to pursue the matter at present.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Was any inquiry made as to whether there is any competent technical staff to manage the school and college?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: There are competent staffs for managing both the colleges.

Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani: If any University is prepared to make arrangements for training in forestry to the satisfaction of the Government, will Government be pleased to give the sanction?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: That is a hypothetical question. When that situation arises, we shall consider it.

FRAMING OF RULES TO ENFORCE RECIPROCIITY ACT.

33. *Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Will the Honourable Member for Indians Overseas please state:

(a) if all the necessary rules to enforce the Reciprocity Act have been framed; and

(b) if measures have been adopted to enforce economic sanctions, where necessary, against the Colonies and Dominions ill-treating the Indians living therein?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: (a) Draft rules have been prepared governing certain matters covered by the Reciprocity Act.

(b) No measures have yet been adopted designed to operate as economic sanctions against any dominion or colony.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: In spite of so much demand from the public, in the Press and on the platform, why has the Government not been alert enough to devise means for enforcing economic sanctions?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: I have said that the draft rules have already been prepared. I may add that the question of economic sanctions is under active consideration.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: When are the rules likely to be put into force?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: Certain matters have still to be examined.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Have the rules received the approval of the Government of India?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: I have said that the draft rules have been framed.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: When are they likely to be approved by the Government? When will they come up for consideration before Government?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: I want notice of the question.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: When will the Honourable Member be in a position to enforce these rules?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: I cannot give the exact date.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: I do not want the exact date. I want to know approximately?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: As soon as the other paraphernalia is finished.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: May I ask whether he can state whether they will be finished in a month or two months or three months?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: I cannot say that.

PROPOSAL FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INDIAN COCOANUT BOARD.

34. *Sir F. E. James: Will the Secretary for Education, Health and Lands be pleased to state:

(a) whether the establishment of an Indian Coconut Board on the lines of the Ceylon Board was recommended by Dr. J. S. Patel, who was deputed by the Imperial Institute of Agricultural Research in 1934 to make an enquiry into the coconut cultivation;

(b) whether similar recommendations have been made by the present Diwan of Travancore in recent years in the Travancore Legislature;

(c) whether, in view of the present shortage of coconut products and the necessity for increasing production, Government would give their urgent consideration to such a proposal; and

(d) whether definite proposals have been circulated to various Provinces and States, what stage they have now reached, and when the Government of India will be able to establish the Board?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: (a) No, but a proposal for the establishment of a Coconut Marketing Board was made by the Dewan of Cochin in 1936;

(b) Government have no information;

(c) and (d). Yes, proposals regarding the establishment of an Indian Coconut Committee are considered urgent and have already been circulated to Provinces and States. Further action in the matter will be taken as soon as their replies are received.

PROVINCIAL STOCKS OF WHEAT, RICE, ETC.

35. *Mr. Amarendra Nath Chattopadhyaya: (a) Will the Honourable Member for Food be pleased to state the stock of wheat, rice, maize, millet and sugar left in each province in India on the 31st March, 1948, including the provinces under the Central Government?

(b) What is the number of civil population, province by province, which had to be fed with the stock left in each province from the 1st of April, 1948?

(c) What quantity of wheat, rice, millet, maize and sugar was produced, province by province, in India between the 1st April and 30th September, 1948, indicating separately the total stock of the aforesaid commodities left in each province in India on the 30th September, 1948?

(d) What total quantity of foodstuff was supplied to the military population, province by province, between the 1st April and the 30th September, 1948?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: The information required for a complete reply to the Honourable Member's question, in the form asked, is not readily available with the Central Government, and they consider that their collection would involve an amount of time and money which would not be justified in present conditions, but statements are placed on the table showing:

(a) Population according to the 1941 Census, province by province.

(b) Normal requirements and production and surplus/deficit position of all provinces in respect of foodgrains.

(c) Total quantity of foodgrains supplied to the Defence Services for the period in question.

Statement showing population and the surplus and deficit position of each province in respect of principal cereals in 1943 as compared with the normal.

Name of province.	Total population.	*Average total quantity of rice, millets, wheat and gram available within the trade block for human consumption and seed purposes.		Production of 1942-43.	Surplus.	Deficit.	Net position. surplus (+) or deficit (—)
		(In '000).	(In '000 tons).				
Ajmer-Merwara	584	76	18	..	..	58	..
Assam	10,205	1,808	1,688	..	..	120	..
Bengal	80,314	9,278	7,080	..	..	2,198	..
Bihar	36,340	4,157	4,323	..	166	..	..
Bombay	20,858	3,844	2,902	..	..	942	..
Baluchistan	502	66	(a) 66	..	..	..	..
C. P. and Berar	16,822	3,337	3,730	..	393	..	..
Coorg	189	56	60	..	4	..	..
Delhi	917	109	37	..	..	72	..
Madras	49,342	7,431	6,181	..	..	1,250	..
N.-W. F. P.	3,038	342	357	..	15	..	..
Orissa	8,729	1,362	1,259	..	..	103	..
Punjab	28,419	4,234	5,919	..	1,685	..	..
Sind	4,537	760	1,074	..	314	..	..
U. P.	55,021	7,049	7,698	..	649	..	..
TOTAL	2,95,797	43,909	42,392		3,226	4,743	—1,517

* Three pre-war years' production (+) or (—) net imports or exports.

(a) Estimated, actual net available.

Statement showing the delivery of principal foodgrains for the Defence Services for the period 1st April, 1943 to 30th September, 1943.

	(In '000 tons).
Wheat	184.6
Rice	75.3
Milletts	1.5
Gram	35.1

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: May I ask whether the Food Department can work efficiently without the information that is asked for in this question.

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: Certainly.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: I thought that if anyone frames a food policy, then the statistics which are asked in this question are the first essential before any policy can be framed.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Next question.

STEPS FOR RELIEVING FOOD SCARCITY IN BENGAL.

36. *Mr. Amatendra Nath Chattopadhyaya: (a) Will the Honourable Member for Food be pleased to state approximately the total civil and military population, separately, which had to be fed in Bengal during the 1st April and the 30th September, 1943, and what quantity of rice, wheat, millet and maize had to be supplied for the purpose?

(b) What is the number of men, women and children, separately, who expired on the footpaths and streets of Calcutta, Dacca, Chittagong, Dinajpur, Rungpur, Rajshahi and Khulna between June and September, 1943, on account of starvation, how many were sent to hospitals during that period, how many died in the different hospitals, and how many were cured and sent back to their homes?

(c) What special steps did he take to stop such deaths in Bengal? What were the causes that led to such a scarcity of food specially in Bengal, and why was not Bengal declared to be a province under famine condition?

(d) What is the total quantity of deficit in rice, wheat, millet and maize in Bengal, separately, and the quantity of the aforesaid commodities supplied to meet Bengal's deficit?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: (a) The civil population in Bengal is estimated at 63 millions. It is not in the public interest to reveal the size of the military population. The requirements of this population for six months are estimated by the Government of Bengal to be of the following order:—

Rice	3.9 million tons.
Wheat	21,000 tons.
Milletts and Maize	2,000 tons.

(b) An enquiry was made from Government of Bengal and this is their answer: "No accurate figures are available".

(c) Arrangements were made by the Central Government for the despatch to Bengal by rail and sea, and from overseas, as quickly as possible, of large quantities of foodgrains. In addition the Bengal Government have opened free kitchens, orphanages, poor houses and cheap foodgrain shops for destitute persons, and have arranged for the free distribution of foodgrains, cloth and milk for such persons. Arrangements have also been made for the treatment of destitute persons in hospitals. Test relief schemes have been started for able-bodied persons, and loans granted.

The scarcity of food in Bengal is due to many causes, amongst which may be mentioned the destruction of crops caused by cyclones and floods, loss of imports from Burma, increase of population and refugees, lack of confidence caused by war conditions which led to hoarding both by traders and consumers.

All districts of Bengal are not equally distressed. The question of applying the Famine Code to certain districts is under the consideration of the Provincial Government. Meanwhile, special relief measures have been undertaken.

(d) The deficits estimated by the Bengal Government were as follows:

	Tons.
Rice	450,000
Wheat	112,000
Millets and Maize	2,000

The quantities of foodgrains supplied from outside the province to Bengal during the 6 months April to September, 1943, were as follows:

	Tons.
Rice	204, 400 (including arrivals during the Free Trade period).
Wheat and Wheat Products	187,200
Millets and Gram	48,500

Mr. K. C. Neogy: With reference to the Honourable Member's answer to part (b) of the question that there is no accurate information as regards the number of deaths from starvation, will the Honourable Member be pleased to state whether any attempt was made to obtain accurate information with regard to this matter by Government?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: As I have stated, we made an inquiry from the Government of Bengal and they say they have got no accurate figures.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Did the Government of India try to impress upon the Government of Bengal the necessity of getting accurate information on such an important matter?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: Yes.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: With what result?

(No answer.)

Mr. K. C. Neogy: With regard to the free kitchens which the Honourable Member has referred to in answer to part (c) of the question, is the Honourable Member aware that according to general opinion the gruel given to the destitute from these free kitchens is not sufficient to keep a fair sized rat alive?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: That is a matter of opinion. I am not aware of that.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Has the Honourable Member taken the trouble of getting expert opinion for his own satisfaction on this point?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: Yes; when I visited Calcutta, I did look into the matter and I was told it was quite sufficient. In fact, it was too much in some cases.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Does the Honourable Member remember the composition and the quantity of the gruel allowed?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I had the recipe.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Will the Honourable Member try it on himself for a day to find out how he flourishes on it?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I have eaten it.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: But has the Honourable Member tried to subsist on it exclusively?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I can live on very little.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Next question.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: May I put a question? I have been getting up so many times.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The food situation is going to be discussed very shortly and I cannot allow further supplementary questions.

VACILLATING POLICY AS REGARDS PRICE CONTROL OF WHEAT, RICE, ETC.

37. **Mr. Amarendra Nath Chattopadhyaya:** (a) Will the Honourable Member for Food be pleased to state the dates on which control on prices of wheat, rice and sugar was announced under the Defence of India Rules? What was the effect of such announcement, and what led to the withdrawal of such control of prices from time to time?

(b) Is it a fact that with the announcement of control of prices the commodities vanished from the market? If so, did the Honourable Member take any step to find out how and where the stock vanished? Did he take any step to punish the traders responsible for such sabotage? If not, why not?

(c) Is it a fact that the Provincial Governments did not co-operate with the Central Government with a view to meeting the food emergency due to which the Central Government failed to cope with the situation? If so, what steps have the Central Government in view to meet the situation?

(d) Is it a fact that the consumers or the Peoples Co-operative Stores in the United Provinces have proved to be the effective instruments for stopping black-market transactions in the Province and a great relief to the people? If so, why have not such Peoples Consumers Co-operative Stores been utilised by the Government of Bengal, or, for the matter of that, by the Central Government by ordinances in other provinces and particularly in Bengal where the situation is so serious?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: (a) A control price for wheat for certain markets in Northern India was first notified on the 5th of December, 1941. The price of sugar was first fixed on the 14th of April, 1942. No control price for rice has been fixed by the Government of India. Control in the case of cereals was only partially successful and led in some cases to the commodity disappearing from the market. The control of sugar has been continued with success. Statutory control on the price of wheat was withdrawn in January, 1943 owing to procurement difficulties.

(b) In order to deal with the situation created by the disappearance of controlled foodgrains, the Government of India promulgated the Foodgrains Control Order on the 21st of May, 1942. The object of the Order is to enable Provincial Governments to ascertain the location and amount of stocks of foodgrains and to penalise the holding of stocks in contravention of the Order. The Order is administered by the Provincial Governments, and has been applied with varying degrees of energy and success. Prosecutions under the Order have been instituted by Provincial Governments.

(c) There have been differences of opinion between the Central Government and certain Provincial Governments over various aspects of measures which the Central Government considered necessary. These differences are being progressively removed.

(d) Cooperative Stores in the United Provinces have proved successful as a distributing agency. The strength and efficiency of the Cooperative organisation in different Provinces varies considerably, and it is not considered suitable that the Government of India should prescribe uniformity all over India in this matter by means of an Ordinance.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: Will the Honourable Member say why price control on rice was not instituted by the Government of India?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: It is very difficult to impose control on rice. There are so many qualities of rice, and the prices vary in different localities enormously.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: Does the Honourable Member say that wheat had a standardised price all over India and therefore it was easy of control?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: Yes, the producing provinces are somewhere near the standard.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: Have Government considered that as no price control was imposed on rice, it brought on the heavy increase in price and consequent scarcity?

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member is arguing. He must put specific questions.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: May I know whether Government have actually taken steps to enquire whether price control on rice could be imposed?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: We did enquire. We looked into the matter. First of all there were difficulties of which I have spoken.

and then the Provinces themselves did not agree. They found it very difficult to institute control.

Mr. Hoeseinbhoj A. Lalljee: Is there any price control on rice at present?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: Yes, in some Provinces.

Mr. Hoeseinbhoj A. Lalljee: How was that arranged?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: By the Provinces themselves. If the Provinces want they can do so.

Mr. Abdur Rasheed Choudhury: Is it not a fact that in some Provinces, they have enforced price control?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: Yes, some of the Governments have done.

Mr. Abdur Rasheed Choudhury: Assam and Bengal?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: Yes, Assam has imposed it.

Mr. Abdur Rasheed Choudhury: Is it not a fact that though the maximum price fixed for rice in Assam is Rs. 25, yet the selling price is as much as Rs. 35 and this happens in the presence of high Government officials?

(No answer.)

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Will the Honourable Member indicate the nature and extent of the success attained by the administration of the Food Control Order referred to in answer to part (b)?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: May I deal with this point in the course of the debate on food which is coming on. I will have to give a lengthy answer.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: May I draw the attention of the Honourable Member to the statement made by the Director General of Food in his own presence in Bombay on 1st October, that the scheme had failed in Bengal? I have a copy of the press report in my hand.

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: That has been contradicted since. It was a case of misreporting.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Was it misreporting or was it a mis-statement?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: It was misreporting. I was present at the conference.

FOOD CONFERENCES AND STANDING FOOD COMMITTEE.

38. ***Mr. Amarendra Nath Chattopadhyaya:** (a) Will the Honourable Member for Food be pleased to state how many Food Conferences were held from time to time in Delhi, Bombay and Bengal, separately, and what schemes were adopted in these Conferences, and to what effect?

(b) What was the total expenses incurred on these Conferences?

(c) Has the Standing Food Committee, which was formed under the Chairmanship of the Commerce Member at the end of the Budget Session in 1943, been convened even once during these six months? If not, why not? Why were the members of the said Standing Committee not invited to attend the Food Conferences? Why was the Food Conference held without any representative from among the non-official members of the Central Legislature?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: (a) No Food Conference was convened by the Government of India either in Bombay or Bengal. Altogether, four All-India Food Conferences were held in Delhi. A summary of the main conclusions reached in the Conferences is laid on the table.

(b) The information is not readily available and Government do not consider that the labour involved in collecting it would be justified.

(c) One meeting of the Standing Advisory Committee of the Central Legislature for Food and Commerce Departments was held on 7th November, 1943.

The members of the said Committee were not invited to attend the All-India Food Conferences as those conferences were for the purpose of obtaining agreement among representatives of the Provincial and State Governments. For the same reason no representative from amongst the non-official members of the Central Legislature was invited.

A SUMMARY OF THE MAIN CONCLUSIONS OF THE ALL-INDIA FOOD CONFERENCES.

First Food Conference (December, 1942).—This Conference was convened immediately after the creation of the Food Department, with a view to make contact with the representatives of Provinces and States on food matters. The Conference was merely exploratory in character.

Second Food Conference (February, 1943).—This Conference was called for the purpose of discussing the Central Procurement Scheme and the Basic Plan for distribution of foodgrains among surplus and deficit areas. The Conference did not agree to the introduction of statutory price control. Provinces were directed to initiate and improve their procurement machinery.

Third Food Conference.—1. The Basic Plan should be continued with such arithmetic adjustments to figures as are necessary.

2. In execution of that plan the operations of procurement shall be carried out by Government or by agencies under the full control of Government—State or Provincial.

3. Action to control prices must be taken. Action on a regional basis appears to be favoured with co-ordination between regions.

4. Energetic steps must be taken to ease and facilitate transport for the distribution plan.

5. As an instrument for control both in respect of physical control and of exerting an influence on prices, the Foodgrains Control Order must be given vigorous application everywhere and that food drives in execution of this should be carried out.

6. As a means of securing equitable distribution and of controlling prices in urban areas, the rationing of such areas in a progressively increasing measure must be resorted to.

7. To facilitate supply, transport and administration, the financial settlement for supplies should be direct as between the surplus and deficit Governments and without the intervention of the Centre.

8. Metal coinage and consumer goods should be made more freely available as the means of securing greater surpluses from the cultivator.

With the Compliments of the Principal Information Officer, Government of India.

UNOFFICIAL NOTE

Un-official Notes are issued for the information of the Press. They may be published as worded or used as background material.

Un-official Notes are not communiques and are issued only on the understanding that their source will not be referred to in any way in what is published.

Passed for Publication.

Fourth Food Conference.

CONCLUDING DAY'S PROCEEDINGS.

Governments' decisions.

STATUTORY PRICE CONTROL, RATIONING, AND PROVINCIAL PROCUREMENT.

Announcing the decisions of the Government of India today, Mr. Hutchings, Secretary of the Food Department said,

BASIC PLAN.

Subject to the use of a common formula the Policy Committee had recommended that in case of differences of opinion over the target figures, the matter should be dealt with by an arbitration committee. Calculation of target figures are to be made half-yearly and provinces and states must leave entirely to the Centre any question concerning allocation, the use of the Central reserve and the conduct of special rescue operations. The main difficulty which emerged in the Conference was the feeling of certain administrations that they had not the requisite statistical basis to work the proposed formula and they were afraid consequently that the formula, if adopted, would lead to unreal results. The Government of India agree with the Committee that a common formula is desirable and that the formula proposed by the Policy Committee is, having regard to all the circumstances, the most suitable that has so far been devised. We accept the recommendation that we should continue to improve upon it. We realise that to proceed merely on the basis of a formula without taking into account special or local conditions is likely to produce serious anomalies. We, therefore, propose to proceed as follows in two stages, First to devise a plan of distribution as between the different deficit areas, in the light of the declared surpluses of provinces and states for immediate operation from the beginning of the relevant crop year, the actual movements being adjusted to the harvesting periods of the state or province concerned. This plan would, in effect, be in the nature of a "budget estimate" calculated on the basis of the best information then available. This preliminary plan would be circulated to the provinces, and movements could begin in accordance with the allocations. We will then pass to the second stage using the formula proposed by the Committee for calculating the target deficits and surpluses of the provinces and states to serve as the basis of discussions between the Centre and provinces or states concerned. In applying the formula regard will be had to all the relevant facts such as actual crop conditions, harvesting periods, abnormal increases in population and statistics of past imports and exports. The first edition of the plan is expected to be in operation from November. 1. The information on which to check the first stage in the light of the formula and other relevant factors will begin to be available in January. The revised or final edition of the plan would be issued in April, and begin to be operative from the beginning of May. The Government of India accept the views of the Conference rejecting the proposed Export Arbitration Committee. Consultations between the Centre and provinces or

states will normally be conducted direct between the Centre and the administration concerned, but the Government of India will be willing to invoke in any case presenting peculiar difficulties, such expert opinion as may mutually be agreed upon by the governments concerned.

PROCUREMENT.

The Government agree with the Policy Committee that the Central Government food-grains monopoly is in principle the only completely satisfactory solution, but consider that it is not a practical proposition to establish such a monopoly at present. It is intended however to pursue actively the examination of this question. At present procurement both on behalf of the provinces for themselves whether for their own consumption or for export to deficit areas, or on behalf of the Central Government must continue to be carried out by provincial or state agencies. In view of the Centre's responsibility for the success of food administration in India as a whole, procurement operations cannot be regarded as a matter which solely concern provinces or states. Although procurement is delegated to the provinces, the Government of India feel that it is incumbent upon them to exercise that degree of direction, superintendence and control which is necessary to secure the effective discharge of the function. This does not however, mean that the government intend to interfere at every stage in the day to day administration of the subject of procurement by the provinces. Nor does this mean a uniform pattern of procurement machinery or procedure in every part of India, as conditions vary in different provinces. Generally speaking, we favour a single procurement agency in a province, which should be essentially a government procuring agency but which associates with itself, and utilises to the fullest extent possible, existing trade organisations. We do not, however, wish to insist on the utilization of trade agencies if the provincial government decides against it. If procurement is to be successful, however, the provinces and states' administrations must bring to bear upon it the whole resources of their administrations and it is upon the determination of the administrations concerned to use their resources to the full that ultimate success depends. There is no desire to interfere with procurement machinery that is adequate to the purpose and functioning successfully, but the Central Government must be kept informed as to how procurement is progressing and must have the right to make suggestions or in the last resort to issue directions.

The Government agree that requisitioning should be resorted to with caution, that it should take account of the crop seasons and that it should be a weapon to be held in reserve. There is no desire, however, to restrain provinces and states from resorting to requisitioning, when they consider it essential in the public interest to do so. The Government of India desire to stress the importance of eliminating as far as possible competitive buying.

STATUTORY PRICE CONTROL.

The Government accept the recommendations of the Conference that statutory price control should be instituted for all major foodgrains in all provinces, and a similar control in respect of an increasing number of non-agricultural commodities, particularly those necessary to the cultivator. The Government are, however, of the opinion that in the present emergent conditions all-India statutory prices for all foodgrains are an impossibility. They consider that this will become possible by building up price control first on a provincial, then on a regional basis and as efficient distribution arrangements supported by imports from abroad, enable the government to regain control of all stocks or sufficient stocks to influence the markets. Pending the enforcement of statutory control of prices throughout India, such provinces as desire to enforce statutory control or ceiling prices will be permitted to do so. Special forms of price control are at present in operation which are designed by a descending scale to reduce prices. Such forms of price control may be a necessity in the present emergency but our ultimate conception of statutory price control is a price fixed for a crop, which will remain fixed throughout that crop season. It should be fixed on the basis of a fair return to the cultivator. We agree that statutory prices for foodgrains must be fixed with regard to variations in other commodity prices. We consider that it must be the function of the Centre to co-ordinate statutory prices throughout India with a view to the eventual building up of an all-India price control. For that purpose statutory prices cannot be fixed without the consent of the Central Government and the Centre must have the right to suggest changes of prices both upwards and downwards. The Government accept the recommendation of setting up of a small Standing Prices Committee at the Centre and that disputes relating to price changes which may arise between the provinces and states and the Central Government should be referred to this committee.

RATIONING.

The Government of India regard recommendations relating to urban rationing as a fundamental part of the co-ordinated food plan. We recognise that the implementation of these recommendations involves the acceptance of a considerable administrative burden and expense but we do not accept the view that the acceptance of these burdens is beyond the capacity of different administrations in India. The Government of India, realise that planning and organisation of rationing schemes must take time, but we urge all administrations not already engaged on the task, to take it up at once.

All provinces and states are urged to prepare plans for the card rationing of their towns with a population of one lac and over, and to introduce as quickly as possible the essential preliminary forms of food control, such as zoning the areas in a city for decentralised control administration, compiling information relating to streets and houses, enforcing the Food Grains Control Order, preparing the schemes for card rationing, the

establishment of Government grain shops where necessary and allocating officers and senior staff for the duties of food control administration. In some cases provinces are already operating, or have made detailed plans for, limited rationing schemes which are less extensive than those recommended by the Policy Committee. The Central Government are prepared to allow such administrations to continue the operation of these schemes, provided they are satisfied that the schemes are associated with an effective application of the Food-grains Control Order measures to check private hoarding, and to secure effective limitation of the overall demand. Such limited schemes should not be regarded as final but as a basis for the eventual introduction to full urban rationing.

Sir J. P. Srivastava in his concluding remarks informed the Conference that the first ship of foodgrains from abroad was already unloading at an Indian port and the second ship was expected to arrive at any moment. The Food Member congratulated the Conference for having evolved an integrated food policy for all India. Unless India was treated as one economic whole, he maintained that the solution of the food problem would be extremely difficult. Sir J. P. Srivastava stressed the importance of public association with all schemes of food control. In the course of his remarks he made a special appeal to the Punjab representatives to give their utmost in this hour of national crisis, and asked for the co-operation of all in this vital problem of India's food.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: How many people attended this conference and to what extent were they themselves responsible for the shortage of food in the country?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I have already said that this conference was attended by representatives of the Provincial and the State Governments.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: May I ask whether there is any truth in the report which has appeared in the newspapers that the Government of India propose to strengthen the Advisory Food Council? Can the Government give us any information on that point?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I am considering the matter.

Mr. Abdur Rasheed Ohoodhury: Is it not a fact that the representatives of profiteers were in this conference, directly or indirectly?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: No, Sir. That is news to me.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: Were any representatives of rice trade invited to this conference?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: No, Sir, official representatives only.

Mr. Amarendra Nath Chattopadhyaya: What was the result of this conference?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: A report has been laid on the table giving the main conclusions.

Mr. Abdur Rasheed Ohoodhury: Is it not a fact that these conferences tended to increase the price of rice?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: Certainly not.

AWARD OF ENEMY PRIZE SHIPS TO INDIA.

39. ***Mr. K. O. Neogy:** (a) Will the Honourable Member for Commerce be pleased to state whether any prize ships from the enemy have been awarded to the Government or to the nationals of India? If so, what are the particulars about the number and tonnage of such ships?

(b) Are such prize ships being operated on the coast of India or outside, and through what agencies?

(c) If no prize ships have been awarded to India, what is the reason for it, when such ships have been awarded to some of the Dominions like South Africa?

(d) Have Government made any representations to His Majesty's Government in this connection, and, if so, what was the nature of such representations and the replies received by them?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: (a) The Government of India and other Empire Governments have come to a working arrangement with His Majesty's Government whereby the ultimate disposal of the net proceeds of prize accruing in all parts of the British Commonwealth will be a matter for decision at the end of the war. There is therefore no question of any immediate award of prize ships to India.

Since the outbreak of war, prize proceedings have been instituted in India in respect of 11 ships with an aggregate gross tonnage of 80,008. Of these, three were seized in Indian ports and the remainder were seized elsewhere and brought to India for prize adjudication.

(b) At the request of His Majesty's Government, all ships in respect of which prize proceedings were instituted in Indian courts have been placed at the disposal of the Ministry of War Transport in view of the very heavy demands made on United Kingdom ships for war purposes. I regret that no information can be given as to where these ships are employed.

(c) and (d). The Government of India have not asked for the award of any prize ship, and are not aware that prize ships have been awarded to any of the Dominions.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Was there any request from His Majesty's Government for being allowed the loan of these prize ships that were seized in Indian waters?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: It was the request of His Majesty's Government.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: With reference to part (b) through what agencies these prize ships are being operated?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: They were placed at the disposal of His Majesty's Government by the Indian Government and by the Governments of the Dominions.

GOVERNMENT CO-OPERATION TO NON-OFFICIAL RELIEF ORGANISATIONS IN BENGAL.

40. *Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: (a) Will the Honourable the Food Member be pleased to state whether it is a fact that in the District of Faridpur in Bengal the District Magistrate informed the organisers of the non-official relief organisations and committees that no facilities would be provided by local officials to any such non-official organisations, especially those with which the Opposition is associated in one form or the other?

(b) Have the Government of India enquired whether the Government of Bengal are helping or hindering the activities of the non-official relief organisations in Bengal? If the answer is in the affirmative, have the Government of India pointed out to the Government of Bengal the above specific case of hindrance to the activities of the non-official relief organisations?

(c) In what circumstances will the Government of India contemplate overriding the powers of the Provincial Government, and controlling the supplies and distribution of food in the Province of Bengal?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: (a) I have no information. An inquiry has been made from the Bengal Government and a reply is awaited.

(b) The Government of India have specifically drawn the attention of all provincial Governments to the importance of enlisting the co-operation of non-official organisations in Food and Relief organisation.

(c) It is not possible to define the circumstances which will justify the exercise by the Government of India of their statutory over-riding powers.

TRANSFER OF POWER TO INDIANS OVERSEAS DEPARTMENT TO GRANT OR WITHDRAW VISAS TO EVACUEES OF FOREIGN NATIONALITY.

41. *Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: Will the Honourable Member for Indians Overseas be pleased to state whether in pursuance of Notification No. 8785-D/43-Public (c), Government of India, Home Department, New Delhi, dated the 9th October, 1948, by which the subject "Evacuees of British and foreign nationalities" dealt with by the Home Department was transferred to the Indians Overseas Department with effect from the 1st October, 1948, the power to grant or withdraw transit and permanent visas to the evacuees of foreign nationalities is now being transferred to the Indians Overseas Department?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: The answer is in the negative. This power remains with the Home Department.

SUPPLY OF ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES OF LIFE TO CIVIL POPULATION.

42. *Khan Bahadur Mian Ghulam Kadir Muhammad Shahban: Will the Honourable the Food Member be pleased to state:

(a) the detailed measures taken to make available to the civil population in India supplies of all essential commodities of life at controlled rates;

(b) what steps have been taken for the equitable distribution of indispensable articles to the people of India with a view to rendering the food front impregnable to enemy attack or propaganda;

(c) whether civilian needs will be fully and adequately met before the export of foodstuffs is allowed out of India; and

(d) whether import of foodgrains into India from abroad will be arranged to meet any deficit; if so, when?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: (a) and (b). In respect of foodstuffs:

A plan for the distribution of foodgrains from surplus to deficit areas is in operation. Distribution to consumers is the function of provincial governments, and urban rationing is being progressively introduced.

(c) Yes, the export of foodgrains from India has already been prohibited.

(d) The import of foodgrains into India has already been arranged and several ship-loads have arrived.

Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali: What are the ports at which the ships have arrived?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: For security reasons I am unable to disclose that information.

Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali: Is it still a secret after arrival here?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: Yes, certainly.

Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali: What happened to the foodgrains which have come?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I shall want notice of that, but generally I can say that they have been made over to the Provincial Governments which want them most.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Do not Government have any information as to the number of ships that have come and the quantity of food received?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: We have the information but for security reasons it cannot be disclosed.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: What is the total quantity of foodstuffs that have arrived so far?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: Six ship-loads aggregating about 30,000 tons have already been delivered and more is coming shortly.

Mr. K. O. Neogy: When did the Government of India first realise the necessity of arranging for the importation of foodstuffs from abroad?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: We have always recognised the need for it but shipping difficulties intervened.

Mr. K. O. Neogy: But is the Honourable Member in a position to indicate, even approximately, the time when they first impressed upon His Majesty's Government the need for arranging shipping space for importing foodstuffs into India?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I shall require notice of that question.

Nawabzada Muhammad Liaquat Ali Khan: Are the foodstuffs that have come into India still lying at the ports or have they been sent to these various provinces?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: They have been delivered to the provinces.

Nawabzada Muhammad Liaquat Ali Khan: Have they been delivered at the ports or have arrangements been made to transport the stuff to the various provinces? What does the Honourable Member mean by "delivered"?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I understand they have already been cleared by the provinces.

Nawabzada Muhammad Liaquat Ali Khan: Cleared out of the ships or have they been cleared out of that particular port?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: They have been taken over by the provinces in any case but I cannot say definitely whether some of it is not lying in the port.

Nawabzada Muhammad Liaquat Ali Khan: Do I understand that the Honourable Member has no information on that point?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: Yes.

Mr. E. L. O. Gwilt: May I know at what price wheat from Australia is being landed in India? And if the Honourable Member feels that he is not prepared to give the precise price, will he be good enough to state whether it is substantially less than the price at which wheat can be purchased by the Government of India from the wheat producing provinces?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: Yes, that assumption is correct it is substantially less.

PRIVATE IMPORTS OF INDUSTRIAL PLANT AND MACHINERY.

43. *Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra (on behalf of **Mr. E. B. Gupta**): Will the Honourable Member for Industries and Civil Supplies be pleased to state the total value of the industrial plant and machinery, including Prime Mover and Electrical Generating Equipment, that has been imported into this country on private account since the outbreak of the present war, and indicate industry-wise the importation that has taken place?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: A statement showing, in such detail as is practicable, the value of machinery and millwork imported into India from September 1939 to July 1943 is laid on the table.

Statement showing value of machinery and millwork imported into India during September 1939 to July 1943.

(All figures in thousand rupees.)

(1) Serial No.	(2) Articles.	(3) Total imports from Septem- ber 1939 to July 1943.
1	Prime-movers—	
	Railway locomotives, engines, etc.	93,21
	Other locomotives	48,60
	Other than locomotives	2,01,22
	Total Prime-movers	3,43,03
2	Electrical machinery including generators, alternators, etc.	7,82,27
3	Aerated water making machinery	33
4	Agricultural machinery	73,95
5	Boilers	1,98,59
6	Boot and shoe manufacturing machinery	5,88
7	Leather tanning and curing machinery	3,27
8	Metal working machinery including machine tools	2,32,47
9	Mining machinery	1,18,66
10	Oil crushing and refining machinery	39,88
11	Paper mill machinery	94,09
12	Pumping machinery	1,19,73
13	Refrigerating machinery	54,82
14	Rice and flour mill machinery	14,41
15	Saw mill and wood working machinery	37,80
16	Sewing and knitting machinery and parts	1,86,58
17	Sugar machinery	95,35
18	Tea machinery	57,40
19	Textile machinery—Cotton	6,67,28
20	Textile machinery—Jute	1,83,35
21	Textile machinery—Wool	16,37
22	Textile machinery others including shuttles	1,46,07
23	Typewriters and parts	84,66
24	Unenumerated machineries	8,93,20
	Total	44,49,44

IMPORTS OF AMMONIA SULPHATE AND OTHER SYNTHETIC FERTILISERS.

44. *Mr. R. R. Gupta: Will the Secretary of the Education, Health and Lands Department be pleased to state the quantity and value of the Ammonia Sulphate and other synthetic fertilisers which have been imported into this country during each year of 1940-41, 1941-42 and 1942-43, the importation of each chemical compound being shown separately?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: A statement is placed on the table of the House.

Statement showing the quantity and value of synthetic fertilisers imported into India during the years 1940-41, 1941-42 and 1942-43.

Manures.	Quantity:			Value.		
	1940-41. Tons.	1941-42. Tons.	1942-43. Tons.	1940-41. Rs.	1941-42. Rs.	1942-43. Rs.
<i>Nitrogenous.</i>						
Nitrate of Soda	3,151	2,639	2	4,85,173	7,13,831	336
Sulphate of Ammonia	32,154	1,627	1,361	54,88,702	3,69,032	3,53,860
Others	900	20	..	1,69,043	6,457	..
<i>Potassic.</i>						
Muriate of Potash	1,585	100	696	2,02,839	23,656	2,91,959
Others	140	..	..	23,017	..	..
<i>Phosphatic.</i>						
Superphosphate	6,732	2,723	..	10,49,898	4,59,677	..
Others	337	20	..	42,260	1,104	..
<i>Compounds.</i>						
Ammonium Phosphate	1,389	250	..	3,38,209	63,700	..
Others	1,015	1,202	2	64,234	66,316	106
Total	47,408	8,580	2,061	78,43,375	17,03,773	6,46,255

RATION PERMITS FOR PURCHASE OF AUTHORISED NEWSPRINT.

45. *Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: (a) Will the Honourable Member for Industries and Civil Supplies be pleased to state if it is a fact that instead of supplying newsprint quotas to newspapers in India, Government now issue ration permits for purchase and use of authorised newsprint?

(b) Is it a fact that the allotted ration of newsprint has to be purchased in a calendar month, and if not so obtained the permit in regard to that month lapses?

(c) What arrangement have Government made to ensure the supply of newsprint to be regularly made in accordance with ration permits? If none, why?

(d) Have any instances come to the notice of Government in which the rationed newsprint has not been supplied to the newspapers? If so, what action have Government taken to ensure the rationed supply? If none, why?

The Honourable Sir M. Azisul Huque: (a) and (b). The reply is in the affirmative.

(c) Stocks of newsprint, whether with dealers or with newspapers, are 'frozen' and can be issued in so far as the former are concerned only against ration permits issued by the Central Government, and in so far as the latter are concerned, against use permits given to them or against special instructions given by the Government which are issued only when stocks with newsprint dealers are exhausted. Thus the Central Government has complete control over stocks within the country, and to the extent that they are satisfactory, supplies against ration permits too will be satisfactory.

(d) The reply to the first part is in the affirmative. Action in such cases has been taken as indicated in the reply to para. (c).

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Is it a fact that very often these people go with ration permits but no newsprint is available?

The Honourable Sir M. Azisul Huque: That is not correct.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: May I know if the freezing order applies to stock imported into this country after the date of this order or stocks held by newspapers prior to that date?

The Honourable Sir M. Azisul Huque: So far as stocks in possession of newspapers are concerned, they are frozen and we are in complete control of any stocks that are brought into the country by import.

INDIAN SEAMEN ENGAGED ON THE UNITED KINGDOM REGISTERED SHIPS, ETC.

46. ***Mr. N. M. Joshi:** (a) Will the Honourable the Commerce Member be pleased to state the number of Indian seamen engaged on the United Kingdom registered ships in (i) the coastal and (ii) overseas trades of India during the last four years since the commencement of the present war?

(b) Were any Indian seamen employed by the ships of any other member of the United Nations? If so, which, and how many?

(c) What is the total number of Indian seamen engaged by ships on the Indian Register during the last four years?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: The information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the House in due course.

EQUALIZATION OF RATES OF ALLOWANCE FOR MEN AND WOMEN UNDER THE INDIAN WAR INJURIES SCHEME.

47. ***Mr. N. M. Joshi:** (a) Has the attention of the Honourable the Labour Member been drawn to the fact that the difference made between the rates of allowances paid to men and women under the War Injuries Schemes in Great Britain has been removed some time back so that men and women receive allowances at the same rates?

(b) If the reply to the above be in the affirmative, do the Government of India propose to make a similar change in the Indian War Injuries Scheme, and to bring the rates of allowances paid to men and women on the same level?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: (a) Since notice of this question was received, I have ascertained the position in Great Britain. It is a fact that the distinction between rates for relief for men and women has been abolished in Great Britain.

(b) The question will be considered.

INSERTION IN GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS OF CONDITION FOR FAIR TREATMENT OF LABOUR.

48. ***Mr. N. M. Joshi:** Will the Honourable the Labour Member be pleased to state whether the subject of the need for insertion in Government contracts of a condition regarding fair treatment of labour was discussed at one of the Tripartite Labour Meetings? If so, what action do the Government of India propose to take on the subject?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: Yes, it was at the third meeting of the Standing Labour Committee. To be precise the subject discussed was need for insertion of a condition regarding fair wages for labour in Government contracts, and not fair "treatment" of labour. Government have already accepted the principle so far as the Central Public Works Department is concerned and the necessary preliminary steps for enforcing such a provision are under active consideration. The question of the introduction of such a clause in the contracts of other Government Departments will be taken up soon after the scheme has been introduced in respect of Central Public Works Department labour.

Mr. Hooseinbhoj A. Lalljee: What is the meaning of "active-consideration"? Is there any time limit involved?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: Yes; I see quite clearly the difference between a matter being under consideration and under active consideration.

Mr. Hooseinbhoj A. Lalljee: Is there any difference of time?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: That means that the matter is really nearing completion.

RULES CONCERNING "OUT OF CLASS" ALLOTTEES IN NEW DELHI.

49. ***Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani:** (a) Will the Honourable the Labour Member please state whether it is a fact that before the introduction of the revised rules for allotment of residences in New Delhi during the war, persons who were allotted quarters were allowed as a concession to remain in occupation of those quarters after they became out of class, when no accommodation of the class to which they were entitled was available?

(b) If the answer to (a) is in the affirmative, what are the reasons for penalising the same occupants by the introduction of the proviso below rule 7 (2) (b) by relegating them to a junior position by treating the dates on which they became out of class as the dates of their posting?

(c) Is it not a fact that by the operation of the proviso referred to in (b) above, the persons remain longer in occupation of the lower class of quarters and thus great hardship is caused to persons who are entitled to those quarters under revised rule 4 by compelling them to wait longer than it would be necessary had the proviso not been in operation?

(d) Does the Honourable Member propose to reconsider, and to remove the grievances of all concerned by deleting the proviso below rule 7 (b) under lists II and III.

(e) Does the Honourable Member realise that by the introduction of the new policy *viz.*, determination of seniority as regards the claim for quarters by the total length of service, practically all new entrants to whatever class of quarters they were entitled will have to go without quarters and be put to great hardship?

(f) With a view to redressing their grievance, does he propose to consider the feasibility of amending the rule so as to allow the counting of seniority from the date of posting in the case of new entrants who have not been allotted any quarter so far and in the case of others from the date on which they became out of class?

(g) If the amendments suggested were accepted, will they be given immediate effect?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: (a) Yes.

(b) The penalising arises more from the shortage of accommodation than from the proviso to rule 7 (2) (b).

(c) Yes, but this cannot be helped under the existing circumstances.

(d) No. Nothing can remove the grievances unless there is increased accommodation at the disposal of Government, which does not seem to be possible so long as the war lasts.

(e) I do not consider that this is the case, but so long as the accommodation available is short of requirements, whatever rules are made, some persons are bound to be put to hardship.

(f) This is already provided for in the rules.

(g) Does not arise.

(b) WRITTEN ANSWERS.

SUPPLIES OF IRON, STEEL, CEMENT, ETC., TO CIVIL POPULATION AND FUNCTIONS OF HONORARY ADVISERS OF CEMENT, IRON AND STEEL.

50. *Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani: Will the Honourable Member for Industries and Civil Supplies please state:

(a) how the needs of the civil population in matters of iron and steel and cement, coal and paper, are met;

(b) what the functions are of the Honorary Advisers of Cement and Iron and Steel; who they are, and where their offices are located, and who deals with Bihar cases;

(c) whether the Honourable Member has any control over these Honorary Advisers;

(d) whether an Honorary Adviser is paid any allowance; if so, how much; what his establishment charges are and how they are met;

(e) whether the Honourable Member is aware that there is acute scarcity of cement in Bihar, and black marketing is rampant there and cement cannot be had for less than Rs. 12 per bag and that, too, not without much difficulty and the help of black marketeers; and

(f) the quantity of cement, iron and steel supplied to the population in Bihar last year, and whether the persons supplied with, cement, iron and only Rajas and Maharajas or middlemen?

The Honourable Sir M. Asif-ul-Haque: (a) to (f). I lay on the table of the House a statement showing the information required by the Hon'ble Member.

Statement.

(a) With regard to iron and steel, the system of control enforced under the Iron and Steel (Control of Distribution) Order, and the Iron and Steel (Scrap Control) Order, provides for civil needs by (1) the allotment of a quota to the Industries and Civil Supplies Department for distribution to various civil applicants for licences to acquire steel; (2) allowing certain quantities of steel to be acquired and disposed of without licence up to limits fixed by the Industries and Civil Supplies Department. The Industries and Civil Supplies Department allots a portion of its quota to the Iron and Steel Controller for distributing to stock-holders to meet these unlicensed sales; (3) allowing the Iron and Steel Controller and his Deputies to meet important civil needs from rejected and defective steel.

With regard to cement, the needs of the civil population are met from quotas allotted each month to the five Regional Honorary Cement Advisers situated at Bombay, Calcutta, Cawnpore, New Delhi and Lahore.

With regard to coal, the needs of the civil population are met under what is known as the Provincial Coal Control Scheme which was introduced in January, 1943. Under this scheme, the Controller of Coal Distribution fixes monthly quotas of the number of wagons of coal that he can make available for each Province to meet the requirements of domestic consumption and of small industries not directly engaged on war work after meeting the priority requirements of essential industries, loco. and shipping coal, etc. He also works out for each Colliery the quotas that a colliery can supply to each Provincial area. The detailed distribution of the Provincial quotas among different consumers within the Province is the responsibility of the Provincial Coal Controller appointed by the Provincial Government. In October 1943, a coal rationing scheme for all-India was put into operation under which quotas have been fixed for consumers of coal of every category.

With regard to paper, 30 per cent. of the Indian mill production of paper has been released for consumption by non-Government users of paper in India. An organisation known as the Paper Control and Distribution Association consisting of representatives of the paper industry has been set up at Calcutta to arrange for equitable distribution to all non-Government consumers of paper at controlled rates.

(b) and (c). The functions of the Regional Honorary Cement Advisers are to issue authorisations for the supply of cement against the allotments received by them from the Office of the Honorary Cement Adviser to the Government of India, New Delhi, each month. Following are the Honorary Cement Advisers:—

Advisers:—1. Mr. H. E. Ormerod, lent by the Cement Marketing Co. of India Ltd., Bombay—Honorary Cement Adviser, New Delhi.

2. Mr. C. W. Fowler, lent by the Cement Marketing Co. of India, Ltd. Bombay—Regional Honorary Cement Adviser, Bombay.

3. Mr. S. E. Sara, lent by Messrs. Balmer Lawrie & Co., Ltd., Calcutta—Regional Honorary Cement Adviser, Calcutta.

4. Mr. J. C. F. Davidson, lent by Messrs. Bird & Co., Lahore—Regional Honorary Cement Adviser, Lahore.

5. Mr. C. J. L. Stokoe, lent by Messrs. Bird & Co., New Delhi—Regional Honorary Cement Adviser, New Delhi.

6. Mr. D. H. Peelyates, lent by Messrs. Bird & Co., Cawnpore—Regional Honorary Cement Adviser, Cawnpore.

The Regional Honorary Cement Adviser, Calcutta, deals with Bihar cases.

There is no Honorary Adviser for Iron and Steel. The Honorary Cement Advisers are under the control of the Supply Department.

(d) The Regional Honorary Cement Advisers receive no allowances and their establishment charges are not met by Government. The Honorary Cement Adviser to the Government of India, New Delhi, is, however, paid a car allowance of Rs. 100 p. m. and out-of-pocket expenses. The establishment charges of this Adviser are Rs. 715 p. m. which are met by Government.

(e) Yes. I may add that scarcity of cement for civil needs and conditions resulting therefrom are not confined to Bihar alone but exist in all parts of India, due on the one hand to the heavy Defence Services demand, and on the other, to the shortage of coal resulting in reduced production.

(f) The information asked for by the Hon'ble Member cannot be supplied without an expenditure of time and labour which would be unjustifiable in war time, but the civil needs of Bihar in respect of cement and iron and steel receive exactly the same consideration as of other parts of India and are judged on their merits, irrespective of the social status of the applicants for supplies of these articles.

APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS AND STAFF IN THE FOOD DEPARTMENT.

51. *Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani: Will the Honourable the Food Member please state:

(a) whether the appointments of officers in the Food Department have been completed;

(b) the number of officers appointed with their ranks and salaries;

(c) whether the Department called for any suggestions from the Muslim League Party; if so, if any one so nominated has been appointed; if so, to what post and on what salary; and

(d) the total number of ministerial officers appointed, and the number of Muslims therein?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: (a) No.

(b) and (d). Statements giving the required information are laid on the table of the House.

(c) Yes. The suggestions are still under consideration.

STATEMENT I.

Serial No.	Name.	Designation.	Pay. Rs. •
<i>Department of Food (Secretariat).</i>			
1	Mr. R. H. Hutchings, C.M.G., C.I.E., I.C.S.	Secretary	3,500
2	Mr. W. H. Kirby	Rationing Adviser	2,500
3	Mr. W. H. J. Christie, O.B.E., I.C.S.	Deputy Secretary	1,700
4	Mr. N. T. Mone, I.C.S.	Deputy Secretary	S.P. 400 1,600
5	Mr. N. N. Wanchoo, I.C.S.	Under Secretary	S.P. 400 1,275
6	Mr. S. M. Yusuf, I.C.S.	Under Secretary	S.P. 150 650
7	Mr. S. R. Maini, P.C.S.	Under Secretary	S.P. 300 780
8	Rai Bahadur D. N. Maitra	Assistant Secretary	S.P. 300 1,100 (Inclusive of pension).
9	Mr. N. G. Abhyankar, M.Sc. (Lond.)	Statistical officer	600
10	Mr. M. Y. Qureshi, B.A.	Superintendent	500
11	Mr. S. K. Sen, M.A.	Superintendent	500
12	Mr. I. J. Malhan, B.A.	Superintendent	600
13	Mr. A. A. Shah	Superintendent	600
<i>Directorate General, Food.</i>			
1	Mr. B. R. Sen, I.C.S.	Director General of Food	3,000
2	Mr. A. P. Hume, I.C.S.	Deputy Director General (Military)	1,800
3	Brigadier E. J. Boughton, O.B.E., I.A.	Deputy Director General (Purchase)	S.P. 400 O.S.P. £30 2,500 (Pay of rank).
4	Hon'ble Somerset Butler	Deputy Director General (Grains)	2,750
5	Col. L. J. L. Addison, I.A.	Assistant Director General (Purchase).	2,205 (Pay of rank).
6	Mr. J. R. H. Bartlett, F.A.C.I., F.C.S.	Chief Technical Adviser	1,800
7	Mr. E. W. Mathew	Director Foodstuffs Supplies	1,500
8	Major F. P. M. O'Sullivan, R.I.A.S.C.	Director of Purchase (Military)	2,000 (Provisional)
9	Mr. Blois Johnson	Director Processed Foodstuffs	1,750
10	Capt. A. M. Thomson	Director of Purchase (Foodgrains)	2,000
11	Mr. M. D. Apostolides	Officer-in-Charge, Karachi Food-grains, Reserve Depot.	2,000
12	Mr. J. F. Morse	Deputy Director	1,750
13	Capt. H. Khan	Deputy Director	900
14	Mr. D. N. Khurody	Dy. Director of Purchase	1,200
15	Mr. Nazir Ahmad	Dy. Director of Purchase (Food-grains).	1,125
16	Mr. Ijaz Ahmad	Dy. Director of Purchase (Food-grains).	1,200
17	Mr. T. G. Rama Iyer	Deputy Director	900
18	Mr. B. L. Sahney	Deputy Director	750
19	Mr. S. N. Sikand	Deputy Director	750
20	Dr. H. S. Bhai	Deputy Director	800
21	Mr. N. C. Mukerji	Assistant Secretary and Administrative Officer.	1,000
22	Mr. A. E. daCosta	Assistant Secretary and Administrative Officer.	1,100
23	Capt. E. W. Hart	Inspector of Controlled Flour Mills and Grain Depots.	1,130 (Pay of rank).
24	Mr. C. R. V. Subhan	Assistant Director (Tobacco)	1,000
25	Mr. M. R. Thadapi	Assistant Director of Purchase (Military).	555

Serial No.	Name.	Designation.	Pay. Rs.
26	Capt. N. S. Gidwani	Assistant Director of Purchase (Military).	830 (Pay of rank).
27	Mr. H. R. Khan	Assistant Director	500
28	Capt. R. Whalley	Assistant Director of Purchase (Military).	960 (Pay of rank).
29	Mr. K. Gopalan	Assistant Director of Purchase (Foodgrains).	600
30	Mr. G. Chaudhary	Assistant Director	400
31	Mr. P. P. Nair	Assistant Director of Purchase (Foodgrains).	600
32	Mr. M. N. Das Gupta	Assistant Director of Purchase (Foodgrains).	600
33	Mr. J. S. Narayana	Assistant Director of Purchase (Foodgrains).	600
34	Mr. I. U. Lakhia	Assistant Director (Grains)	600
35	Lt. M. G. Abhyankar	Assistant Director (Grains)	550
36	Dr. D. V. Karmarkar	Assistant Technical Adviser	350+
		S.P.	75
37	Mr. E. M. Bee	Technical Adviser	500
38	Mr. M. A. H. Khan	Deputy Assistant Director of Purchase (Military).	350
39	Mr. S. A. Qureshi	Deputy Assistant Director of Purchase (Military).	350
40	Mr. B. Mitter	Deputy Assistant Director of Purchase (Military).	350
41	Mr. Barkat Ahmad	Deputy Assistant Director of Purchase (Military).	350
42	Mr. D. D. Gupta	Deputy Assistant Director of Purchase (Military).	350
43	Mr. Brij Raj Kishore	Deputy Assistant Director of Purchase (Military).	350
44	Mr. S. P. Joshi	Industrial Planning Officer	300
45	Mr. T. M. Rama Aiyengar	Industrial Planning Officer	300
46	Mr. W. D. Saleem	Assistant Industrial Planning Officer	225
47	Mr. Harohan Singh Rai	Assistant Industrial Planning Officer	200
48	Mr. M. A. Kabir	Assistant Industrial Planning Officer	225
49	Mr. S. R. Johri	Assistant Industrial Planning Officer (Tobacco).	300
50	Mr. P. R. Kashyap	Assistant Industrial Planning Officer	200
51	Mr. Y. A. Mehta	Assistant Industrial Planning Officer	200
52	Mr. S. R. Swarup	Assistant Industrial Planning Officer	250
53	Mr. Imtiaz Ahmad	Assistant Industrial Planning Officer	200
54	Dr. D. V. Raja Gopal	Assistant Industrial Planning Officer	200
55	Mr. B. S. Lalia	Assistant Industrial Planning Officer	200
56	Mr. S. K. Srivastava	Assistant Industrial Planning Officer	200
57	Mr. Sarmukh Singh	Assistant Industrial Planning Officer	200
58	Mr. P. G. Kurup	Assistant Industrial Planning Officer	200
59	Mr. P. Thotheadari	Assistant Industrial Planning Officer	175
60	Mr. Abdul Hamid	Assistant Industrial Planning Officer	175
61	Mr. K. K. P. Narasingharao	Assistant Industrial Planning Officer	250
62	Mr. Abdul Rahim Khan	Assistant Industrial Planning Officer	200
63	Mr. Y. V. Salpekar	Assistant Industrial Planning Officer	200
64	Mr. G. Vaswani	Assistant Industrial Planning Officer	200
65	Mr. Tazimul Haq	Assistant Industrial Planning Officer	200
66	Mr. R. Parikshit	Assistant Industrial Planning Officer	200
67	Mr. Bala Ram Dhawan	Assistant Industrial Planning Officer	200
68	Mr. Mohd. Sadiq	Assistant Industrial Planning Officer	200
69	Mr. Jon Benedict Chitambar	Assistant Industrial Planning Officer	200
70	Mr. Mohd. Ikramullah	Assistant Industrial Planning Officer	200
71	Mr. A. N. Chaddah	Assistant Industrial Planning Officer	175
<i>Sugar Controller for India.</i>			
1	Mr. N. C. Mehta, I.C.S.	Sugar Controller for India	3,250
2	Mr. S. A. Iyengar, I.C.S.	Dy. Sugar Controller for India	1,150
		S.P.	250*
3	Mr. R. C. Srivastava, B.Sc., O.B.E.	Technical Adviser	* S.P. 250
4	Rai Sahib S. K. Dikshit, B.A. (Hons.)	Assistant Sugar Controller for India	775
5	Mr. Shashi Kiran, M.A., LL.B.	Assistant Sugar Controller for India	625
6	Rai Sahib I. H. Desai, B.A., LL.B.	Assistant Sugar Controller for India	1,000
7	Mr. I. P. Mathur, M.A.	Inspector	300
8	Mr. S. N. Gupta, M.A.	Inspector	300

* Pay not debitable to the budget of the S.C.I.

Serial No.	Name.	Designation.	Pay.
<i>Regional Food Commissioners.</i>			
1	Sir Colin Campbell Garbett, K.C.I.E., C.S.I., C.M.G.	Regional Food Commissioner, Punjab Region.	Rs. 2,750
2	Mr. M. R. Ghulati	Deputy Regional Food Commissioner, Punjab Region.	1,000
3	Rai Bahadur Col. Dina Nath, C.I.E.	Regional Food Commissioner, U.P. Region.	2,500
4	The Hon'ble Mr. Justice H. B. L. Braund, Bar. at-Law.	Regional Food Commissioner, Eastern Region.	4,000
5	Mr. P. K. Basu	Deputy Regional Food Commissioner, Eastern Region.	900
6	Dewan Bahadur C. P. Karunakara Menon.	Regional Food Commissioner, Madras Region.	2,300
7	Mr. J. B. Ross	Regional Food Commissioner, Bombay Region.	2,650
8	Khan Bahadur Sir Abdul Hamid, C.I.E., O.B.E.	Regional Food Commissioner, Rajputana Region.	2,500
<i>Group Liaison Officers.</i>			
1	Mr. Balkrishan	Group Liaison Officer, Punjab States	1,000
2	Mr. Onkar Nath Bajpai	Group Liaison Officer, Eastern States.	500
3	Rao Bahadur S. V. Kanungo	Group Liaison Officer, Central India States.	1,000

STATEMENT II.

Name of the Department/Office.	Total No. of Ministerial Officers appointed.	Total No. of Muslim Ministerial officers.
Food Department (Secretariat)	133	33
Directorate General, Food	335	75
Sugar Controller for India	44	11
Regional Food Commissioners	38	8

BAN ON THE SAILINGS OF PILGRIM SHIPS FROM INDIA.

52. *Nawab Siddique Ali Khan: (a) Will the Honourable Member for Indians Overseas please state whether the announcement by the Central Government made on the 10th August, 1943, imposing a ban on the sailing of pilgrim ships from India, has been widely resented by Muslims in this country?

(b) Have Muslims protested against that decision and asked Government to make arrangements for pilgrim ships? If so, what action has been taken on their demand?

(c) Is the Honourable Member aware that the Honourable the Defence Member took the courage to tell the House on the 12th August, 1943, that if the route this year became safe and the lives of Hajis were not in danger, he would again raise the question in the Executive Council and with the Member for Indians Overseas?

(d) What action has been taken on his promise?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: (a) and (b). Dissatisfaction with Government's decision and requests for the provision of pilgrim ships have been expressed by certain Muslim Associations and individuals. Government regret they have been unable to alter their previous decision.

(c) and (d). Yes. The position has been watched but it has not been possible to reopen the matter as the route is still unsafe.

PILGRIMAGE TO ARABIA BY LAND ROUTES.

53. *Nawab Siddique Ali Khan: (a) Will the Honourable Member for Indians Overseas please state the number of persons who have applied for permission to perform pilgrimage to Arabia by land routes?

(b) Do Government propose to make satisfactory arrangements for their journey? If not, why not?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: The question should have been addressed to the External Affairs Department.

FIXATION OF WHOLESALE AND RETAIL PRICES BY GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL FOR PADDY AND RICE.

54. *Mr. K. O. Neogy: (a) With reference to the order of the Government of Bengal fixing a graduated scale of maximum wholesale and retail prices at which

paddy and rice can be sold or purchased with effect from different dates, and penalising any breach thereof on the part both of the buyer and seller, will the Honourable the Food Member be pleased to state how far the object of this order has in practice been realised?

(b) Does the Honourable Member propose to make a statement showing, for the different periods in respect of which the different rates have been fixed by the aforesaid order, the actual prices for which the principal foodgrains were available in any quantity to the civilian population generally in the city of Calcutta and the different district headquarters of Bengal? Is it a fact that while this order has been rigorously enforced against cultivators from whom purchases of rice or paddy are made at the instance of Government, the prices authorised under the order for retail sale of rice and paddy to the general consumer have proved altogether illusory, and that one of the immediate results of the promulgation of the said order has been the almost complete disappearance of stocks of rice from almost all the important centres of consumption?

(c) Is it a fact that the aforesaid order has so far, in effect, put a premium on black market operations? To what extent have the summary powers given to the executive put into operation and proved successful in bringing out hidden stocks?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: The material required for a complete reply to the Honourable Member's question is not available with the Central Government. An inquiry has been made from the Government of Bengal, and their reply is awaited.

SUPPLY OF FOODGRAINS AT CONTROLLED OR CONCESSIONAL PRICES TO NON-MILITARY EMPLOYEES OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL.

55. ***Mr. K. C. Neogy:** (a) Will the Honourable the Food Member be pleased to state what the different classes are of non-military employees of the Central Government, including those of Railways, employed in Bengal, as well as the employees of the Government of Bengal, that are in the enjoyment of a concession under which foodgrains are supplied to them at controlled or reduced prices?

(b) What is the total number of such employees of the Central Government and the Government of Bengal, separately, and what quantities of rice, wheat and other foodgrains have been supplied to them at controlled or concessional prices, month by month, since January last?

(c) Who are the authorities in Bengal charged with the duty of furnishing supplies for the benefit of these Government employees, and what is the approximate extent of the stocks that they have maintained from time to time to enable them to discharge their obligation, and through what agencies in Bengal have these stocks been acquired, and at what prices on an average, month by month?

(d) Is it a fact that persons belonging to certain official or semi-official organisations, such as the Air Raid Precaution Services and Civic Guards, have also been given the benefit of the aforesaid concession? If so, who are the authorities in Bengal charged with the duty of furnishing supplies for the benefit of these persons, and what is the approximate extent of the stocks that they have maintained from time to time to enable them to discharge their obligation, and through what agencies in Bengal have these stocks been acquired, and at what prices on an average, month by month?

(e) Have the acquisition and maintenance of stocks for supplying the aforesaid privileged classes of persons with foodgrains at concessional or controlled prices, contributed towards the creation of scarcity conditions and the prevalence of high prices in Bengal?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: (a) All Central Government Civil servants stationed in Bengal who are in receipt of pay of Rs. 300 p.m. or less, and all Railway servants and their families are entitled to get foodgrains at concessional rates.

(b) and (c). The total number of eligible Central Civil Government employees, including the Posts and Telegraphs and Railways, in Bengal is about 1,62,000. In Calcutta arrangements for supplies have been made by the

Supply Department in collaboration with the Provincial Director of Civil Supplies, and in the mofussil by heads of Departments in consultation with the local authorities. The Railways have their own purchasing organisation, whose duty it is, in the first instance, to buy locally for their requirements, but the responsibility for ensuring that the Railways receive adequate supplies rests with the Provincial Government.

In regard to the quantities supplied, the stocks maintained and the prices at which purchases were made from time to time, details are not readily available and the Government consider that their collection would involve an amount of time and labour that would not be justifiable in existing conditions.

(d) Information regarding Bengal Government employees and the official and semi-official organizations such as the A. R. P. Services and Civic Guards, has been called for from the Bengal Government and their reply is awaited.

(e) No.

STOCKS OF FOODGRAINS HOARDED BY EMPLOYERS IN BENGAL.

56. *Mr. K. O. Neogy: (a) Has the attention of the Honourable the Food Member been drawn to the following statement made in the Council of State by the Honourable Mr. Parker in the course of the Food Debate, on the 12th August, 1943:—

"I must say that my impression is that there is a large amount of hoarding, but that a large proportion of it is what I would call unintentional. I will tell you two cases where I have been a hoarder myself, as an employer. When I found that my employees could not get grain, I went out and bought grain in larger quantities than I or they had done before. I had never bought such large quantities before in normal times. Why did I do that now? Not so much because I was frightened about the future, but because I wanted to start my own organisation of grain shops to supply my employees with food. I naturally had to stock the required foodgrains in fairly large quantities in order to make sure of supplies for a reasonable period of time. Not only did I do that for a few thousand people whom I happened to be employing as manager of a company, but I also did it for my own personal staff. I started a little grain shop in my compound which was run by one of my servants. There also I had to keep a stock of grain. That is all very harmless, in general terms. But the fact remains that it gives the impression that large stocks are being bought and taken away?"

(b) Is the Honourable Member aware—

(i) that the practice referred to above has been followed almost universally by all the important and influential employers in Bengal, either directly or through their organised Associations and purchasing agencies, and that the enormous stocks of foodgrains available within the Province of Bengal, were acquired at different times by them at comparatively high prices for initially building up such stocks and replenishing them from time to time; and

(ii) that these hoarding operations have materially helped in the withdrawal of a very large proportion of available stocks in Bengal and the creation of conditions of scarcity throughout the Province and prevalence of continually soaring prices?

(c) Was any attempt made at any time to impose official control on such operations, or even to obtain accurate information about the nature and extent thereof, and their bearing upon the food crisis in Bengal?

(d) Is it a fact that prior to the "recent" amendment of the Foodgrains Control Order, referred to by the then Member-in-Charge of the Food Department in his reply to my starred question No. 143 on the 2nd August last, there was no authority enjoyed by the Provincial Government to require returns of stocks of foodgrains hoarded by employers, far less to require them to take out licenses for the storage of foodgrains? What information has been obtained as regards the extent of the hoarding resorted to by the aforesaid employers since the promulgation of the aforesaid amendment of the Foodgrains Control Order and what Government control, if any, has been imposed upon their stocks?

(e) Does the Honourable Member propose to make a detailed statement giving information as to the extent of stocks of foodgrains available in the different areas of Bengal obtained as a result of the successive "food-drives" undertaken by the Government of Bengal in respect, firstly, of the mofussil districts and rural areas, and, secondly, of the Calcutta and Howrah areas? Were the hoards of foodgrains held by employers referred to above fully comprised within the scope of these food-drives, or was any exception made in favour of any single party or interest in this matter in the actual course of the food-drives?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: (a) Yes.

(b) The Government of India are aware that there has been large scale purchasing in Bengal and other provinces by employers of labour as an insurance against shortage of foodstuffs. They have no reason to believe that such purchases have on the whole been excessive for the purpose in view, and they have consistently advised Provincial Governments and employers, through their regional Food Commissioners against the holding of excessive reserve stocks.

(c) Yes.

(d) The Provincial Government have had since November 1941 powers under the Defence of India Rules to make orders regulating or prohibiting the keeping, storage, distribution, acquisition, use or consumption of foodgrains. Material for a complete reply to all parts of the Honourable Member's question is not readily available with the Government of India.

REPATRIATION OF DESTITUTE PERSONS FROM CALCUTTA.

57. ***Mr. K. C. Neogy:** (a) Will the Honourable the Food Member be pleased to state whether he is aware of any proposal of the Government of Bengal for the promulgation of an ordinance authorising the repatriation of the destitute persons from towns to their respective villages? If so, is the Honourable Member in a position to state the approximate number of people who may be repatriated under such a measure?

(b) Is the Honourable Member aware that an increasing number of destitute villagers have been pouring into the City of Calcutta and other towns, big and small, particularly because of the absence of anything like adequate relief measures in their respective villages?

(c) Will the enforcement of the proposed Bengal measure against such persons take place only after necessary arrangements for famine relief in the respective rural areas have been made on the basis of the relevant provisions of the Bengal Famine Code? Has any such or other conditions been agreed to by the Government of Bengal in any consultation, either formal or informal, that may have taken place between that Government and the Food Department of the Central Government?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: The material required for a complete reply to the Honourable Member's question is not available with the Central Government. An inquiry has been made from the Government of Bengal, and their reply is awaited.

STATEMENTS BY SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA ON FOOD SITUATION IN INDIA.

58. ***Mr. K. C. Neogy:** (a) Will the Honourable the Food Member be pleased to state whether the recent statements made by Mr. Amery, the Secretary of State for India, on the food situation, particularly those made in the House of Commons on the 12th and 14th October and in a public speech at Birmingham on the 15th October, were based upon information supplied by or through the Government of India?

(b) To which period does Mr. Amery's statement that the death rate in Bengal was estimated at about 1,000 a week, including Calcutta, but it might be higher, relate?

(c) What are the detailed figures in respect of Calcutta and the different districts of Bengal, separately, which went to make up the above number during the period in question?

(d) Has the attention of the Government of India been drawn to the editorial article in the *Sunday Statesman*, dated the 17th October last, under the head

"The Death roll" in which the estimated death roll from starvation in Bengal was put between 9,000 and 11,000 per week on the basis of official statistics as indicated particularly in the following extract therefrom:—

"adept at under-statement, Mr. Amery admitted that Bengal's weekly death-roll from starvation "might be higher" than his 1,000; the very imperfect official statistics available suggest that it might be higher than our 9,000 or 11,000, which figures have those official statistics alone as their shaky basis"?

(e) Have the Government of India taken steps for the purpose of verifying these statistics, and conveying to Mr. Amery the correct position in the matter?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: In reply to (a), (b) and (c), the Government of India have supplied information on the food situation in India, regularly, to the Secretary of State, but it is not known whether Mr. Amery's statements have been based on that information, nor whether the press reports of these statements are correct. An inquiry has been made from His Majesty's Government and their reply is awaited.

(d) Yes.

(e) The Government of India have made and will continue to make every effort to supply correct information.

STATEMENTS BY SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA ON FOOD SITUATION IN INDIA.

59. ***Mr. K. O. Neogy:** (a) With reference to Mr. Amery's statement at Birmingham on the 15th October that the dangerous possibilities of the situation were fully realised by the Government of India as soon as the loss of Singapore and the invasion of Burma showed that India could no longer rely upon her customary rice imports from Burma or easily secure wheat cargoes from Australia, will the Honourable the Food Member be pleased to state what precautionary measures in regard to augmentation of food supplies were taken after the loss of Singapore and before the fall of Rangoon? Was the attention of the Government of Bengal drawn by the Central Government to the necessity of augmenting or conserving supplies of foodgrains in the Province, particularly for the benefit of the civil population, at any time within this period as a precautionary measure? If not, were any other precautionary steps suggested to the Government of Bengal during the said period? If so, to what effect, and on what dates?

(b) With reference to Mr. Amery's statement in the House of Commons on the 12th October last, that at the beginning of the year His Majesty's Government provided the necessary shipping for substantial imports of grain to India in order to meet prospects of serious shortages which were subsequently relieved by the excellent spring harvest in Northern India, when was such shipping provided, and were such shipments on their way to India and actually reached any port of India at any time? What quantities of foodgrains were represented by these shipments? Was any opinion conveyed to His Majesty's Government since the aforesaid provision of necessary shipping that the shipments were not needed in India? If so, on which dates and on whose advice was such opinion communicated, and with what result?

(c) Does the Honourable Member propose to explain fully the position referred to in a Reuter's message quoted by Lord Strabolgi in the House of Lords on the 20th October to the following effect:

"In the early part of this year the Indian Government realising the possibilities of continued shortage pressed for large imports of food into India and received 1,50,000 tons. This was only part of the amount asked for. With operations in North Africa and U. Boats sinking, the position became acute and in view of these facts coupled with the bumper harvest in the Punjab, the Government decided not to press for further imports. It is now admitted that this was a serious mistake"?

The Honourable Sir Jawala Prasad Srivastava: (a) The period between the loss of Singapore on 10th February and the fall of Rangoon on 7th March was only 20 days. The action taken by the Government of India was not precisely related to this period, nor specifically addressed to the Government of Bengal. During the first four months of 1942, three important conferences, attended by

representatives of provincial Governments, were called by the Government of India, at which were considered the control of prices, conservation of supplies and the increased production of foodstuffs, with special reference to the emergency caused by Japan's entry into the war. That Emergency was described, and the steps necessary to increase the country's food supply outlined in the speech of the Honourable Member in charge of the Department of Education, Health and Lands, in opening the Food Production Conference on the 6th April 1942, a copy of which will be found in the Library of the House.

(b) and (c). Shipments of wheat from Australia amounting to about 160,000 tons, in all, arrived in India between November 1942 and the end of April 1943. This quantity did not represent the full amount for which the Government of India had asked, but in view of the very difficult shipping position of the United Nations at that time, as well as the serious shortage of food-grains in Ceylon, coupled with the success which had attended the efforts of the Government of India to procure old-crop wheat earlier in the year and prospects of a good *rabi* harvest, the Government of India agreed to forego further shipments of wheat, on the understanding that a claim for imports later in the year might be favourably considered. We have had to make that claim, and shipments of wheat are now arriving in Indian ports.

STATEMENTS BY SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA ON FOOD SITUATION IN INDIA.

60. *Mr. K. C. Neogy: (a) With reference to the speech made at Birmingham by Mr. Amery, the Secretary of State for India, on the 15th October, mentioning the gradual increase of population of India as a factor contributing to the present food situation, will the Secretary for Education, Health and Lands be pleased to state when for the first time the steady increase of population of India came to be realised by the Central Government, and how far the efforts of the Central as well as Provincial Governments have been successful ever since in increasing the production of essential foodgrains so as to keep pace with the said increase of population?

(b) What are the reasons for not initiating the "Grow More Food" Campaign earlier than April, 1942?

(c) Will the Honourable Member refer to the answer given to my unstarred question No. 51 on the 5th August last, indicating the increase in area and yield of foodgrains in 1942-43 over 1941-42 in different Provinces, and, explain the decrease recorded therein in the case of Bengal of 660 thousand acres under *Kharif* foodgrains and 701 thousand acres under rice, and a falling off of 2,608 thousand tons in the production of *Kharif* foodgrains and of 2,905 thousand tons in that of rice? How much of the said deterioration is explained by unfavourable weather conditions or natural calamities, and how much approximately is by the denial policy followed in certain parts of the Province, as well as evacuation of civil population due to military reasons or occupation of tracts of land on behalf of the fighting forces? Is the Honourable Member in a position to furnish details approximately indicating the acreage of homestead, cultivated and culturable waste lands in Bengal occupied by the military or vacated by the civil population for reasons of security, and assess approximately the effect, if any, on the "Grow More Food" Campaign in Bengal by military policy?

(d) What steps have been taken in different Provinces to re-instate the agricultural population of areas compulsorily evacuated for military reasons and occupied on behalf of the fighting forces, in other areas and provide them with all facilities of finance and equipment, so as to enable them to resume their activities of farming; and what is the acreage thus brought into cultivation as compared with the acreage vacated as stated above?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: (a) and (b). The pressure of a growing population on the supplies of essential foodgrains produced in India has been realised by the Central and Provincial Governments for some decades. Efforts have been made over a long period to counter this pressure by the initiation of such schemes as financial resources permitted for the extension of irrigation and the development of agriculture by means of vigorous research and the application of the results

of research to the land of the cultivator. Judged by import figures India's normal production of foodgrains fell short of her normal requirements by no more than 4 per cent. This deficit was easily made good by imports, mainly of rice from Burma which, till 1937, was a part of India. Until the outbreak of hostilities in the Far East there was no difficulty in making foodgrains available to the people of India at a reasonable price. The need for an intensive "Grow More Food" Campaign, prosecuted at the expense, to some extent, of India's valuable cash crops, did not, therefore, arise until, in the course of the war with Japan, India was threatened, in the spring of 1942, with the loss of supplies from Burma.

(c) In the statement attached to the reply to unstarred question No. 51 of the 5th August last, *Kharif* foodgrains included rice. The figures for rice were also given separately, to show the increase or decrease under rice. The decrease in the area and production of *kharif* foodgrains in Bengal in 1942-43, was mainly attributable respectively to an increase in the area under Jute and to extensive damage to the rice crop by the cyclone of October 1942 and by insect pests and diseases. Details are not available of the effect on production of the other factors mentioned in the question, but that they could not have affected the production to any appreciable extent will be evident from the fact that this year's first forecast of rice acreage in Bengal shows an increase by 2 million acres over the 1941-42 acreage and by 2½ million acres over the 1942-43 acreage.

(d) The information asked for is not available and is being collected from the Provinces.

POSITION OF SUPPLIES OF FOODGRAINS IN BENGAL.

61. *Mr. K. C. Neogy: (a) Will the Honourable the Food Member be pleased to make a comprehensive statement, indicating district by district, as far as possible, the position of the supplies of foodgrains in Bengal during the last months of August, September and October, separately?

(b) Has any instruction been given by the Food Department, formally or informally, to Provincial authorities for the purpose of ensuring an improvement in the methods of distribution of foodstuffs and organisation of relief measures in the districts, towns and rural areas of Bengal? If so, to what effect and with what result?

(c) To what extent, on material points, does the present scheme of relief inaugurated by the Government of Bengal differ from the requirements of the Bengal Famine Code in regard to (i) the controlling organisation, (ii) relief works, (iii) allowances of food to different classes of persons, and (iv) special measures for the relief of poorer families among the middle class?

(d) Has the Honourable Member satisfied himself about the suitability of the standard gruel served from free kitchens to the destitute population in Bengal at different centres, from the points of view, firstly, of sufficiency as regards the minimum human requirements, and, secondly, of its suitability as regards its ingredients and their effect upon the health of the people served, having regard to their ages and varying degrees of continued privation? Has any expert opinion been obtained either by the Central Government or the Government of Bengal, on these points? If so, what is the substance of that opinion, and by whom has it been expressed?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: (a), (c) and (d). Material for a reply to parts (a), (c) and (d) of the Honourable Member's question is not readily available with the Central Government, and has been called for from the Government of Bengal. The suitability of the standard gruel is at present under examination and I do not wish to make any pronouncement until that examination is concluded.

(b) The Government of India are closely and continually in touch with the Government of Bengal with the object of improving methods of distribution and relief measures. Practical assistance and advice have been given; rail and river distribution has been improved; a senior military officer has been appointed as Director of Transport in Bengal; local rationing schemes have been introduced, and over 5400 relief centres have been opened. Reports from certain districts show that there has been a perceptible improvement in conditions.

FEEDING OF LABOUR ENGAGED ON MILITARY WORKS IN BENGAL BY MILITARY AUTHORITIES.

62. *Mr. K. C. Neogy: (a) With reference to the Associated Press message, dated New Delhi, the 19th October, 1943, to the effect that arrangements are being made by the Military authorities to relieve the Bengal Government of its responsibility for feeding labour engaged on military works, will the Honourable the Food Member be pleased to make a statement:

(i) fully explaining the arrangements that were hitherto in force between the Military authorities and the Government of Bengal in this matter;

(ii) giving the quantities, month by month, since January last, of the foodgrains supplied by the Government of Bengal for this purpose; and

(iii) showing the average prices paid per maund for different kinds of foodgrains by the Military authorities to the Government of Bengal during this period, comparing them with the average prices paid by the Government of Bengal for procuring such supplies?

(b) What quantities had to be acquired and maintained by the Government of Bengal, month by month, for carrying out its responsibility in this matter, ever since it was undertaken by that Government?

(c) What independent arrangements for the procurement of foodgrains in Bengal will be made hereafter by the military authorities for feeding labour engaged on military works in that Province?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: (a) and (b). No final decision has been reached with regard to the arrangements referred to in the Press message. In the case of most of the works in question the Military Authorities have hitherto had no direct responsibility for providing the requirements of Civilian labour; this responsibility rests with the employers of the labour under the Civil Department concerned, and with the Provincial Government.

The Statistical Material for a complete reply to parts (a) and (b) of the question is not readily available and a report has been called for from the Bengal Government.

(c) None.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

ALUMINA IMPORTED DUTY FREE.

2. **Shams-ul-Ulema Kamaluddin Ahmad:** Will the Honourable the Commerce Member be pleased to state the quantity of alumina that has been admitted duty free in this country since 1939? Is any action under contemplation for withdrawal of the facility for importation of alumina free from customs duty?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: The information asked for in the first part of the question is being collected and will be laid on the table in due course.

The reply to the second part of the question is in the negative. The attention of the Honourable Member is invited in this connection to the Government of India, Commerce Department Resolution No. 6-T/Sim/40, dated the 20th July 1940, published in the *Gazette of India* of the same date.

SUPPLY OF RATIONS TO THE MILITARY IN BENGAL AT CONCESSION RATES.

3. **Mr. K. C. Neogy:** (a) Will the Honourable Member for Food be pleased to state what the different classes are of personnel of the military forces, combatant as well as non-combatant, stationed in Bengal, that are entitled to free rations or the supply of essential foodstuffs at concession rates?

(b) Does the Honourable Member propose to make a statement indicating the quantity of rice, wheat (including flour) and other foodgrains that had to be acquired in Bengal, month by month, since January last, for the benefit of such personnel? Through what agencies were such supplies acquired in Bengal, and at what average prices, month by month? What stocks had to be carried by the supplying agencies or any other authorities responsible for maintaining these supplies from time to time in Bengal?

(c) To what extent has the acquisition and maintenance of stocks for supplying the above privileged classes of persons stationed in Bengal with food grains, contributed to the creation of scarcity conditions and the prevalence of high prices in Bengal?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: (a) The necessary information will be given by the War Department.

(b) No foodgrains have been purchased for the Defence Services from Bengal since January last.

(c) Does not arise.

SUPPLY OF FOODGRAINS TO EMPLOYEES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRIES AND CIVIL SUPPLIES IN BENGAL AT CONCESSION RATES.

4. Mr. K. C. Neogy: (a) Will the Honourable Member for Commerce and Industries and Civil Supplies be pleased to state the different classes of employees under the control of his Departments and employed in Bengal that are in the enjoyment of a concession under which foodgrains are supplied to them at controlled or reduced prices?

(b) What is the total number of such employees and what quantities of rice, wheat and other foodgrains have been supplied to them at controlled or reduced prices, month by month, since January last?

(c) Who are charged in Bengal with the duty of furnishing supplies for the benefit of these employees, and what is the approximate extent of the stocks that they had to maintain from time to time to enable them to discharge their obligation, and through what agencies in Bengal have these stocks been acquired, and at what prices on an average, month by month?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: The information is not readily available but is being collected and will be laid on the table of the House in due course.

SUPPLY OF FOODGRAINS TO EMPLOYEES OF THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT IN BENGAL AT CONCESSION RATES.

5. Mr. K. C. Neogy: (a) Will the Honourable Member for Labour be pleased to state the different classes of employees under the control of his Department and employed in Bengal that are in the enjoyment of a concession under which foodgrains are supplied to them at controlled or reduced prices?

(b) What is the total number of such employees and what quantities of rice, wheat and other foodgrains have been supplied to them at controlled or reduced prices, month by month, since January last?

(c) Who are charged in Bengal with the duty of furnishing supplies for the benefit of these employees and what is the approximate extent of the stocks that they had to maintain from time to time to enable them to discharge their obligation, and through what agencies in Bengal have these stocks been acquired, and at what prices on an average, month by month?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: The attention of the Honourable Member is invited to reply given by the Honourable the Food Member to starred question No. 55 on the 9th November 1948.

SUPPLY OF FOODGRAINS TO EMPLOYEES OF THE FOOD DEPARTMENT IN BENGAL AT CONCESSION RATES.

6. Mr. K. C. Neogy: (a) Will the Honourable Member for Food be pleased to state the different classes of employees under the control of his Department and employed in Bengal that are in the enjoyment of a concession under which foodgrains are supplied to them at controlled or reduced prices?

(b) What is the total number of such employees and what quantities of rice, wheat and other foodgrains have been supplied to them at controlled or reduced prices, month by month, since January last?

(c) Who are charged in Bengal with the duty of furnishing supplies for the benefit of these employees and what is the approximate extent of the stocks that they had to maintain from time to time to enable them to discharge their obligation, and through what agencies in Bengal have these stocks been acquired, and at what prices on an average, month by month?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: (a) I am replying to this question on behalf of all the Departments of the Government of India other than the Railways to whom the Honourable Member has addressed it. All Central Civil Government servants stationed in Bengal who are in receipt of pay of Rs. 300 per month or less are eligible for a concession of the nature indicated.

(b) and (c). The total number of eligible Central Civil Government employees, including the Posts and Telegraphs but excluding railways servants in Bengal, is about 22,000. In Calcutta arrangements for supplies have been made by the Supply Department in collaboration with the Provincial Director of Civil Supplies and in the mofussil by heads of Departments in consultation with the local authorities. In regard to the quantities supplied, the stocks maintained and the prices at which purchases were made from time to time, details are not readily available and Government consider that their collection would involve an amount of time and labour that would not be justifiable in existing conditions.

STOCKS OF FOODGRAINS RELEASED FROM ARMY RESERVES FOR CIVILIANS IN BENGAL.

7. Mr. K. O. Neogy: (a) With reference to the statement made by Mr. Amery in the House of Commons on the 14th October that some stocks of foodgrains have already been released from Army reserves for the benefit of the civilian population in Bengal, will the Honourable the Food Member be pleased to state the quantities of the stocks thus released during different periods and in different areas in Bengal, and what proportions the stocks thus released roughly bore to the amounts of Army reserves of foodgrains held in Bengal during the corresponding periods?

(b) Since which date has the Food Department been responsible for the procurement of foodstuffs for military requirements, and what are the different kinds of foodstuffs that the said Department procures to meet these requirements? Is the said Department solely responsible for the procurement of foodstuffs for such requirements in respect of the fighting forces stationed within India, as well as the export of foodstuffs for the benefit of Indian forces stationed abroad?

(c) How much of the military requirements have been met by the procurement of foodstuffs of different kinds within the Province of Bengal since January last? What quantities of rice have been procured in Bengal for meeting such requirements, month by month, since January last, and what were the average prices paid for it in the respective months?

(d) Is the Honourable Member in a position to satisfy the House that the procurement of foodstuffs in Bengal for military requirements has not contributed either to the shortage of foodstuffs available for civilian population or to the high prices thereof?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: (a) About 23,000 tons of wheat have been released for the civil population in Bengal this year from imports specially ordered for the Defence Services. It is not in the public interest to disclose the Army Reserves of foodgrains in Bengal.

(b) The Food Department has been responsible for procurement of foodstuffs for the Defence Services since its creation on 2nd December 1942.

The types of foodstuffs procured for the Defence Services include all grains and products thereof for men and animals of the Defence Services and, in addition, such items of processed foodstuffs for men as are available from indigenous sources.

(c) Certain quantities of Shakapara Biscuits, tinned and bottled provisions including chutney, pickles, condiments and a few other minor items, are obtained from Bengal. As regards biscuits, wheat products for the manufacture of these are supplied from Defence Services stocks and are not drawn from the resources of Bengal. No rice has been purchased in Bengal.

(d) Yes.

MOTIONS FOR ADJOURNMENT.

BANNING PUBLICATION OF BENGAL GOVERNOR'S ORDER AGAINST THE *Amrita Bazar Patrika*.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi has given notice of a motion for the adjournment of the business of the House for discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, the prohibition under Sub-rule (1) of Rule 41 of the Defence of India Rules, by the Chief Press Adviser to the Government of India, of the publication outside the Province of Bengal of an order (intended to be applied only within the Province of Bengal) served on the Editor of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* under the Order of His Excellency the Governor of Bengal on 8th October, 1943 under the clause (b) of the sub-rule (1) of Rule 41 of the Defence of India Rules prohibiting the printing or publishing within the Province of Bengal only any document containing a reference by way of comment or otherwise, relating to the economic condition in Bengal, the food and supply situation, relief and distress, etc.

I have not been able to understand the position clearly. I should like to know what the facts are.

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi (Dacca *cum* Mymensingh: Muhammadan Rural): Sir, the facts are that the order of the Government of Bengal was limited to Bengal only. May I read the Order?

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Yes, if it is not a very long one.

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: It is not. It runs thus:

"In exercise of the power conferred by Clause (B) of Sub-Rule (1) of Rule 41 of the Defence of India Rules, the Governor is pleased to prohibit the printing or publishing within the Province of Bengal of any document containing a reference by way of comment or otherwise to Order No. 923-Pr., dated the 8th October, 1943, of which a copy is hitherto annexed."

The annexed Order is absolutely clear; it only applies within the Province of Bengal.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): What is that Order referred to?

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: I will read that also:

"In exercise of the power conferred by Clause (a) of Sub-Rule (1) of Rule 41 of Defence of India Rules, the Governor is pleased, for the purpose of securing the public safety and the maintenance of public order, to order that any matter, relating to economic conditions in Bengal, the food and supply situation, relief and distress and Civil Defence services or organisations, shall, before being published in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* newspaper, till further orders, be submitted for scrutiny to the Special Press Adviser, Calcutta."

It is absolutely clear that this Order was intended only for Bengal and not outside Bengal. Therefore, I submit that the Chief Press Adviser had no business to kill this news by prohibiting its publication throughout the rest of India. Of course it cannot be published in Bengal, that is admitted. The Order has clearly defined that it has only to be used in the Province of Bengal and nowhere else.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I would like to know why it was confined to Bengal.

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: That is the Order. I have read it to you. The Government of Bengal have only applied it to their own province.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Would the same reasons apply for other parts of India?

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: Not necessarily.

The Honourable Sir Sultan Ahmed (Member for Information and Broadcasting): The assumption that any Order was passed by the Chief Press Adviser prohibiting, under Rule (1) of Rule 41 of the Defence of India Rules, the printing or publishing of any paper or document or anything like that, is in itself unfounded. There is no such order.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): In view of the statement made by the Leader of the House I rule the motion out of order.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee (Calcutta Suburbs: Non-Muhammadan Urban): Was there any advice.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Order, order.

FAILURE TO GIVE PUBLICITY TO MORTALITY DUE TO STARVATION IN BENGAL.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The next motion is in the name of Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh. He says that the business of the Assembly be adjourned for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, the failure of the Government of India to give true and extensive publicity, in time, of the mortality in Bengal due to starvation. It is rather general. Besides, this question can be discussed on the days which will be allotted for food debate.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh (Nagpur Division: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, I do not wish to move this and the next adjournment motion which stands in my name.

FAILURE TO TAKE TIMELY ACTION FOR PREVENTING ACUTE FOOD CRISIS IN BENGAL.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The next motion is in the name of Mr. Essak Sait. He wishes to move for the adjournment of the business of the Assembly to discuss an urgent matter of definite public importance, namely, the failure of the Government of India to take timely action to prevent the acute food crisis which Bengal is undergoing now the possibility of which must have been in Government's knowledge previously.

That can also be discussed in the food debate.

Mr. H. A. Sathar H. Essak Sait (West Coast and Nilgiris: Muhammadan): I understand that the Leader of the House has to make a statement in connection with the allotment of two days for food debate.

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava (Food Member): I have already stated in answering questions that I am going to get two days for food debate.

Many Honourable Members: We want three days.

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I will agree to three days provided no Resolutions are moved.

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan (Agra Division: Muhammadan Rural): We will agree to that.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: The announcement should come through the proper channel. The Leader of the House should make a statement in this connection.

Mr. N. M. Joshi (Nominated Non-Official): May I ask which are the three days allotted for food debate.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Order, order.

FAILURE TO CONSULT THE LEGISLATURE *re* AGREEMENT FOR UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND REHABILITATION ADMINISTRATION.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The next motion is in the name of Mr. Krishnamachari. He proposes to move for an adjournment of the business of the Assembly for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, the failure of the Government of India to consult the Legislature in the matter of the agreement for United Nations relief and rehabilitation administration.

I think this matter was brought up before the House once before.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari (Tanjore *cum* Trichinopoly: Non-Muhammadan Rural): The Resolution tabled in the last Session was subsequently withdrawn and it happens that today the Agent General to the Government of India at Washington is signing the Agreement. It has also transpired that the department has communicated to several bodies, like the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce, that before the final draft is approved the Legislature's approval will be obtained. I now see an announcement in the papers—a Press Note—and it says that the signature of the Agent General will be

subject to the Legislature approving. It is an unheard of procedure. I think the Legislature is entitled to discuss this matter and voice its views on the action of the Government.

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque (Commerce Member): I should explain the whole position; it was in September 1941 that His Majesty's Government invited the representatives of the Dominions and India to consider the question of post-war relief and thereafter the United States Government, the Government of China, and the Government of Russia considered all these matters from different points of view. It was before the last Session that the question came to us whether India is prepared to sign an agreement. We raised from India from the very start that in any question of post-war rehabilitation of devastated areas we in India have a special liability towards those territories in Asia which have been under enemy occupation and in which there is a large Indian population; and that is the attitude which we took all along; and then we actually tabled a Resolution before this House in which we desired the approval of this House. But thereafter there were certain further inquiries to be made in view of the discussions which we had with several Members informally. These points required to be clarified, and at that stage we did not anticipate that the conference would be called, as it has been called today. In between that time there has been a new principle, namely, our signature to that agreement nowhere binds India to any effective action. In other words, it is merely a conference of Dominion representatives and the United Nations and India to put the signature to a document that in case the Legislature approves of any further action, India will participate in the details. Till then India will be a member, and at any time if India feels that she cannot thereafter agree to any decision, we will stand out. It has been consistent with the attitude of India from the very beginning, not only during the war, but even before, that India is always associated in all international conferences. We took part in international conferences and I may say that this question was taken up by the international conference at Geneva also. In view of that we thought that at least our agreement to the extent of signature subject to legislative sanction at a later stage, will be the proper action, consistently with the attitude of India; and I feel that there is nothing to fear. We have consulted Chambers of Commerce; we propose at the proper stage to consult the Legislature for any effective action to be taken.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: I would like to submit that that is not exactly as it has been stated; the Honourable Member has not told us about the urgency of subscribing India's signature to this document.

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: What more urgency is there except that the United Nations decided, not India, that the conference will be held on the 9th November and there was no time for us to table a motion before this House.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: In that case, I submit that it would not have mattered at all if the signature had not been given and India had been allowed to enter into an agreement after the Legislature had discussed it. Besides, it forces the hand of the Legislature.

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: No, no. I can assure the House that it would be the free decision of this Legislature whether India will be isolationist or will be a participant in international cooperation not only for the post-war world rehabilitation but in other matters also.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: I would like to state one thing with your permission, Sir. If the Honourable Member will say that the approval of the Legislature shall be that the elected members of this Legislature alone decide

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): That is not allowed. On the facts stated by the Honourable Member for Commerce and the assurance given by him I hold that the motion is not in order.

HUNGER-STRIKE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS IN BHAGALPUR CAMP JAIL.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The next is Mr. Kailash Behari Lal's notice. He wishes to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, the assault by lathi charge on the political prisoners in Bhagalpur camp-jail on 21st October, 1948, and the consequent hunger-strike of some of the prisoners in the same jail since then and the failure of the Government to resolve the seriousness of the situation to save the lives of the hunger-strikers.

This happened on the 21st October; what has happened since then, to these hunger-strikers?

Mr. Kailash Bihari Lal (Bhagalpur, Purnea and the Sonthal Parganas: Non-Muhammadian): That is not yet known; as far as my information goes, they are still on hunger-strike.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): What are the facts?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell (Home Member): I have no information as to whether they are on hunger-strike or not. The matter is entirely one falling within the provincial responsibility, and the Government of India have no information on the subject, nor have they any responsibility for passing any orders in such a matter.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The administration of jails is, I suppose, a provincial subject?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: Yes.

Mr. Kailash Bihari Lal: But at present the Bihar Government is under section 98 of the Government of India Act, and there is no responsible government there; the Government of India is responsible for law and order in the province and these prisoners are all political prisoners on account of the political movement there which was controlled by the Government of India, and the Government of India owes some duty for the welfare of those prisoners.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Very well; it has been ruled more than once that the administration of jails, being a provincial subject, no motion can be made here on that matter. I therefore hold that the motion is not in order.

CONTINUANCE OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT'S SUBSIDY TO SIND.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The next one is in the name of Mr. Jamnadas Mehta. He wishes to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, the continuance by the Government of India of the payment of a subsidy to the Province of Sind in spite of the highly improper conduct of the Government of that province in profiteering in the supply of food grains to the other provinces who are bearing the burden of that subsidy.

I do not know whether the allegations are correct or not. How is a question like this a fit subject for an adjournment motion? The object of the motion seems to be to recommend that certain action should be taken by the Government of India with respect to the Sind Government's subsidy. That surely can only be done on a Resolution; it cannot be the subject of an adjournment motion.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta (Bombay Central Division: Non-Muhammadian Rural): May I submit that it could be done by the Government of India by some Ordinance immediately?

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I do not know that. You had better approach the proper authorities for that purpose; the House does not issue any ordinance. I hold that the motion is out of order.

NOMINATION OF THE PANEL OF CHAIRMEN.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I have to inform the House that under sub-rule (1) of rule 3 of the Indian Legislative Rules, I

nominate Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang, Mr. K. C. Neogy, Mr. Hoosinbhoj A. Lalljee and Sir Henry Richardson on the Panel of Chairmen for the current Session.

RESOLUTION RE STABILIZATION OF PRICES—*contd.*

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Further discussion of the following Resolution moved by Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad on the 12th August, 1943:

"That this Assembly recommends to the Governor General in Council to modify their currency policy and to concentrate their attention more on the stability of prices than on the stability of the bank rate of interest."

That has already been moved and three Members have spoken.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta (Bombay Central Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): I rise to support the object of this Resolution although the text of the Resolution is somewhat lacking in precision and is even inconsistent and incoherent. Some of the statements which the Honourable Doctor made are in effect a contradiction of what he wants to be done, and he has announced certain economic doctrines which also show that he is not really supporting his own Resolution. The learned Doctor is so transparently honest that in one place he confessed that he never studied economics at college; he says that he has now started reading Marshall and Ricardo; I quite agree that it is never too late to learn, but I doubt very much whether his learning has progressed very much if his speech is to be the test. He has, in fact, far from supporting his arguments, weakened his case by making admissions. For instance, I shall only mention one. In one of his arguments he has said that Government should take the utmost care that the purchasing power of the rupee should not increase. If there is anything notorious to-day, it is this that the purchasing power of the rupee has declined by 80 per cent. At such a time he wants Government not to increase the purchasing power of the rupee. Does that show that he really supports his own proposition?

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad (United Provinces Southern Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): On a point of order, Sir.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: I am not giving way. I have got only fifteen minutes.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member raises a point of order. What is the point of order?

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: He is not quoting me correctly.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): That is not a point of order. The Honourable Member knows that.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Let my Honourable friend read his speech. He has on page 686 definitely mentioned that the Government should take every care to see that the purchasing power of the rupee does not increase. (Interruption.) Let him say that he has committed a mistake, but let him not say he did not say that. I can read from the text of his speech but I have no time. Secondly, he has paid compliment to Government; I do not mind that but he should remember that the Honourable the Finance Member is such a skilful gentleman that on some occasion he will use them against us. As a matter of fact, there is not much to compliment about as I will show hereafter. The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman's speech was applauded on the floor of the House. He received a good press; the impression created was that he had made such a cogent and convincing case for Government that nothing remained to be said. I am reminded of the instructions which a gentleman by name Gregsbury in Dickens' novel "Nicholas Nickleby" probably a Chancellor of the Exchequer gave to his Secretary as to what points should be taken in preparing his speech. Mr. Gregsbury gives instructions for his speech like this. He says:

"I should expect him (*Secretary*) now and then to go through a few figures in the printed tables, and to pick out a few results, so that I might come out pretty well on timber-duty questions, and finance questions, and so on; and I should like him to get up a few little arguments about the disastrous effects of a return to cash payments and a

[Mr. Jannadas M. Mehta.]

metallic currency, with a touch now and then about the exportation of bullion, and the Emperor of Russia and bank notes and all that kind of thing, which it is only necessary to talk fluently about, because nobody understands it. Do you take me?"

"I think I understand," said Nicholas.

When the Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman gave instructions to Mr. Jones to prepare his speech, he said something about this inflation, something about mopping up savings, something about bears and bulls, he was savaging the bull, and he was to talk eloquently because nobody understands . . .

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman (Finance Member): Nobody prepares my speeches except me.

Mr. Jannadas M. Mehta: I am simply assuming. I am glad. You said to yourself then, "I will only say something about bear and bull and make the most sweeping statement eloquently, nobody will understand me and everybody will applaud it." He had the peculiar advantage of speaking at the last moment of the last Resolution day of the Session so that there was nobody to reply. He could say what he liked, it cannot be replied to for a period of more than two months,—therefore he felt himself safe and made a speech extending over seven pages in which he spoke so much and said so little; it is one of his master performances on all questions if inconvenient matters are under discussion. As a matter of fact the whole of the speech of the Honourable Member was full of imaginary triumphs, of irritation with his critics, and there was no hope held out for lower prices and there was no real reply. For instance, what does it matter, he asked, in a country like India whether your currency in circulation is 180 crores or 1,000 crores? I wonder why he did not say 10,000 crores. Does he really wish this House to believe that it makes no difference whether the notes in circulation are 100 millions or 200 millions or 500 millions? I say that it makes every difference, when even a crore of rupees of currency is added to the existing volume. After the debate in the House of Commons now, he will have to admit that inflation is at the bottom of this great tragedy of starvation of Indian masses and that the prices have grown and grown not so much because of the many extraneous circumstances, but definitely and clearly on account of the unbalanced inflation that has gone on during the last 3½ years. My Honourable friend not only denounced those who were complaining of inflation but claimed some victory over inflation. I say that his victories are imaginary. The London *Economist* describes his financial methods as methods of crude inflationary finance. My Honourable friend thinks that it makes no difference what inflation there may be. I shall tell him what difference it does make. He could not have forgotten Ricardo, though Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad has not understood it. Ricardo more than 150 years ago made it quite clear that every unit of currency in circulation carries out transactions worth 20 units. That was in the days when scientific invention and industrialisation of the world had not made much progress, when the number of transactions was few. To-day it must be, not one rupee to 20 rupees of transactions, but one rupee of currency to 50 rupees of transactions. And what does that imply? It implies that for every rupee note in circulation 50 rupees worth of transactions are gone through. Further as the *Economist* points out that it is not a question of any sacrifice India has to make but it is a sacrifice already made in terms of services and of commodities by the masses in India by which sterling accumulation has taken place in England. If you calculate the growing sterling accumulations they work out, according to my calculation to no less than nearly 1,800 million sterling in three years. If you multiply 1,800 by 50, it comes to transactions of goods and services worth £90,000 millions.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: What about the distance of the sun from the earth?

Mr. Jannadas M. Mehta: That is an astronomical picture, but you have done more than that. You are capable of achieving more than the calculation of

astronomical figures. And I assure the Honourable Member that according to the *Economist* and according to the calculations I made—I am willing to be subject to correction—the people of India have, as a result of the currency inflation during the last four years, denied themselves 18 thousand crores of rupees worth goods and services. I am making this statement on the floor of the House and if the Honourable Member wishes to correct me, I shall gladly accept the correction, if I am wrong.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: He has omitted three zeroes.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: You said that you were still studying the subject but my figures are quite correct—eighteen thousand crores of rupees worth, denial to ourselves of food, clothing and other necessities of life. That is the contribution of India to the war—starvation and denial of food, goods and services to the extent of 18 thousand crores of rupees. Do you wonder when the prices have gone up so high, that a large number of people—many millions—are unable to obtain food and they have lost whatever of blood and flesh they had, that only their skin and bones remain. That skin has also become very soft now and the bones have become brittle; indeed, no country in the world has sacrificed more than the people of this country from the point of view of denial of goods and services of the most essential character. That is the fact of the matter and the Resolution has only asked him to stabilise the prices. No, Sir. I want him to lower the prices. Stabilising the price means continuing the present starvation of the people.

The Finance Member had also boasted of the several triumphs he had achieved. Let him look at page 90 of the Report of the Gregory Committee. What does it say? The Honourable Member promised great victories over the profiteers in the months of March and April. (*An Honourable Member:* "What is that report please?") It is the Food Grains Policy Committee Report. It has been published in the Press. (*An Honourable Member:* "We have not seen it".) It has been published in the Press. You have not read it. If you have read it, you will find that in March and April

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari (Tanjore *cum* Trichinopoly; Non-Muhammadan Rural): We are not members of the National Defence Council.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: This is a more tragic subject. You may have a joke about the National Defence Council of which you are so fond but I wish to read the figures of the triumphal march of the success of the measures taken by the Honourable Member. He boasted that from April he had been savaging the bull. Let us see. The price of rice was in April 634 as against 100 at the beginning of the war. The price of rice in July, after three months' progress of his success, was 951 points, that is, it had risen nearly 317 points after the supposed success began. The price of wheat rose by 134 points after his triumphs started. The price of kerosene rose from 194 to 203 points since he began to suppress profiteering and the price of cloth had risen by August from 469 points to 493 points since he boasted on the floor of the House that he had taken stern measures and that there was no cause for defeatism. Now, that kind of thing which simply believes in words, while the facts are quite contrary is not worthy of my Honourable friend.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: Does the Honourable Member deny that there has been a fall in cloth prices?

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: I am quoting from an authoritative Committee's report.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: Will the Honourable Member kindly relate his figures to some precise period of time?

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: I am giving even the month.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: Is it the Honourable Member's suggestion that since Government began to control cloth prices, the prices have moved up?

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Let the Honourable Member read his speech. I have read it many times. If he reads his speech, I do not think he will be able to challenge me. He was speaking in August, when the figures for July alone

[Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta.]

were available—not other figures—and I say that his boast on the floor of the House that he will crush the profiteers was made in March. It is the profiteers who crushed him by July when the ruling prices of cloth were 498 points against 469 points in March. I am in sympathy with him. I do not say that it is his fault that the profiteers are there. It is the fault of the Government of India but let him not indulge in imaginary triumphs. What we want is a reduction of prices. A reduction of prices alone will give some consolation to the poor who have to pay 500 per cent. for cloth, one thousand per cent. rise for rice and similar rises. My friend is very fond of mopping up the purchasing power which does not exist in the hands of 99·5 per cent. of the people. The mopping up of the power can only be done in the case of ·5 per cent. Let him do it and he will have my full support but, in season and out of season, to have the poor working classes' wages in his mind and to talk of mopping up purchasing power which only the ·5 possess is like Mrs. Partington mopping the Atlantic with her broom. I cannot imagine that the Honourable the Finance Member will ever be able to mop up fugitive purchasing power unless he goes against the real perpetrators of these high prices.

The last thing I wish to say is this—that the Government will not succeed by the measures that they have taken so far. They are good measures, they are measures in the right direction but they are measures whose effect can only be to the extent of 10 to 15 per cent. If they want to produce real effect, it must be in two directions. One is to lower the prices of foodstuffs and other essential supplies by stopping inflation. The *Economist* has said it. He can have the cutting from me if he likes. Mr. Pethick Lawrence has said the same thing in his speech. My Honourable friend has consistently tried to ridicule those who talked of inflation. That is at the bottom of the rise in prices and the second thing in connection with the rise in prices is profiteering. He has not yet really touched this latter. In his speech, I find that any appeal to him to touch this profiteer will be considered by him as hostility to the profiteers. What a calamity to the people of India, that the Honourable the Finance Member should think that in asking him to take measures against the profiteers we are showing any hostility. We are hostile to the deeds, not to anybody personally.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: When did I say that?

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: You have said it, in describing the action you have taken in lowering the prices of cloth. I shall refer you to your speech. Do you want me to read it?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: Surely, I did not deprecate hostility. The point was whether it would succeed in getting the price of cloth reduced.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: You warned us against hostility which does not exist. On page 695, five lines from the bottom of the last but one paragraph, the Honourable Member says:

“At the same time, it was equally true that you were dealing with one of the most powerful and most organised industries in this country and that if you were to proceed to deal with it by methods purely of hostility and force.”

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: Go on.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: That is what he say. But no one has suggested the method of force or of hostility.

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Haque (Commerce Member): Where is the profiteer? He says ‘organised industries’.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: But they are the biggest profiteers. You must pardon me because I am in earnest about telling the Honourable the Finance Member that there is no question of hostility or force to the profiteers who have raised the price of cloth 500 per cent. Do you describe any protest against this as hostility and force? And what will you do? Will you give them a bouquet of flowers for robbing the public by 500 per cent.?

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: That is what the Civil Supplies Department is now doing.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: I am telling the Government of India that there is no method of violence or force in what I am saying. It is an appeal to

them that the profiteers deserve no mercy. Today the greatest thing to do in India is to lower the prices. You have really suffered the biggest disaster of the war by the rise in the food, cloth and other prices in this country. Therefore, the reply to this debate should not have been: "Never mind, if the unit of currency is one thousand millions. Is the Government to go on counting the currency figures or to conduct the war?" Is not this mere rhetoric? Will you lose the war if you looked after the currency statistics? On the contrary, if you do not look at the bloated currency expansion, you will lose the war. Therefore, your rhetorical expression that a Government responsible for the conduct of the war cannot go on watching the currency statistics is, in my humble opinion, a mere flourish and as an argument, absolutely bottomless and is indeed against the effective prosecution of the war. For these reasons, I beg the Government of India to apply their mind in carrying out the latest foodgrains policy and other controls into effective action without loss of any time because the time is heavily against you. Four hundred millions of the people of India are involved in the war and you must lower the prices, no amount of temporising and no amount of casuistry will do. The problem is far too tragic and far too important. It goes at the bottom of the war effort. All our publicity and all our National War Front work cannot carry any weight with the people who have to think of their food next morning. Children do not get their milk and the whole generation is getting stunted in growth and will be not A1 population but Z26 population.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member has already exceeded his time.

Mr. Jambadas M. Mehta: I shall conclude. Therefore, my submission to the Government on this Resolution which is already accepted is that the acceptance is only verbal, the argument being all against taking any action. The argument is that the Government is doing all that it can and that it is succeeding; this is a sad illusion. Government are not succeeding; they are failing every day. The profiteer goes scot-free and unless they arrest the progress of inflation and arrest the progress of the profiteers all their attempts will be a flea-bite against disaster which awaits this country. Sir, I support the Resolution.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee (Calcutta Suburbs: Non-Muhammadan Urban): Sir, I have full sympathy with the spirit of the Resolution which was moved by my Honourable friend, Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad, but unfortunately the Resolution was not very happily worded. So far as I know, my friend himself was not happy about the form of the Resolution and he wanted to move an amendment to his own Resolution which was not permitted by the Chair.

Now, Sir, what my Honourable friend really means is this that the Governor General in Council do modify their currency policy and to concentrate their attention on the stability of prices after bringing them down to the normal, and I do not think he insists very much on the stability of the bank rate of interest because that is somewhat irrelevant. If that be the real purport of his Resolution, I fully support it. More than a year ago, in the course of putting a question in this House, I asked the Honourable the Finance Member to guard against the inflationary tendencies which were manifesting themselves at the moment and I also told him that such safeguarding was being taken in other countries such as England and America against inflation. My Honourable friend at that moment thought that I was referring to the actual steps which were being taken in those countries. I was not referring to the actual steps which were being taken in the United States of America and England in order to guard against inflation, but my object was to invite his attention to the necessity for providing against inflation in this country in accordance with our own needs. Then, a few months ago, when the Finance Bill was under consideration, I discussed this question at considerable length and I pointed out that the sole cause of the phenomenal rise in prices was not currency inflation. On the other hand, I thought that the inter-connection between demand and supply was mainly responsible for it. And I also warned the Government against the expansion of currency

[Dr. P. N. Banerjea.]

which was going on and I warned the Government against what might take place in future and I mentioned the fate of the mark in Germany. The Honourable the Finance Member in reply said that he agreed with me to a very large extent and he had the goodness to compliment me on my views and he told us that he would take effective measures against inflation.

Shortly afterwards a number of economists headed by Professor Kale, an old friend of mine, wanted to issue a manifesto and a copy of this manifesto was sent to me for my signature as I was at one time a University Professor and a President of the Indian Economic Conference. Now, Sir, this manifesto appeared to me to be too theoretical and very one-sided and I did not sign it. In that manifesto, the authors placed too much emphasis on the currency side of the rise in prices and the remedies which they suggested were of the old orthodox type, namely, increased taxation and increased savings. Shortly afterwards I read in the papers that the Honourable the Finance Member took two steps, one relating to restriction on capital issues and the other relating to the excess profits tax. These two measures taken by themselves were quite unobjectionable, but they did not go far enough in my opinion. Subsequently he took other steps also of a somewhat modest character, namely, his attempt to check control of cloth prices. But I do not deny that the steps which he did take were in the right direction, but they did not go far enough. He was faced with this problem of how to finance the war purchases by Great Britain and the Allied Nations in this country. For that money was needed and where would this money come from? That would come from the expansion of currency. He was himself placed in a very difficult position and that was why he said that war effort of the Allied Nations should not be ignored altogether. But there were certain steps which he might have taken in order to overcome the fix of expansion of currency. The most important of these were greater production of goods for civilian consumption. That was a great need of the hour. That would have at once brought down the price level, at least the price level of goods consumed by the ordinary people and would have checked the inflationary tendencies.

Sir, it is known to everybody that inflation breeds inflation. Unless serious attempts are made to check inflation, it goes on from more to more. What do I find? In March last year, the amount of notes in circulation was somewhere about 550 crores. In August it amounted to nearly 700 crores and now it is nearly 780 crores. When it was put to him whether the expansion of currency had ceased, he said, no, the volume of currency expanded has not been reduced or ceased to expand, but the rate of expansion had decreased. But that is not enough. You should go further. You will have to take definite steps in order that within a reasonable period of time the prices should be brought down to the normal or something near normal, if not exactly normal and then the prices should not be allowed to go up higher. Now, Sir, for that purpose as I have already said, the first thing that is necessary is to increase the productivity of this country, production of industrial goods for civilian consumption and greater production of agricultural food grains and other products in order that starving people may be saved from death. These are the two most important suggestions which I have to make. Besides, I may suggest that if he wants money for financing the purchase of war materials by the Allied Nations, the sterling balances at London may be utilised for this purpose, by utilising them for buying up some of the capital assets in this country. Now, all these steps taken together would not only give immediate relief but would produce a new atmosphere and there will be a gradual downward tendency of the price level and the people of India will cease to starve and will cease to die of cold.

My Honourable friend being a Member of the Government of India has his responsibility for helping the war efforts of the Allied Nations. What I have suggested to him will not hamper his activities in that regard. If the sterling balances are utilised for the purpose mentioned by me, well, the war effort of the Allied Nations will not be hampered. If greater attention is devoted to

the production of goods for civilian consumption both on the manufacture and on the agricultural side, no greater impediment will occur in the progress of the war. Now, Sir, you all remember that this subject was discussed in the British Parliament a few days ago, and an economist of the calibre of Pethwick Lawrence said that inflation was one of the causes of the famine in Bengal. So, it will not do to ignore the effects of inflation altogether although I do maintain that inflation is not the sole cause of the present height to which prices have risen. But if you take the steps which I have mentioned, you will not only help the people to get food and other necessary articles, but you will be able at the same time to reduce inflation and guard against further flights of the currency which might reach the heights which were reached by the mark in Germany 25 years ago. Sir, my Honourable friend the Finance Member is not an unreasonable man. But it seems that his hands are tied. If his hands are tied, of course, he is helpless, but he should take courage in both hands and say that this is the way to save the country.

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: Sir, I would not have liked to participate in this debate but for the fact that there have been certain misstatements about the price position and the control position, and specially with reference to cloth. It is impossible for me to imitate the similes and metaphors of Mr. Jamnadas Mehta. Sometimes I feel that the best saying I have ever known is that of a Scotch poet who said:

"O, wad some power the giftie gie us,
To see oursel's as others see us."

I will leave the matter there. I will only say that the Department of Industries and Civil Supplies was made a separate department only about the end of April and therefore we had barely six months' time to tackle the cloth position of India as a whole. It is well known that at an earlier part of the year, even in April, May and June, the cloth position was as acute as the food position itself, and it was towards the end of June that we convened a conference of the provincial and State representatives to discuss the whole cloth position. We immediately took up the matter and we came to an agreement in consultation with the trade that, in the best interests of the consumers we should push on with the scheme of standard cloth. The industry had been putting forward for some time past that it would fall into line with Government in the production of standard cloth of the requisite quantity desired only if adequate and satisfactory arrangements to distribute it in the provinces could be made. We consulted the provinces and devised a scheme and the Provincial Governments and State representatives undertook to distribute it in as satisfactory a manner as local conditions permitted. After that, it is well known that we have been going on with the cloth control scheme and we insisted that all the quantity which was lying in stock with the dealers all over India should be unbated, and we stood firmly by that because we knew that in the interest of the consumer we must not allow any time to the dealers, —the dealers who had been saying only four months before that there was not sufficient stock in the country. Sir, it is now well known that at least about eight months of the total production of textiles in India was in the hands of dealers when there was cloth famine in the country. We gave about two months' time and we found that it was a physical impossibility to sell the entire quantity of eight months' production in the course of two months; and therefore we have allowed another two months to sell all this cloth. In the meantime we have placed orders with the mills for the production of standard cloth and its production has been going on.

It will be interesting to the House to know that within the last two months or so we have sent to the different provinces and States standard cloth to the extent of about 218 million yards. This has been distributed all over the provinces, and to quote only a few examples, U. P. has got over 31 million yards, Madras over 31 million yards, Bengal about 27 million yards, Bihar about 22 million yards, Assam a little over 8 million yards, and so on. This will show that we have been pressing for the quicker dispatch and production of standard cloth; and I believe Mr. Jamnadas Mehta will at least admit that we have also been able to bring before the public the stock which was lying

[Sir M. Azizul Huque.]

stocked with the dealers; and this distribution of 218 million yards of cloth throughout India has undoubtedly helped to ease the cloth situation, even though we would like much further progress to be made in this matter. There is one thing which should be realised, and that is that in economic life we have often to contend against human nature and against the elements at work. Matters which take some time to be completed cannot be done in the course of a few weeks. In any case all I am concerned with is that we have taken the step of distributing the standard cloth, and if Mr. Jamnadas Mehta had time in the last Session during which I informed the House that samples of standard cloth were on exhibit in one of the rooms of the Assembly Chamber, he would admit, as would be admitted by every one who saw the samples, that standard cloth was being sold at a comparatively much cheaper price in comparison with the prices raging at that time. Our aim is to distribute 2,000 million yards all through the year. We have already placed orders for the next six months of a thousand million yards which the mills are producing and we have been distributing as much as we could to the different provinces and States. But quite apart from that it is well known that at the inception we succeeded in fixing a ceiling price for certain kinds of cloth, *i.e.*, of certain counts and yarns; and thereafter we found that we had made some progress in the matter. At the last meeting of the Textile Control Board, it was decided to fix ceiling prices for all varieties of cloth and yarn in the market with effect from early next year. If we have succeeded in that I think it must be admitted that we have done something at least to ease the present situation, and we are constantly at work to find out what further steps may be taken. Not only that, we are fully cognisant of the fact that something should be done to supply yarn at cheap rates to the handloom industry; and since we have thought of this question we have decided to have a conference of all the provincial representatives about the end of this month at Madras, which is one of the largest handloom industrial areas, to see what steps should be taken for distribution of handloom yarn and what control, if possible, could be exercised over the price of handloom cloth. Quite apart from that we found that at the present moment there was nothing in the nature of a law to deal effectively with profiteers in any form. The House is aware that an Anti-Hoarding and Profiteering Ordinance has been promulgated; though it is not even a few weeks since this has been done we have already succeeded to this extent that only yesterday I was told that about 20 to 30 trade representatives met together at a certain place and decided among themselves that they should try their best to see that no profiteering was indulged in and that they keep within the limits of the profits which are laid down under the law or which may be specially permitted by the Controller General. It is too early for me to say what will be the result. The question affects the whole continent of India and the millions of people who are distributed all over India. But we have taken up the task and I can assure the House that we have taken it up with a view to keep a check over profiteering and to keep control over prices.

Apart from these two things the question of high prices of drugs and medicines are not only under active consideration, but I believe Honourable Members will be able to know in a few days the nature of the steps we are proposing to take to control the prices of drugs and medicines all over India on the same principle that we have been following in the case of cloth.

Apart from drugs, medicines and cloth, we have taken steps to get more consumers' goods into the country. We are trying our best to see that more of these goods are available and produced in the country, and I can assure the House that the question of high prices cannot be tackled solely at one end. You cannot deal with it, as was said by the Honourable the Finance Member, purely by hostility against the industrialists; you have to attack it on all fronts. And we have been trying for some time past to deal in this effective manner with all these problems, *i.e.*, not only the supply of consumers' goods, but the availability of more of these goods, better distribution arrangements, better supply of cloth, etc.

As regards food, the Honourable the Food Member will explain the position to the House when the matter is discussed, but we in the Industries and the Civil Supplies Department have been constantly watching to see that the position is eased. And I claim that at least so far as textiles are concerned, we have succeeded in bringing down prices, even though we would, like the prices to go very much further down. Economic factors, as I said before, depend on various circumstances. We have been tackling the position as best as we can, and I can assure the House that we in the department and its officers are determined to see that the price racket is stopped and that as soon as possible.

Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani (Tirhut Division: Muhammadan): Sir, the question of price of cloth has been introduced. In this connection I want to submit that on the one side it has been pointed out that an Ordinance has been passed against profiteering and also regulating and controlling the price of cloth. Subject to correction I say that the last day for clearing old stock of cloths was fixed as the 31st October last but has now been extended till December. The result is that whatever tendency had been shown by the cloth merchants in the reduction of the prices, now they have raised it to the exorbitant limits. They are openly saying: "Let us make as much profit as possible within the limited time at our disposal". This is because the time has been extended by the Government. I think this was not fair on the part of the Government. The attention of the Government was drawn during the last Session and they were asked not to extend the last date of clearance of the old stocks. But they paid no heed to those words. The result is that the poorer classes are suffering.

We have read in the press that an Ordinance has been issued to control the price of cloth—I have not seen the Ordinance myself—if so it is quite welcome. But we have a very sad experience of the controlling agencies. Unless they are put right all the efforts of the Government of India will be frustrated and what will remain will be a pious hope and nothing else. We find from our experience that corruption is rampant in every corner of the country—whether the management is in the hands of officials or non-officials, Indians or anyone else. Unless this is checked, no Ordinance will be of any help to the people.

I will say a word about the change of Government's currency policy also. On account of the absence of silver and gold coins the people in this country have got very little attraction for the slips of paper currency. It discourages people, and the purchasing price has been reduced. People going into the market with paper currency have to pay more than those carrying silver currency. There should be some satisfaction given to the public that there is some reserve at the back of currency papers. With these words I support the Resolution.

The Assembly then adjourned for Lunch till Half Past Two of the Clock.

The Assembly re-assembled after Lunch at Half Past Two of the Clock, Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang (one of the Panel of Chairmen) in the Chair.

Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali (Lucknow and Fyzabad Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): Sir, these Resolutions on the currency policy that are put before the House off and on are the result of the extreme trouble and difficulty which India is and has been experiencing not only now but for a long time past. You are, of course, unfortunately following the footsteps or the dictates from Home on the currency policy. We have objected to it several times, but the time has now come when we must raise our voice of protest very seriously and strongly about this currency policy of the Government. The Resolution has been moved because there is a lack of a centrally administered policy for the control of essential commodities. We all know that there is a great scarcity in this country now of essential commodities; not to speak of our food only which is the mainstay of every human being, there is also the scarcity of cloth, the scarcity of kerosene oil, the scarcity of fuel and the scarcity

[Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali.]

of everything imaginable which sustains the life of a human being. Under these conditions, if we come before this House and raise questions of currency policy, we submit that we ought to be heard more patiently and the Government should reconsider its currency policy. The country suffers and there is a likelihood of a crisis, just as we find today in Bengal, in other provinces too. It is not simply because there is not sufficient foodgrains in the country --we find some time back in this very House it was said that there was sufficient food to be found in this country; but the fact remains that there is not sufficient food and there is not sufficient cloth to cover ourselves. It will be a very serious affair if the crisis comes throughout the whole of India; and the Government will have perhaps no time to meet the crisis if it comes on suddenly. We ought to take some lessons from the conditions in Bengal and we ought to be prepared to consider again the currency policy of the Government of India. We find that an unworkable price control schedule has been fixed by the Government, but we know how it has been counteracted by the *bania* of the country and also by the Government contractors by hoarding and profiteering. Nobody can deny that there is hoarding by the *bania*, that there is hoarding by the military department, that there is hoarding by the contractors of the Government and that due to all this, we are in a fix now. In fact, if the Government arranges for regulated supplies and consumers receive sufficient supplies through effective control, then it is possible that the crisis on some occasions may be averted.

I find that in one of the speeches of Sir George Anderson recently made in the House of Commons—it is in every way instructive and Indian politicians and economists ought to take a lesson from that and I hope the Honourable the Finance Member will remember what Sir John Anderson said—he said:

“I sincerely believe we have reached the peak of inflationary prices which have been going on.”

If that is the statement of such a high authority in the House of Commons, how can it be denied here in India that we are not labouring under very serious inflationary evils?

I also hold that there are not sufficient consumers goods nor capital goods that can be imported for their manufacture; therefore in future we ought to be more careful about the crisis which may come. Unfortunately if prices in future will not decline and the present condition is as it is, how are we going to manage the government of this country, and how can we hold that there is no inflationary profiteering going on in this country? In the markets, at least in my own province, if I go with a rupee in my hand and want to buy grain, we get not more than 4 seers for a silver rupee

An Honourable Member: Five seers?

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra (Presidency Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Where do you get 5 seers?

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: Five seers for a silver rupee.

Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali: If I go with small change in my hand, I get not even four seers. Every one knows that in the U. P. there is such a scarcity of small coin that it is absolutely impossible, not only in the urban areas but also in the agricultural areas and small towns, to have a two-pice coin or an anna coin or a two-anna coin. It is absolutely impossible to get any change and so any grain in the market. If I tender a rupee note, they will never give me more than 2½ seers of grain. Under these conditions, what more proof do you want that inflationary conditions are prevailing in India? These are very serious conditions and circumstances. The Government has not fixed any purchasing power for this our rupee by any executive order or Ordinance. I ask why? Is it the policy of the Government that the present conditions should prevail and remain as they are? Government ought to fix at least some purchasing power for the present rupee so that the present conditions may not continue. At the same time we find that there is no metallic reserve for all the paper currency that is existing in India. There are 780 crores of currency notes at present circulating in India, whereas we have only

44 crores worth of gold to back that paper currency. Nobody knows where the stock of gold is or where the stock of silver is, to back this currency. In these circumstances what are we to do except to bring to the notice of the Assembly that the country is in a very serious condition, that a crisis may come any day, not only because of no metallic background, but also for the other reasons which I have just placed before the House? We all know that prices are going up higher and higher from day to day, and to say that the prices are declining—I submit that it is not to the knowledge of the people of this country, though it may be to the knowledge of the officials of the Government. In the Resolution it is stated, "more on the stability of prices than on the stability of the bank rate of interest". If the Government is trying to stabilise the bank note, then the Government ought to know that the poor people of this country have not enough money to put in the bank so that stabilisation of these bank notes can make any difference. But stabilization of the purchasing power of the rupee is more necessary. Of course, in the eyes of the Government bank notes may be of very great value, but to the people of this country, to the people at large, the bank note is only a paper. If anybody can come with me to the United Provinces I can show him that the villager does not attach any great importance to the value of the note at all. These bank notes have not the face value even which is fixed by the Government. With these words I support the Resolution.

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi (Dacca cum Mymensingh: Muhammadan Rural): I would make only a few observations with regard to this Resolution. I would confine myself to the first part of the Resolution which says:

"That this Assembly recommends to the Governor General in Council to modify their currency policy and to concentrate more on the stability of prices"

Sir, that there is inflation everybody admits, I believe, Government too. I listened with very great interest to the speech of my Honourable friend, Mr. Jamnadas Mehta. He charges the Government of India with this, that, although the Finance Member said several times on the floor of this House that every step was being taken and had been taken to reduce the prices of commodities which are required for civilian use, my Honourable friend thinks that nothing has been done in this respect except making speeches on the floor of this House and making various statements. I myself do not think that they have done nothing, but I feel that they have done things which will never reduce the prices. I will tell you why. The whole trouble is our sterling balances in London. Unless you devise means to absorb those sterling balances which are in our favour in London, nothing else on earth will give you that result which you and I and every one else want, namely, a reduction of the prices of commodities. Now, Sir, I will give a few figures. These I have obtained from the Government publications. Index numbers of wholesale prices in Calcutta were in June 1940, 114; June 1941, 137; June 1942, 182; June 1943, 319; and September 1943, 343. Look at the rapid rise in prices of the commodities. The Reserve Bank of India agrees with what I am saying now.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: In Great Britain it is 122.

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: These rapid and general upward movements in prices are an inevitable reflection of the economic and monetary situation in this country. The growing scarcity of consumers and producers goods available for civilian use and the expansion of money and supplies both arising in the process of diversion of resources to war services—this is, as I said, confirmed by the Reserve Bank of India report for the year 1942-43. What is the root cause of the inflation? Everybody says and I think it is agreed, that it lies at the door of Government's policy both in regard to monetary as well as production aspects. The fundamental problem lies rooted in the ever-growing accumulation of the huge sterling balances in London. The effective disposal of that alone can lead to a right and proper solution of inflation in this country. A large amount of expenditure is incurred in India on behalf of the British and other allied Governments in rupees, and with the

[Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi.]

development of the reverse lend-lease or lease-lend the expense of maintaining the American army also involves larger disbursements of rupees by the Government of India. The rupee finance required for all these is first found by the Government of India. In respect of India's exports and His Majesty's British Government's purchases in India not only on their behalf but on behalf of other Allied Governments, India as a return has obtained credits in sterling in London. While sterling thus goes on accumulating to the credit of the country in London, it is all the time a continuing process of increasing note circulation in this country. That is the problem. The whole problem is the problem of these sterling balances in London, and it is going on day to day increasing. Although it would be argued—and this is the argument which Government makes—that legally India's note circulation is amply covered, in fact more than amply covered, it is not realised that receipt of sterling by India is responsible for the ever-increasing note circulation in this country and logically therefore these very sterling balances should be utilised in such a way that the utilisation involves withdrawal of note circulation from the country.

How is that to be done. The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry have repeatedly urged upon the Government that the sterling balances should be utilised in such a way that it would prove beneficial to the country's economy, at present, in the immediate future as well as in the long term. Part of the solution of the inflationary situation in the country lies in her using the sterling balances in the same manner as other Governments have used them or would use them.

If the Government of India had insisted to purchase investments of British nationals in Indian industries, against the sterling credits that had been accumulating, these investments would have been purchased by the Indians in the country and thereby the contraction of currency would have been automatically provided for. Such a policy, if pursued in a manner to achieve a gradual disinvestment of British investment in the country, would have ensured stability of commodity prices, as well as the stabilisation of India's finances. This was and still is the most effective cure against the evil effect of the inflationary tendencies in the country caused by the processes of British and Allied purchases of Indian goods.

I would mention that even in the House of Commons Mr. Pethick Lawrence said that the Government of India is responsible for inflation, as everyone knows. That is the aspect I want to place before this House. The inflation is there and is admitted and unless you can absorb the sterling balances, which are in our favour in London, in such a manner as to reduce the circulation of notes, you will never be able to achieve the object, namely, the reduction of the price.

Mr. Chairman (Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang): I understand there is an agreed amendment to this motion.

Mr. Muhammad Hussain Chowdhury (Bakarganj cum Faridpur: Muhamadnan Rural): Sir, I move:

"That for the original Resolution the following be substituted:

"That this Assembly recommends to the Governor General in Council to give foremost place in the monetary policy to the stabilization of prices on which the prosperity of the country largely depends."

Mr. Chairman (Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang): Amendment moved:

"That for the original Resolution the following be substituted:

"That this Assembly recommends to the Governor General in Council to give foremost place in the monetary policy to the stabilization of prices on which the prosperity of the country largely depends."

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: Before I touch on other points, I would like to say a few words about Mr. Jamnadas Mehta, who has left the Opposition Benches and has now become a camp follower of the Treasury Benches.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: You may console yourself for your ignorance by that statement.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: I am not accustomed to harsh language. I will just quote a few sentences from my speech to which he referred, which he quoted or rather misquoted. I said in 1931 that the prices were very low, too low and we had to raise that. The prices at the present moment are too high, and we have to lower them. Later on I said very clearly that the price should be fixed at not more than 50 per cent. of the prices in 1939-40. That is, prices should in no case be allowed to go beyond 50 per cent. higher than they were before the war in 1939 and on this basis, I said that Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar fixed the price of wheat at Rs. 4-10 a maund, which is about 50 per cent. higher than the price which prevailed in 1939.

Now, my friend Mr. Mehta gave us to understand that he read the speech very carefully. But he misrepresented, or he misunderstood it. This reminds me of the statement made by a member of the House of Parliament 'I can give my friend the argument but I cannot supply him with the brain to appreciate and understand it'. This is not the only occasion when he has misread and misrepresented the views expressed from this side of the House, either intentionally or otherwise. It has become a habit with him, a habit that has been unfortunately created on account of the flattery of the Treasury Benches of which he has now become a camp follower. Therefore I leave him alone.

I will tell my friend another thing. I challenged him as an economist to define inflation. I said that when you talk of inflation there must be a border line which is the starting point. Anything above that must be called inflation and anything below that would be deflation. The border line may shift with the change of conditions. Let us say that 300 crores is the border line. Anything above 300 will be inflation. 301 will be inflation, and 299 will be deflation. Then I could have understood him but he did not care to understand and entirely misrepresented what I said. Then the other thing to which I drew attention on page 684 was this. I don't know whether he read it really or simply pretended to have read it. I said that inflation does not depend upon the quantum of the currency notes. It depends upon the velocity with which they are circulated and I said on that occasion that the speed of circulation in 1939 was 16.7, and now it is only 5. This really means that there are a large number of persons who have been hoarding these currency notes. This we know definitely that the hoarding of

3 P M. currency notes is a very common thing nowadays. I think everybody understands that there is a good deal of corruption at present all round and those persons who got these currency notes not by the front door but by the back door will hide them from the Income-tax officer also. So, they do not like to deposit them in the bank lest they may be found out. They keep these notes in the stock and hoard them in the same manner as some other people hoard grains or metallic coins. So, when you talk of currency notes in circulation, you must deduct the quantum of those notes which have been hoarded by these persons. The number of notes which are hoarded can be calculated by the velocity in circulation. If the velocity of circulation of notes is small, then currency notes must have been frozen somewhere. My Honourable friend, Mr. Mehta, poses himself to be very good at calculation except that he forgets the three zeros whenever he gives his figures. He ought to tell us by finding out the speed of circulation as to how many currency notes have now been frozen and were put out of circulation by those persons who acquired them in an illicit manner. This is a thing which I expected from him as an economist to calculate and comment. If he can find out the number of these frozen notes, then he will find that number of notes in circulation will be reduced to a figure which he will not call inflation. I have repeatedly challenged him and I challenge him again today that the word 'inflation' is really used by economists without understanding. Whenever you use the word 'inflation', you must define it and you must fix a

[Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad.]

limit which is neither inflation or deflation. Everybody knows that a unit in such matters cannot be defined. They do not define the limit but they talk of inflation simply to find an excuse for raising the prices. Those persons who desire to raise the prices always talk of inflation and give it a reason for increasing the prices. This is really a device which good many industrialists and good many merchants use and they always hire out the economists to support their views.

Now, Sir, I come to my Resolution. This Resolution which I have moved stood in the name of Mr. Ahsan. At that time I wanted to move an amendment but as I took it up I was not allowed to do so. Of course, I would like to put the amendment in the form in which now my Honourable friend, Mr. Piracha, has given notice. Now, there is no doubt that there is a depreciation of the rupee. The rupee now has not got the same purchasing power and I appeal to the Finance Member that it should be his first business to raise the purchasing power of the rupee and attempt to bring it at par, or at least not beyond 50 per cent. to what it was before the war. The wage of a labourer is thermometer by which purchasing power of a rupee can be judged. The wage of a labourer before the war, at least in my part of the country, was 5 annas per day; it is now Rs. 1-8 per day. Therefore, it means that 5 annas before the war is practically equivalent to Rs. 1-8 at the present moment. This really means that at least the value of a rupee has now been depreciated to about 4 annas or less. It was 6 annas when we discussed this Resolution last time and it has now been further reduced to 4 annas. I think it is the responsibility of the Finance Department of the Government of India to see that the paper currency which they are now using should be maintained at its proper level and should have definite and stabilised purchasing power. When in the original motion we put down the bank notes, it really meant on this because the bank notes determine the value of Government securities. I lent to the Government of India Rs. 100 about 5 years ago when that amount had a certain purchasing power. If I get back my Rs. 100 today, then I will get them in terms of paper notes and their purchasing power will really be that of Rs. 25. So, the Government securities have been depreciated by 75 per cent. and the value of a hundred rupee security is now only Rs. 25. This is what I meant when I said that the bank rate of interest should be set aside and we must concentrate our attention on the stabilisation of prices. We said on the previous occasion and it has not been challenged by anybody that at present the security of the paper rupee is the prestige of the Government. It is not the metallic reserve or anything else which used to be at one time. Therefore, if the purchasing power of paper rupee diminishes, then it really means that the prestige of the Government also diminishes proportionately. Of course, the law of mathematical proportion does not apply to this because there are so many other factors to be taken into consideration. Therefore, in order to maintain the financial prestige of the Government it is the duty of the Finance Department to see that the purchasing power of the rupee remains approximately the same as it was before the war. The maximum that could be allowed is 50 per cent. higher and nothing beyond.

I will discuss in detail when I have no time-limit that even your food problem cannot be solved without stabilising the purchasing power of the rupee. It was mentioned by several speakers here that the purchasing power of the silver rupee is quite different to the purchasing power of the paper rupee or of small coins. That is our repeated experience of every day. Supposing you want to purchase something worth Rs. 1,000. If you pay the amount in terms of silver rupees, the price will be Rs. 1,000, but if you pay the amount in terms of paper money, the price will be Rs. 1,500. The price goes down if you assure the man who sells the article that he will be paid in terms of silver and not in terms of paper money.

There is one point which I would like to make quite clear as there is a good deal of misunderstanding amongst the statesmen both here and in Europe. I have heard and read that some people are under the misapprehension that the recruitment for the army depends upon the high prices. Now, I agree with the Finance Member that at present our war efforts must take the priority to every other problem. But if you overlook the stability of your rupee, then the war effort will also suffer and in this way. At present the labourer who used to get 5 annas a day is getting Rs. 1-8 a day and he does not like to go to the front and leave his home and family unless he gets much more than what he is getting as a labourer. If my Honourable friend will inquire from the Recruiting Officers he will find that the recruitment is not going on in the same proportion as it used to be about some months ago. It is not on account of the fact that those people who wanted to go to war have already gone, but it is due to the fact that they can earn almost the same amount at home which they would earn by going to war.

Now, I implore the Honourable the Finance Member that for stabilising the prices or for fixing the purchasing power of the rupee the first step he should take is to ask America to give gold and silver to India under lend-lease system. We ought to make some kind of arrangement that for every paper rupee, we should be able to give one tola of silver. Then, as soon as this thing can be done, people will come to know that they can get silver for a paper rupee and confidence will be restored. We heard a good account from the Honourable the Commerce Member this morning about cloth, though of course the reply given by the Food Member was disappointing. Our position as regards food will still remain the same unless the value of the paper rupee is stabilised and some effective steps are taken.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Sir, the learned Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad made a personal attack on me. I wish to give a reply.

Mr. Chairman (Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang): The Honourable Member, Mr. Jamnadas Mehta, made certain remarks in the course of his speech this morning and it was only with reference to them that Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad replied.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: But he did not quote his own speech correctly.

Mr. Chairman (Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang): I will not allow the Honourable Member to reply.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: Sir, I wish to make just a few remarks on what has been said in the course of this debate and in particular, I should like to define the attitude of the Government to the revised Resolution. In speaking the other day in response to the desire of this House that I should speak early, in speaking on the Resolution as it then stood, I deliberately refrained from dealing with the question of the rate of interest, what was called the bank rate. I presume that what was meant was the rate of interest on Government borrowings. I did not deal with that aspect of the matter because I understood that it was the desire of the Honourable the Mover of the Resolution to put his motion in a different form, in the form in fact in which it has now been embodied in the amendment. I feel it important to make it clear that the Government's policy in regard to the rate of interest on Government borrowings is quite definite and deliberate and that they have no intention of departing from that policy. It is a policy which has been vigorously criticised in certain quarters, but which on the whole, I think, has the overwhelming support of the majority of opinion in this country. I need not go into details of why it would be highly undesirable to depart suddenly from the cheap money policy which we have followed hitherto. We should of course thereby be inflicting very heavy loss on the investors, and particularly the institutional investors who have been our main customers for Government loans. We should be inflicting loss on insurance companies who represent the interest of large numbers of small investors. A sharp increase in the rate of interest would mean

[Sir Jeremy Raisman.]

that the value of their investments would go down and would have to be written off in their balance sheets at this time. That is hardly a gesture which is likely to encourage increased lending to Government, which is agreed on all hands to be one of the most important remedies for the existing situation. Besides, the policy of increasing the rate of interest is not even likely to secure the object of attracting more borrowings. It has been found as a psychological fact that if the securities market gets the impression that the rates of interest are likely to rise, investors are at least as likely to hold off as to come forward, in fact they are more likely to hold off, and in that respect the position is very similar to the situation in regard to food prices. We have always found that while food prices are rising, it is extremely difficult to procure our requirements and in order to procure food, you must either maintain a stability or preferably a downward movement in prices. It is paradoxically enough at times when prices are falling, that stocks come out of hoards for sale, and an exactly similar process takes place in regard to purchase of Government securities. I will not labour that point further, but I thought it important to make it quite clear what the policy of the Government is in regard to the only rate of interest which is directly relevant to this discussion, namely the rate of interest on Government borrowings. I need only add that in regard to securities which are specially devised to attract the small saver, there is, of course, some departure from that policy, and slightly more advantageous rates of interest are offered in order to attract the small man. But that is not a contradiction or a serious departure from the general policy.

I feel that I too must have a word or two to say about some of the observations of my Honourable friend, Mr. Jamnadas Mehta, and I take leave to support my Honourable friend, Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad, in deprecating the extremely cavalier and arbitrary way in which Mr. Jamnadas Mehta regularly handles statements of other Members of this House. He complimented me on my skill in some field or other, but I could never hope to emulate the incredible dexterity with which he handles the astronomical figures which he manages to produce out of his hat. He managed to establish by a process of complete and absolutely irrefutable mathematical argument that this country had been called on to supply 18,000 crores of rupees worth of goods and services. Well, I am very glad to feel that we have done better than the United States of America or Great Britain or any of the wealthiest belligerents in the world. At the same time, I would ask Mr. Jamnadas Mehta to endeavour to import some sense of ordinary proportion into his handling of figures of this kind. I do not wish to make a rhetorical or debating point, but I do think that Mr. Mehta permits himself a good deal more liberty or even licence than he would be prepared to admit to any of the other participants in a debate of this kind.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: I am more moderate. I assure you the figures are much larger.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: It is surely a very large figure, in the absolute. Eighteen thousand crores of rupees reduced to millions is 180,000 millions, that is to say it is 180 billions. Now if we put it into dollars it is about 60 billion dollars.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: If you reduce it to annas or pies, it might be much more, 60,000 billions.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: I do suggest that as the figures increase in quantity they seem to get more and more remote from any reality in which we can possibly be interested. Now it is not part of my contention to say that this country has not been called upon to make extremely large contributions in the way of goods and services to this war, and it is quite clear that the process which has been taking place is that in return for these goods we have received money which at the present time we are unable to use. We are

unable to use that money because the outside world is so engaged, as we are, in the prosecution of the war that they cannot pay us in the goods which we would like to receive. We have the utmost difficulty in obtaining either capital goods or consumer goods. There is nothing mysterious about the process. What has been happening is that goods and services for civilian consumption have grown less whereas the money which could buy these goods and services has grown greater. It is a process which really is very easy to understand. For the time being large sums of money are available for consumption spending but goods are not available for the same process. And that is why I have always agreed with my Honourable friend, Dr. Banerjea's diagnosis of the situation. It seems to me that you have to take both aspects into account. It is equally wrong to say either that the situation arises merely out of scarcity of goods or to say on the other hand that nothing else is the matter excepting the inflation of currency. It is a combination of both these processes, and that suggests that the appropriate method of treatment is a treatment which applies to both aspects. You have to apply monetary remedies; you have to try and reduce the amount of money in circulation by taxation and borrowing and at the same time you have to try, as far as possible, to increase the quantity of goods available for consumption. Or, if you cannot do that, you have to try and control the prices at which these goods are sold. Well, control of commodities in the conditions of India has, as might have been expected, proved extraordinarily difficult, and particularly in regard to the main commodity, food. I hope we are making progress even in regard to the treatment of that highly intractable problem. We have at the last Food Conference secured a remarkable degree of unanimity of view about the policy that should be followed in regard to price control of food; but of course we still are in the dangerous position that the province which produces the largest surplus of food regards the whole idea of controlling the price of food as anathema. It is no use disguising or hiding the fact that that is one of the most serious and fatal weaknesses of the whole position in India. Unless the province which is the main producer and supplier of surplus food to the rest of India can take a larger and wider view of its responsibilities, unless it ceases to pursue the idea that as the intensity of distress and demand increases, so the price which it can exact shall advance,—until that stops we are faced with an extremely great difficulty in dealing with the situation. It is a difficulty internal to the country and it can only be overcome, or rather, an alternative remedy can only be sought by going elsewhere for the supplies of food for distressed areas,—an extremely tragic diversion of resources and a most lamentable state of affairs. This is not the proper time to go in any detail into the food position, but I am merely making clear the attitude of the Government of India in regard to the inflationary problem, because the food problem and inflation are very closely connected. You will never solve the inflationary problem if you cannot do anything about food, because food underlies the whole price structure of the country; and you may as well try to erect a castle without having a foundation. You cannot deal with the food problem also unless you can control inflation. The two things are really two aspects of the same problem; but you can attempt to tackle both simultaneously; and that is what the Government of India to the best of their ability have been trying to do.

Now, Sir, Dr. Banerjea quite rightly drew attention to the immense importance of production of goods, and it is quite clear that if the production of goods could be stepped up to the requisite degree you would not have a currency or a price problem in the country. But here again you are faced with the fact that the rest of the world is at war, and although you have foreign exchange to purchase the instruments of production, money alone will not now buy them. They are not available because they are not being produced at the present time. The productive forces of the world are engaged in producing guns, tanks, aeroplanes, and so on, and not in producing factory plants or even agricultural implements. If all those resources which are necessary to step up production in India to the requisite level were available inside India, then the Government of India would indeed stand condemned for their failure to increase production

[Sir Jeremy Raisman.]

at the present time. It is true that there are still large resources of untapped labour and in some respects there may still be considerable resources of raw material, but we have not got all the tools that we require to finish that job; we have not got all the instruments of production in the country, and those instruments which are here are already fully employed.

• It may be asked, what then? Does that mean that we must submit to the continuance of the intensification of scarcity of the present kind? I say, no. I think relief will come in two ways: it will come by some expansion of production in the country even during the existing difficulties; and the Government of India are continually on the alert to promote and assist such expansion wherever possible. It would also come, we may hope, by some increase in the shipping which can be allotted to India in the further stages of the war. And, finally, I must admit that we have to attempt now, even to some extent at the expense of India's war effort, to switch back the productive resources of the country to supplying the clamant needs of the consumer. We realize that. The Government of India realize that a stage has been reached at which the needs of the home front have become extremely important, at which the internal economy of the country must be preserved; that we must cater for it and that, in fact, we could not go further without endangering even the war effort. That position is realized. The situation is very different from what it was in the earlier days when there were surpluses of various kinds available which could be rapidly switched over to meet military demands. The position now is that we have reached a stage at which, in order to maintain the war effort of the country, it is necessary to cater for civilian requirements. Otherwise the civilian morale will undoubtedly suffer. These are considerations which are very present to the mind of the Government of India. But on the other hand, I would ask critics to realize that there are many factors which are beyond our control. There are many factors which we cannot even estimate. We here cannot estimate the comparative importance of diverting goods and shipping from other parts of the world to India or to some other sector of the war effort. It is natural that we should always claim that our demands and our requirements are so serious that they should be given priority. We do claim that. Some day when the history of this war comes to be written, it will be found that the Government of India have been clamouring months ahead of most of its critics for all the things which its critics said it should have insisted on getting. But the necessities of the whole world situation and the necessities of the prosecution of the war can only be truly judged by those who are familiar with the picture on all sides, and one of the problems of this war has been so to organize the United Nation's effort that the knowledge of these things is brought together in a single point. As a member of the United Nations we have as loyally as we can to accept the decisions which are taken at a very high level. But we continue to press our demands for the requirements of the civilian consumer of this country and we do hope that we shall be able to produce a very marked improvement in the situation. That, I think, will be a great contribution to dealing with this very important problem.

For the rest, on the monetary side, I may say that the response to Government loans in the last few months has been most encouraging and that if the volume of loans to Government continues at that rate, we are far from taking a discouraging view of the matter. The small savings campaign in the provinces has also had an exceedingly favourable response and we hope to develop that and intensify the drive. I must differ entirely on that point from my friend, Mr. Jammadas Mehta, who always seems to think that there is no scope whatever for securing savings from the small man. There are many competent economists who hold that unless you can secure the savings from the small man you cannot deal with inflation. It is precisely the purchasing power in the hands of the small consumer which exerts a disastrous effect on prices. The large profiteer is capable of putting his money aside, of investing it in various ways

and waiting till after the war, but the small man is liable to try and turn his money into consumption goods as soon as he can, and that is why a savings drive amongst cultivators and even industrial workers is of the utmost importance.

I did not mean to traverse the whole field again, but merely to touch on a few aspects of the various fronts on which we are trying to tackle this problem. I will only say that I have no difficulty whatever in accepting the Resolution as amended.

Mr. Chairman (Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang) The question is:

"That for the original Resolution the following be substituted:

"That this Assembly recommends to the Governor General in Council to give foremost place in the monetary policy to the stabilization of prices on which the prosperity of the country largely depends."

The motion was adopted.

Mr. Chairman (Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang): The next Resolution on the agenda stands in the name of Nawab Makhdum Murid Hossain Qureshi. Has he authorized any other Member to move it on his behalf?

An Honourable Member: No, Sir,

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra (Presidency Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): I am not moving the Resolution which stands in my name because it is in connection with the food situation in Bengal.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai (Sind: Non-Muhammadan Rural): I am not moving the next Resolution which is in my name.

Mr. K. C. Neogy (Dacca Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): I am not moving, either.

Mr. Muhammad Ashar Ali (Lucknow and Fyzabad Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): I am not moving today.

Mr. Chairman (Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang): Are you moving the next Resolution, Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi?

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi (Dacca cum Mymensingh: Muhammadan Rural): No, Sir.

STATEMENT OF BUSINESS.

The Honourable Sir Sultan Ahmed (Leader of the House): Sir, we had proposed to allot Friday and Saturday in this week for the general debate on the food situation and to include all the Government legislative business of the Session in a combined list of business for Monday to Thursday next week. Now that we have agreed to allot three days for the Food debate we would have proposed to allot Friday, Saturday and Monday for the same and to take the legislative business on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday next week. We have however, been informed of a desire in certain quarters that Saturday should not be one of the days allotted for the food debate and in deference to this desire we are prepared to put down the food debate for Friday, Monday and Tuesday and to take part of the legislative business on Saturday. This involves one complication, namely, that the Honourable the Commerce Member has an important engagement on Saturday which will preclude his presence in the House with the result that we will not be in a position to put down the Tea Control (Amendment) Bill or the Indian Companies (Amendment) Bill on that day. The other three Bills introduced yesterday (the Bill to amend the Victoria Memorial Act, the Bill to amend the Indian Trade Unions Act and the Code of Criminal Procedure (Second Amendment Bill) can scarcely occupy the whole day and we, therefore, propose to include in the list of business for Saturday the consideration and passing of the Bill to make provision for appeals in criminal cases tried by High Courts exercising original criminal jurisdiction and of the Bill to amend the Code of Criminal Procedure in the matter of commissions on both of which Bills the Report of the Select Committee was presented yesterday. These Bills are not controversial and in consideration of our having

[Sir Sultan Ahmed.]

adjusted our programme to meet the convenience of the House we would ask for an understanding that no objection will be taken to their consideration before the expiration of the seven-day period referred to in Standing Order 44.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta (Bombay Central Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Will the change in programme mean extension of the Session?

The Honourable Sir Sultan Ahmed: No.

Mr. Chairman (Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang): May I take it that the House agrees to this programme?

Some Honourable Members: Yes, yes.

The Assembly then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Wednesday, the 10th November, 1943.