

15th November 1943

THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY DEBATES

Official Report

Volume IV, 1943

(8th to 19th November, 1943)

NINETEENTH SESSION OF THE FIFTH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, 1943



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

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Sardar SANT SINGH, M.L.A.

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

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Monday, 15th 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.

MEMBERS SWORN:

- Mr. Wilfred Howard Kirby, M.L.A. (Government of India: Nominated Official);
Mr. Robert Howell Hutchings, C.M.G., C.I.E., M.L.A. (Secretary, Food Department).

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): As regards questions in today's list I ought to inform Honourable Members that if any one of them wants that the answers to his questions should be printed and the questions to be treated as unstarred, the proper course for him would be to inform the office that he wants his questions to be treated as unstarred. If any Member who is present in the House says that he will not put his question, that question will be treated as withdrawn and no answer will be printed. I think the best course in the circumstances would be, as some Honourable Members may not have been aware of the practice, to let any Member who wishes to put his question do so. I will therefore call the questions in order and let any Member put his question who wants to do so.

STARRED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

(a) ORAL ANSWERS.

INDIAN CHRISTIANS SERVING IN THE ARMY, NAVY AND AIR FORCE.

160. ***Mr. S. C. Chatterji**: Will the War Secretary please state:

(a) the total number of Indian Christians of all ranks in His Majesty's Indian Land Forces, the Royal Indian Navy and the Indian Air Force, separately, in September, 1939, and September, 1943;

(b) the total number of Indian Christian Commissioned Officers in the Indian Land Forces, the Royal Indian Navy and the Indian Air Force, separately, in September, 1939, and September, 1943;

(c) the total number of Indian Christian non-commissioned officers in the Indian Land Forces, the Royal Indian Navy and the Indian Air Force, separately, in September, 1939, and September, 1943; and

(d) the total number of Indian Christian Commissioned Officers, non-commissioned officers and other ranks in the Civil Pioneer Force in September, 1939, and September, 1943?

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: (a) to (c). The number of Christian Viceroy's Commissioned Officers, Indian Other Ranks and enrolled non-combatants in the Indian Army on the 1st September, 1943, was more than 30 times as great as it was on the 1st January, 1940. It would not be in the public interest to give the actual total on either date.

No figures for Indian Christian officers in the Indian Army, and no figures for Indian Christians of any ranks in the Royal Indian Navy or the Indian Air Force are available, nor could such figures be obtained without an expenditure of time and labour which would be unjustifiable in war-time. The Honourable Member will, however, realize from what I have said that the number of Indian Christians in His Majesty's Indian Forces has enormously increased since the outbreak of war.

(d) This question should have been addressed to the Honourable the Labour Member.

FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS OF INDIA IN RESPECT OF OPERATIONS OF THE EAST ASIA COMMAND.

161. *Khan Bahadur Mian Ghulam Kadir Muhammad Shahban: (a) Will the Honourable the Finance Member be pleased to state what India's financial obligations are over the forthcoming operations connected with the East Asia Command against Japan?

(b) Will India be reimbursed if the cost of operations is met from her exchequer?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: I would invite the Honourable Member's attention to my reply to Sardar Mangal Singh's question No. 73 given on the 10th November, 1948.

INDIANS AS STAFF OFFICERS IN GENERAL HEADQUARTERS.

162. *Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: With reference to my starred question No. 158 about Indians as Staff Officers in different Branches of the General Headquarters, answered on the 3rd August, 1948, will the War Secretary please state:

(a) the details of the percentage 9·81 given in his answer of Indian to British officers employed in the various Branches and Directorates, referred to by me in the question, separately;

(b) the details of the percentage given in his answer of 18 Indian to 100 British officers holding graded staff appointments;

(c) the reasons why there was such a low percentage as 2·23 in 1940 and why the percentage could not be more than 9·81 in spite of the facts that the army has considerably expanded and the staff of the General Headquarters has also increased; and

(d) how many of the percentage of Indians given in (a) and (c) above are Anglo-Indians and non Anglo-Indians; or what the percentage is of Anglo-Indians and non-Anglo-Indians?

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: (a) (i) General Staff Branch:—

(1) Military Operations Directorate—2·7 per cent.

(2) Military Intelligence Directorate—3·57 per cent.

(3) Military Training Directorate—2·27 per cent.

(ii) Adjutant General's Branch—14·25 per cent.

(iii) Quartermaster General's Branch—12·5 per cent.

(iv) Master General of the Ordnance Branch—11·76 per cent.

(b) (i) General Staff Branch:

(1) Military Operations Directorate—2·85 per cent.

(2) Military Intelligence Directorate—7·52 per cent.

(3) Military Training Directorate—Nil.

(ii) Adjutant General's Branch—2·45 per cent.

(iii) Quartermaster General's Branch—3·18 per cent.

(iv) Master General of the Ordnance Branch—1·99 per cent.

(c) In 1940 the percentage of Indians was limited by the number of available officers with staff training and the same reason is applicable to-day, though, as the Honourable Member will doubtless notice, the position has considerably improved and will continue to improve as more Indian Staff trained officers become available.

(d) None are Anglo-Indians.

GRANT OF KING'S COMMISSION TO V. C. O's.

163. *Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: With reference to the answer to my question No. 160 relating to the grant of King's Commissions to V.C.Os., will the War Secretary please state how many of the numbers supplied to me in his reply were Anglo-Indians and Indians, separately?

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: The information required is not readily available especially with regard to the earlier appointments and the time and labour involved in collecting it would not be justifiable in war-time. It can be said, however, that of the Viceroy's Commissioned Officers granted emergency commissions between the 12th December, 1940, and the 15th July, 1948, not more than three are Anglo-Indians. One is an Anglo-Burman.

PERCENTAGE OF AND QUALIFICATIONS FOR MUSLIM RECRUITMENT IN THE CENTRAL EXCISES AND SALT REVENUES, WESTERN DIVISION.

164. *Nawab Siddique Ali Khan (on behalf of **Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi**): (a) Will the Honourable the Finance Member please state if it is or it is not a fact that since the extension of the Central Excises and Salt Revenues North Eastern India, Western Division, the ratio of Muslims to be recruited has been fixed at 50 per cent. in various grades? If not, what is the correct percentage?

(b) Is it or is it not a fact that Muslim candidates for appointment to the posts of Inspectors and Upper Grade clerks must be graduates, while Muslim candidates for the posts of Supervisors and clerks must have passed the Matriculation Examination, and no minimum qualification is prescribed for the superior establishment?

(c) Is it or is it not a fact that candidates for the posts mentioned in (b) above are selected by the Assistant Collector, Western Division, either directly or are recommended by him to the Collector and that the Collector does not select the candidates directly as a matter of practice?

(d) Is it or is it not a fact that generally the Assistant Collector selects the candidates after a short interview? If not, what is the method adopted?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: With your permission Sir, I will reply to questions Nos. 164, 165, 166 and 167 together.

The information has been called for and will be laid on the table of the House in due course.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATION FOR RECRUITMENT OF HINDUS AS LOWER GRADE CLERKS IN THE CENTRAL EXCISES AND SALT REVENUES, WESTERN DIVISION.

†165. *Nawab Siddique Ali Khan (on behalf of **Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi**): (a) Will the Honourable the Finance Member please state if it is or it is not a fact that the minimum qualifications for a Hindu for appointment as a lower grade clerk is that he must be a graduate?

(b) Is it or is it not a fact that many Hindus have been recruited to these posts in the Western Division, Central Excises and Salt Revenues, who are only undergraduates? If not, what are the facts?

MINIMUM QUALIFICATION FOR RECRUITMENT OF CANDIDATES AS UPPER DIVISION CLERKS IN THE CENTRAL EXCISES AND SALT REVENUES, WESTERN DIVISION.

†166. *Nawab Siddique Ali Khan (on behalf of **Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi**): (a) Will the Honourable the Finance Member please state if it is or it is not a fact that the B.Com. qualification has been fixed as the minimum qualification for candidates for the Upper Grade in the Western Division, Central Excises and Salt Revenues?

(b) Is it or is it not a fact that in other Divisions no such distinction is made between B.Coms. and other graduates? If so, what is the reason for it?

MUSLIM RECRUITMENT IN THE CENTRAL EXCISES AND SALT REVENUES, WESTERN DIVISION.

†167. *Nawab Siddique Ali Khan (on behalf of **Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi**): (a) Will the Honourable the Finance Member please state if it is or it is not a fact that in the Western Division, Central Excises and Salt Revenues, the ratio fixed for the Muslims is not being kept up from the very beginning as some of the posts reserved for the Muslims have been given to other communities, on the ground of competent Muslims being not available?

(b) What is the number of posts that were available to the Muslims in the Western Division, the number of applications of persons with the prescribed minimum qualifications, and the number of persons actually taken in the Western Division since March, 1948?

(c) Is it or is it not a fact that the very low number of Muslim successful candidates is mostly due to the tendency of the selecting authority in finding unnecessary faults with the candidates?

†For answer to this question, see answer to question No. 164.

(d) Is it or is it not a fact that a number of Muslim clerks in the office of the Assistant Collector who had the good fortune of being selected had to resign their post due to harassment by the Assistant Collector and had mentioned this fact in their resignations, copies of which had been sent to the Collector? If not, what are the facts?

(e) In view of the complaints of Muslims do Government propose to consider the advisability of appointing some other authority for the selection of Muslim candidates, and setting up a machinery by which these complaints may be removed?

SPECIAL PRESS ADVISER IN DELHI AND HIS STAFF.

168. ***Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani**: Will the Honourable the Home Member please state:

- (a) who the Special Press Adviser is in Delhi; and
- (b) the total number of his staff and the number of Muslims thereon?

The Honourable Sir Sultan Ahmed: (a) Lala Savitri Prasad, P.C.S.

(b) The total number of his staff is seven out of which three are Muslims.

DIRECTLY RECRUITED POLICE OFFICERS IN DELHI.

169. ***Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani**: Will the Honourable the Home Member please state the total number of Assistant Superintendents of Police, Deputy Superintendents of Police, Sub-Inspectors and Assistant Sub-Inspectors of Police appointed in Delhi by direct recruitment, and the number of Muslims under each category during the last three years?

The Honourable Sir Raginald Maxwell: Assistant Superintendents of Police belong to the Indian Police Service, recruitment to which is made by the Secretary of State for India. Deputy Superintendents of Police, Sub-Inspectors and Assistant Sub-Inspectors serving in Delhi are drawn from the Punjab Cadres, recruitment to which is made by the Punjab Government (in the case of Assistant Sub-Inspectors, by the Range Deputy Inspector General). Residents of Delhi are eligible for these appointments if they possess the requisite qualifications. Information is not readily available as to the number of Muslims recruited under each category during the last three years.

METHOD OF RECRUITMENT OF INCOME TAX OFFICERS.

170. ***Mr. H. M. Abdullah**: Will the Honourable the Finance Member please state:

- (a) how the recruitment for the posts of Income-tax Officers is conducted in the various provinces; and
- (b) if Government propose to entrust the recruitment of these officers to the Federal Public Service Commission; if not, why not?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: (a) Recruitment to Income-tax Officers' posts is made subject to the approval of the Central Board of Revenue by Commissioners of Income-tax generally by promotion of suitable officers from the subordinate executive service and occasionally by direct recruitment of candidates possessing high academic and technical qualifications.

(b) A scheme for improving the administration of the Income-tax Department is now under the consideration of the Government of India and it is proposed in that connection to recruit officers for the more important posts of Income-tax Officers through the Federal Public Service Commission.

PROPOSALS FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF UNITED AND ASSOCIATED NATIONS' STABILIZATION FUND.

171. ***Mr. K. C. Neogy**: (a) Will the Honourable the Finance Member be pleased to state whether the Government of India received a letter from the United States' Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting the text of the proposals for a United and Associated Nations' Stabilisation Fund? If so, have Government been requested to arrange for any consultation or discussion with the authorities of the United States of America in this matter?

(b) Have the Government of India sent any technical experts to Washington to convey their preliminary reaction to the above-mentioned draft proposals,

and to discuss them with the technical experts of the United States of America?

(c) Have Government otherwise conveyed their views on these proposals to the United States' Secretary of the Treasury, if so, what is the substance of such views?

(d) If the Government of India have sent any technical experts to Washington, what are the names of the personnel selected, and what instructions, if any, have been given to them by Government?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: (a) The answer to the first part of this question is in the affirmative.

As regards the second part, the Government of India were invited to send one or more of their technical experts to Washington to discuss with the technical experts of the United States' Government the possibility of international monetary co-operation along the lines suggested in the draft scheme or along any other lines.

(b) No.

The bilateral talks between experts of various Allied Nations and those of the United States' Government took place in May and June. It was not found possible in the time available between receipt of the draft scheme and the time of the discussions to formulate views and send representatives.

(c) The reply to the first part of the question is in the negative. The second part does not therefore arise.

(d) Does not arise.

SUPPLY OF ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES TO NON-INDIAN FORCES STATIONED IN INDIA

172. *Mr. K. O. Neogy: (a) Will the War Secretary be pleased to state what arrangements have been made by Government to make supplies available to the non-Indian forces that have been or will be stationed in India consequent upon the establishment of the South-East Asia Command?

(b) To what extent are the requirements of these forces in respect of essential commodities, including food and other daily necessities, to be met through imports from abroad?

(c) To what extent are these supplies to be secured from Indian sources? How are the interests of the civilian consumer likely to be affected by such local supplies?

(d) Are Government prepared to give an assurance that the large bulk of supplies to these forces would, in future, be met by imports, and that under no circumstances, the requirements of these forces would be allowed to compete with the civilian demand for essential commodities in respect of which shortage already exists in the country?

Mr. C. M. Trivedi: (a) to (d). The matters raised by my Honourable friend are under the active and careful consideration of the Government of India in consultation with His Majesty's Government. I may assure the Honourable Member that the need for safeguarding the essential requirements of civilian consumers is fully realised.

BANNING PUBLICATION OF BENGAL GOVERNOR'S ORDER AGAINST THE "AMRITA BAZAR PATRIKA."

173. *Mr. K. O. Neogy: (a) Will the Honourable Member for Information and Broadcasting be pleased to state whether any action has been taken by, or at the instance of, the Chief Press Adviser banning the publication of an order relating to an action taken by the Governor of Bengal against the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* requiring that any matter relating to the economic condition in Bengal, the food and supply situation, relief and distress and the civil defence services or organisations, shall, before being published in the said newspaper, be submitted for scrutiny to the Special Press Adviser, Calcutta?

(b) If the answer to (a) be in the affirmative, what are the reasons for the said action taken by or at the instance of the Chief Press Adviser?

(c) Was any Press Advisory Committee consulted in the matter before the action was taken?

(d) In what other instances was action taken prohibiting the publication of an order of this character or comments thereon?

The Honourable Sir Sultan Ahmed: (a) No.

(b), (c) and (d). Do not arise.

STEPS FOR REMOVING SHORTAGE OF SMALL COINS.

174. ***Mr. Ananga Mohan Dam:** (a) Has the attention of the Honourable the Finance Member been drawn to the unfortunate incident published in the *Ananda Basar Patrika* of Calcutta, dated the 30th September, 1948, to the effect that a man of Ranaghat tore a one rupee note to pieces after his repeated failures to get small coins in exchange for the note?

(b) What have Government done up till now to remove the shortage of small coins?

(c) Do Government realise the consequence of such shortage on the mentality of the people regarding the administration of the country?

(d) Do Government admit that they have failed to cope with the situation? If not, what are the new Government proposals for giving relief to the people?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: (a) Yes.

(b) Government's main efforts have been directed to increasing the output of small coin and securing the most speedy and efficient distribution that existing conditions permit. The average monthly output for January to June this year was 130 million pieces and from July this has been stepped up to nearly 160 million pieces a month. This figure will be further augmented by the output of the new Mint at Lahore which has just started production.

Widespread prosecutions and propaganda have been directed against the hoarders of small coin, and this has had its effect.

(c) Government are aware of the inconvenience and even hardship which have been occasioned by the shortage.

(d) The reply to the first part of this question is in the negative. As regards the second part, as a result of the action which has already been taken, there is a marked improvement in the situation over the greater part of the country, though considerable inconvenience is still being felt in some areas of Northern India. Government are still continuing to make every effort on the lines indicated above to restore the position to normal throughout the whole country as soon as possible.

SELECTION BOARD FOR APPOINTMENTS IN THE OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER OF ASSAM.

175. ***Mr. Ananga Mohan Dam:** Will the Honourable the Finance Member be pleased to state whether Government are aware of the fact that a register is maintained in the office of the Comptroller of Assam for candidates eligible for appointment, and of the existence of a Selection Board to select proper candidates for appointment out of those registered candidates as and when vacancies occur? If so, whether during the time of the present Comptroller of Assam the Selection Board had a free hand in the matter of selection of candidates?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: I am making enquiries and a reply will be laid on the table of the House in due course.

COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE QUALITY OF ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA SECRETARIAT AND ATTACHED OFFICES.

†176. ***Sardar Sant Singh:** (a) Will the Honourable the Home Member please state whether Government are receiving general complaints against the quality of essential supplies—wheat, rice, fuel—being supplied to the Government of India Secretariat and Attached Office employees under the Essential Supplies Scheme?

(b) Is it a fact that the articles supplied are not according to samples of the articles placed by Government at dealers' shops in order to help Government staff getting genuine stuff?

†Answer to this question laid on the table, the questioner being absent.

(c) Is it a fact that when these facts are brought to the notice of the Supervisory Staff employed by Government of India, they show their inability to help the staff in getting stuff of the requisite quality and can only threaten to terminate the contracts of the dealers concerned?

(d) How many such contracts have so far been cancelled?

(e) Are Government aware that generally dealers throw the blame of supply of non-standard quality of stuff on wholesale dealers and the latter on the dealers?

(f) Are Government aware that in certain cases some dealers have stated that the quality of the stuff they were supplying was purchased in the presence of the Supervising Staff who did not interfere despite protests from the dealers?

(g) In order to help in these matters, are Government prepared to vest powers in the members of the Food Supply Committee, comprising representatives of the various Service Associations, to try and dispose of such complaints on the spot by imposing fines up to a certain limit for each offence? If not, what other method do Government propose to adopt to stop the malpractices of retail and/or wholesale dealers?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: (a) There have been some complaints about the qualities of certain commodities supplied under the scheme.

(b) Samples of approved qualities of wheat and rice have been kept at the shops of retail dealers. It is true that the qualities actually supplied have not been in all cases according to those samples.

(c) No.

(d) Two agreements were terminated but for other reasons and not for supplying inferior qualities.

(e) Yes.

(f) No.

(g) No. Suitable action under the agreements executed by them will be taken against those dealers who are found guilty of malpractices. This may consist of forfeiting their security and terminating their agreements.

ADVERTISEMENT FOR RECRUITMENT OF TEMPORARY CLERKS BY MILITARY ACCOUNTS DEPARTMENT.

†177. *Sardar Sant Singh: (a) Will the Honourable the Finance Member please state whether the Military Accounts Department has advertised some temporary clerks' posts to be filled under it?

(b) Is it a fact that the qualifications required are a University degree, except for Muslims who should have passed the Intermediate examination? If so, why has this exception been made in the case of Muslims?

(c) Has a similar exception been made in the case of Sikhs? If not, why not?

(d) Is the Honourable Member prepared to consider the advisability of making such an exception in the case of Sikhs? If not, why not?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: (a) Yes.

(b) Yes. A sufficient number of Muslim graduates were not available, and the minimum educational qualifications have therefore been lowered in the case of Muslim candidates for these particular posts.

(c) No. The necessity for a similar relaxation of the normal rule in the case of Sikhs has not so far arisen. There is no quota fixed separately for the Sikh community. The quota (8½ per cent.) for "other minority" communities includes Sikhs. As a sufficient number of graduates from the "other minorities" (including Sikhs) have been generally forthcoming, the question of reducing the minimum educational qualification in their case has not yet arisen.

(d) I propose to have the whole matter further examined.

CLASSIFICATION AND SELECTION POSTS OF POSTS OF PERSONAL ASSISTANTS CARRYING SPECIAL OR PERSONAL PAY IN THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA SECRETARIAT.

†178. *Sardar Sant Singh: (a) Will the Honourable the Home Member please state whether the posts of Personal Assistants to officers, carrying special or

†Answer to this question laid on the table, the questioner being absent.

personal pay, are classed as 'Selection posts' in the Government of India Secretariat?

(b) Are Government aware that junior men are promoted as Personal Assistants on grounds of "Selection"?

(c) What other channels of promotion are normally open to stenographers except to the posts of Personal Assistants? If none, are Government prepared to consider removing the hardship thus caused to a certain section of their staff? If not, why not?

(d) With reference to his Department's Office Memorandum of September, 1942, and the Honourable Member for Posts and Air's statement in the Council of State in regard to promotion, is it admitted that "selection" generally leads to favouritism and nepotism? If not, why has it been declared that promotion should be given to the man next in seniority, irrespective of caste or religion, if there is nothing against him?

(e) If the answer to the first part of part (d) be in the affirmative, why have the posts of Personal Assistants been classed as "selection posts", especially in view of the fact that there is no other channel of promotion open to stenographers ordinarily?

(f) Will the men so selected take precedence over men who may be otherwise senior to them, for instance, in the case of temporary men, in regard to confirmation, etc.?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: (a) Yes.

(b) I have no information regarding any particular cases but there is no objection to a junior man being promoted to a "selection" post on grounds of merit.

(c) Stenographers belong to a separate cadre and the question of their promotion to other posts or of any hardship being caused to them in that connection does not, therefore, arise. The posts of Personal Assistants are also stenographers posts which carry special pay.

(d) Complaints were received that favouritism was sometimes shown in making appointments to "selection" posts. Although these complaints were regarded as generally not justified, it was considered that in order that there might be as little ground as possible for any complaint, appointments to all posts, other than those in which it was administratively necessary to appoint the best candidates available, should be made by seniority, subject to fitness of the candidates concerned. Orders were issued accordingly.

(e) The posts of Personal Assistants are responsible posts and carry special pays. It is considered desirable that they should be filled from the best candidates available. They are therefore classed as "selection" posts.

(f) Seniority among Stenographers is not necessarily affected by selection for the post of Personal Assistant.

REDUCTION OF THE BASIC PAY OF CERTAIN TEMPORARY SUBORDINATES OF THE MILITARY ENGINEERING SERVICE.

†179. *Sardar Sant Singh: (a) With reference to the reply to starred question No. 452, dated the 31st March, 1948, is the War Secretary aware that the basic pay of certain temporary subordinates of the Military Engineering Service has been reduced and in certain cases also restricted solely because these individuals were declared medically fit for category 'C' but otherwise efficient in their work?

(b) In view of the reply to the question stated above, does the Honourable Member propose to issue early orders to the Commanding Officers to restore this unauthorised cut in pay?

(c) Does he further propose to consider the desirability of paying compensation to those individuals who have evidently lost their health through devotion to duty and hard work in difficult times? If not, why not?

Mr. O. M. Trivedi: (a) and (b). I am not aware of any such cases but if the Honourable Member will give me specific instances, I will have an enquiry made.

†Answer to this question laid on the table, the questioner being absent.

(c) Provision already exists in regulations relating to pensions, gratuities and compensation, for special consideration of cases of individuals who have contracted disabilities attributable to military service.

DEARNESS ALLOWANCE TO THE STAFF OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA SECRETARIAT AND ATTACHED OFFICES.

†180. *Sardar Sant Singh: (a) Will the Honourable the Finance Member please state whether Government are aware that the prices of necessaries of life have risen now from 300 to 400 per cent. in Delhi as compared to pre-war prices?

(b) Is it a fact that Government have granted dearness allowance to persons drawing salary up to Rs. 125 or Rs. 135 only?

(c) Is it a fact that the maximum dearness allowance allowed is Rs. 11 per mensem?

(d) Are Government considering the grant of dearness allowance to their staff in the Secretariat and Attached offices upto Rs. 499 monthly salary in reasonable proportion with the rise in prices of necessaries of life? If not, why not?

(e) How do Government expect the said Government servants to maintain themselves and their families on their present pay without help from Government?

(f) Are Government aware that a very large number of the said staff are now being forced to borrow money from month to month to meet the abnormally increased expenses?

(g) Are Government prepared to modify their orders against their staff resorting to loans, etc., at least till such time as they finally decide to grant substantial dearness allowance to them? If not, why not?

(h) Is it a fact that their staff in Delhi getting salary up to Rs. 300 monthly are given a form of subsidy on purchases of wheat and rice, which comes to about 25 per cent. of the price ordinarily charged? If so, are Government prepared to increase this subsidy to 50 per cent. applicable to staff getting Rs. 499 monthly? If not, why not?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: (a) Government are aware that in some cases prices have risen to 300 per cent. of pre-war levels.

(b) and (c). Government servants in Delhi drawing a salary of Rs. 125 p. m. or less are entitled to dearness allowance, the maximum rate being Rs. 11 p. m. Staff drawing between Rs. 126 and Rs. 135 are given an allowance to bring their salary upto Rs. 136.

(d) to (h). The Government of India, in consultation with Provincial Governments, are considering whether it is necessary in addition to the substantial price concessions now given in areas where conditions are acute, to revise the present rates and pay limits of cash dearness allowance. It is unlikely, however, that Government will decide to raise the pay limit to a figure approaching that mentioned by the Honourable Member. The rate of concession given to the Delhi staff is, in the case of the cheaper kinds of grain consumed by the inferior staff, higher than the 25 per cent. mentioned by the Honourable Member, and is, in the opinion of Government, adequate in view of the prevailing price of foodgrains. It is subject to revision in the event of any substantial change in prices. Government have no reason to believe that a large number of their staff is indebted; nor are they prepared to relax their standing orders regarding the avoidance of indebtedness.

SUBSIDIES TO PRIVATE STUDIOS FOR PRODUCING ENTERTAINMENT PICTURES.

181. *Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani: Will the Honourable Member for Information and Broadcasting be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that at the request of the Department three leading studios, one in Calcutta and two in Bombay, have started producing full-length entertainment-cum-instructional pictures, and twelve other studios will start work on similar pictures next month;

(b) the amount hitherto given—and also proposed to be given—to such producers as contribution or subsidy or encouragement; and

(c) the nature and descriptions of such pictures?

†Answer to this question laid on the table, the questioner being absent.

The Honourable Sir Sultan Ahmed: (a) Yes, Sir. According to information available up to date two studios in Calcutta and two in Bombay have already started producing full length entertainment-cum-instructional pictures. About 12 other studios are also likely to start in this or the next month.

(b) Nil.

(c) These pictures will deal with problems created by the war such as hoarding, profiteering, rumour-mongering, rationing, A. R. P., Blood Banks, Grow More Food, recruiting for both civil and technical labour schemes and fighting services, public morale, etc. In addition, subjects like Hindu Muslim unity, education, medical relief are also dealt with.

MASTER AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND THE UNITED KINGDOM.

182. *Mr. K. O. Neogy: Will the Honourable the Finance Member be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of India have examined the full implications of clause 7 of the Master Agreement between the United States of America and the United Kingdom, which lays down that the participating countries of like mind should agree "to the elimination of all forms of discriminatory treatment in international commerce"; and

(b) whether by reason of the commitment of the United Kingdom to this cause, Great Britain will be precluded from extending preferential tariff to the Indian goods imported into the United Kingdom, and, similarly, whether the United Kingdom will also be precluded from seeking preferential tariff for the British goods imported into India, by way of reciprocity or otherwise?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: The question should have been addressed to the Honourable the Commerce Member.

ALLOCATION OF COST OF BUILDING NEW ROADS FOR MILITARY PURPOSES.

183. *Mr. K. O. Neogy: (a) Will the Honourable the Finance Member be pleased to state whether the cost of opening new roads between India and China is being debited to the Indian Exchequer?

(b) If the answer to (a) be in the affirmative, have the Government of India taken steps to impress upon His Majesty's Government that the cost of building such military roads should be borne by Allied Governments, in so far as they are built for the purpose of carrying out the Allied strategic plans against Japan and do not fall within the category of the Defence obligations of India?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: (a) No

(b) Does not arise.

FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS OF INDIA IN RESPECT OF OPERATIONS OF THE EAST ASIA COMMAND.

184. *Mr. K. O. Neogy: Will the Honourable the Finance Member be pleased to state:

(a) what financial commitments the Government of India have undertaken in regard to the operations of the South-East Asia Command from bases in India; and

(b) whether the Government of India have made any representation to His Majesty's Government that no expenses resulting from the establishment of the South-East Asia Command in this country, and its operations, should be charged to India?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: (a) No.

(b) In view of the answer to part (a) this does not arise.

ALLOCATION OF EXPENDITURE ON TROOPS RAISED IN INDIA FOR OUTSIDE SERVICE.

185. *Mr. K. O. Neogy: (a) Will the Honourable the Finance Member be pleased to state whether the interpretation of the terms of the 1939 Settlement has been varied in any way so as to impose a heavier financial burden

on India in respect of troops meant for operations outside the country than was initially contemplated?

(b) What charges are payable by His Majesty's Government in respect of troops raised in India, but intended for operations outside the country, (i) so long as they remain in this country, and (ii) when they are sent abroad?

(c) What amount of expenses has the Indian Exchequer borne for the maintenance of troops which were sent abroad for the years 1939-40, 1940-41, 1941-42 and 1942-43 up-to-date?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: (a) The answer is in the negative.

(b) The cost of troops raised in India specifically for operations abroad is charged to His Majesty's Government, as is their cost when they are sent abroad.

(c) The cost of all troops serving abroad has been borne by His Majesty's Government.

INABILITY OF GHAZIPUR OPIUM FACTORY TO MEET DEMANDS FOR OPIUM ALKALOIDS

186. *Sir Abdul Halim Ghaznavi: (a) Will the Honourable the Finance Member please state when the Ghazipur Opium Factory is unable to meet adequately the demand of opium alkaloids of the Indian pharmaceutical and chemical industries, why the Government of India are not willing to permit manufacture of opium alkaloids intended for medicinal and scientific purposes by the approved pharmaceutical and chemical industries under proper Government control in this country?

(b) What steps do the Government of India propose to take in view of the failure of the Ghazipur Opium Factory to supply the needs of opium alkaloids of the pharmaceutical and chemical industries of this country? Is it not a fact that even the requirements of the armies for these alkaloids for medicinal needs have been only partially met by the Ghazipur Opium Factory?

(c) Do the Geneva Opium Convention of 1925 and the Drugs Limitation Convention of 1931 prevent the Government of India from allowing the approved private manufacturers to undertake manufacture of these alkaloids under proper Government supervision? If so, how do the Governments of the United States of America and the United Kingdom, being the signatories of these International Conventions, allow private pharmaceutical and chemical industries the facilities to manufacture opium alkaloids?

(d) Are Government aware that Australia—a signatory of the above International Conventions,—has of late allowed a private manufacturing concern to undertake manufacture of opium alkaloids?

(e) While the opium alkaloids, particularly Morphine, Codeine, Heroin, etc., and their salts have well-recognised unique medicinal properties and are indispensable for the manufacture of various patents by the Indian Pharmaceutical and Chemical Industries which are essential civilian commodities, why should Government treat the subject as a matter of excise policy only?

(f) When Government are successfully controlling traffic, distribution and consumption of opium through the ordinary and often poorly educated licenced dealers, do they apprehend illicit traffic in these drugs if the approved Pharmaceutical and Chemical Industries were allowed to undertake manufacture of opium alkaloids under proper Government supervision? If so, why will it not be possible for the Government to control the same?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: (a) to (f). The Geneva Conventions do not prevent the Government of India or any signatory country from allowing private manufacture of dangerous drugs in their territories. Private manufacture is, however, not allowed in India because Government have a factory of their own at Ghazipur for the manufacture of these alkaloids and it is desirable in the larger interests of the country that manufacture of such drugs should be restricted to as few manufacturing centres as possible. The Ghazipur Factory is ordinarily able to meet the entire peace-time requirement but demands created by the war have thrown a tremendous strain upon the factory. Production has, in addition, been materially reduced as a result of the August disturbances last year, and it is with considerable difficulty that

the factory has been able to meet Army requirements in full as also a part of the civilian demand. Arrangements have, however, now been made for increasing the civilian quota and when the new factory installed at Ghazipur for the purpose is in full working order early next year, it is hoped to meet the entire requirements of the trade. The fact that these alkaloids have unique medicinal properties is no reason why Government should not take every precaution against abuse having regard to the immense potentialities for evil which these drugs possess.

FOODGRAINS POLICY COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION RE SALE OF PRECIOUS METALS TO THE CULTIVATOR.

187. *Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: Will the Honourable the Finance Member please state:

(a) whether the Foodgrains Policy Committee has recommended selling of precious metals, and particularly gold, to the farmers in this country; and

(b) if so, how Government propose to implement the recommendation?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: I would invite the Honourable Member's attention to my reply to Mr. G. V. Deshmukh's question No. 81 on the 10th November.

SALARIES OF APPELLATE COMMISSIONERS AND APPELLATE TRIBUNALS UNDER INCOME TAX DEPARTMENT.

188. *Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani: Will the Honourable the Finance Member please state:

(a) the names and salaries of persons appointed as Appellate Commissioners and Appellate Tribunals under the Income-tax Department; and

(b) the total number of officers recruited during 1941-42 and 1942-43 under (i) the Income-tax Department, and (ii) the Central Excise and Salt Department in various circles, and the number of Muslims therein?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: (a) A statement giving the information asked for is laid on the table of the House.

(b) The information asked for is not readily available and its collection would involve an amount of time and labour that would not be justifiable in war time.

List showing the Name of Appellate Assistant Commissioners of Income-tax and their salaries.

S. No.	Name	Salary per mensem.
		Rs.
1.	Mr. Ramaswamy Iyengar	1,500
2.	" T. Arumukha Mudaliar	1,500
3.	" P. B. Srinivasaohari	1,500
4.	" R. A. Narayana Ayyangar	1,100
5.	" S. M. A. Uraizee.	1,500
		S. Pay 250
6.	" M. P. Kapadia..	1,500
		S. pay 250
7.	" D. S. Tanavde.	1,300
8.	" C. A. Eotee	1,100
9.	" A. N. NeSurkar.	1,400
10.	R. S. K. P. Mukerji	1,200
		S. P. 250
11.	Mr. M. Ahmed	1,000
12.	" H. C Choudhury	1,000
13.	" W. A. Hardie	1,400
14.	" K. C. Avasia	1,300
15.	" B. M. Pandit	1,300
16.	" B. L. Vaish	1,300
17.	" B. K. Mukerji	1,300
18.	" Asanand Kumar	1,500
19.	" K. C. Khanna	1,500
20.	" Dalip Singh	1,500
21.	" Parmanand Jain	1,500
22.	" H. M. Pattanaik	1,300
23.	" P. K. Sen-Gupte	1,500
24.	" D. Shambu Dayal	1,600

RE-ARREST OF MR. JAIPRAKASH NARAIN.

189. *Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: Will the Honourable the Home Member please state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that Sjt. Jaiprakash Narain has been re-arrested;
- (b) whether he is incarcerated in the Lahore Fort and is denied the ordinary amenities needed for human sustenance; and
- (c) whether Government intend bringing him up for trial in a court of law?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: (a) Yes.

(b) It would not be in the public interest for me to disclose his present place of confinement. He is not denied the ordinary amenities needed for human sustenance. In any case these matters are the concern of the Provincial Government.

(c) I am not prepared at this stage to disclose Government's intentions in this matter.

Mr. Abdul Qaiyum: May I know if the Government of India have anything to do with the arrest of Mr. Jaiprakash Narain?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: No, Sir. They have nothing to do with his arrest. With regard to his trial, that is a matter for the Provincial Governments who have cases against him.

Mr. Abdul Qaiyum: Is he being tried, or likely to be tried, for any offence committed by him in an area for which the Central Government is responsible?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: I have already stated in answering to part (c) that I am not prepared to disclose Government's intentions in this matter.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: May I ask whether Mr. Jaiprakash Narain was not a detenu in Bihar on a warrant issued by the Government of India?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: No, Sir. The warrant was issued by the Government of Bombay.

Dr. G. V. Deshmukh: Could the Honourable Member tell us whether Mr. Jaiprakash Narain is given any of the inhumanities complained of in this House the other day?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: Nothing has been said to substantiate those allegations which are entirely denied.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Arising out of the reply given by the Honourable Member that Mr. Jaiprakash Narain is given ordinary amenities, may I know what amenities have been afforded to him?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: Ordinary amenities.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Will the Honourable Member say what the amenities are, so that we may know as a fact that he is getting what is needed for his sustenance?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: I understand from the reply given in the Punjab Assembly that he is being treated as a Class I Security Prisoner.

Mr. Abdul Qaiyum: Is he allowed interviews?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: Interviews are not allowed to the Security Prisoners in the Punjab as I informed the Honourable Member the other day.

Mr. Abdul Qaiyum: In view of the fact that he is no longer a security prisoner, is he being allowed facilities for legal advice?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: He is a security prisoner and security prisoners are allowed to obtain legal advice.

Mr. Abdul Qaiyum: May I know where a security prisoner absconds and is re-arrested under the ordinary law, does he still continue to be a security prisoner?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: The original warrant against him has never been cancelled.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: May I know from the Honourable Member whether Mr. Jaiprakash Narain can write and receive letters?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: I understand that to be the practice in the Punjab. I have no actual information in this case.

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

Mr. Abdul Qaiyum: May I ask one more question?

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

IMPROVING OF TREATMENT OF POLITICAL PRISONERS.

190. ***Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari:** Will the Honourable the Home Member please state:

(a) what steps have been taken by Government following the discussion in this House on the resolution for the better treatment of political prisoners, to implement the assurances contained in the Honourable the Home Member's reply to the debate;

(b) whether the Central Government have framed a new set of regulations for the treatment of political prisoners who are detained by their orders; and

(c) whether the Government of India have addressed the Provincial Governments on the matter; if so, with what result?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: (a) and (c). As a result of the debate on the Honourable Member's resolution in the last session, the Government of India addressed Provincial Governments, laying down certain further principles in regard to the treatment of security prisoners. The results were described in my reply to Sardar Mangal Singh's question No. 70 on November 10th.

(b) No.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: May I ask the Honourable Member if his attention has been drawn to the press note published in the *Hindustan Times* this morning which says that the Government of India are considering the question of revising detention rules, and that they propose to detain, under Rule 26, only for six months, and they are setting up Revision Boards for considering the question of further detention of these people?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: My attention has only just been drawn to the paragraph in question which appears to have been published without any authority.

PERSONS ARRESTED AND DETAINED IN DELHI UNDER RULES 26 AND 129 OF THE DEFENCE OF INDIA RULES, ETC.

191. ***Mr. N. M. Joshi:** Will the Honourable the Home Member be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of persons arrested and detained under Rule 26 and Rule 129 of the Defence of India Rules from Delhi, since the 9th August, 1942, up to the 15th October, 1943; and

(b) the number of persons convicted under Defence Rules in connection with the 'Disturbances' and under the Criminal Procedure Code, since the 9th August, 1942, up to the 15th October, 1943, for political offences, and whether they are being treated as political prisoners or not?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: (a) 164 persons were arrested under Defence Rule 129 during the period mentioned by the Honourable Member. Out of this total, 78 persons were subsequently detained under Defence Rule 26, the remaining 91 being detained under Defence Rule 129 for varying periods not exceeding two months. In addition, 32 persons were arrested and detained at once under Defence Rule 26.

(b) The number of persons convicted under the Defence of India Rules in connection with the disturbances during the period mentioned was 66. Convictions during this period under all laws other than the Defence of India Rules totalled 543. As I have frequently pointed out Government do not recognize the term "political prisoners". Such of these persons as were convicted of offences not involving violence have been classified as 'Civil Disturbances Prisoners 1942', a special class created for them by the Punjab Government. Such as were convicted of offences involving violence

arc, however, treated as ordinary convicted prisoners and have been classified accordingly.

PERSONS ARRESTED AND DETAINED IN DELHI UNDER RULES 26 AND 129 OF THE DEFENCE OF INDIA RULES, ETC.

192. *Mr. N. M. Joshi: Will the Honourable the Home Member be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that all persons detained under Rule 26 of the Defence of India Rules by the Delhi Administration are kept in the Punjab Jails and the nearest jail they are kept in is Ferozepore, which is over two hundred miles from Delhi;

(b) whether it is a fact that the Ferozepur Camp Jail is designed to keep 'C' Class prisoners; and

(c) whether it is a fact that there are no covered baths and covered latrines there, and that the detenus are put to much inconvenience on that account; if so, whether Government propose to take any action in the matter?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: (a) All security prisoners detained by orders made under D. R. 26 by the Chief Commissioner are transferred to the Punjab to a jail to be determined by the Inspector-General of Prisons. Such prisoners as are detained for reasons connected with the Congress movement are transferred to the Ferozepore District Jail.

(b) and (c). I have no information.

PERSONS ARRESTED AND DETAINED IN DELHI UNDER RULES 26 AND 129 OF THE DEFENCE OF INDIA RULES, ETC.

193. *Mr. N. M. Joshi: Will the Honourable the Home Member be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that only six or seven persons arrested and detained under Rule 26 of the Defence of India Rules by the Delhi Administration after the 9th August, 1942, were classified as Class I Security Prisoners and the rest as Class II Security Prisoners;

(b) whether it is a fact that so long as they remained in the District Jail, Delhi, they were treated as Security Prisoners and allowed all the privileges of Security Prisoners;

(c) whether it is a fact that soon after their transfer to the Punjab Jails all such privileges were withdrawn, and since then they are being treated as Civil Disobedience detenus; if so, why;

(d) whether this fact was brought to the notice of the Chief Commissioner, Delhi, by some of them soon after their privileges were withdrawn in September, 1942; if so, what action, if any was taken thereupon;

(e) whether the Delhi Government wrote to the Punjab Government to accord to them the treatment they were entitled to as Security Prisoners Class I and II; if not, why not; and

(f) whether the action Government propose to take in the matter now is to set right the grievances of the detenus?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: (a) No.

(b) Security prisoners detained in the Delhi District Jail are treated in accordance with the Central Government Security Prisoners Order, 1942, and instructions issued thereunder from time to time.

(c) As I have told the House on previous occasions, Central Government security prisoners detained in Provinces are treated according to the rules current in that Province. There are certain differences of detail between the treatment accorded under the Central Government Security Prisoners Order and the Punjab Government's rules, but I am satisfied that the treatment in matters of principle is substantially the same.

(d) Yes. The Chief Commissioner informed the prisoners that their conditions of detention were to be determined by the Punjab Government.

(e) No, for the reasons already explained.

(f) I do not admit that there are legitimate grievances.

PERSONS ARRESTED AND DETAINED IN DELHI UNDER RULES 26 AND 129 OF THE DEFENCE OF INDIA RULES, ETC.

194. ***Mr. N. M. Joshi:** (a) Will the Honourable the Home Member be pleased to state whether it is a fact that all persons detained under Rule 26 of the Defence of India Rules and treated as Class I Security Prisoners in the Delhi Jail are entitled to—

- (i) interviews once a fortnight and to receive and write four letters a week;
- (ii) books and newspapers and writing materials;
- (iii) furniture, *vis.*, one table, one chair, one cupboard and one stool;
- (iv) monthly maintenance and clothing allowance of Rs. 20 and family allowance according to the status and number of dependents;
- (v) indoor and outdoor games at Government expense; and
- (vi) supplement their food up to Rs. 10 per mensem through the jail contractors and receive supplementary diet from home and friends?

(b) If the answers to (i), (ii), (iii), (iv), (v) and (vi) be in the affirmative, is it a fact that Security Prisoners belonging to Delhi and now detained in the Punjab Jails are denied all the privileges? If so, what are the reasons for the same, and what action, if any, Government propose to take in the matter?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: I take it that the Honourable Member is referring to the treatment of security prisoners in general and not to Congress Security Prisoners, in regard to whom, as I have frequently explained, there are certain differences of treatment.

(a) The information required by the Honourable Member is as follows:

(i) Yes; they are, however, allowed to receive not four but eight letters per week.

(ii) Yes

(iii) Yes, except that instead of the stool referred to by the Honourable Member, a bed is provided.

(iv) and (vi) They are allowed to receive funds not exceeding Rs. 20 per mensem to supplement the amenities of life in the jail. Family allowances are not granted automatically and each application for such an allowance is considered on its merits;

(v) Games are allowed.

(b) No. The Punjab practice is substantially the same. The second part of the question does not arise.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: As there is difference of treatment given to ordinary security prisoners and the Congress security prisoners, will the Honourable Member explain in which respect the Congress security prisoners are at a disadvantage?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: I gave that information to the House in answer to Mr. Krishnamachari's Resolution at the last Session. For instance, the Congress security prisoners are allowed to write and receive fewer letters per week and they are allowed interviews less frequently. I think these are the only material points of difference.

PERSONS ARRESTED AND DETAINED IN DELHI UNDER RULES 26 AND 129 OF THE DEFENCE OF INDIA RULES, ETC.

195. ***Mr. N. M. Joshi:** Will the Honourable the Home Member be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Delhi detenus under Rule 26 of the Defence of India Rules kept in Punjab Jails are not allowed to read any newspapers published in Delhi except the *Statesman*, despite the fact that the *Hindustan Times*, the *Daily Tej* and *Vir Arjuna* are allowed to the detenus in the District Jail, Delhi; and

(b) whether it is a fact that a written request was made by Lala Deshbandhu Gupta for permission to get the *Hindustan Times*, the *Tej* and some British and American periodicals, including *The Nation and Statesman*, *Time*, *Unity* and *Foreign Affairs*, at his own cost was rejected; if so, if Government propose to grant the necessary permission for the same now; if not, why not?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: (a) and (b). I have no information on these matters which are for the Punjab Government. All I know is that the Punjab Government do allow newspapers.

UNSTARRED QUESTION AND ANSWER

NEW APPOINTMENTS OF OFFICERS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING.

31. Seth Yusuf Abdoola Haroon: Will the Honourable Member for Information and Broadcasting please state:

(a) whether it is a fact that new appointments of Joint Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Administration Officer (Film Section), Film Publicity Officer, and American Relations Officer have been created in the Information Department;

(b) whether it is a fact that all non-Muslims have been appointed or promoted to these posts;

(c) whether it is a fact that Muslims were available in the Department, but were not given a chance of promotion;

(d) whether the recruitment to appointments referred to in (a) above is the responsibility of the Member-in-Charge; and

(e) whether the appointments referred to in (b) above are directly made by the Secretary of the War Department?

The Honourable Sir Sultan Ahmed: (a) Yes, except that there is no post in the Information and Broadcasting Department with the designation of 'American Relations Officer'.

(b) No.

(c) Appointments to the posts in question were made by promotion except in the case of one which was made by transfer. No Muslim has been superseded.

(d) Appointments to posts of Joint Secretary, Deputy Secretary and Assistant Secretary are made by the Governor General-in-Council. The appointments to other posts are made by the Secretary in the Department with the approval of the Member-in-Charge.

(e) No.

Mr. C. M. Trivedi (Secretary, War Department): Sir, I would like to make a statement with your permission. I much regret that in reply to a supplementary question on Question No. 64 asked by my Honourable friend, Sir F. E. James, on the 10th November, 1943, I made a statement which on further examination is found incorrect. I stated that the dependents of personnel of the Indian Army and Indian unattached list who are under the rule-making control of the Secretary of State have a right of appeal to the appeal tribunals in the United Kingdom. The correct position is that there is no such right of appeal. The question whether a provision should be made for appeal is, however, under consideration.

DECLARATIONS OF EXEMPTION AND NOTIFICATION UNDER THE REGISTRATION OF FOREIGNERS ACT

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell (Home Member): Sir, I lay on the table a copy of the following Declarations of Exemption and Notification:

(i) No. 1/33/43-Poll. (E), dated the 4th August, 1943;

(ii) No. 1/36/43-Poll. (E), dated the 2nd September, 1943;

(iii) No. 1/37/43-Poll. (E), dated the 25th August, 1943;

(iv) No. 1/38/43-Poll. (E), dated the 3rd September, 1943;

(v) No. 1/40/43-Poll. (E), dated the 21st September, 1943;

(vi) No. 1/43/43-Poll. (E), dated the 12th October, 1943;

(vii) No. 1/44/43-Poll. (E), dated the 12th October, 1943;

(viii) No. 6577-S/43-Poll. (E), dated the 3rd October, 1943;

(ix) No. 1/47/43-Poll. (E), dated the 19th October, 1943;

(x) No. 1/48/43-Poll. (E), dated the 22nd October, 1943;

(xi) No. 1/50/43-Poll. (E), dated the 29th October, 1943; and

(xii) Notification No. 1/30/43-Poll. (E), dated the 20th September, 1943.

DECLARATIONS OF EXEMPTION.

No. 1/33/43-Political (E), Simla, the 4th August, 1943.—In exercise of the powers conferred by section 6 of the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939 (XVI of 1939), the Central Government is pleased to declare that the provisions of the Registration of Foreigners Rules, 1939, except rule 8 and such of the provisions of rules 4, 14, 15 and 16 as apply to, or in relation to, passengers and visitors who are not foreigners, shall not apply to, or in relation to, the following United States Senators who are on a visit to India:

Messrs. Henry Cabot Lodge, A. B. Chandler, Richard B. Russell, Ralph O. Brewster, and James M. Mead.

No. 1/36/43-Political (E), Simla, the 2nd September, 1943.—In exercise of the powers conferred by section 6 of the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939 (XVI of 1939), the Central Government is pleased to declare that the provisions of the Registration of Foreigners Rules, 1939, except rule 8 and such of the provisions of rules 4, 14, 15 and 16 as apply to, or in relation to, passengers and visitors who are not foreigners, shall not apply to, or in relation to:

1. Mr. John Fischer, special assistant to the Personal Representative of the President of the U. S. A.;

2. Mr. Eric Beecroft, special assistant to Mr. Fischer;

3. Mr. Chico Henry Schneider, Chief Mining Specialist of U. S. A. at Calcutta;

4. Mr. Paul Block, U. S. Office of War Information; and

5. Mr. McCune, Principal Procurement Officer of U. S. A. in India,
so long as they remain in their present posts.

No. 1/37/43-Political (E), Simla, the 25th August, 1943.—In exercise of the powers conferred by section 6 of the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939 (XVI of 1939), the Central Government is pleased to declare that the provisions of the Registration of Foreigners Rules, 1939, except rule 8 and such of the provisions of rules 4, 14, 15 and 16 as apply to, or in relation to, passengers and visitors who are not foreigners, shall not apply to, or in relation to:

(1) Dr. Carl Contalle;

(2) Dr. Herbert Baer;

(3) Dr. Walter Freundmann;

(4) Dr. David Yanco;

(5) Dr. Frederick Kisch;

(6) Dr. Eric Mamlock;

(7) Dr. Victor Taubenfligel;

(8) Dr. Franz Kriegel;

(9) Dr. Samuel Moise Flato; and

(10) Dr. Alexander Volokhina,

now serving as medical officers under the United States Armed Forces in India so long as they remain in their present posts.

No. 1/38/43-Political (E), Simla, the 3rd September, 1943.—In exercise of the powers conferred by section 6 of the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939 (XVI of 1939), the Central Government is pleased to declare that the provisions of the Registration of Foreigners Rules, 1939, except rule 8 and such of the provisions of rules 4, 14, 15 and 16 as apply to, or in relation to, passengers and visitors who are not foreigners, shall not apply to, or in relation to, Mr. Thomas Jefferson Lavis, a member of the United States Lend-Lease Mission to India, so long as he remains in his present post.

No. 1/40/43-Political (E), Simla, the 21st September, 1943.—In exercise of the powers conferred by section 6 of the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939 (XVI of 1939), the Central Government is pleased to declare that the provisions of the Registration of Foreigners Rules, 1939, except rule 8 and such of the provisions of rules 4, 14, 15 and 16 as apply to, or in relation to, passengers and visitors who are not foreigners, shall not apply to, or in relation to:

(1) Mr. Edward Harold Sweeney, Superintending Engineer for the United States War Shipping Administration at Bombay.

(2) Messrs. David W. Graham and Theodore Frutkoff, employees of the United States Office of War Information at New Delhi.

(3) Mr. Sheldon T. Mills, Secretary to the American Mission at New Delhi, and

(4) Mr. Tell Carrol Schreiber, Assistant Representative of the Overseas Operations Branch of the United States Office of War Information at New Delhi,
so long as they remain employed in their present posts.

No. 1/43/43-Political (E), Simla, the 12th October, 1943.—In exercise of the powers conferred by section 6 of the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939 (XVI of 1939), the Central Government is pleased to declare that the provisions of the Registration of Foreigners Rules, 1939, except rule 8 and such of the provisions of rules 4, 14, 15 and 16 as apply to, or in relation to, passengers and visitors who are not foreigners, shall not apply to, or in relation to, Messrs. Francis B. Rogers and Victor C. Rankin, Assistant Representatives of the Overseas Operations Branch of the United States Office of War Information so long as they remain employed in their present posts.

No. 1/44/43-Political (E), Simla, the 12th October, 1943.—In exercise of the powers conferred by section 6 of the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939 (XVI of 1939), the Central Government is pleased to declare that the provisions of the Registration of Foreigners Rules, 1939, except rule 8 and such of the provisions of rules 4, 14, 15 and 16 as apply to, or in relation to, passengers and visitors who are not foreigners, shall not apply to, or in relation to, Mr. Harold Mrazek, Assistant Representative of the United States Office of War Information, so long as he remains in that post.

FOREIGNERS ACT

No. 6577-S/43-Political (E), Simla, the 3rd October, 1943.—In exercise of the powers conferred by section 6 of the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939 (XVI of 1939), the Central Government is pleased to declare that the provisions of the Registration of Foreigners Rules, 1939, except rule 8 and such of the provisions of rules 4, 14, 15 and 16 as apply to, or in relation to, passengers and visitors who are not foreigners, shall not apply to, or in relation to:

1. Dr. Soong, the Chinese Foreign Minister.
2. Mr. T. A. Soong.
3. Brigadier General Tsai.
4. Five officials of the party of Dr. Soong.
5. A valet.

B. L. PANDEY,
Under Secretary.

No. 1/47/43-Political (E), Simla, the 19th October, 1943.—In exercise of the powers conferred by section 6 of the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939 (XVI of 1939), the Central Government is pleased to declare that the provisions of the Registration of Foreigners Rules, 1939, except rule 8 and such of the provisions of rules 4, 14, 15 and 16 as apply to, or in relation to, passengers and visitors who are not foreigners, shall not apply to, or in relation to, Mr. Minard Hamilton, Representative of the United States Office of Economic Warfare, for so long as he remains in that post.

No. 1/48/43-Political (E), Simla, the 22nd October, 1943.—In exercise of the powers conferred by section 6 of the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939 (XVI of 1939), the Central Government is pleased to declare that the provisions of the Registration of Foreigners Rules, 1939, except rule 8 and such of the provisions of rules 4, 14, 15 and 16 as apply to, or in relation to, passengers and visitors who are not foreigners, shall not apply to, or in relation to, Mr. James Daniels, a member of the staff of the U. S. Office of War Information, for so long as he remains in that post.

No. 1/50/43-Political (E), Simla, the 29th October, 1943.—In exercise of the powers conferred by section 6 of the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939 (XVI of 1939), the Central Government is pleased to declare that the provisions of the Registration of Foreigners Rules, 1939, except rule 8 and such of the provisions of rules 4, 14, 15 and 16 as apply to, or in relation to, passengers and visitors who are not foreigners, shall not apply to, or in relation to, Mr. George W. Small, clerk at the United States Consulate at Karachi, for so long as he remains in that post.

A. W. LOVATT,
Under Secretary.

NOTIFICATION.

No. 1/30/43-Political (E), New Delhi, the 20th September, 1943.—In exercise of the powers conferred by section 6 of the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939 (XVI of 1939), the Central Government is pleased to direct that the following further amendment shall be made in the Declarations, published with the Notification of the Government of India in the Home Department No. 1/30/43-Political (E), dated the 7th July, 1943, namely:

In clause (i), after the words "issued", the words "or on behalf of" shall be inserted.

H. J. FRAMPTON,
Joint Secretary.

MOTION RE THE FOOD SITUATION—*contd.*

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The House will now resume further consideration of the motion regarding food situation in India.

Lala Sham Lal (Ambala Division: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, I spoke last as to how the situation in Bengal was affecting war measures.

Now Sir, we have a 'Grow More Food' campaign inaugurated for some time. As to this campaign the Honourable the present Food Member has made up a case and repeated the matter again. It is an admitted fact that this campaign has not so far made any improvements in food cultivation in any appreciable degree. I think it ought to have been like that. There are no cattle available for cultivation—the very means of cultivation. The average value of a bullock has gone seven times higher than normal. The daily wages of a plough have risen from Rs. 1/8/- to Rs. 9/8/- per day. Cultivation has gone beyond the means of an ordinary peasant. Sir, in my own part of the country I have seen myself women having been yoked to plough instead of bullocks while throwing seeds. During the last Session, Government were asked as to how many cattle were being slaughtered daily to supply beef to military, but they refused to declare the number of cattle slaughtered daily, on security reasons. If such is the state of affairs, how then is the cry for "Grow More Food" going ever to succeed?

[Lala Sham Lal.]

In case the few observations that I have made be found correct and agreeable, then with due respect to the seniority and high thinking of my colleagues here, I will say earnestly, "Friends, do not waste any more time now. There is no use putting or indulging in questions and answers. The answers are not forthcoming satisfactorily; in many cases the information is not supplied on grounds of public policy or on the grounds of security. There is no use harping upon one calamity or the other. The calamities must go on increasing under the circumstances that India is faced with today. If there is a calamity in one direction today, there will be another calamity in another direction tomorrow. It may be possible that the Government may apply some anodyne for your satisfaction to some afflictions, but that will only be a very temporary affair; otherwise by way of reaction surely the misfortunes will grow stronger and stronger". The whole fabric of the Government at the centre, it seems to me, apparently has been unhinged. It is, therefore, necessary now to lose no time to bring this administration back to its centre. With the administration having been unhinged at the centre, I should say the administration in the provinces also has become unhinged. Therefore, to my mind, it is now necessary and in my considered opinion there is no way out except to have a popular national Government at the centre, a government representing all shades of political opinion, a government responsible to the people for the welfare of the country, and a government over which the people of this country may have the fullest control. Therefore, I ask all my Honourable colleagues here to compose all their differences, to come to an amicable settlement. It is not expected that this Government will come to your aid or do anything which may bring about a common understanding. It is now left for you alone to do it and to make a concerted demand for a popular national Government pointed out by me. It is that popular and national Government alone that can solve all your difficulties, including the food crisis in the country today. As far as I think, the political situation in the country requires that a joint and concerted demand should be made. Friends, you represent 400 millions of the people of this country. If you choose to make a combined and concerted demand in order to save your country and your countrymen from further disasters, then I do not think that your demand can be turned down in any case. Under these circumstances, I therefore suggest to my Honourable friends to cease making parties, to cease indulging in a tug of war for party strengthening, and then composing all their differences through this Assembly, a determination be made that a national Government is the only need of the hour and this determination of yours may be carried to His Majesty's Government in England through His Excellency the Viceroy, and you will see how the situation of India is corrected in all directions, including the food situation. People are not affected by your parties at all. Mark you please, that many of your high thinkers are now doing penance for you behind the bars. Mark you please, that they are doing so, so that you may become capable to discern clearly what is needful for the good of your country. Your delays in the matter are reducing your country more and more.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): All that is outside the scope of the motion before the House. The motion before the House is that the food situation of the country be considered. You cannot bring in all sorts of political and constitutional matters.

Lala Sham Lal: Sir, the food situation is intimately connected with

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): There may be a remote connection.

Lala Sham Lal: All right; I bow to your ruling. Then if you cannot do this thing, then of course nature will have its way; Kali's ways are mysterious and not always visible all at once. Nature will set things right in her own way. Of course nature will not care for your methods of remedying this situation by this device or that and quite unmindful of your bewailing.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member's time is up.

Lala Sham Lal: A couple of minutes more?

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I cannot allow that. There are a number of speakers yet to speak.

I find that Mr. Neogy has moved his amendment, but he has not made his speech; I think he had better make his speech now.

Mr. H. A. Sathar H. Essak Sait (West Coast and Nilgiris: Muhammadan): With regard to the other amendments, I suggest that they may be moved formally and the Members may take their chance later, so that all the amendments may be before the House.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Yes; that may be done.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta (Bombay Central Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I move:

"That to the motion the following be added at the end:

'and having done so this Assembly views with grave concern the tragic situation prevailing in Bengal and other parts of India and recommends to the Governor General in Council to adopt immediately more vigorous and effective measures to cope with the situation including the stoppage of further inflation of currency; this Assembly further recommends to the Governor General in Council that a Committee consisting of fourteen with eight elected members of the Assembly, four elected members of the Council of State and one Accountant General with the Chief Justice of the Federal Court as Chairman be appointed to enquire into and report on the following points relating to the economic distress prevailing in the country:

- (a) the causes of the present distress;
- (b) the degree of effectiveness of the steps taken to prevent or remedy the situation with particular reference to the systems of procurement, transport and distribution of foodgrains, as well as price control, that have been in operation from time to time;
- (c) the suitability of the administrative organisation in charge of famine operations;
- (d) the adequacy or otherwise of the relief measures adopted by Government, specially in the light of experience of the management of previous famines in India and the actual results achieved so far in Bengal;
- (e) the accuracy or otherwise of mortality statistics and the effect of the present distress on mortality rates;
- (f) the steps to be taken to counteract or mitigate the effects of starvation and malnutrition upon the younger generation; and
- (g) the measures to be taken to prevent a recurrence of the present trouble in any part of India."

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Amendment moved:

"That to the motion the following be added at the end:

'and having done so this Assembly views with grave concern the tragic situation prevailing in Bengal and other parts of India and recommends to the Governor General in Council to adopt immediately more vigorous and effective measures to cope with the situation including the stoppage of further inflation of currency; this Assembly further recommends to the Governor General in Council that a Committee consisting of fourteen with eight elected members of the Assembly, four elected members of the Council of State and one Accountant General with the Chief Justice of the Federal Court as Chairman be appointed to enquire into and report on the following points relating to the economic distress prevailing in the country:

- (a) the causes of the present distress;
- (b) the degree of effectiveness of the steps taken to prevent or remedy the situation with particular reference to the systems of procurement, transport and distribution of foodgrains, as well as price control, that have been in operation from time to time;
- (c) the suitability of the administrative organisation in charge of famine operations;
- (d) the adequacy or otherwise of the relief measures adopted by Government, specially in the light of experience of the management of previous famines in India and the actual results achieved so far in Bengal;
- (e) the accuracy or otherwise of mortality statistics and the effect of the present distress on mortality rates;
- (f) the steps to be taken to counteract or mitigate the effects of starvation and malnutrition upon the younger generation; and
- (g) the measures to be taken to prevent a recurrence of the present trouble in any part of India."

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh (Nagpur Division: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, I have an amendment to this amendment which has been moved by Mr. Jamnadas Mehta; Sir, I move:

"That in the amendment by Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta for the words 'younger generation' occurring in clause (f) the word 'people' be substituted."

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): But it has not been circulated to Members.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: I have given copies to the Whips of the Parties. I received notice of this amendment only on Saturday night. I have given notice exactly in time. I came here at 10-30 A.M. today.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): But it has not been circulated to Members. If he had given notice in time, it would have been circulated.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: But it was circulated, Sir.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): If the Honourable Member had taken the earliest opportunity to give notice to the office that he wished to move this amendment, it could have been circulated.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: I came to the office this morning at 10-30 A.M. and there was nobody, and at 10-35 A.M. I handed over the notice to Mr. Robinson.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): As it is a harmless sort of amendment, I think it might be moved. Very well. Amendment moved:

"That in the amendment by Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta for the words 'younger generation' occurring in clause (f) the word 'people' be substituted."

Mr. Kailash Bihari Lal (Bhagalpur, Purnea and the Santhal Parganas: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, I move:

"That to the motion the following be added at the end:

'and having considered the appalling condition prevailing all over the country this Assembly recommends to the Governor General in Council to appoint a Committee consisting of the officials and non-officials to enquire into the matter with a view to suggest measures for guarding against the recurrence of such catastrophe in future and also with a view to the possibility of affording immediate and effective relief to the suffering people by adopting the following remedial measures:

(a) opening of free gruel kitchens in the worst affected parts;

(b) opening of public orphanages;

(c) opening of poor houses and industrial factories attached thereto in important towns and stopping beggary;

(d) assuming of control over the public hotels meant for the proletariat class and regulating and fixing reasonable rates thereof;

(e) centralising the control of poor houses and industrial factories attached thereto and financing them from government money and funds from public charity; and

(f) controlling all public and charitable funds and authorising only responsible bodies to collect funds for the purpose."

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Amendment moved:

"That to the motion the following be added at the end:

'and having considered the appalling condition prevailing all over the country this Assembly recommends to the Governor General in Council to appoint a Committee consisting of the officials and non-officials to enquire into the matter with a view to suggest measures for guarding against the recurrence of such catastrophe in future and also with a view to the possibility of affording immediate and effective relief to the suffering people by adopting the following remedial measures:

(a) opening of free gruel kitchens in the worst affected parts;

(b) opening of public orphanages;

(c) opening of poor houses and industrial factories attached thereto in important towns and stopping beggary;

(d) assuming of control over the public hotels meant for the proletariat class and regulating and fixing reasonable rates thereof;

(e) centralising the control of poor houses and industrial factories attached thereto and financing them from government money and funds from public charity; and

(f) controlling all public and charitable funds and authorising only responsible bodies to collect funds for the purpose."

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Sir, I have got an amendment to Mr. Kailash Bihari Lal's amendment that clause (f) of his amendment be omitted.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Order, order. The next amendment is in the name of Pandit Shambhudaya Misra. The first part of it wishes to indict Lord Linlithgow, Mr. Amery and Sir John Herbert. He is apparently not aware that he cannot do anything like that under the rules and standing orders of this House. As regards the second part, that is evidently beyond the scope of the motion. I hold that this amendment is not in order.

Pandit Shambhudaya Misra (Central Provinces Hindu Divisions: Non-Muhammadan): May I be allowed to say a few words?

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I have considered the matter and that is my ruling.

Pandit Shambhudayal Misra: That is only a recommendation

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

Mr. H. A. Sathar H. Essak Sait: I move:

"That in the amendment moved by Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan after the words 'Royal Commission' the following be inserted:

'composed of independent and impartial persons, majority of whom shall be Indians commanding the confidence of the peoples of India';"

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Amendment moved:

"That in the amendment moved by Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan after the words 'Royal Commission' the following be inserted:

'composed of independent and impartial persons, majority of whom shall be Indians commanding the confidence of the peoples of India';"

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Sir, I have an amendment to this amendment. I move:

"That in the proposed amendment by Mr. H. A. Sathar H. Essak Sait and others to Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan's amendment for all the words beginning with the words 'composed of' and ending with the words 'peoples of India' the following be substituted:

'composed of elected members of the Assembly and the Council of State with a Judge of the Federal Court as Chairman';"

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Amendment moved:

"That in the proposed amendment by Mr. H. A. Sathar H. Essak Sait and others to Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan's amendment for all the words beginning with the words 'composed of' and ending with the words 'peoples of India' the following be substituted:

'composed of elected members of the Assembly and the Council of State with a Judge of the Federal Court as Chairman';"

Mr. K. C. Neogy (Dacca Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): The calamity which has befallen my unfortunate province at the present moment is in a sense unparalleled in the history of human civilisation. Starvation, death, pestilence, have been known to follow in the wake of victorious tyrants overrunning foreign territory. In the present instance, however, this gigantic tragedy is being enacted while a well established Government is functioning in the country. If we consider the acts of omission and commission of which Government have been guilty in their attempt to prevent the outbreak of this famine or to deal with it adequately, we cannot help thinking that this famine is primarily a State industry, and to my mind in certain of its aspects it bears the hall-mark of a genuine British manufacture.

I recall with disappointment and sorrow the debate that took place in this House three months ago when we had the Honourable Sir Azizul Huque as the Member in charge of this Department. I say I recall that debate with disappointment and sorrow because on that occasion we tried to rouse the Government to the necessity of taking prompt action for the prevention of a tragedy that was fast overtaking my province. I remember with disappointment, and sorrow the attitude that was taken up by Sir Azizul Huque as the mouthpiece of an incompetent and callous Government in parrying all our suggestions and questions seeking information about the actual state of affairs in the country. At that moment in a mood of frustration Sir Azizul Huque sought solace in Tagore's poetry. Lord Linlithgow was busy packing his trunks. A friend of the bovine species, he perhaps would have been more interested had it been a case of cattle epidemic in Bengal. Or was it because a sense of constitutional chastity prevented him from visiting Bengal in those days?

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member knows that he cannot reflect on the conduct of the Governor General.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: But he is no longer the Governor General.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): That makes no difference. It is the holder of the office.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: The plea has been raised that this famine has been aggravated, or at least its treatment has been made difficult, because of the division of responsibility between the Central Government and the provinces. If it is a question of the policy of repression, somebody has got to press the button at New Delhi and the whole country can be set ablaze; and the policy that is enforced throughout India, irrespective of the existence of a ministry or not in any province, is carried out faithfully in every detail throughout the

[Mr. K. C. Neogy.]

length and breadth of the country. This Government has specialised in the enforcement of law and order of the Maxwellian variety. If, however, it is a question of preserving human life and providing food for the people, well, then comes the rub. Well, then let the Azizuls fight the Fazluls and the Srivastavas the Suhrawardies, so that our friends in England can establish beyond the shadow of a doubt the incapacity of all Indians for self-government.

Sir, the debates that took place recently in the Houses of Parliament have been a great eye opener to us. The official spokesman mentioned all the facts except the real ones, that could be held responsible for this unheard of famine. Mr. Leopold Amery threw up his hands in holy horror, while contemplating the increase in India's population during the last census. I have in front of me certain statistics which I have taken some pains to study and from which I find that whereas during the last three centuries and odd the British population has increased more than 8 times, the Indian population has not increased more than four times. Moreover, if we were to take, say, about a period of 50 years prior to the last census, the total increment in India is found to be about 39 per cent. whereas the increment in the United States of America for that half century stood at 186 per cent., in Japan 74 per cent., Great Britain 54 per cent., Italy 46·8 per cent., Switzerland 43·5 per cent., Germany 42·2 per cent. as against India's 39 per cent. If we regard for a moment the progress of population in Great Britain and Wales, and if particularly we examine that census decade 1871 to 1881, during which Leopold Amery was vouchsafed to an expectant world to fulfil his Heaven-appointed mission of presiding over the India Office in his dotage, we find that the increase of population was 14·36 per cent. in England and Wales. We are not aware that Mr. Amery protested against this phenomenon either before or after his birth. Nor are we aware that England and Wales was swept by a devastating famine as a consequence of this phenomenon. Sir, is it the case of the British Government that India is no longer in a position to maintain a larger population? If that be their case, let us examine it a little further. Two speakers in the Houses of Parliament pointed out the very low outturn per acre of foodgrains in India. I am not going to trouble the House with the percentages. Taking rice, I find that in the case of the province of Bengal, in regard to which we have the benefit of an authoritative commission, the Land Revenue Commission of 1940, which was presided over by Sir Francis Floud, it has been recorded that the outturn of paddy per acre has not progressed since the days of Emperor Akbar. If anything, it has gone down. Now, Sir, the Commission compares the yield in respect of rice of the various rice producing countries and points out particularly with reference to Japan, that although in Japan where the same problems of over-population and uneconomic holdings exist, the yield is at least three times as much as that of Bengal and in China it is more than double. I wonder if the British Government wants to take that as a credit and as a proof of the success of their trusteeship of India. Admittedly a very large proportion of the Indian population has always been on the margin of starvation. Indeed it has been pointed out by many writers in the past that very many thousands and hundreds of thousands of the people really live in a state of semi-starvation even in normal times. When therefore India got embroiled in a total war, was it not expected of our trustees to take some care to ensure a sufficient supply of foodstuffs for India's population? Mr. Amery says that precautions were taken soon after the fall of Singapore. I think Singapore fell about the middle of February, 1942. Burma soil had already been invaded on the 9th December, and what were the precautions taken? The only constructive programme to which the Government can point in this connection is the starting of the 'Grow More Food' campaign, which was inaugurated as "early" as the 7th April, 1942, Burma soil having been invaded on the 9th December, that is to say, about four months earlier. Moreover, what was the attitude of the Government of India

in regard to the question of increasing the rice acreage in Bengal? Just before Burma was invaded, the Government of Bengal was persuaded by the Government of India to insist upon an enlarged acreage under jute in view of problematic orders from America and other parts of the world. In spite of the opposition of the representatives of Jute growers on a statutory body, the jute growers were compelled to undertake double the acreage of what they were prepared to agree to, and this insistence went on till the 24th March, when the Government of India permitted the Government of Bengal to order a reduction in view of the developments of the war. It had already become too late and there could be no remedy of the situation. The result was that the area under rice underwent a shrinkage. The area under rice in Bengal in the year 1942/43 was 7 lakhs of acres less than in the year 1941/42; and this decrease in the acreage has partly to be ascribed to this policy of the Central Government in encouraging a larger acreage under jute than the jute growers themselves wanted. Then, Sir, exports continued to the Mid-East and Africa; and it cannot be said that so far as the export policy is concerned, the Provincial Government had any say. Indeed, it is on record that the Ministers protested on more than one occasion against the policy of export in which the Government had indulged, but to no effect. The Government of Bengal really meant Sir John Herbert in those days—and the Ministers kept on protesting, but to no effect. In the Gregory Committee report a fantastic assumption has been made that the high prices of foodgrains really encouraged the producers to gorge themselves with food. A more fantastic suggestion cannot be made, and its hollowness has been exposed in the note appended to that report by the present Minister of Agriculture for Bengal, where he points out that not more than 10 per cent. of the agricultural population, perhaps he was speaking exclusively of Bengal, could be said to have anything like any surplus. The rest either had to depend upon subsidiary occupations, because of the uneconomic sizes of their holdings, or they just barely maintained themselves with the produce of their fields. The Floud Commission also made a recommendation that a very large proportion of the cultivators really do not possess economic holdings. They pointed out that 29 per cent. of the total population of Bengal represented landless agricultural labour, and that of the rest barely one-fifth has just sufficient land for maintenance. Two-fifths are cultivators of extremely small holdings. While these factors have been conveniently ignored by the authorities in England in the course of the debate that took place in the Houses of Parliament, as also in this House by the Honourable Member in charge. An undue emphasis has been placed on hoarding. I entirely agree that hoarding has to a very large extent been responsible for the present famine, but hoarding on whose part? As pointed out by the Minister of Agriculture in Bengal, not more than 10 per cent. of the agriculturists could possibly be suspected of hoarding anything like, say, considerable amounts which could make any impression on the markets.

One of the factors which went to contribute towards this famine was referred to in the House of Lords by Lord Huntington when he said that grain bought for the army and army reserves must also be a contributory cause. This has not been referred to by any other speaker. Now, Sir, a good deal of discussion has taken place in the Gregory Committee as regards this point. We find a laboured apologia in the report to indicate that, after all, the army feeds the Indians who otherwise have to be fed by the country and, although the standard of consumption in the case of soldiers may be higher than the standard of consumption in their homes, the difference between the two standards cannot be very considerable; and although the army is expected to hold reserves, the reserves are not at the present moment held up to the mark. But, Sir, there is one point which has got to be remembered in this connection. Though quantities do matter, it is not so much the quantities, as the simultaneous withdrawal of foodstuffs from the market by different competing parties, that matter. In the present instance, the Government of India is responsible for very large purchases made on behalf of the Army, as well as considerable

{Mr. K. C. Neogy.}

purchases made for the benefit of the civilian Departments, of which the Railways perhaps take the lead. It is admitted that all the Departments of the Government of India and all the Departments of the Government of Bengal, had to be supplied with rations at concession rates, though the details of this privilege vary from Department to Department. In some cases, the entire families of the employees are entitled to be supplied with rations at concession rates. In other cases, perhaps the individual employees alone are so entitled. But, then, the fact remains that very large purchases had to be made by Government for the purpose of carrying out this obligation. That meant withdrawal of large quantities of grains from the market simultaneously with the purchases made on behalf of the Army. Add to this the demands made. . . .

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Honourable Member's time is up.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee (Calcutta Suburbs: Non-Muhammadan Urban): It was agreed, Sir, the other day that the Movers of amendments would get 30 minutes.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I see the Honourable Member has moved an amendment. He can then speak for half an hour.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: This fact is amply illustrated by a very recent publication on behalf of the Government of Bengal in which it is pointed out that from the 1st of March to 31st of August 1943 the total quantity of foodgrains received on Government account, including purchases by Government agents from outside Bengal and purchases on Government account within the province itself, amounted to 65·3 lakhs of maunds. Out of this, these different Departments which enjoyed certain priorities, the industrial concerns, the essential services and so on, took away 22 lakhs of maunds, that is to say, more than one-third of the total quantity that was available to the Government of Bengal. The despatches to the districts amounted to 16½ lakhs of maunds. That is to say, out of a total of 65 odd lakhs of maunds, the districts which represent 6 crores of population, got 16½ lakhs of maunds. Is it, then, any matter of wonder that the distress was so acute and so tragic in its effects in the interior of the province? I find that only five days ago, a Doonars

planter, evidently an honest Briton, writing to the *Statesman* said
12 Noon. the following:

"What is wanted is the restarting of a free movement of rice and paddy to local bazaars throughout Bengal. This will happen if large industrial concerns require again to lay in stocks to safeguard their labour and they will only be carrying on the vicious circle of the bazaar. This must not be allowed to continue."

Sir, we had another honest Briton in the Council of State, Mr. Parker, admitting that he had hoarded large stocks of food, though for the benefit of his employees. Hundreds of Parkers all over Bengal contributed to the misery of the population by resorting to this procedure for the purpose of safeguarding their own interests.

An Honourable Member: The others are not so honest as to confess.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: I expect Sir Henry Richardson to get up and explain the part that was taken by his friends in this particular matter. Nowhere else can such a thing be imagined. There was a mad rush for securing grains, and it is referred to in the Gregory report as a scramble for supplies at ever increasing prices which they say had diminished supplies procurable. Who was responsible for this scramble? Let Sir Henry Richardson answer. Between Government and the employers of labour, those who are understood to be engaged in essential industries (and the very touch of the white hand seems to endow any industry with the character of an essential industry), the scramble went on, and was to a very large extent responsible for the famine which we are discussing. What did the Central Government do? According to a statement made in this House, till 29th May 1943, there was no statutory authority given to the Provincial Governments to require employers of labour

to submit returns of the stocks that they held for distribution to their employees, nor to take out a licence for the maintenance of such stocks. Am I very wrong when I say that the Central Government is itself responsible for encouraging employers of labour in this murderous enterprise of theirs? At no time in the history of India the cleavage between the Government and the people had been brought out so clearly. Here was the Government supported by the capitalists whose needs must be satisfied at all costs, if necessary, at the sacrifice of humble lives. Nobody was there to enquire as to what was happening to the people—six crores of people in the Province of Bengal. This attitude was very forcibly expressed by a British executive officer in one of the Eastern Bengal districts when he pointed out that the life of a pack mule belonging to the military transport department was more valuable, and deserved to be preserved with greater care, than the life of people who were not helping in the war effort. That truly represented the attitude of a section of the permanent officials in this country, and that also led to the tragedy that we are witnessing today.

Sir, I have very little time at my disposal to deal with the other points that come to my mind. Sir, the cup of my humiliation is full to the brim. I have under the rules of procedure of this House to word my amendment as a recommendation to those very people who, I think, are responsible for the misfortunes of my countrymen. But, Sir, I feel that I am pleading at the bar of history—history that is not propaganda, history that is truthful, history that is fair and just to the weak and the oppressed, and I have no doubt about the verdict of that history.

The Honourable Sir Jogendra Singh (Member for Education, Health and Lands): Sir, I as a Member of this very incompetent and callous Government, may say that I just paid a flying visit to some parts of Bengal. To speak with confidence concerning the rural conditions in Bengal would need a prolonged stay. I can give you only my passing impressions. I can claim that these impressions are not without some validity. I have been familiar with similar conditions elsewhere.

Bengal has been passing through a terrible ordeal of both body and mind. I have been asking myself the question: why Bengal suddenly found itself faced with famine? Bengal had managed to subsist for years and conditions to all appearances were normal.

In 1933, General Megaw, after a careful enquiry into certain Public health aspects of village life in India struck a note of warning when he said:

"The outlook for the future is gloomy to a degree, not only for the masses of the people who must face an intensified struggle for bare subsistence, but also for the upper classes whose incomes depend on the production of a surplus crop."

Taking India as a whole, he said that 39 per cent. of the people were well-nourished, 41 per cent., poorly nourished and 20 per cent. very badly nourished.

An Honourable Member: What is the distinction between poorly nourished and badly nourished.

The Honourable Sir Jogendra Singh: I suppose 'poorly nourished' means under nourished, and "badly nourished" means not properly nourished at all.

This was said in 1933 and the conditions have not greatly changed since this was written. The fact is that India has been suffering from chronic poverty. Even in normal times, Bengal produces only 19·6 ounces of grain per adult against 24 ounces per adult estimated to be the minimum nutritional requirement. The position in Bengal was aggravated by the shortage of rice harvest in 1942-43 owing to damage by cyclone and insect pests. The situation in the province was not made easier by an attempt to bring the laws of supply and demand which act sub-consciously under conscious control and the provincial barriers which suddenly sprang up impeding normal streams of supply. The corn dealers who carry stocks in normal times, faced with the uncertainties of a controlled market, now carry no stocks. Villages were emptied of supplies and the landless agricultural labour was stranded. The village drudge trudged to the towns in the hope of getting some food. The towns had neither

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the reserves nor the organisation to meet the situation. The precariously balanced economy of Bengal was thus put out of gear by factors over which the Province lost control. New problems arose which could not be readily resolved.

The impression I formed was that the clouds are lifting. Since about a month ago grain from outside Bengal is now not only flowing into Calcutta but into the remote towns in a steady stream. The charities organised by people in Calcutta and outside towns have done a great deal to succour and to save. At Dacca I found a voluntary organisation at work which has much to commend itself. The citizens of Dacca of all communities have formed a central food committee. This central food committee has formed mohalla committees. The authorities hand over foodstuffs as they become available, to the central food committee and this committee distributes to mohallas and committees who in their turn distribute it to their consumers. The central committee charges a small commission for the supplies it gives to the mohalla committees for retail sale. Out of this profit it runs free kitchens which feed a few thousands. It has also started cheap canteens which have become very popular. These cheap canteens provide four *chapatis*, *dal* and vegetables for one anna. I tried these myself and found them good.

Then a rich harvest of rice would soon be ready for the scythe. Those who are ready to work will find their way into the rice fields and those who are too weak to work and the orphans will need care and nursing for some time to come. Indeed orphans will need care and protection for many years till they grow up. I would, however, remind the House that this 26 million acres of early and late rice give less than half an acre per head on 60 million people of Bengal. The normal yield of rice per acre in Bengal is about 1,000 pounds only. This is the grim fact of this situation, and till food production can be increased to meet all the demands the situation would remain just as it was in 1933. It will go to normal but that normal does not mean that the population is getting what it should get—a good standard of living.

Thanks to the Honourable the Finance Member we have not been idle. Our "Grow More Food" campaign has succeeded during 1942-43 in increasing the area under food crops by 80 lakh acres, and our target during the current year is to increase it to 120 lakh acres. Up to 15th October, 1943, we have given financial assistance amounting to 133 lakhs in loans, over 61 lakhs in grants from the Central revenues and nearly 10½ lakhs from the Cotton Fund—I am glad to say that 62 lakhs in loans and 13 lakhs in grants have gone to Bengal. This financial assistance has been sanctioned for initiating various schemes which are expected to produce quick results. Among irrigation schemes, two schemes of irrigation by tube-wells have been sanctioned, one for 200 tube-wells in U. P. and another for 73 tube-wells in Bihar, which would command an area of 60,000 acres in U. P. and 22,800 acres in Bihar, respectively. These areas have been diverted from cash crops to food crops and would revert to cash crops as the cultivator is losing over the change. The cultivator must be assured of a square deal if we want to ensure the success of the "Grow More Food" campaign and have consumer goods available to meet the needs of himself and of his family. There is no ground for a complacent attitude. The disease of poverty and under-production is of long standing. It will need consistent effort continued for long years to improve conditions.

I am a new comer to this House. I wonder if this House has ever taken any abiding interest in the report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture, Sir John Russell's admirable recommendations, Dr. Wright's report on Animal Husbandry and the Banking Inquiry Committee's report which gave estimates of agricultural debt. The need of the moment is to take a warning from the present, to plan for increasing production for the future, providing for paying employment for surplus village population and to raise generally the living standards of the agricultural producer as well as urban labour. Planning

requires grasping of the complex conditions from a number of key positions from which a complete design can be produced.

The problem may be placed under four heads: Land, Economics, Social, Political.

Land improvement implies the lightening of the burden of debt which the agriculturists carry, to bring the land tax within the modern canons of taxation, to provide cheap agricultural credit, a knowledge of better seeds and the method of improved animal husbandry, of co-operation and of farming generally. It needs bringing science to the help of the villagers, to extend the responsibility of our colleges and universities beyond their academic walls to fields and farms.

Economics imply provision of money for developing new lands, to convert barren areas into fruitful fields by irrigation, to cover areas that lie waste with grass and trees, to raise the price of agricultural produce which determines agricultural wage, so that our vast population may have some purchasing power creating a new demand for goods and services leading to expansion of industries, to provide employment for our population which remains unproductive.

On the social side it needs a programme for rural and urban reconstruction, training for applying modern scientific discoveries. In the words of a poet, our fleet-footed friends have captured the *Mahmal*, while we sit spell-bound by the piping of the piper of the caravan. The force of human engine has been assessed at 2,000 kilogram calories *per capita* per day, while science in countries which are now in the forefront has increased the capacity per day to 1½ lakh kilograms *per capita* per day. The lag in scientific technique will have to be made up if we are to take our place with the other countries of the world.

Some planning on the agricultural side was carried out in the Punjab and it is as a result of this that the Punjab is able to provide a surplus for other provinces and has made an unrivalled contribution in men, money and material, and her wheat has found its way not only to Bengal but to many war fronts and at rates which compare favourably with the prices of other food-grains. The Punjab has made the interest of the producers its paramount concern and has been rewarded by the contentment of the countryside even in these fateful days.

You may well ask, what is the policy and programme of my department? It is true that I am in command of Education, Health and Lands, but it is none the less true that my command does not wield the sceptre of authority. Agriculture, Education and Health are primarily the concern of the provinces. Indeed it seems to have become a tradition, nay, it is the constitutional position that beyond offering occasional advice the Centre has no direct responsibility in these fruitful fields. I must confess that I am not satisfied with this. If India is to resolve the economic deadlock it must have centralised direction, centralised finance and decentralised activities. I feel that unless we at the Centre guide the emergent forces which are racing in full blast in all countries of the world, we would fail entirely in advancing the economic interests of this vast continent. Society cannot be rationed as a factory. It can only live by pooling its resources, by financing boldly agriculture and industry and by harmonising collective and individual cultures, sub-consciously acting as if bound by social contact, to promote and protect, with common force, the goods of each associate. The strategy of the future must aim at production of food and goods. We are worried about the increased circulation of money. We ought to worry more about increasing the production of goods.

I have deliberately dwelt on conditions which govern life and labour. We must apply our minds to the problems of the chronic disease of poverty which is haunting our villages and towns. Of enquiries, reports, and recommendations there is no end. What we need is action. Our discussions bear no fruit and will be gone with the wind unless we plan boldly and carry out the plans with courage to make a better future for the generations to come.

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Mr. Churchill has given the lead. Let us resolve to provide food, work and homes for all.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra (Presidency Division: Non-Muhammadian Rural): Not for us.

The Honourable Sir Jogendra Singh: The battle of land and the battle against poverty should be fought now and continued till victory is won. (Interruption.) I can assure you that this Government is resolved now to fight poverty and to raise the standard of living both in the villages and towns.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee: Good sense is dawning on this Government now. . .

The Honourable Sir Jogendra Singh: I call 'this Government' because it is largely Indianised and is resolved to do its best.

Sir Oowajee Jahangir (Bombay City: Non-Muhammadian Urban): May I ask the Honourable Member what is the production for 1942-43 from his 'Grow More Food' campaign?

The Honourable Sir Jogendra Singh: Three and a half million tons.

Mr. Abdul Qayyum (North-West Frontier Province: General): May I know whom does the Honourable Member represent? Nobody. Please do not lecture to us about your representative character.

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

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Sir, I have already moved the amendment which stood in my name, and I shall presently explain why my amendment should be carried. In the meantime I wish to express my satisfaction that at long last the Government have come to a right conclusion and have accepted a really right, food policy. It has been a very belated performance, but at last they have reached a really right policy to get over this food crisis. . . .

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: What is that?

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: What it embodied in the Gregory Committee Report which the Honourable Member has accepted on behalf of the Government, which recommends statutory control of prices, vigorous drive against profiteers, no matter who they are, and so on. I am very glad that that policy has at last been accepted and even now—even at this late hour—if it is honestly pursued without any but or if, it will relieve the unfortunate distress that has been stalking the land for nearly two years. (Interruption.) I only say 'if'. It is not such a big 'if' as I will explain just now. I find that there is no reference to the immediate present or immediate future in my Honourable friend, Sir Jogendra Singh's speech. He has been talking to us of a beautiful future vision when the standard of life will be raised and he has his poetic dream of something which is yet to come.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: From the corpses of the dead.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: For the present I am not concerned with that dream but I am concerned with the terrible realities. . . .

Dr. G. V. Deshmukh (Bombay City: Non-Muhammadian Urban): But he is concerned with his four *chapatis*.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: The drift of policy about which I will use the mildest word that the Government has been guilty of criminal neglect. It is the mildest word that I can use. The mildest words which I can use for the policy of the Government for the last four years are 'criminal negligence' and even more 'criminal self-complacency'. But I am not indulging in recriminations. I am more concerned with the immediate future and I assure Government that it is because I want to help them that I am saying all this. The problem is too tragic. The situation does not admit of these personal bickerings, but of the promptest and the quickest remedy vigorously pursued. I am not quite sure whether the Government are still going to pursue the policy which they have announced. If they do, we shall even now forget what has happened in the past. Dreary processions of one Food Member after another, one Food Member comes and one goes, experts come, committees come, reports come, pompous promises were made on the floor of this House by General Wood, Admiral Steel, Air-Marshall Iron, but nothing is done to relieve the poor people who are dying.

I want something real from day to day, from moment to moment. But still my Honourable friends on the Treasury Benches want us to sympathize with their difficulties and not to redress the difficulties of 40 crores of people. They have no apology for the past; they are still telling us that they have done their best when the whole world says that they could not have done worse. Let them keep this in mind that if they were in a free country, all these Honourable Members will be driven into an exile from which they will not return until their next birth.

An Honourable Member: It is fiction.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: But what do I find the Indian Members to be? They are simply departmental heads. I am shocked that not one single Indian Member has raised his voice against the policy of the last four years of deplorable self-complacency and criminal negligence. Indian Members of the Executive Council must act like members of a Cabinet, and not departmental heads. The past Food policy shows that they simply attended to their departments, did their best, made their mild protests in the Executive Council and left everything to those who control the policy.

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: That is unfortunately the impression that I have got. I have tried in all places wherever my voice was heard. In fact, I asked one Food Member to get me the food or to get out. I said, "get out". I don't think there is any milder word for you who have starved 40 crores of people and who are still complacent and who want us to appreciate only your difficulties. What is the difficulty that you know about? 40 crores of people going without food, thousands of people forming queues at food shops. And then because they have some kind of rationing in Bombay, there is no end of boosting this Bombay rationing. Remember that in Bombay the solution achieved is only of distribution and of nothing else. It is a mistake to boost Bombay. I come from Bombay and I know the conditions there. It is of course right to compliment the Government of Bombay and their officers who have done their very best for distribution, but don't think you have much to envy us in the matter of prices, and unless the problem is solved both ways, distribution and prices, there is no meaning even in rationing in Bombay. I tell you that the prices in Bombay today are what black market prices were this time last year; and the food is often adulterated with dust and stone, and we have to pay for mud at wheat prices. That is the position in Bombay. You have read of rats gnawing at the dead body of a woman, not merely in Bengal where it is so common, but in Bombay, which has been boosted out of all proportion everywhere, even in the House of Commons. I say as a Bombay man that what they have solved is the distribution question; the prices question remains absolutely unsolved. Therefore I ask the Government that they should not have any complacency about this matter; they should pursue with vigour the measures they have initiated, with courage and persistence, and they should not care for anybody who comes in the way. If the Punjab zemindars come in the way, they must be taught their places; if the Government of Sind is profiteering at the expense of the starving masses, that Government must be pulled down

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai (Sind: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Under the orders of the Central Government.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Yes; there are ample powers; they have not been used. I asked for a food dictator months ago. What do I see now? The Sind Government making a profit of 2 crores or even some say 3 crores—I received a letter yesterday only—a gentleman who was a highly placed Government servant but who has now retired says it is three crores; and this Government to whom I am paying a subsidy for the last 8 years of one crore and 5 lakhs a year, this Sind Government which is living on my charity for the last 8 years to the extent of one crore and five lakhs a year and which is going to live on my charity for another forty years because of this Sukkur barrage, this Government has the ingratitude, the inhumanity of starving my people unless they pay these fancy prices for what stuff it exports to Bombay and to other places. What

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mercy are you going to show them? You are not touching the Punjab zemindar or the Sind Government. My friend Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad mentioned in his speech the other day that 95 per cent. of the people of the Punjab are against this policy of the zemindars; and I am glad to find that his voice has been echoed in the *Tribune* which condemns without reservation this complacency of the Punjab Government and their incipient revolt against the policy of control. I say, control them properly; shackle them if need be; force them to behave properly.

But unless the Government are also clear that the real causes of this misery are also attacked, they will only land themselves in a blind alley. That real cause is inflation. Let Government remember what they have done during the last four years. That inflation is at the bottom, and it is the biggest and the most essential and the most decisive cause of the present crisis. It was early in 1942 that my humble voice was raised at a public meeting over which I was presiding, that inflation was not coming in the future—it had already come. Thereafter Professor Vakil followed with a series of lectures against inflation. Then there is the *Economist* of London, one of the best known financial papers—I cannot help reading what the *Economist* has to say about the policy of this Government: it calls it "crude inflationary finance". That is not enough; it goes further and condemns them roundly. I could not condemn them as effectively as the editor of the *Economist* has done; but unfortunately my Honourable friend, the Finance Member, does not still lay the same emphasis on inflation as he should. First he ridiculed and pooh-poohed it; then he employed hirelings to write in favour of his policy. These hirelings were writing in April, that wheat is flowing into Bengal. They are being picked up from some native state, one of them a foreigner, to write in support of his inflationary policy. The Honourable the Finance Member did everything in his power to confuse the issue by talking of workers, in their thousands—getting high wages and about their "fictitious" purchasing power; but it never occurred to him that it is the inflationary policy which is the decisive and the real cause of this great catastrophe prevalent in the country. In my humble way, I tried to work out what in terms of human misery this country had suffered as a result of his policy; it caused me many sleepless hours and when I reached my conclusion, I tell you that I could not get sleep till 3 A.M. After such patient labour I presented him some statistics the other day and asked him to correct me if I was wrong, or he could give his own figures. What did he do? With incredible levity, which cannot be excused, he began by pouring ridicule on the statistics of the miseries of the poor of this country. Let him come out with his own reasoning; otherwise for a finance minister of this country to pour ridicule over the miseries of hundred millions of people worked out in statistics is to my mind a performance which nobody will envy him. I am willing to be corrected; but I maintain that after careful consideration I reached a figure of 50,000 crores of goods and services—for a margin of error I reduced this to 18,000. That shows how moderate a man I am. But instead of studying those figures my friend went on ridiculing them. That complacency must go.

I would also request the Honourable the Commerce Member not to be so full of optimism as he is. He is a fighter like me; I like a man who fights and therefore I like his fighting figure whenever he comes and speaks to us; but let him fight on the side of right. Let him not fight as an official. Let me tell him that when 27,00 million yards of cloth were found to be hoarded, the hoarders were not punished for profiteering or hoarding but they were given three months more time to rob the poor; and he wants me to thank him for it and says that he will not follow me. He need not follow me. I do not expect him to do so; but I ask of him to remember the two ladies in Bengal who went to buy cloth—*saris*—for Rs. 4, the pre-war price, and were told they had to pay Rs. 14 and then they went home and committed suicide. I want him to remember those sisters of his and mine, of whom there must be many who are

suffering nudity today on account of his "success" of his control of prices of cloth.

Regarding the control of prices, I want to say that that will be the crux of the whole question. The only Member of Government, who was not a Food Member at that time, who can claim credit for having initiated a right policy is the Honourable Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar. Late in 1941 it was he who wanted to fix the price at Rs. 4-8-0 a maund of wheat; but he did not get the support of his own Executive Councillors; and their things have run riot until wheat cannot be had even for Rs. 15 sometimes or Rs. 12 a maund and even worse. If his policy had been adhered to in 1941 we could never have come to this unfortunate crisis.

There is one other point on which I want to say how sad I am that in this country, at this very critical time my own countrymen have played a most discreditable part. The zemindars and capitalists have bled, starved and fleeced their own countrymen with a callousness and soullessness which make me feel that there is nothing glorious in "Nationalism". The Punjab starves Bengal

Sardar Mangal Singh (East Punjab: Sikh): Question.

The Honourable Sir Jogendra Singh: Question

Sardar Mangal Singh: I will give you figures.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: You can give them in your own time. It is admitted now, my friend—the Punjab starves Bengal.

The Honourable Sir Jogendra Singh: Admitted by whom?

(Interruption by Sardar Mangal Singh.)

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: You can say in your own time. I am simply saying that this is the information on which I am speaking.

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan (East Central Punjab: Muhammadan): They have done more to Bengal than any other province.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: If you go on in that style, I will expose you further (Interruption.) I say, you can have your say when you have time. I maintain that the Landlords of the Punjab have become the greatest parasites.

An Honourable Member: It is a lie.

Sardar Mangal Singh: It is a white lie.

An Honourable Member: It is a black lie.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: No doubt you have given wheat for money. I won't pursue this, but this shows the difficulties of the Honourable the Food Member—what forces he has to meet.

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar (Supply Member): Hear, hear.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: This shows that even in his own Executive Council a just and humane man—my Honourable friend, Sir Jogendra Singh—a quiet man, a recluse and a philosopher—he thinks that the Punjab has played a noble part. History will speak. But I am sad that my own countrymen are playing an ignoble part. When the existence of inflation was admitted by 20 eminent economists, these capitalists in Delhi and Bombay were talking of commodity inflation and all that bunkum. I am sorry they could get hireling writers who call themselves economists, to re-echo that absolute bunkum. Mr. Pethick Lawrence is as great an economist as any Liberal or Tory statesman, and our own 20 brilliant economists who are not hirelings of any capitalists have said with the greatest emphasis what wrong inflation has done. But what did our big merchants do? They say, there is no inflation, let us get more profit. And they are responsible for getting bloated wealth in their pockets by starving, bleeding and even killing the masses of this country. It is not merely the Government that are responsible. I acquit Government of any deliberate desire to starve. Where they have failed is that they have not got at the right policy; it is not intentional. But as for the zemindars and the capitalists, there is the intentional policy of making as much money as they can out of the miseries of the people of this country. Therefore, my indignation against these profiteers, even though they are my own countrymen, is ten times greater than my indig-

[Mr. Jamnadas M Mehta.]

tion against this Government. I find the press in India, to a large extent, only attacks this problem politically and condemns the Government's food policy on political grounds. If the press had real sympathy for the starving people they would have stormed the houses of these capitalists and profiteers. I do not find any condemnation of the profiteers or hoarders. The Government behave as if the capitalists are their spiritual brethren, the press also behave as if the capitalists were their spiritual brethren, and as between the Government and the press the profiteer has got the paradise to-day. I want that public opinion should awake up. The pressmen—these poor fellows—they write what 'their proprietors force them to do. They know that this is wrong, but they write for what is called this wretched belly. They write what they do not believe in. They tell me, I can produce them if their job is certain for the rest of their life. I can produce them here and make them swear God's own truth that it is these proprietors who are compelling them to write such nonsense when the profiteers and the hoarders are there. But, unfortunately for the masses there is no friend. This condemnation of the Government's food policy in the press, so long as it does not condemn and ferret out the profiteer and the hoarder, is purely political, and I attach no importance to it because it is not sincere. But at the same time, the condemnation is true, and the Government must not forget that for a moment.

Lastly, I will say, I do not want to go into the bickerings about the past. I am prepared to forget them. I want that the Government with the co-operation of this House which the Honourable Member has sought, with such conciliatory spirit in his speech—I am sorry that his speech is ridiculed on political grounds, the contents of it are not appreciated. The contents of that speech are exactly on the lines of the Gregory Committee's report and if he does not pursue that policy I will blame him. But the policy which the Gregory Committee announced and which he has accepted, which the Government has accepted, I say, is correct, and if anybody ridicules you he is an enemy as much of yours as of the masses. It is not an easy thing for you to pursue that policy. In your own Council there may be people who may be against you. The Provincial Governments may be against you. The reputation of the Civil Service is against you, the infallibility of the foreign bureaucracy is against you, the lethargy of the human nature is against you. There are many other things which are against you, and in the meantime, 40 crores of people do not know where to get their next meal and three crores of children are growing without any milk. It is an ignoble thing that our younger generation should grow without milk. Milk is getting scarcer and scarcer every day, and my friend pictures a vision of the future in which we shall have an idyllic state of things, when to-day all we see is devastation, desolation, starvation, nudity and death! Let my Honourable friend apply his mind, let the Government apply their mind to the present situation. The future will take care of itself. I am not concerned with the future now; I am concerned with the present. And unless they do so, the Indian Members of the Government will go down in history as simply puppets who stuck to their jobs. In face of inflationary finance by the Government, in face of an absolute complacency on the part of the higher powers, they must stand out. If they all combine and tell the powers that be, "Look here, no Indian shall starve", things will not be like this. In the Taj Mahal Hotel in Bombay you can have your seven courses. Nobody prevents,—who prevents it? What do I find on the Bombay race course? Bookmakers and gamblers in their thousands get whatever refreshments they want, though they may not want any. They are simply drowning their sorrows in a cup of tea. That is what they do. Why do Government carry on races now? If one thing should be made illegal to-day it is racing. But they enjoy themselves. Life goes on merrily in India from the bureaucratic point of view as if there was no war, no starvation, no destitution. I only wish that the drive which His Excellency

the Viceroy has undertaken,—for which all credit to him—will not be a short-lived thing, because I cannot imagine a greater hurdle against him—his own Government—which does not know its own mind from one day to another. I absolve them from all deliberateness, I do not absolve them from negligence and carelessness, and I blame them for their absolute failure, and I only wish that they now retrieve with vigour and courage, a policy, a course of conduct which has brought us to this pass. Otherwise, India without having been invaded, will present a picture far more ghastly than ever Poland, Yugo-Slavia and other invaded countries. Do you find anything more gruesome, has it ever occurred,—200, 500, 600, 1,000 people dying, people struggling with dogs and mice for a morsel of food from the dustbins, mothers abandoning children, husbands abandoning their wives, the whole social fabric breaking down, and you sit down here in your complacency and ask me to give you credit! I ask you to understand the difficulties of the people, and unless you want to conceal the folly and stupidity of the last four years they should agree to my amendment. I do not want Royal Commissions. Since the Simon Commission, I have lost all inferiority complex. I do not want any Royal Commission any more. I want the elected representatives of the people, people who are in daily touch with the lives which people live, elected from the members of this House and the next. (*An Honourable Member*: How many reports do you want?) This will be the report of the people. Unless you are interested in starving the people, you will join me and if I am interested in not starving the people, I shall join you. I assure you that to me the poorest Indian, of whatever caste or creed, has always been and will always be my next-of-kin. Therefore I assure you that I shall report as justly as it may be, if I am elected, of which I am not sure. But what I want is ten elected people. Then there is the Federal Court Chief Justice who is the biggest judicial authority, who will impartially go into the situation and give us a report. I do not want scapegoats. I do not want to hang anybody, just as they threaten to hang Hitler when he meets them next. All that I want is that responsibility should be shown where it is and people who have starved the masses for four years should no longer live with a reputation for infallibility which they have always cloaked their failures with. That is the reason why I am asking for the Chief Justice of the Federal Court. He is a man whose impartiality nobody can doubt. His capacity cannot be doubted and if these 12 elected members, these 12 apostles, if they apply their honest minds guided by an Accountant General and the Chief Justice of the Federal Court, we need not fear the verdict of that body. They will enquire, not with a view to find scapegoats but solely with a view to lay the responsibility where it is and to seek guidance for the future.

Sir, I have done. I implore my Honourable friends on the Government Benches to forgive me if I have spoken a strong word. I ask every other Honourable Member to forgive me if I have spoken a strong word. I want, just as any one else in this country, that this war should be won but you are losing the war by pursuing the policy which you have done, by the complacency that you have shown. You have thrown us to the wolves of hunger which are much worse than the Japs or the Germans. For the cloth that I am wearing today I used to pay 12 annas or 14 annas per yard in pre-war days. After my friend Sir Azizul Huque inaugurated his policy of cheapness, I have paid Rs. 3-12.

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque (Commerce Member): Why don't you purchase cloth at 10 annas, which is still available.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member has only one minute.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: I am finishing. I say this is the position which has got to be retrieved. I commend my amendment to the House.

Sardar Mangal Singh: We are debating the food problem under the shadow of a great national catastrophe. Thousands and thousands of our countrymen are dying of starvation. Here is a Government of India which sits complacently

[Sardar Mangal Singh.]

and I am sorry that the speeches from the Treasury Benches do not come up to the requirements of the situation. I heard with attention the speech of the Honourable the Food Member the other day but I must say that his speech was disappointing; While he showered compliments on his colleagues to his left and to his right, especially to the Honourable the Railway Member, there was nothing which could be called a constructive contribution to the solution of the acute food problem that is now before the country. He sits there with the privileges of an accused person denying the charges that are brought forward against him but he does not make any statement himself. When he is asked what are the starvation figures of deaths in Bengal, he says that the Bengal Government does not know. When he is asked what are the production figures, he does not know anything. When he is asked what foundation there is for the statements made by the Secretary of State in the British Parliament about the Indian food situation, he says he does not know. He has not even read the White Paper issued by the British Government and then he says that the British Government might have learnt the facts from sources other than the Government of India. I put a question the other day as to what foundation there is for statements made in the British Parliament that the Punjab zamindars are withholding foodgrains from Bengal. He confessed his complete ignorance. He says he did not know what was the foundation for those statements. I asked again what was the foundation for other fantastic statements made by Mr. Amery the other day in the British Parliament. He could not say anything. The Government of India is groping in the dark. They do not know their own mind. They have no reliable data before them.

When they feel puzzled, they send a telegram to Mr. Amery: "Please send one more expert." The expert comes here. He juggles with his figures. He produces a report. The Government does not know what to do. These experts from Britain are trained in the methods of price control in Britain. England is a small country with a highly educated people. They have got their own national government in which they have complete confidence. The conditions in England are entirely different from the conditions in this country. This is a country of 400 millions, the great majority of whom are illiterate. It is a big agricultural country where the sources of food cannot be controlled. In England you can control either, at the factory or at the port. In India, you cannot control the foodgrains which are produced all over the country. Unless you can control the commodity you want to requisition, you cannot introduce price control. If you introduce price control, the moment the Ordinance is issued from the Secretariat, that commodity will disappear from the markets. Under the very nose of the Government of India, *gur* disappeared from the markets of Delhi last year, as soon as the Ordinance was issued. The next day when it was withdrawn, *gur* came on the markets of Delhi again. What is the position of cloth control in this country. Mr. Jamnadas Mehta has not said a word about the soaring prices of cloth from Bombay. He was very unjust to the Punjab zamindars. I am very much against profiteering and hoarding. Profiteers and hoarders must be punished along with the Members of the Government of India. My Honourable friend said that the present Indian Members of the Government should be sent to exile. Why should they not be tried for murder and sentenced to starvation to death. That would be the most appropriate punishment. My point is that if you want to issue orders about price control, you must be sure that you can enforce them. What is the guarantee? Last year, when you introduced price control in the Punjab, you fixed the price of wheat at Rs. 5 per maund. Where was the wheat? Even the Government Departments, the Military Department purchased wheat in the Punjab at Rs. 7 or Rs. 8 a maund, instead of Rs. 5. The Military Department entered into the black market; they were forced to do so. Where is the guarantee for the price control all over the country for which Mr. Jamnadas Mehta pleaded? He might have read some books on price control printed in England and he wants

J. M.

to force those theories on this country, the conditions of which are entirely different. I submit that so far as the Punjab is concerned, there seems to be a misapprehension all over the country. In the British Parliament also statements have been made which are obviously based upon wrong telegrams which are being sent weekly by my Honourable friend, the Food Member. What is the position? I agree with Mr. Jamnadas Mehta when he says that hoarders and profiteers must be punished. I support him in that statement. But the question is who are the hoarders and who are the profiteers?

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: The Government knows that.

Sardar Mangal Singh: Government knows nothing. I would like to know whether the Punjab zamindar is a hoarder or a profiteer.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: The *Tribune* says that he is.

Sardar Mangal Singh: The *Tribune* man is from Madras and he writes something for his belly and how can you rely on his statements? Now, what are the figures? In this wheat year the arrivals in the Punjab Mandis of wheat are 425,700 tons as compared with 371,000 tons last year. Now, what are the Government purchases? In May 1943, the Punjab agents purchased on behalf of the Government of India 195,000 tons of wheat. How much of it was transported? I would invite the attention of this Honourable House to study these figures. The Punjab Government purchased nearly two lakhs of tons of wheat for Bengal. How much of it was transported to Bengal? Only 16,000 tons. The remaining wheat, 180,000 tons, remained undespached and it was lying in different godowns and on different railway platforms. I challenge the Honourable the Railway Member to prove that these figures are wrong. My Honourable friend the Food Member complimented the Railway Member for the quick despatch of foodgrains to Bengal. But what is the Punjab story and what happened in the month of June?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall (Member for Railways and War Transport): So, it is a story?

Sardar Mangal Singh: It is a right story; it is not a fiction.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: What about Sir Chhotu Ram?

Sardar Mangal Singh: I am coming to him. Now, Sir, in May the Punjab Government purchased about 2 lakhs of tons of wheat and only 16,000 tons of it was sent to Bengal. Now, what happened in June? In June the Punjab Government purchased 42,000 tons and only 67,000 tons were despatched at the end of June, 158,000 tons remained undespached. At the end of July 141,000 tons of wheat remained undespached at the stations. Again, at the end of September, there remained 63,000 tons of wheat still undespached from the railway stations of the Punjab. Now, Sir, may I ask the Honourable the Food Member and the Honourable the Railway Member who is withholding the grains from Bengal? Whether it is the Punjab Government or the Railway Member himself or the Government of India who are withholding this grain? I may inform the Honourable the Railway Member why he does not get the wagons. All the Departments of the Government of India from top to bottom are thoroughly corrupt. My Honourable friend cannot get the wagons whereas the ordinary trader can get the wagons from the Railways. Why? Because there is no one on behalf of the Railway Member to pay the tip to the railway Babu. The real difficulty is this. If you send someone to tip the Babu, you will get the railway wagon. But if you issue instructions, nobody will care for them. The railway Babu will care for his tips.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: May I ask the Honourable Member where all this wheat he talks about is now?

Sardar Mangal Singh: It is still lying on the platforms of railway stations and in the godowns.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: May I inform the Honourable Member that all that wheat has been moved to Bengal?

Sardar Mangal Singh: The Government of India has obviously awakened now. This being the position, I would inform my Honourable friend

[Sardar Mangal Singh.]

Mr. Jamnadas Mehta that the Punjab zamindar is neither hoarding nor profiteering. That he is not hoarding, I have proved. And hē is not profiteering.

Now, what is the position? The Punjab grower sells wheat at roundabout Rs. 10 per maund. Sometimes he may sell 4 annas this way or that way. Now, what was the price of *atta* and wheat in Bengal? When you purchased wheat at Rs. 10-4 per maund from the Punjab, the *atta* was being sold at Rs. 20 per maund in Bengal. I am quoting the official price; I am not quoting the black market price. May I ask the Honourable the Food Member or my Honourable friends of the European Group why there is so much difference in the price. There is a difference of about Rs. 10 per maund. The railway freight is only Rs. 1-6. Including the overhead charges, the price of *atta* should not be more than Rs. 14 per maund in Bengal.

An Honourable Member: Not even that.

Sardar Mangal Singh: Yes, not even that. May I ask who is profiteering somewhere? Who is taking away this Rs. 10 per maund because neither the Bengal consumer is being benefited nor the Punjab grower?

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Quite clearly, it is the Punjab zamindar.

Sardar Mangal Singh: How?

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Let us argue this point outside.

Sardar Mangal Singh: Why not argue it out here?

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: I do not want to fight with you here. I shall do so outside.

Sardar Mangal Singh: May I ask when the Punjab grower was selling his wheat at a lower price than the United Provinces zamindar by Rs. 3 a maund, who was the profiteer? It was either the European miller or the Bengal Government or even the Government of India. I charge here the Government of India that they had been making profit at the expense of the Punjab grower. I charge the Bengal Government that they had been making profit at the expense of the Punjab grower. I charge the European millers in Calcutta that they had been making profits at the expense of the Bengal consumer and the Punjab grower. Why don't you catch these people?

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: I agree with you about the profiteer.

Sardar Mangal Singh: Thank you. Now Sir, I leave the profiteers and consumers and growers. What is the position in the country? My Honourable friends have given notice of amendments asking for a Royal Commission and Committees. I would beg of them not to fall in the trap because this Royal Commission is a trap. What will be the report of this Royal Commission? The first recommendation would be that the transfer of power to Indians was a mistake. That, I am sure, would be the first recommendation. The second recommendation would be that they will condemn Indianisation. They will say: "Look here, the Bengal civilian was sitting back in his chair, not sure of the support of the Ministry in his actions." That would be the line of the recommendations of the Royal Commission. I beg of the Secretary of the Muslim League Party and my Honourable friend the Leader of the Nationalist Party to drop the proposal of the Royal Commission. We do not want commissions and committees. We had plenty of them. We do not want experts. We want food straightaway here and now. That is the question before the House. If you cannot give food, the only other way is that my friends on Treasury Benches should get out and make room for others who can handle the situation properly. You have failed and you will go down in history—those Indian Members especially will go down in history as people who let down their country at a critical time. That would be the verdict of history. You may shake your head or you may not shake your head, but that would be the verdict of history.

What are the causes. Government are issuing Ordinances, creating black markets and all those things. That is no solution. The real problem is that this country has a vast population and this vast population has no confidence in the present Government. That is the reason why orders issued by the Government are not carried out even by the Government servants. There is

corruption all along under the very nose of Government of India. It is impossible to remove it with the present policy of the Government of India. You will fail, because during the last century and a half of the British rule, you have encouraged all undesirable elements in the public life of the country. That is the real crux of the problem. You have suppressed desirable and better elements in the country. You have encouraged only those people who have no self-respect and who regard themselves as very inferior people. So, Sir, this is the result. There may be direct causes for the Bengal famine, such as no rice from Burma, cyclone, etc., but the real cause is the long exploitation of the masses by the British Government. You have reduced the masses to bare starvation and they cannot put up any power of resistance when the calamity comes. The British Government is really the culprit, they are really responsible for this famine. God knows next year how many other Provinces may be caught in the grip of famine. If you want to earnestly settle this question, the only possible solution is to take the leaders of the country into confidence, get their help and I am sure if Mahatma Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah put their heads together, these two leaders can deliver the goods and they can solve all questions.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Question.

Sardar Mangal Singh: You may question. But if the Government of India refuse the co-operation of the people, if the Government of India treat with contempt the offers of co-operation of the people of India in fighting the Axis countries, then the responsibility for this muddle, political as well as famine, muddle, will be solely on the shoulders of the British Government. I would beg of my Honourable friends the elected Members of this House not to be caught in any trap, but come to a straightforward decision and let the Government of India be held responsible. If the Government of India really seek the co-operation of the people, I am sure this food problem—which is not a political problem—can be solved and the leaders of the country will be willing to offer their hand of co-operation for solving this problem and thus save our dying countrymen.

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, Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta) in the Chair.

Sir Abdur Halim Ghuznavi (Dacca cum Mymensingh; Muhamnadan Rural): Sir, before I proceed to fix the responsibility for this man-made famine I should like to give a reply to my Honourable friend Sir Jogendra Singh. He is not here now but I wanted him to hear this. I represent the Dacca-cum-Mymensingh constituency in this House. When he was giving us his experience of Dacca, the four *chapatis* that he had in one of these cheap canteens that Government run there, he forgot that that canteen merely is not all that the Dacca people want. You cannot get rice in Dacca for even Rs. 200 a maund; even now rice is not available in Dacca town and the Dacca district, even at Rs. 80 a maund. And my Honourable friend said that everything is o. k., that rice was flowing in and he saw an abundance of rice in Dacca. My constituency will take me to task if I do not enter a protest against what he said about the situation in Dacca.

Mr. J. D. Tyson (Secretary, Department of Education, Health and Lands): Sir, with due respect, the Honourable Member said that foodgrains were flowing in from other provinces, not rice.

Sir Abdur Halim Ghuznavi: My Honourable friend perhaps did not hear him. He distinctly said that it was his experience that foodgrains included rice. I do not know if the Honourable Member wants to differentiate between rice and wheat I am speaking about the rice famine.

Sir, the responsibility for this man-made famine in Bengal rests, firstly, on Sir John Herbert for the manner in which he carried out the denial policy in April, 1942; and secondly, with Lord Linlithgow's Government for not taking

[Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi.]

any steps whatsoever to prevent food shortage which was inevitable owing to enormous military purchases and continued exports of rice from India. After the declaration of war in 1939, more particularly after the fall of Malaya and Burma when the rice position became critical, nothing was done even then; and lastly, after the creation of the Department of Food on the 2nd December 1942 the department had no Member for three critical months commencing from the resignation of Mr. Sircar. Chaos prevailed in that department in those three months and Secretaries were making wild statements. Major-General Wood made a statement in Bengal that rice would be flowing in within a month and the month he mentioned was April, 1943. He again made a statement at the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce that every arrangement had been made to see that there was no shortage of foodstuff in the deficit provinces. Now, Sir, Lord Linlithgow's Government did not take a census of the food position nor did they ever endeavour to get accurate statistics of the food position in the provinces.

The Bengal trouble started with an unfortunate denial policy, rice removal policy. Sir John Herbert ignoring his Ministers and the ministry ordered the Joint Secretary of the Commerce Department to remove the surplus rice within a fortnight from three surplus districts in Bengal. When he got enraged he ordered the Joint Secretary to remove the rice within 24 hours. The removal of rice from these surplus districts coupled with the removal of the boats and the other means of conveyance like bicycles, etc., was responsible for the complete loss of confidence in the Government and was further accentuated by reports from evacuees from Burma and Malaya when they described their experiences of a like nature. All these led to a complete breakdown of the trade channel and the rural economy of the areas immediately concerned and also of the other areas when this news began to spread. It must be said to the credit of Mr. Fazlul Huq that in a letter addressed to the Governor on the 2nd August, 1942, he made this picture absolutely clear to him. In that historic letter he, with the courage of his convictions, told the Governor:

"There is first of all the case of your mandate to the Joint Secretary in April last in the matter of the rice removal policy. In a matter of such vital importance affecting the question of the food-stuffs of the people, you should have called an emergent meeting of the Cabinet and discussed with your Ministers the best means of carrying out the wishes of the military authorities and of the Central Government, but you did nothing of the kind. The Joint Secretary says that when he was arranging to carry out your orders, you grew impatient and gave him definite directions to arrange for the removal of excess rice from 3 districts within 24 hours. The result has been a dismal failure so far as this particular policy is concerned."

He then says:

"At the present moment (i.e., in August, 1948), we are faced with the rice famine in Bengal mainly in consequence of an uncalled for interference on your part, and of hasty action on the part of the Joint Secretary."

He further proceeds:

"Then I come to the boat removal policy. The most outstanding instance of blunder which has been committed by the permanent officials. . . (not the ministry), apparently with your knowledge and concurrence, has been the case of the prevention of boats from going out into the Bay of Bengal for the purpose of cultivation of the lands in the various islands lying at the mouth of the Delta."

That was another blunder on the part of the Governor: To destroy the boats which used to do all the sowing of rice in those islands. And then as a result of destruction of these boats there was fuel wood shortage. 4 million tons of fuel wood used to be carried by these boats, and that was denied to Bengal. People had to depend on coal only; no fuel was available. The military authorities intended that the boats may not fall into the hands of the enemy, but here instead of keeping them away from the hands of the enemy by removing them to a safer distance, he destroyed thousands and thousands of boats. And those were the boats which used to go into the islands for sowing rice and other things, and which used to carry fuel wood. That is the reason why we are facing famine in Bengal.

Sir, speaking on the food debate on the 9th August 1943, my Honourable friend, Sir Azizul Huque referred to the Food Conference which was held on

the 14th of December, 1942. He was not the Food Member then; Sir N. R. Sarker was the Member. He quoted from the proceedings of that conference, and incidentally I may say that not a single copy of the proceedings of that conference has been placed in the Library so far.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee: The Honourable the Food Member assured us that he would endeavour to make a copy available to us.

Mr. R. H. Hutchings (Secretary, Food Department): Sir, copies are being made. The proceedings were never printed; there are no printed copies available. So I was under the unfortunate necessity of having them typed out and cyclostyled or of sending the proceedings to Simla to be printed. I hope they will be available very shortly.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee: After the food debate is over.

Mr. R. H. Hutchings: As soon as I can get them.

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: My Honourable friend, the Commerce Member, quoted the following from those proceedings:

"The rice position was therefore discussed by the Conference, and this Conference was attended among others not only by the official representatives of the Government of Bengal but also by the then Chief Minister of the Province, namely Mr. Fazlul Haq. As regards rice, the statement on behalf of Bengal was as follows (*I have got this quotation from the proceedings of the Assembly debates. He said that Mr. Fazlul Haq stated*):

'We do not require for the next few months any rice even though we are in deficit'."

That is the line he quotes from his speech, but he does not quote the second sentence which I have got from Mr. Fazlul Haq. He said:

"Provided you do not export any rice from Bengal and provided you give us sufficient wheat for our consumption. And it is then and then alone that I shall be able to pull through for the next few months."

What is the sin that he has committed if he said that. You did not stop your exports, and you did not give us the wheat that you promised to do, and that is the reason of the famine. Why do you hold Mr. Fazlul Haq responsible for this situation?

Then, Sir, bear in mind that he said this on the 14th of December 1942. How could he realize then about the denial policy which was later carried out by Sir John Herbert—removal of excess rice from those districts.

Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang (East Punjab: Muhammadan): Was it after December?

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: It was in April 1943.

An Honourable Member: No, that is wrong.

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: Yes, I beg your pardon.

Pandit Nilakantha Das (Orissa Division: Non-Muhammadan): Who is blaming Mr. Fazlul Haq? Why should he be defended?

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: I am not defending him at all.

Then, Sir, my Honourable friend, Sir Azizul Huque, referred to the frantic telegram of Mr. Fazlul Haq. He said:

"I am at least happy that he (Mr. Fazlul Haq), has become frantic to send the telegram now. I ask my Honourable friend to find out, when did Mr. Fazlul Haq, realize—I should not have used his name—when did the late Chief Minister of Bengal realize that there was famine condition in Bengal in 1942? Was it in August, 1942, as my friend says today? Will he get an answer from him as to why is it that in January, 1943, when the Government of India wrote to the Government of Bengal that there was a great shortage for civilian consumption. . . ."

The Government of India wrote to the Government of Bengal—shortage of civilian consumption; shortage of potatoes, shortage of onions, shortage of cabbages, shortage of cauliflowers. Is this an answer? When did this arise? It did not arise in August 1942. The letter to the Governor is clear on that point; but all this blame is foisted on him for shortage of other things, the civil food supply shortage.

Now, my Honourable friend Sir Azizul Huque has said so much about him; now let me quote Sir Azizul Huque himself. What did he say in Krishnagar in May 1943?

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): The Honourable Member's time is up.

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: I shall conclude in two minutes. Sir Azizul Huque, the Commerce Member of the Government of India in reply to the address of welcome by the Krishnagar municipality stressed the absolute accuracy of the figures recently published by Government regarding rice, and maintained that Bengal was not yet deficit in rice. Not content with saying that, he continues: he strongly hoped that there would be a substantial reduction in the price of rice within a week. The week commenced from the 15th May; and he asked the people to muster hope and courage and shed panicky despair. This is what he said in May 1948—that abundance of rice will be available and the market will go down. But what happened? The price of rice in May was 18 rupees and it is forty rupees a maund today and even at that price it is not available in Dacca.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): The Honourable Member will conclude his speech now.

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: I will now come to the last page. The Honourable Members here invariably tell us that we criticise and that we never make any constructive suggestions. That is the grievance. They say, "Give us the constructive suggestions and see whether we carry them out or not." I gave you a constructive suggestion but you did not carry it out; I give you a constructive suggestion today and I shall wait and see whether you carry it out or not. You, Sir, in your speech on behalf of the Bengal people gave a constructive suggestion: I have read that again today; if those constructive suggestions which you gave to this House and to the Member in charge had been carried out this present famine condition would not have prevailed in Bengal. I have no time to read them out, but I will ask the Honourable the Food Member to whom I must say we Bengalis are grateful for taking up the food question and going to Bengal the following day as soon as possible to visit and see the Bengal position for himself—we have no grievance against you, but we have this grievance that as you are the Member for Food, will you please read page 550 of the Assembly Debates—the constructive suggestion which the Deputy President had given the House which, if you will carry it out, will save suffering Bengal. I shall give the substance.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): The Honourable Member must conclude now.

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: I will not take more than a minute. The remedy is this, that food grains for Calcutta, Howrah and other industrial areas should be made available for imports from abroad and from other surplus provinces, and the Government of India should be responsible for such supplies. This is my first suggestion.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): I am afraid the Honourable Member must stop now.

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: Half a minute only, Sir. The distribution should be taken out from the hands of the Provincial Government and should be made and adjusted through the military authorities or the Government of India. The *Aman* crop—that is our danger. The *Aman* crop should not be disturbed as far as practicable; so that it may circulate freely through the normal trade channels and feed the people of the district towns and the rural areas.

Hajee Chowdhury Muhammad Ismail Khan (Burdwan and Presidency Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): Sir, it has been said that the present famine in India is a man-made famine. I agree. But the question is who are those men that made this famine?

An Honourable Member: With the permission of the Chair, he may come down nearer and speak.

(The Honourable Member moved down to the front bench and continued his speech.)

Hajee Chowdhury Muhammad Ismail Khan: Who are those that by their acts of omission and commission have caused the deaths of hundreds of thousands of their fellow men?—The object of this Motion is to find out those guilty

men and expose them to the gaze of the world, to the contempt and condemnation of the world.

Attempts have been made in England and in this country to lay the blame for this food crisis at the doors of provincial autonomy. The British die-hards clutched at this as an argument and an excuse for the perpetuation of British rule in India. They say, "Self-Government in the provinces has resulted in this huge toll of lives. Full self-government would mean that Indians would kill themselves off in record time." Now, Sir, whatever may be the faults of Indians, whatever may be their shortcomings, who can deny that the responsibility for this man-made famine ultimately rests with the British Government and their agents in India? It is no argument at all to say, that there are only a few handful of Britishers in India. All the key posts are held by Britishers and it is sheer brazenfaced opportunism to make scapegoats of Indian self-government. If the Indian ministries went wrong, why did not Governors intervene and stop the rot? If the Governors went wrong, why did not the Governor General pull them up? And if the Government of India went wrong, what did the Secretary of State do? It is because Indian lives are involved in this crisis, all the responsible people went to sleep without lifting their little finger to save the lives of these unfortunate Indians.

Now, Sir, let me turn to the scene in India itself. The Government of India is said to have a majority of Indian Members. How have these Indian Members discharged their duty to their countryman? Some months ago when the life of a single man was at stake, three Indian Members vanished from the Government Benches. But now, hundreds of thousands of their own people are dying of forced starvation, and when the whole country is stunned by the groans of the dying and the dead, our Indian Members are sitting opposite cool as cucumbers! What have they done in terms of achievement to justify their calling themselves the Government of the country? So far as I can see, they have only brought about the deaths of countless numbers of their own countrymen. Their delay of two years in setting up even a Food Department is a crime of the very first order. Having set up the Food Department, they went on from one blunder to another. They tried to feed the country by statistics and Mr. N. R. Sarker declared that the food position in the country was statistically sound, that there was only 4 per cent. shortage. Did the Government even then realise that these unfortunate 4 per cent. meant hundred per cent. starvation and death? When the Government introduced the control price for wheat, the small stocks that were available promptly disappeared. People clamoured for food, but the Government gave them wood—Major General Wood. This gentleman withdrew price control and embarked on some experiments of his own. The disastrous effects of his introduction of free trade in the eastern zone are too well known to need repetition. Markets became chaotic and prices soared high. Major General Wood also dallied in statistics and declared that far from there being any shortage in Bengal, there was actually a surplus of 285,000 tons.

3 P.M. But independent calculations which took account of exports and also the cessation of imports conclusively established that the deficit was in the region of 1,818,000 tons.

When the theory of "no shortage" was thus exploded, Government then resorted to another explanation. They blamed the poor peasant for hoarding. Big posters were put up calling upon the people to outcast the hoarder. An anti-hoarding drive was ushered in with a fanfare of trumpets, but no drive was undertaken against the Government itself which was the biggest hoarder and the biggest purchaser, reckless of prices. In spite of loud warnings from the public, the Government merrily allowed exports overseas. From the outbreak of war right down to July 1943, it was the declared policy of the Government of India to export food to Ceylon, to the Indian troops fighting abroad and also to the Middle East and other Empire countries. The part played by the United Kingdom Commercial Corporation in depleting the country not only of its food resources but also of other consumption goods cannot be overlooked in this connection. The activities of the U. K. C. C. have been sought to be made

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public by questions put in this House but the Government have not placed full information yet before us about this Corporation. But according to the Chairman of the U. K. C. C. himself, it was the prompt shipments of Indian wheat that spared Persia the horrors of famine early in 1941. I am not against India giving help to other countries. But I want the House to imagine what this huge export trade carried on by U. K. C. C. meant in terms of self-denial to this country. And, yet, in this grave peril for Indians all over the country, where is the U. K. C. C.? Could not the U. K. C. C. use its immense influence with the British Government and secure shipping space for the transport of grains from Africa, America and Australia?

What did the Government of India do here? The "Grow More Food" campaign was inaugurated and agricultural exhibitions were held. The virtues of tomatoes and cauliflowers were much advertised. But what can the poor illiterate peasant do who has not got the wherewithal to keep body and soul together? Even the Royal Commission on Agriculture admitted that the standard of fertility was of a very low standard. In rice, the Indian average is 750 to 900 lbs. per acre as compared to America's 1,500 lbs., Egypt's 2,000 lbs., Japan's 2,300 lbs. and Italy's 3,000 lbs. I ask, Sir, whether the Government have got any clear policy at all in this matter of cultivation?

It was said in the House of Commons recently that the famine in India to-day is merely one of famine in money and not in grains. The price of food grains has reached a point which is beyond the reach of the masses. In the words of the London *Economist*, India has reached the crudest inflationary finance.

Now, turning to my own Province, Bengal, it is the worst sufferer now. My own district of Barisal has been known to be the granary of Bengal, and yet the misery of the people knows no bounds. Thousands of them have already died of starvation. More are dying every day. The tragedy started with the "Denial Policy" that led to the removal of rice from many parts of my district and it was heightened by the confiscation of boats used by the people for reaching their fields and carrying their paddy. Later, a reckless policy was followed at the instance of Government for large scale purchase of local stocks at unreasonably high prices. Rice was selling formerly at Rs. 5 a maund and it has now reached Rs. 60 a maund, and at this rate too it is not obtainable. The Government agents are giving advance to cultivators for *aman* crops. The cultivators are helpless and they have to give up the crops for fear of being forfeited on some pretext or another. It is high time that the Government put a stop to this disastrous policy. So far as my district is concerned, I must pay my thanks to the Muslim Chamber of Commerce which has been doing much useful work in giving relief to the distressed people there. The Chamber has opened free kitchens for distribution of gruel and milk to the distressed.

As regards the other parts of Bengal, the distress is equally pitiable. The prices of food grains have risen in some places to 1,000 per cent. The price of pulses has gone up. The diet of the ordinary man has become starchy and unbalanced. At this rate, I am afraid it will devitalise the coming generation of the people. When people here are suffering, experts are brought out from abroad on high salaries. After thousands have paid with their lives, a report is brought out by Sir Theodore Gregory. The net result of the recommendations of this report will be a multiplication of the ranks of the bureaucratic army. My complaint against our economic experts is that they have not drawn the attention of their employers in good time to the great catastrophe to which we were heading. As long ago as 1933, the then Director General of the Indian Medical Service gave a warning which went unheeded. The population has been increasing at the rate of 5 millions a year, but the area under cultivation has been stationary for the past many years. According to the best authority, our food production has been falling short by 12 per cent. Have the economic experts pondered over these ominous facts and have they warned the Government? If not, they have failed in their duty.

The object of this amendment is to institute an enquiry and to bring to light these and other correlated matters. Who have failed and why have they failed? Who were responsible for allowing the crisis to develop? Who permitted the foodstuffs to be exported? Who were at the back of the U. K. C. C., which denuded this country of its foodstuffs? Why was it that both price control and free trade failed? Have not the Government themselves violated their own control orders by giving secret instructions to their purchasing agents to purchase articles at more than the control rates? On Saturday last, in answer to a supplementary question put by my Honourable friend, Mr. Neogy, the Food Member admitted that there were attempts on the part of some purchasing agents to give more than local ruling price for rice. Who were the authors of that unheard of policy of denying foodstuffs and also boats from whole districts and yet not removing the people to other districts where foodstuffs could be had? What has become of the huge quantities of rice that were removed? Have they been exported or destroyed? The Honourable Sir Azizul Huque gave numerous instances during the last session of determined obstruction to the Central Government policy. Who are those responsible for this policy? I can go on multiplying questions by the hundreds which have all to be investigated by an impartial body and satisfactory answers arrived at.

In conclusion, I wish to say that I support the demand for the enquiry so that the perpetrators of the dark deeds may be dragged into full light of day, so that they may serve as an example and a warning to all such polemical heroes in this land and elsewhere, so that they may be outcast from civilisation and from humanity. The other day an Honourable Member remarked that even congenital idiots could not have mismanaged the affairs in a worse way. We, Sir, may tolerate fools, but we cannot tolerate knaves.

Before I conclude, I must ask the Government to be careful about the *aman* crop. The future of Bengal depends mainly on this crop. If it is mishandled by the Government, if it is captured and cornered by them, then there is no hope for Bengal. The Government must not purchase this *aman* crop but leave it to the trade with some safeguards. They must feed Calcutta from the imports of food grains from other provinces and from overseas, and by Calcutta I mean also its neighbouring industrial areas. The whole of the *aman* crop should be made available to the rest of the province outside Calcutta through the ordinary trade channels and not through Government agencies which miserably failed in the past. If the people of Bengal are yet to get a chance to survive, they must be allowed to draw upon this *aman* crop without any interference from the Government.

Mr. Sami Vencatachelam Chetty (Madras: Indian Commerce): I move:

"That at the end of the motion the following be added . . ."

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): Is it an amendment that the Honourable Member is moving?

Mr. Sami Vencatachelam Chetty: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): When was notice given?

Mr. Sami Vencatachelam Chetty: It was given only this morning.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): Then the Honourable Member had better not move it.

Mr. Sami Vencatachelam Chetty: Then I can make a speech on the main motion and the amendments before the House.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): Certainly, the Honourable Member can.

Mr. Sami Vencatachelam Chetty: After hearing the two long speeches of the two Honourable Members of the Food Department successively and after reading the report of the Food Department on the food situation, I am astonished at the limited and narrow view they have taken on the whole about the anguishing problem of widespread starvation not only in Bengal but in other parts of the country as well. Too much stress seems to have been laid on th

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Bengal famine or Bengal starvation because of the wide publicity given lately to Bengal in the Press and on the platform, while similar things are occurring in some parts of Southern India, that is the Madras Province, and particularly in the States of Travancore and Cochin, not to speak of Malabar. If the situation is as has been described by the Government communiques and the speeches of the Honourable Members of the Government and they have to be taken as the correct diagnosis of the existing situation, it is this, that India is normally a deficit country in foodgrains, that the deficiency has hitherto been met by imports from Burma, that on the outbreak of hostilities with Japan we lost about a million and a half tons of rice that should have come to India. Added to this deficit, there was the necessity of export of some limited quantity of foodgrains to countries outside India for the purpose of the defence services and we had also to supply some quantity of rice for the Indian population in Ceylon and therefore it was that the acuteness of the shortage of foodgrains has come to be felt in several parts of India. According to their own estimate, this has resulted in a deficit of 2½ million tons of foodgrains as against a normal production of 52 million tons of foodgrains. The shortage works out to, more or less, 4 per cent. of the total production. That is all the deficit during this year. It is difficult to believe that this small deficit of 4 per cent. would alone have created the havoc which we are witnessing in all parts of the country. It is therefore a very narrow view to take to say that the shortage of foodgrains alone was responsible for the devastating starvation that is going on all around us. There must be other causes which have got to be looked into and have been deliberately passed over.

So far as Bengal is concerned, even if we base our arguments on the limited sphere which the Honourable the Food Member has conveniently taken to be the cause of the famine, enough has been said of the way in which the whole thing has been bungled from the very beginning. It is said that there were large purchases on behalf of the Military, on behalf of the big industrialists and by the profiteers, the railway employees and so on and so forth. Those who hoarded stocks of foodgrains for the purpose of feeding their workers have been criticised rather out of proportion. I should have thought there was enough justification for the industrialists and big employers of labour to be forewarned of the possible acute shortage of foodgrains in their province and to stock reasonable quantities for the purpose of feeding the workers and the labourers employed by them, especially as they had no assurance from the Local Government that steps would be taken to bring in supplies, to regulate supplies and to ensure a continuous supply of rice or foodgrains; but if in their anxiety for self-preservation they had exceeded the reasonable limits of storage of foodgrains, surely they were as blameworthy as any other private person who hoarded stocks of foodgrains for the purpose of making more money. The fact seems to be that these persons have exceeded reasonable limits under the auspices of the local Government and hoarded large stocks of foodgrains at the expense of the common man and later on when the Government realised that the man in the street is not able to get his food articles, they did not take any steps to de-hoard stocks from these persons. As has been stated on the floor of the House, there was neither any action taken by the Local Government nor there was any direction from the Central Government to the Provincial Government to find out exactly what were the stock balances in the hands of these industrialists or big employers or the profiteers. Surely, it cannot be said that this Government or the Bengal Government was so weak or so inefficient and so unworthy of the trust placed in them by the people that they would not be able to unearth the stocks of these grains. (*An Honourable Member*: "They were not able to do it in Madras".) They were and there is no hoarding there. Latterly what happened was. There was more fight between the ministry and the Governor and bickerings between the Central Government and the Provincial Government than food grains in that part of the country.

dying of starvation from day to day in scores, if not in hundreds. All this cannot be explained away by saying that it was due to the four per cent. shortage of foodgrains, that is apparent from the statistics supplied by the Government themselves. Therefore the reason must be something else than this mere shortage. In the steps that are proposed to be taken either in the shape of recommendations of the Food Policy Committee or in the Resolutions of the Government on those recommendations, I do not see any solution offered for the immediate tackling of this perplexing predicament. They seem to be going on in the same old groove of facilitating despatch of supplies to deficit areas and their distribution. A million and 40 thousand tons of foodgrains have gone to Bengal and they say yet I have heard one of the representatives from Bengal saying that even this quantity is not available to the ordinary man and that even this quantity is finding its way into holes. I suppose there are many Black Holes in Calcutta besides the one we have read of.

Now, Sir, what steps the Government have taken to see that the supplies which they are inducing the Honourable Member for Railways to send are actually reaching the consumer? The inactivity and hesitation are visible in one of the sentences of this report which reads that rationing in Calcutta is a gigantic affair. Well, Sir, when this statement is made, I can understand the efficiency and the ability of this Government. I should be underrating the ability, the intelligence and the cleverness of the Government and the Government Members if they should consider rationing in the city of Calcutta to be a gigantic affair. May I say that the city of Madras which has perhaps less abler men than those sitting on the Treasury Benches here has been able to effect it. And Madras is not a mean city. It has got a population of 11 lakhs of people; probably Calcutta has got a population of two millions of people.

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava (Food Member): Greater Calcutta has a population of four millions.

Mr. Sami Vencatachalam Chetty: Even if the population is four millions, it is not an impossible task to ration out what stuff you are getting into Calcutta. I can understand that there would be some difficulty with regard to the villages and the rural parts even though they also have got to be managed somehow. If, however, you are unable to manage, then take the whole of this House into your confidence and convert the present Session of the House into a Committee. We will be able to offer our suggestions and we will ourselves go to Calcutta at our own expense to see that the rationing is done properly. If the Government is of the opinion that rationing alone is the possible and sensible solution for ensuring equal supplies of rice and other commodities to the people, then it ought to be resorted to in as early a time as possible.

Now, Sir, one thing that strikes me in the enumeration of deaths which are occurring not only in Calcutta but in other parts of the country is this that all these deaths are taking place only amongst the poorer classes and the destitutes. If the shortage of foodgrains was really a reason, why should I not see some middle class and richer people dying? I, therefore, conclude, apart from other reasons, that it is more the lack of purchasing power that is responsible for so many deaths in that city and elsewhere.

Now, how does this lack of purchasing power come in? We have got enough money. In fact, our currency has increased from 299 crores to 780 crores. Economists were clamouring that we are having lot of money. The Honourable the Finance Member came to our rescue in his own way by withdrawing this money and not by gathering it and spreading it over the whole country in order that the poorer man might get a portion of the money. But he has taken the criticism of the economists at its face value against the so-called inflation and has taken steps to withdraw the money and practically succeeded in withdrawing a lot of money from the people. It is not intended that he should sit tight over the collected money. He has got to inaugurate schemes in order that that money would reach the person who has not got the

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money and whose purchasing power has been curtailed on account of the rise of prices occasioned by the very inflation. He must see that the starving people whether they are in Calcutta and other parts of the country are given the purchasing power in order to find the requirements which they can get under the existing conditions of shortage. That is not to be. In fact, the Honourable the Food Member is making himself a scapegoat of all this criticism, whereas both this criticism and the guilt of the whole of the starvation and the deaths ought to be ascribed to his other colleagues, namely, the Honourable the Home Member and the Honourable the Finance Member. The Honourable the Home Member should be charged in the sense that he has clapped all the political leaders in jail and would not take the public into his confidence and would not allow them to work for the good of the country and the Honourable the Finance Member because of the financial policy which he has inaugurated albeit at the direction of Home Government. Now, I am sure whatever may be the plans that have been accepted and proposed to apply by the Food Department they would only be an external treatment for this symptom. The disease cannot be attacked that way. The disease can only be attacked if the Honourable the Finance Member makes up his mind that it should be tackled, tackled in the sense that he must put a purchasing power in the hands of the poor people. Is he in a position now to say, owing to this inflation of currency, that the purchasing power of most of the people has increased? I know there are some military contractors, some industrialists and some big combines of manufacturers who have got more money than they can manage, but what about the 90 per cent. of the population?

An Honourable Member: 99 per cent.

Mr. Sami Vencatachelam Chetty: Is there not any means of helping the poor to tide over this calamity? How long can you go on giving the wrong twist that the present calamity is due to shortage of foodstuffs? Rushing of foodstuffs to those big cities and asking people to buy without money will add to their misery. Are you going to make bricks without straw? If that is so, the Honourable the Food Member would be justified in accepting all these criticisms and in accepting the responsibility for this sorry state of affairs. Otherwise, he must tackle the Honourable the Finance Member and the whole Government to change the financial policy and to see that something substantial is returned for the exported goods to the account of United Kingdom in order that you may improve the purchasing power of the people without which, I am sure, the situation will be considerably deteriorated, more to the danger of the Government and of the people concerned.

Mr. E. L. C. Gwilt (Bombay: European): Sir, I commence by expressing my appreciation of the work of the Foodgrains Policy Committee and particularly that of its Chairman. The volume of its endeavour and the speed with which it was achieved and the comprehensiveness of its report call for the highest praise.

India, Sir, as a whole, is today faced with a food crisis and Bengal in the midst of a tragedy, the more deplorable because it might have been, in a large measure, avoided, and the more tragic because thousands of souls are starving in a country of plenty—at any rate plenty judged by war standards.

India, as the Foodgrains Committee rightly says, has suffered practically none of the ravages of the war; from the ravages of nature she certainly has, but even taking into account the damage done by the Bengal cyclone of last year and the loss of Burma rice imports, there is still sufficient grain in the country to feed the population on rationed standards, if procurement were not presenting such a problem and if India could be encouraged to operate as a single economic unit.

As things are, grain is now being brought to India in ships, most urgently required for the war, for the shortening of the suffering of millions of people outside India. The process is virtually one of pouring grain into a grapary.

Grain is being purchased from countries, whose emergency laws are such, that to profiteer in its sale, would result in the most dire penalties to the seller. Whatever may be the other considerations, and I am aware of them, grain is being shipped to India to provide for Government in large measure, a stock pile with which to fight the activities of the profiteer. It is being landed in India at prices substantially less than those at which the wheat producing Provinces of this country are prepared to sell their large surpluses to the Central Government. In what other country of the world could these conditions exist today?

I would ask those who are deliberately holding up supplies of grain for higher prices, to ask themselves whether they have seriously considered the implications of what they do, for unless there is a rapid change in the attitude of some of the 'surplus' Provinces, and National co-operation to assist towards procurement, the future must hold the most serious of consequences for the Nation—consequences from which India may take a generation to recover. I would remind the House that, as the Honourable the Finance Member stated on Tuesday last, Food forms the very basis upon which the economic structure of the country is built.

The end of the war in Europe may be nearer than many of us realise, and when the Axis occupied countries are liberated, there will be a vast number of people, numbers running comparable with a half of the population of India, indeed, likely to be even more, who are not only hungry, but bordering on complete starvation. They will need to be fed, and ships not required to continue the war against Japan must be used to carry food to them. Can India, under such circumstances, expect the rest of the United Nations to permit the process of pouring grain into her granary to continue?

I would appeal to every Member of this House, to every section of the population, to strive to avoid permitting the state of Bengal degenerating into a political issue, to which there has been a tendency. I hope, Sir, I shall not be misunderstood in an appeal to the Press, and particularly to the *Statesman* to whom I pay tribute for the stand they have taken in directing attention to the ravages of the Bengal famine, not to allow their original commendable policy to become sensationalism, the repercussion of which may be the alarming of many, and encouraging hoarding. I would respectfully suggest for the consideration of the Press that in the future they give space to what is right in the rationed areas, as they have done in the past to what is wrong in Bengal, and vigorously to drive home Lord Woolton's famous dictum—"the profit motive must be taken out of the people's food".

Bengal is news of the most tragic nature, because little there seems to be right, but as the report of the Foodgrains Committee correctly says, Bombay and Madras and other cities have ceased to be news. Rationing of food and good administration have prevented the enactment in those Cities of the grim scenes of Bengal, and though they would be the last to seek publicity, I would take this opportunity of paying tribute to Mr. Knight and Mr. Gorawala of the Province which it is my privilege to represent, and to their team of efficient and enthusiastic colleagues. To them is due the credit that the distribution of food in Bombay City, the second largest in India, runs as smoothly as it does, particularly when it is remembered that in March of this year, its stock of food was little better than Calcutta's. The spirit of confidence that rationing has produced, has been bought at the extremely reasonable figure of one rupee per head of population, for that is the annual cost of administering it.

Now, Sir, I should like to reply to my Honourable friend Mr. Jamnadas Mehta who I am sorry to see is not in the House. He attacked the Bombay rationing scheme, and particularly the quality of grain sold under it. I would like to tell the House that the coolies employed by my company, my own personal servants, my co-Directors, myself and my staff eat sugar and grain all purchased from precisely the same source. I have nothing to complain of and so far as I am aware neither have any of the other parties I have mentioned, at any rate not since the initial difficulties were overcome, and

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you can imagine, Sir, the difficulties in rationing 1½ millions to 2 millions of people are considerable.

Now, Sir, I would ask that none of the grain being imported by the Central Government be supplied by them to any Province which has not shown their *bona fides* in introducing an efficient measure of food control or rationing. It is not an adequate answer for the Central Government to say that if it takes the precaution of handing that grain over to a Provincial Administration, there the responsibility of the Central Government ends. Only two Provincial Governments, Bombay and Madras, have a comprehensive rationing scheme, and only two States, namely, Travancore and Cochin.

Bombay proved before they introduced rationing, that grain sold in Government shops merely gave it an official *entre* to the black market, for there never can be, except on a ration basis, control over the people who make their purchases from Government retail grain establishments, or even retailers controlled by Government.

Unless, therefore, supplies of wheat imported from Australia are sold only to those Provinces who have a fully comprehensive ration scheme or show sufficient *bona fides* of introducing them in such areas as they are workable, the needs of the sons of the people of India now prisoners of war in Japanese hands and the millions of people in Axis bondage will have once again provided ships further to encourage black markets in India and their process of deliverance will be so much the longer delayed.

Those who have not given the problem thought, seem to regard rationing as a penalty, and it is perhaps only natural that those who live in surplus Provinces should be opposed to it. It is difficult for them to understand that rationing may save them too from being hungry, or to perceive it as even remotely possible that an unscrupulous 'corner' in the market may leave them virtually a deficit province. I submit, Sir, that as things are in some of the surplus Provinces at the moment, such an eventuality is not outside the bounds of possibility.

Bombay and Madras and other rationed areas, as I have already said are no longer the news, because they are rationed but had they not been, the appalling conditions of Bengal would inevitably have extended to them, and they too might now be equally firmly held in the grip of famine.

Time does not permit me to make more than a brief reference to the Note on rationing written by Mr. Kirby, whom I am very pleased to see in the House. His Note is in answer to the question "why should food rationing be inaugurated in a 'surplus' Province?". As the House knows, Mr. Kirby is the Adviser upon rationing to the Government of India, and a great authority on his subject. He was in charge of the food supplies and rationing administration of London from 1939 and until last year, which period included the worst of the blitz.

I understand that he is going to speak on rationing, and I venture to suggest that the House will hear much of interest from him, but I would ask the Honourable the Food Member that Mr. Kirby's note to which I have referred, shall be given to every Member of the House before the end of the Session.

Efficient rationing, however, must obviously be based upon a sufficiency of procurement.

In dealing with a man, whatever be his status in life, to convince him that what he is doing is anti-social and calculated to cause suffering to his fellowmen, there can only be but the shortest limit in appealing to his reason. When that limit is reached, there is justification for the most drastic steps to be taken against him.

May I ask of any Honourable Member in the Treasury Benches to tell me whether any one in this country received a heavy sentence for a food offence since war began? If not, has no man within the country been guilty of such an offence?

I appreciate only too well the difficulty facing Government in the matter of procurement, but I hope that they will be as harsh, as he is deserving, with

any man who attempts to obstruct them by word or deed in their endeavours to procure grain. Of one thing I am certain; if they follow that policy they will be surprised at the weight of public opinion that will support them. The food emergency within the country, Sir, will not be of short duration, to promote confidence in the cultivator, therefore, must be the immediate desideratum towards the procurement of his crops. To gain, his confidence, however, something must be offered to him for the future, and I submit, Sir, in addition to the suggestions made by the Foodgrains Policy Committee, in addition to those that were made by my colleague Mr. Lawson and as a long-term policy, the establishment of Government buying agencies throughout the rural areas.

Many years ago South Africa was faced with a food problem, not as serious as that confronting India at the moment, but serious enough. The cultivator was the poorest of the poor; the individual who bought his grain had him perpetually in his debt. The price at which that country's grain was sold in international markets was vastly different from the price at which the middleman purchased from the cultivator. As a long-term plan South Africa established Government purchasing agencies in rural areas and encouraged the cultivator to bring his grain to them. An immediate deposit price was paid to him and when the grain was eventually sold by Government in the world's markets, but for a small commission, the balance of the price at which it was sold was paid directly to the cultivator. It is an extremely short-sighted policy when dealing with the food of a country for any man to say, "Do nothing to prevent the cultivator making hay while the sun shines"; and the truth of this statement, I submit, is evidenced by the suffering of Bengal today, except that at the present moment there is no evidence to show that the cultivator is getting his full share of the greatly increased price of grain.

I would further suggest that food in every sense of the word should become the responsibility of the Food Department of the Central Government. I would also suggest that any senior appointment made to any of the provincial food administrations be so made by the Public Services Commission. Also that within the Food Department there be an agricultural department and that during the war all agricultural responsibilities be removed from the Department of Education, Health and Lands. I sincerely hope that those in charge of that department will not regard what I have said as a reflection upon them. That is the last motive I have in mind; but food has become such a serious question and as Agriculture is the parent of food, I consider that they should be under the same responsibility. If Agriculture is too vast a subject for the Food Department, my suggestion is that it should be a separate portfolio.

Before I close I will make an appeal to the more fortunate people in this country, to my own countrymen. I would ask them to eat no more rice until the war is finished. It may seem a trivial amount, but in the aggregate it is probably substantial. Recently in a weekly paper there was an account of an Indian wedding to which seven thousand guests were invited. No doubt most of them ate their fill. How many of the poor could have been fed by the food that was consumed at that *tamasha*! The Government of Bombay issued an order prohibiting any entertainment at which food was served to consist of more than fifty people. They have had to amend that order because it was found that more than one ostensible host was entertaining at the same function and increasing the guests to hundreds. I will not enlarge on the mentality of people who were responsible for that second order being made necessary.

In the finality I would urge the imperativeness of forward planning. Are Government more than satisfied with their plan for a year ahead? Are they satisfied with their plan for five years ahead, and is there a five years' plan? For unless such planning exists the future can only consist of one piece of panic legislation after another.

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan: Sir, not very long ago the world used to look upon India as a land of smiling fields, bumper harvests, flowing with milk and honey. Those were days when we had no railways, no speedy modes of transport, no electricity, no buses, no motors, nothing whatever. Then we had

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to depend not upon mechanical contrivances but upon ourselves. When famine visited this country occasionally from time to time there was nothing to arrest the march and the depredations of the scarcity spectre. One such visitation was the famine of Bengal in 1770. Thousands of people died of starvation then; but in the long history of this country there is no parallel to be found to the terrible calamity that has overtaken Bengal these days. We find thousands of people starving to death before our eyes; we find human corpses and human beings still living being devoured by vultures and jackals; we find that owing to the dearth of fuel funeral pyres cannot be lighted and Hindus have to bury their dead bodies under the ground; and we find before our eyes dead bodies floating in the streams. This is the condition of a province the population of which is 6 crores; and although millions and millions of tons of foodgrains have been sent to Calcutta and elsewhere in the mofussil, the rate of deaths does not seem to decrease. The other day I asked a question on the floor of this House whether the attention of the Food Member was drawn to a statement made by the Honourable Pundit Kunzru that 50,000 people were dying of starvation every week in Bengal; and the reply was that these are guesses and he could make similar guesses but it is better that these guesses should not be made. Pundit Kunzru's statement has now been confirmed by that of Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherji who said that 50,000 people were dying of starvation in Bengal every week. So a Government which does not know the actual number of people dying of starvation can surely be charged with lack of sympathy for the life of people in this country. The first and foremost cause of this terrible state of affairs is the lack of sympathy on the part of British Imperialism and the British system of Government with life as it actually is in this country. I remember a statement made by the *London Times* many years ago when the Persian question was before the public that the entire realm of Persia was not worth the bones of a single British Grenadier. I thought that those days were gone for ever. But when this morning Mr. Neogy told us that a military officer in these days was heard saying that the life of a mule is more precious than the life of an average civilian in this country, so far as the successful prosecution of the war is concerned, I thought that those days perhaps are again upon us. So I only hope and trust that this is only the expression of a single individual or a number of individuals and the whole British nation is not of the same mind. And especially the gentlemen who are sitting opposite us do not hold the same view. They have told us that they were trying to fight Indian poverty and bury it in some dark corner of the black market.

They speak of control: Control of foodstuffs, control of commodities, control of prices and some other controls. Perhaps a time may come when seeing that these controls are of no avail there will be another control from the Government and that control will be birth-control, because then alone numbers of the people of this country will be reduced to a normal condition from the point of view of the British Government and then they won't require any measure to fight this starvation.

Sardar Mangal Singh: What about the black market?

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan: Black markets will remain so long as no definite steps are taken by the Indian Government to fight these high soaring prices and as long as the Finance Minister will remain obdurate in the matter of currency policy; so long as that is the state of affairs, there is no hope for this country.

Sir, they were referring to the Punjab. I come from the Punjab and you will be amazed to hear that although we are a surplus province, yet in that surplus province the rate of *atta* is $3\frac{1}{2}$ seers to a rupee. Sugar cannot be had for love or money. The prices of commodities have shot up and anything that we could get for four annas formerly, cannot be had for one rupee today. The purchasing power of the money has been reduced; a rupee is worth four annas. And you talk of growing more food. Why should people grow more food? Why should people of the Punjab grow more food? I tell you about

the people of the Punjab: They are a set of peasant proprietors, their average holdings not above five acres per head, and they have to live upon it and if they gain anything by producing wheat they lose it by spending it on sugar, on cloth and on other commodities which they require. So when you talk of controlling prices and you threaten the provinces with dire consequences in the event of their refusing to abide by the decision of the Imperial Government, I tell you that you will have to make an exception in the case of the Punjab so far as control of prices is concerned, because in the Punjab we find that whenever there is a control the commodity, of which control has been proclaimed, disappears suddenly—God knows where. You will have to control wheat throughout the Punjab by going to every hamlet where it is stored in small quantities and still you will not find yourself able to control the situation. The Government of India in the Food Department have issued a memorandum—God knows how they managed to commit themselves, and I am surprised to find that no Member of this House has drawn the attention of Government to a certain passage in this memorandum. In that passage the Government has condemned itself. It reads thus:

"The marketable surplus of foodgrains produced in India consist, by and large, of the small margins of production over consumption of 50 to 55 million cultivators who normally live on a very meagre standard of nutrition. Any increase in their money income tends to result in increased consumption and proportionate decrease in the marketable surplus."

What are the implications of this statement? The implications are firstly, that the average Indian peasant does not get a square meal from year's end to year's end, and secondly, if surplus foodgrains are to come to the market at all in appreciable quantities, the income of the producer must not be allowed to increase, because the producer would then consume more and leave very little to come to the market. So the Government is interested in keeping the producer poor, poor to the verge of starvation. Who is the hoarder then, and who is the profiteer? The cultivator in the Punjab earns only as much as it is sufficient to feed himself and something beyond that which goes to the market. If he earns more by way of profit, that is spent upon himself and very little is left for the big stock-holders, big profiteers and the middlemen and others.

[At this stage, Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim) resumed the Chair.]

I should like again to emphasise that the Punjab's firm resolve not to allow control must be listened to and must be heard with respect. The Punjab, as has been rightly pointed out, is the sword arm of the Empire. Twenty million of Indians are now shedding their life blood on battle fields, and of these 20 millions the majority have come out of the Punjab.

An Honourable Member: It is not 20 millions; it is 2 millions.

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan: I have always differed in many questions from Chaudhari Sir Chottu Ram, but I am with him when he declares from the floor of the Punjab Assembly that if the Government forced their hands they will have no option but to resign and when they resign, I will see how the Government manages to carry things to their liking.

Then, Sir, I would like to say something about transport. When we Mussalmans called upon the British Government to provide us with one or two ships to take our pilgrims from Bombay to Jeddah, the Government said they were afraid of the action of the enemy and they were afraid for the lives of the pilgrims, which they held too sacred to be exposed to this danger, and therefore there was going to be no pilgrimage this year. Mr. Amery had not yet come to his proper mood, all that he had to say was 'Let us prosecute the war successfully and after the war is over we will see what we can do about the people of Bengal'. So he glibly pointed out that as there was no shipping accommodation owing to the necessities and exigencies of the war wheat from Canada or Australia could not be imported. But recently we find that six ships have been provided. Where did they come out of? Out of some

mysterious hole? These ships coming to India, reaching the shores of India, unloading their cargo where did they come from? If they can come now, why did not they come earlier? If they had come earlier,

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thousands of lives might have been saved. But you did not look at it from that point of view. Let me remind the Honourable the Railway Member, although he is not as much to blame as his predecessor was, still a certain amount of blame attaches to him. Under the basic system the Punjab offered millions of tons of wheat to the Government, and a proportion of that was set apart for Bengal. From the figures given by my friend, Sardar Mangal Singh, you will have found that a large proportion of this stock which was held for the benefit of Bengal was not transported at all. Who is to blame for that?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Where is it?

Dr. P. N. Banerjee: It was transported late.

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan: You did not transport it; it was still lying there.

Sardar Mangal Singh: Where was it in July and August? That is the point.

Now you have taken it away and there are no stocks.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member has already had his speech.

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan: So, the best thing is that you should not pose as Popes of Rome and that you are infallible. The worst blunder that the Government commits is that it looks upon itself as sacrosanct; it does not believe in anybody calling it liable to err, because they are not human! Are you inhuman? You are all Popes of Rome who looks upon himself as infallible. So, if you repose confidence in us and we repose confidence in you, we are prepared to co-operate with you in the successful prosecution of the war. We are as much interested in the success of the British victory and the victory of the Allies as you yourself are; we are all against Nazis, we are all against the Japanese; we are all against Italians. We are all interested in seeing that you succeed. When that is so, why should you not place confidence in us? That want of confidence is at the bottom of the whole trouble. That trouble should go; and whenever you commit a blunder, accept it and acknowledge it, and we will respect you; but unfortunately you do not . . .

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member's time is up.

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan: Your predecessor, Sir, gave ten minutes more to Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi.

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

Mr. W. H. Kirby (Government of India: Nominated Official): Sir, more than one Honourable Member this afternoon has mentioned rationing; and I should like to say a few words about that subject. But before giving an outline of the principles of a food rationing scheme, I should like to mention an incident that occurred last week which will illustrate the necessity for being precise and accurate when dealing in all matters relating to food. This incident relates to the quite unnecessary apprehension that exists amongst certain large sections of the people that rationing is a form of punishment, if not of something much worse. I was discussing last week the Bengal food position with an Indian grain merchant of long experience, who also was a Bengal Government purchasing agent for the recently marketed *Aus* crop . . .

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: What is his name, please?

Mr. W. H. Kirby: He said in reply to my question as to how he viewed rationing in Calcutta "Please do not ration us. If you do, you will kill us." The explanation of this startling statement was that since the people will be kept down to a ration of foodgrains of say, one pound per person per day the Government had not got the stocks, and therefore would not give the people anything like that amount; therefore there was nothing else for them but to starve. Sir, we shall not introduce rationing without first having the requisite stocks and reserves; consequently such erroneous ideas as those just mentioned will vanish as soon as the public see that in fact rationing means that their food supply is assured and under the rationing schemes properly organised they will get their food easily.

But such a statement of apprehension as the one I have just quoted is a significant indication that it is necessary to educate the public mind on rationing, and it is in this that the leaders of the people and particularly Members of this House can assist the Department of Food. Perhaps the words 'food control' would be a better designation than rationing, and more quickly convey confidence, which must be the foundation of all operations connected with the feeding of the people. Before the Ministry of Food in England inaugurated individual card rationing in the early days of 1940, there was an initial period of strict food control, during which time the people realized that a competent well organized administration was undertaking the vital task of ensuring that the people would be properly fed and that the supply and price of the essential foods would be firmly controlled.

But directly the pressure of events started to interfere with supply and prices, full scale rationing was inaugurated which resulted in complete restoration of the temporarily lost confidence. One of the first, and best examples in India of the benefits of food control and rationing to the people can be found in Bombay, as has already been mentioned, where today no one feels any apprehension whatsoever as to where his food is coming from, nor that the prices will fluctuate largely from day to day. In the Army, the word rations has a very definite meaning of guaranteed feeding. Why then, must the civilian be made to believe by unthinking persons that rationing means starvation, instead of salvation?

The Department of Food has for many months past been advising the Provincial Governments and the States on all matters relating to food control, whilst in August and September, of this year, the Department in collaboration with the Bombay Government inaugurated a series of conferences and lectures on food control and rationing. In the short space of time at my disposal, it is not possible to deal adequately with the complicated subject of food control and rationing; but a summary of the salient points can be stated as follows:

The object of food rationing is not primarily to reduce consumption, but to distribute short supplies in an equitable manner. When supplies are ample and assured, as in surplus Provinces and States, the control of consumption is necessary for the effective mobilisation of resources for war purposes; but when supplies are short and irregular, a closely controlled rationing scheme is even more necessary to ensure fair distribution to everybody. Food rationing must go hand in hand with price control. No price control can withstand, unaided, the pressure of increasing demand on dwindling supplies, and it must be accompanied by quantitative controls over demand and supply. Equally, rationing requires price control, since, no matter how widespread rationing is, it will not ensure equitable distribution among all income groups unless prices are low enough to enable every one to buy the quantity of their ration to which every one is entitled.

Food rationing schemes should in their policy and detail be as far as possible uniform. Their smooth operation depends on the degree to which they are co-ordinated with related policies, more especially controls over production, supply, price and income. This cannot be operated in watertight compartments. There is seldom any justification for local variation in rationing schemes. It is more efficient, more intelligible, and less wasteful for a uniform system, prepared and supervised by expert administrators, to be adopted throughout the country. Food rationing should be comprehensive. It is seldom possible to introduce food rationing of any particular article in short supply because once control and rationing of an essential food article is established then everybody tries to rush and buy up a similar kind of article. All rationing must have legal sanctions which will give necessary powers dealing with enumeration etc., which is a very vast task, and it is one of the great difficulties encountered when rationing a large and congested area. Besides legal sanctions for enumeration and entering into peoples' houses, there is

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legal sanction required in connection with all the other administrative control. These must be rigorously enforced and it is advisable to have a special staff for dealing with that purpose.

Sir, I should like to emphasise the point that, although it is necessary to have a special legal staff for enforcing such rationing orders, it should not be necessary to look upon such a legal staff and inspectors as some kind of *inter gestapo*, because many of the poor people do offend against rationing laws simply out of ignorance. It is necessary to associate the public and the trade with rationing administration. Local Food Advisory Councils or Food Control Committees should be set up, having as members representatives of the trade, transport and distribution, and hotel and catering experts, and welfare workers, etc. The functions of these Committees should be advisory and not executive. We heard to-day from an Honourable Member about Dacca. Dacca in Bengal, has a population of 235,000. The whole of the rationing scheme, distribution, looking after the welfare of destitutes, is entirely in the hands of voluntary workers who are doing a splendid job of work and are not costing the Bengal Government anything more than the bare necessities for ordinary administration. The distribution of foodstuffs by rationing must be carefully co-ordinated with the supply position, and its planning supported by an accurate statistical balance sheet adjusted day by day. We must, when dealing with the people in their millions, know exactly, as a banker must know exactly what cash there is in his strong rooms,—we must have an exact balance sheet of what we have got in stock, what is going out, what is being purchased, what has been arriving, and what we have in reserve. Both in supply and in distribution, wholesale and retail traders should be used, under Government license, and supervision, to carry out the operations as Government agents. In those cases where this is not possible—because some traders will not obey the rules, there is no alternative but that the Government must take supreme charge and open up their own Government distribution centres and shops, and if necessary, become their own agents. Please do not think I am saying anything against the trade.—traders are the ordinary real avenues for distribution. One or two Members have mentioned this afternoon, that Government have only to impose a price control order for the goods to disappear. Sir, there is only one person who makes those goods disappear;—it is not Government, it is not consumer, but it is the trader. The strength of the supply position in relation to a rationing organisation is the maintenance of reserve stocks of the essential rationed foods. These reserves or “buffer” stocks can be accumulated gradually and “turned over” in order to prevent deterioration.

Certain authorities have stated that we cannot bring in rationing because we have not bought up six months or a year's supply. Sir, it is never necessary for an organised administration running a rationing scheme to have more than one month's supply, and in fact, if investigations could be made, it would be discovered that in the ordinary course of business it is seldom that in an ordinary unrationed area the trader has anything like one month's stock at the back of him.

As regards propaganda and publicity, this is a very essential point of any food control and rationing scheme. As an Honourable Member has said this afternoon, food is “news”. The good-will of the press can be of immense value in the administration of food rationing. Daily advertisements, which, of course, should be paid for, in the local newspapers are recommended, with a distinctive layout and a constant position in the paper,—people in their own papers will look for a certain sign on any day at the same place, so that they may know exactly what is happening about their food. In addition to the press, there are many other ways well known to those specialising in publicity, such as films, wireless, loud speaker vans. All these aids to disseminating correct news are used by all the large areas now administering rationing schemes.

When a country is in the midst of a serious crisis—as India now is in relation to food—it is illogical that, through no fault of their own, the population of certain provinces and States are at starvation level, whilst others are surrounded by ample food. Besides being illogical, such a state is anti-social, non-ethical and a possible breeding ground of civil discontent. The inauguration of a rationing scheme enables the authority to calculate with mathematical accuracy the exact requirements of the staple foods for the population, and is in a position to give a true statement that will show how such surplus foodstuff can be released for deficit areas. Since the population of all large cities, especially those situated on the coastline, are unable to grow food, but are usually occupied in manufacturing the material needs of the countryside, each set of the community is helpless without the aid of the other, and therefore they are definite partners in the whole of the economic structure. To the objection raised by some authorities in connection with the inauguration of a complicated piece of administrative machine and the necessity to engage a large staff, the answer is, the more employment that can be given to a country's citizens the better for every one concerned, provided, of course, that elementary economics are observed. On the other hand, as was mentioned just now about Dacca, it is possible to run a food control scheme on a voluntary administrative machinery of a town as large as Dacca with its 285,000 inhabitants. Since food rationing instils confidence into the people, the Authority is the sole judge of the amount it is prepared to pay for securing such confidence, and an efficiently run food control scheme. As an Honourable Member mentioned a little while ago, the cost of such confidence to the people of Bombay amounts only to one rupee per person per year. Provided the Authority has the requisite skilled staff and the right outlook, no difficulty should be encountered in devising an efficient rationing scheme to meet the extent of the particular problem. Each city has its own particular problem. Several authorities, I know, have installed their own training scheme for their own clerks because they realise that the staff selected for dealing with the people must be of that calibre, who are prepared to almost dedicate their lives to the people. When an efficient food control scheme is in operation, it is not only the population which feels a sense of security and confidence but it is the Authority itself, because it is the possessor of an instrument, of a machine, that can be made to cover several other forms of consumer goods control other than food.

Sir, it is reasonable to assume, as has been stated, that since the eyes of the world are now focussed on India and India's food situation, the amount of practical help in the form of shipments of grain will be governed by the amount of efficient food control organisation initiated and maintained by the Provinces and States. The United Nations could not have possibly carried on their war effort, as they have done, without rationing, whether it is rationing of foodstuffs or clothing or the luxuries of life, in fact the real regimentation of all the people. Therefore it is reasonable to suppose that the United Nations will judge the food control administration of India by the food control schemes inaugurated or neglected. The inauguration of food control and food rationing in time of war might conceivably mark the beginning in this country of a new era of nutritional feeding. A great deal has still to be done in the way of looking after the feeding of children. It might mark the beginning of a new era of equitable distribution and also of a new type of trading and of course a more satisfactory price structure for every one concerned, not only the consumer but also the producer.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member's time is up.

Mr. W. H. Kirby: In conclusion, I will end with a claim for the endorsement of a policy of rationing by the House and an appeal to all Members for their aid and co-operation in making a success of this policy throughout India and thus restore confidence and good will without which so little can be done.

Sir Cowasjee Jehangir: I promise not to repeat anything that has been said upto now and thus save the time of this Honourable House. It is no use trying to stress the point of Bengal's misery and Bengal's condition. It is known to everybody and Bengal has the sympathy of the rest of India.

I would like first to draw the attention of my Honourable friend, the Food Member, and his Secretary to a portion of the note that has been circulated to us. They try to show a deficit of 2½ million tons throughout India but I regret I am unable to follow the figures. They show that ordinarily India produces 51½ million tons a year and that in the year 1942-43, that is the year ending March 1943, India's production was 52·1, thus giving India ·6 million more tons than is usual. Having started with that premise, they go to show how the deficit of 2½ million tons is made up. They give us the deficit due to the loss of Burma. Burma supplied India with a million and a half tons of rice. They show us that 650 thousand tons is required for defence services and 300 thousand tons is exported. The *pluses* and the *minuses* give about 2½ million tons deficit, but may I point out to them that they have begun with two items which are common both to the last year and the year 1942-43. The Defence services were supplied with foodgrains in 1941-42. Exports were more than 300 thousand tons in 1941-42. Both these factors being common to the two years, they should not be taken into consideration in making up their deficit and the deficit they have shown is therefore larger by at least a million tons than it ought to be according to their own figures. Now, Sir, I would like an explanation why is it necessary to show a deficit of 2½ million tons, while according to their own figures it should be at the most 1½ million or less. The only factor which has to be taken into consideration in comparing these two years is the loss of Burma. That is 1½ million tons. Against that they have got a surplus of ·6 million. Then I was surprised to hear the Honourable Member in charge this morning say that the 'Grow More Food' campaign had yielded 3½ million tons. Where has that disappeared to? Where is that in your calculation? It is proverbial that statistics always prove the wrong thing. In this case, certainly the statistics put up by the Government are very faulty. The only conclusion we can come to is that there is a very big allowance made by the Government for the black market. They are fairly certain that a large quantity is going there and consciously or unconsciously they are making an allowance for it, or it may be that the figures are drawn up from facts supplied to them by the provinces. The provinces have been asked to give figures. That we do know. The result of the figures supplied to the Government of India by the provinces, may be, shows a deficit on the whole of 2½ millions. And instead of telling us that those figures come from the provinces or the Provincial Governments, they have tried to show us this deficit of 2½ millions in this rather illogical method. Let us take it for granted that this deficit of 2½ millions is arrived at from figures supplied by the provinces: so much surplus, so much deficit, the total being a deficit of 2½ millions. If the figure of production for 1942-43 of 52·1 millions is correct, then all I can say is that the provinces have been most conservative in the figures they have supplied and that is but human nature. After all, when one is responsible for the feeding of a province, one is liable to be a little more conservative than one would otherwise be, but to be so conservative as this gives a very wrong impression and leads us to wrong conclusions. If my deductions are correct, then the only conclusion I can draw is that there is a very big black market in India, that there is a considerable amount of grain hidden which Government have not been able to detect and that it is the duty of the Central Government to see that the Provincial Governments find this food which is most probably not in the hands of the agriculturist and which is certainly not in the hands of the consumer. There are certain consumers who may have got a couple of months' stock, but they are very few and their number is negligible. That stock is somewhere and it must be with the merchants. It is the duty of the Provincial Governments to find that stock because these figures show that there is that stock and it is the duty of the Central Government to insist upon Provincial Governments finding it out to enable the people to get at it.

Now, Sir, there is another passage in this report which, in my opinion, is most interesting. I will read it. This is how it runs:

"Unless conditions are such that the cultivator has no incentive to hold back his supplies such as the constant increase in commodity prices resulting from monetary expansion and unless the distributive machinery is prepared to play its own part fairly and well under the controlled scheme, it is clear that there is no alternative but requisitioning on a very large scale directly from the cultivators, a course which is fraught with serious political risks."

Now, Sir, I personally have come to the conclusion from what little I have seen and learnt in my own province that the only method of procurement that will succeed in India is to take the grain from the cultivator in the fields and not to let it pass into any other hands. I am told in this report that in doing this there are political risks. I am not quite able to follow what those political risks are. I do not for a minute contend that the agriculturist should not be given by Government a fair and equitable price for the grain which they may procure from him. He should be given a really good profit. And let me remind this Honourable House that those few lucky agriculturists who have lands today and who are getting the profits from those lands are paying the same taxation as they were paying before. Of course, I do not include in this category the thousands of agricultural labourers. Taxation on all other products has gone up by leaps and bounds but the taxation on the profits from lands, which the very few in this country enjoy, has not increased. Therefore, I plead that grain should be bought by Government agency—I do not mean the Central Government agency but the Provincial Government agency—and it should be bought direct from the agriculturist in the fields at a reasonable and good profit. I am asking for nothing that would bring about any political risks.

Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali (Lucknow and Fyzabad Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): It is impossible.

Sir Cowasjee Jehangir: I do not see why it is impossible. We have our land-revenue officers. I do not know about Bengal because there is Permanent Settlement there, but I do know about the province of Bombay where we have our land revenue officers who are capable of buying at a fair and equitable rate grain from the agriculturist. Nothing is easy; everything is difficult. There are many complications in what I suggest and I am fully aware of them. But that is the only equitable way in which grain can be procured for the common good of all. That is the second point I desire to stress and I do hope that the Central Government will bring this point to the attention of Provincial Governments who are reluctant to adopt these measures. They may be reluctant today but by next year they may have again learnt their lesson, a lesson from which Members of Government and their servants will not suffer but a lesson from which the teeming millions will suffer. Procurement is the most important thing. So, procurement at a fair rate is the second point. Again, I will emphasise the point that the agriculturist must be given a proper profit.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: But how do you decide to determine it?

Sir Cowasjee Jehangir: That is not difficult. The taxation has not gone up. That factor is even. It can be done by revenue officers. I know there is one danger. The revenue officers value the crop and the land revenue is periodically settled on those reports. Surely, with proper supervision it can be decided as to what the agriculturist should get in the first instance. Once you have got the grain in that way, there will be some other difficulties. For instance, there will be the difficulties of storing and I am fully alive to them. But I can see no other way out. I hope that at least my province of Bombay will adopt it and again show the way how procurement can be done in the interests of all.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: It must be in the interests of the agriculturist.

Sir Cowasjee Jehangir: Yes, in the interests of the agriculturist as well. After all, the interest of the consumer is also to be borne in mind.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: And the agriculturist is also a consumer.

Sir Cowasjee Jehangir: Everybody's interest should be borne in mind. The agriculturist must be given a good profit and even after giving him a good profit by my method, it will be found that the consumer will get his grain at a cheaper rate than he is getting it today.

{Sir Cowasjee Jehangir.]

But there are many obstacles and one of the main obstacles in the way is the honesty of petty Government officials who deal directly with the agriculturists. I fully realise the danger. I have had personal experience of that class of officials, many of them are honest, many of them on very small salaries are serving the Government and the people from generation to generation, but there are very often exceptions to the rule and these few exceptions may ruin the whole scheme. I am fully aware of that. But I am not going into all these details as I have said before. There are objections and difficulties to all schemes.

An Honourable Member: It is all right on paper.

Sir Cowasjee Jehangir: I would urge that others have carried out the scheme successfully. I can give instances where it has been carried out successfully.

Sardar Mangal Singh: Has the Honourable Member ever seen a field or a crop?

Sir Cowasjee Jehangir: If the Honourable Member expects that everybody is as ignorant about subjects with which he is not personally connected, as he himself is, then he is very much mistaken. I have had something to do with the Land Revenue Department of my Province and I have had something to do with the agriculturist and I maintain that what I have suggested is the only method which will in the end be found efficacious. These are the two main points to which I wish to draw the attention of the House.

I was very glad to hear from Mr. Kirby the principle laid down that, in rationing, there must at least be a month's stock. I was under the impression that after coming to this country, he had come to the conclusion that rationing under any circumstances was the best thing to do. I am really glad to find that he has come to the conclusion that, while working the ration system, if you run short at any time, you will cause considerable amount of suspicion, unrest, etc., which will make the rationing scheme a failure. Therefore, the principle must be laid down that in all rationing schemes there must be at least a month's stock and also the likelihood of maintaining these stocks.

Mr. Hooseinbhoj A. Lalljee (Bombay Central Division: Muhammadan Rural): He said you must have a balance sheet of food grains.

Sir Cowasjee Jehangir: The balance sheet is all right when you have got money. Now, Mr. President, that is a principle which I was very glad to hear him enunciate and I endorse, as many of us have done in this House, that rationing is the only equitable method of distributing food. Why is it that it is opposed? It is opposed mainly from fear that it may be a complete failure, that is to say, you may run short of food altogether and nobody will get anything at all. It is also opposed by those people who can afford to buy food at any price.

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan: Rationing in big cities or in the villages?

Sir Cowasjee Jehangir: I am not talking of villages. Let us begin with big cities with a population of a lakh of people and then we can go on to villages. Rationing is opposed by those who can afford to buy things at any price because under rationing they will only get a certain quantity and not be allowed to buy as they like, large quantities because they have got a fat purse. That is one of the apprehensions. That is the class of people who are most vocal. That is the conclusion I have come to from the experience in my own city.

I have nothing further to say except I hope and trust that the Central Government will see to it that distribution takes place in an equitable manner at least in Bengal, but that if it does not, they will exercise their authority as a Central Government to see at least in those Provinces, the lower officials or the merchants do not attempt to take advantage of the sufferings of the people for their own ends. If that prevails in Bengal or continues to prevail in Bengal, then God help Bengal and consequently God help the whole of India because the failure in Bengal will surely affect the other parts of India next year, and there will be shortage every where. It will be the duty of the Central Government to see that this distribution is carried out equitably and fairly, and if they fail in that, they will have failed in their duty.

Shri Bahadur N. Siva Raj (Nominated Non-Official): A debate on Food in India very rightly opens a wide area of discussion and it is possible for Honourable Members of this House to make many suggestions and offer many criticisms to the Government which might rightly be said to be not wide of the mark. I sincerely believe that for the present it would be not necessary for us to go into the causes of our present crisis, though a study of the causes might indicate to us the lines on which our situation regarding food can be bettered or improved in the future. I believe, Sir, that primary responsibility for the provision of food during the war is that of His Majesty's Government. It is well known, as I have already mentioned before, that food has never been and never was the concern of any Government either provincial or central in India. I do not suppose the fault is only of the British Government in India. Even the predecessors of the British Government in India have never tackled this question of feeding the populations of India; so much so that it will be right for any Honourable Member to make the observation that the food economy of India was always unstable and not strong and it was liable to be seriously upset at any strain which has been brought upon it, such for instance, as by war. If we feel the food crisis so keenly today it is because the social economy of India has been affected by the strain of this modern war.

Whatever position India occupies in the British Empire or in the constitutional status amongst the other parts of the British Empire, the fact remains that India is today on a war basis on account of the responsibility that has been imposed upon her by the British Government. It was the British Government that declared war against Germany; consequently India had to declare war, and it is my contention that those who took this responsibility to declare war have also to bear the responsibility of finding the food supply for the civilian population of India. They have not done so either because they thought there was no necessity for it or because they thought that the Government of India had both the capacity and the competency to do so. However, the results do not seem to justify their expectations. It is indeed hard luck that it was not possible either for the British Government or for the Government of India to conceive of a position in India which would be followed by the conquest on the east. They never for once imagined that it was possible for a country like Japan —after all an eastern nation—to advance so rapidly against the forces of the Allies or against the Britishers. Otherwise I should certainly feel that the Government of India and the British Government would have made a provision for all this trouble. We find that long before the war started, in spite of the fact that the Englishman is supposed to drift or stumble into success, in England steps have been taken to see that sufficient stocks of food are built up to pass through this crisis of war. Even though it was easier in the case of the English food structure to do it the fact remains that neither the British Government nor the Government of India have ever done any such thing like that in India. And in this respect I do not blame even the Government of India. In normal times and in peace times whatever initiative the Government of India may have had and whatever powers they may have, certainly during this war such initiative has been assumed and taken away from them by His Majesty's Government; so that in every circumstance practically they have to look to His Majesty's Government for advice, guidance and instruction. And I think in this particular case of lack of food for the civilian population of India I should personally blame His Majesty's Government.

With these remarks I should now like to refer to the subject of a Royal Commission or the subject of an inquiry. I am not a believer, even though I hear that the Leaders of the Parties and the Parties themselves have agreed or are likely to agree upon a common amendment on this question of Royal Commission. I feel that such Commission will be useful only at a later stage. But at the present moment I sincerely think that it is of no use at all unless that Royal Commission comes as a sort of relief society or, in Mr. Jinnah's happy phrase, as a fire brigade to put down the fire which is now raging in

[Rao Bahadur N. Siva' Raj.]

Bengal. But if it is a matter of inquiring into the food situation of India as a whole, I do not think that a Royal Commission need come now. And there is another point about this Royal Commission coming at the present moment. If they come now they are likely to upset what little plans the Government of India or the Government of Bengal have devised, so far as the Bengal famine is concerned, to relieve the distress. So I do not feel quite enthusiastic about this Royal Commission. But if it is the wish of the House that there should be a Royal Commission I have no objection to it at all.

Sir, I am to place before the House the suggestion that during the period of the war the Government of India should have the responsibility for food, that food actually must become a Central responsibility, and if it is necessary that an amendment of the Government of India Act should be made to confer upon the Government of India such powers as would make food a Central responsibility, I would even ask the Government of India to address the Secretary of State to have the Government of India Act amended in that way; because, in my opinion and in the opinion of the Association of which I happen to be the President and which has passed a Resolution to this effect, unless food is made a Central responsibility it will not be possible for the Government of India to enforce such of the measures as they have now in view for the solution of this problem. So I would suggest that the Government of India should immediately be vested with the responsibility for food and the food administration throughout India. We find very unfortunately indeed that the provinces have sought to exercise at a wrong moment such power and independence of the Government of India that they seem to possess in their provincial autonomy. I wish the provinces would seriously realise the necessity for cooperating with the Government of India in such measures as they have taken.

With regard to rationing I wish to say that so far as Madras city and other cities in the Madras province are concerned, rationing has really gone a great deal to improve the situation and to restore the confidence of the public in the matter of food supply. I happen to be a member of the Madras Provincial Food Council and I know that the Government of Madras, because of the early steps it took to see that sufficient stock was kept in hand, found it possible to have the rationing system introduced there.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee: There is no such Food Council in Bengal.

Rao Bahadur N. Siva' Raj: We know that rationing has been a great success. Indeed there are certain difficulties in the matter of rationing. In Madras, as my Honourable friend, Mr. Venkatachalam Chetty, will agree, much of the stock that was meant for the City was actually in the hands of the wholesale dealers and much of the rice went underground, and for a long time the Madras Government were not able to tackle them; but on a certain day they stopped all the licenses of these wholesale dealers and they purchased all the stock that was necessary for the city of Madras through their grain purchase officers in the districts. And when they actually got this stock and distributed in the city by this rationing system they found that all their calculations were wrong, that actually speaking, the Madras city had to have a much lesser quantity than their anticipations went, and consequently whatever excess there was went over to the villages. And the Madras Government did another thing. In spite of a deputation that was taken by the wholesale dealers that this ban on the licenses of the wholesale dealers or, as our friends would like to say, the normal channel of trade should be given up, the Madras Government declined to accede to their request and said that for a period of one year, at any rate, they would not remove this ban on the licenses of wholesale dealers. So I will say that rationing has been a success in the city of Madras. And I personally think that the Government of India should take early steps to see that it is introduced in all provinces, irrespective of the fact whether it is a deficit area or a surplus area. There is one other matter which I should like to mention in connection with the food situation. Actually we have had many arguments today but very

few suggestions which will go to relieve the situation. The food situation, according to me, is due to two factors; one is that there is shortage of food and the other is that there is maldistribution. Shortage of food may be due to the wrath of God or due to the avarice of man. Whatever it is, the fact is that today we are facing a shortage of food and if it has been due to an act of God the Government of India can escape the responsibility; but if it is due to maldistribution I can only impress on the House that it is the responsibility of Government to set right that maldistribution. And if necessary they should take all

5 P.M. powers that are possible to set right this maldistribution, and, as it has been suggested by me, if it is further necessary that the Parliament should be approached for amendment of the Government of India Act to confer upon them these powers, they must do that also.

The Assembly then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Tuesday, the 16th November, 1943.