

# THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY DEBATES

## Official Report

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Volume IV, 1943

*(8th to 19th November, 1943)*

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### NINETEENTH SESSION OF THE FIFTH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, 1943



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 17th November, 1943.

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

## MEMBER SWORN:

Mr. Harry Greenfield, C.I.E., M.L.A. (Government of India: Nominated Official).

## STARRED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

### (a) ORAL ANSWERS.

#### ORDINANCE FOR DISTRIBUTION OF FOODGRAINS IN BENGAL THROUGH REGISTERED CO-OPERATIVE STORES.

**222. \*Mr. Amarendra Nath Chattopadhyaya:** (a) Will the Honourable the Food Member be pleased to state if he is prepared to recommend to the Governor General to pass an ordinance regarding the distribution of foodstuffs through the registered Co-operative Stores in different places in Bengal in preference to the ordinary normal trade channels who are selected to be the instruments for distribution by the local municipalities?

(b) Is he aware of the fact that these normal trade channels withdraw foodstuffs from the market as soon as control of prices is announced by the Provincial Governments, and that they carry on trade through the black market?

(c) Is the Honourable Member aware of the fact that local police do not take steps against the dealers indulging in black market even when they are approached by the helpless aggrieved parties? If so, what steps does he propose to take to prevent such negligence on the part of the police?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** (a) There is no proposal under consideration for the issue of such an ordinance. Both Central and the Provincial Governments have power under the Defence of India Rules to regulate the distribution of foodstuffs.

(b) Yes, in some cases.

(c) No such reports have been received. Control of the police is the Provincial Government's function.

**Mr. Amarendra Nath Chattopadhyaya:** Is the Honourable Member aware that the Gregory Committee has recommended that co-operative stores should be used for distribution of foodstuffs?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** Yes.

**Mr. Amarendra Nath Chattopadhyaya:** Are you going to use these co-operative stores as instruments for distribution?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** Yes, as far as possible but the Honourable Member is aware that the co-operative movement has not made the same progress in every province and in every district.

**Dr. P. N. Banerjee:** In Bengal, it has not touched the fringe of the problem.

**Mr. Amarendra Nath Chattopadhyaya:** Wherever they are, they may be used as instruments of distribution in Bengal.

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** My information is that the development of the co-operative movement in Bengal as a whole does not justify the employment of these societies as the sole channel of distribution.

**Mr. Amarendra Nath Chattopadhyaya:** One of the channels, not the sole channel?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** Where a co-operative society justifies itself, it will have the job of distribution.

#### SUPPLY AND DISTRIBUTION OF RICE, WHEAT, ETC., IN BENGAL.

**223. \*Mr. Amarendra Nath Chattopadhyaya:** (a) Will the Honourable Member for Food be pleased to state the total tonnage of rice produced or harvested in October in Bengal, and how that quantity is being distributed?

(b) Is he aware of the fact that in places near Calcutta neither rice nor coal was available between the 15th September and the 15th October, 1943?

(c) How has all the supply of rice and wheat to Bengal during September and October been distributed? Has the Liaison Officer, Government of India, any authority in the matter of distribution of foodstuffs in Bengal?

(d) Does the Honourable Member propose to set up control shops in those places in Bengal where the Provincial Government could not set them up? If not, is it proposed to pass an ordinance to set up control shops in municipal towns and rural areas under the Union Boards?

(e) Do Government propose to pass an ordinance to bind every owner of the fallow land to use it for cultivation, and in case of failure, to empower any body else to cultivate such lands on payment of a nominal rent or no rent?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** (a) It is not possible to give an estimate of the quantity of rice produced or harvested in a particular month in any Province. The estimate of the *aus* harvest this year in Bengal is 1.7 million tons.

(b) I am aware there has been great scarcity of rice.

(c) The supplies received during September and October have been distributed partly through grain shops and controlled markets in Calcutta and partly in the deficit districts in the mofussil. The Government of India's Regional Commissioner (Food) has no authority in the matter of distribution of foodstuffs in Bengal beyond communicating the advice and if necessary the order of the Government of India to the Provincial Government.

(d) No sir, but the Government of India are constantly pressing the Government of Bengal to improve their distribution arrangements.

(e) An amendment of the Defence of India Rules to secure the object in view is already under the consideration of the Department concerned.

**Mr. Lalchand Navalrai:** If there is scarcity of food there and there is no storage of food also, how are they going to live?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** From the surplus areas. patches of food.

**Mr. Lalchand Navalrai:** From where?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** From the surplus areas.

#### DISTRIBUTION OF FOOD IN BENGAL THROUGH FOOD DEPARTMENT.

224. **\*Mr. Amarendra Nath Chattopadhyaya:** (a) Does the Honourable the Food Member propose to take up the work of distribution of food through his Department in Bengal? If so, what steps does he propose to take immediately to control the food front in Bengal?

(b) What precautionary steps does the Honourable Member propose to take to prevent hinderance to the war effort which may ensue from the present serious food situation in Bengal?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** (a) The distribution of foodstuffs in Bengal is the function and responsibility of the Provincial Government, under the general supervision and guidance of the Food Department of the Government of India. The Government of India are in very close touch with all the arrangements for distribution made by the Provincial Government, and have, on various occasions, rendered practical assistance. The Honourable Member will also have observed the recent announcement of the appointment of a high military officer to assist the local civil authorities in the organization and creation of the movement of foodgrains in Bengal.

(b) Despatches of foodgrains from the surplus areas to Bengal have been increased and expedited; distribution by rail and river within Bengal has been improved; substantial imports have been arranged from abroad; over 5,440 relief centres have been opened throughout the province; rationing is expected to be introduced in Calcutta shortly. The Government of India have been

in the closest consultation with the Government of Bengal regarding plans for the procurement of the winter rice crop for distribution within Bengal. To the extent that these measures relieve the present distress in the Province, they are calculated to prevent a 'dislocation of the war effort.'

**Mr. Lalchand Navalrai:** Is it the policy of the Government to rob those provinces which have got surplus and make them deficit provinces.

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** No. We do not regard food-stuffs as the property of any one province.

**Mr. K. O. Neogy:** Will the Honourable Member indicate the date since which the Central Government undertook the duty of controlling the Provincial Government in regard to the distribution of foodgrains. I want the approximate date.

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** We have throughout rendered them advice and this policy of definite supervision and control was accepted and enunciated in the last Food Conference.

**Mr. K. O. Neogy:** Is the Honourable Member now satisfied that the scheme of distribution which has been adopted by the Government of Bengal is satisfactory?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** The whole matter is under constant examination.

**Mr. K. O. Neogy:** What is the result of that examination so far?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** I think I may claim that the result has been a steady improvement.

**Mr. N. M. Joshi:** May I ask whether the Government of India propose to start centres in all the villages in Bengal in order that the landless labourers may get grain at a cheaper rate and whether the Government of India propose to give landless labourers the statutory right to secure grain at a very reasonable rate?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** This is primarily for the Provincial Government but I shall examine this suggestion.

**Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari:** Is this control being exercised by the Central Government with the consent of the various Provincial Governments or is it being done by the executive authority of the Governor General?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** I would say both. With the consent of the Provincial Government but where necessary we interfere.

#### RICE AND OTHER COMMODITIES EXPORTED FROM MADRAS PROVINCE.

225. \***Mr. G. Rangiah Naidu:** Will the Honourable the Food Member be pleased to state:

(a) the amount in tons of the following commodities such as rice, bajra, jawar, ragi, chillies, tamarind, coriander and pulses exported from the Madras Province to foreign countries such as Ceylon, South Africa and North Africa and to Indian States in the Province such as Travancore, Cochin, Mysore and Hyderabad during the years 1940, 1941, 1942 and 1943;

(b) the amount of the above commodities at present available in the Madras Presidency; and

(c) whether the present stock is sufficient for the population of the Presidency until the new crops are available?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** (a) Separate statements showing (i) exports from Madras to foreign countries and (ii) exports from Madras to Hyderabad and Mysore States, are placed on the table. Travancore and Cochin being within the same trade block as Madras, exports from Madras to these States are not separately recorded.

(b) It is regretted that the information is not readily available.

(c) The Government of India have been informed that there has been a definite improvement in the situation in Madras and have no reason to believe that the stocks held at present in the Province will not suffice until the new crops are available.



	Aden.			Iraq.			Canada.			(Total).			Grand Total
	1940	1941	1942	1943*	1940	1941	1942	1943*	1940	1941	1942	1943	
(1) Rice.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	113,183	141,104	119,778	65,844	439,159
(2) Millets.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	4	7	2,737	1,243	2,751
(3) Chillies.	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	5,332	6,255	9,310	1,249	22,156
(4) Coriander.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,010	2,123	2,591	499	6,223
(5) Tamarind.	..	..	..	N	A	V	A	I	2,086	1,837	32,635	..	36,758
(6) Paddy.	..	..	..	O	T	..	..	..	267	284	1,902	..	2,612
(7) Gram.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,449	3,529	6,121	..	11,904
(8) Other Pulses.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	123,331	155,209	175,364	87,700	521,604
Total.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..

\*Relates to period from January to September only.

STATEMENT II.

Showing export of various foodgrains from Madras to Hyderabad and Mysore (by rail) during 1940, 1941, 1942 and 1943.

	Hyderabad.				Mysore.				(In tons).	
	1940.	1941.	1942.	1943.*	Total.	1940.	1941.	1942.		1943.*
Rice	61,687	27,556	47,618	8,865	145,726	39,408	35,709	21,851	17,097	114,065
Millets	758	313	19	..	1,090	104	69	55	23	251
Maize	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Gram	16	181	150	..	347	2,164	5,187	6,029	1,923	15,303
Total	62,461	28,050	47,787	8,865	147,163	41,676	40,965	27,935	19,043	129,619

\*1943 figures records only from January to July, 1943, the rest is not available.

**Mr. G. Rangiah Naidu:** Is the Honourable Member aware of the distress in the famine areas where people are unfit and are suffering from want of food?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** The situation has greatly improved.

**Mr. G. Rangiah Naidu:** Is it by the Government effort or by the help of charitable institutions?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** It is definitely by the help of the Government because we have sent them a lot of stuff.

**Mr. G. Rangiah Naidu:** How many tons of foodgrains have been sent to ceded Districts?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** I cannot give the information off-hand. I would like to have notice of the question.

#### FOODGRAINS IMPORTED IN BENGAL.

**226. \*Mr. G. Rangiah Naidu:** (a) Will the Honourable the Food Member please state the amount of foodgrains in tons that has been imported to Bengal from the various provinces of the country and overseas since August 1943?

(b) How far has the distress caused in Bengal due to want of foodgrains been relieved?

(c) Is it a fact that the situation in Bengal is growing worse day by day in spite of the measures taken by Government and the public to relieve the distress? If so, what steps do Government propose to take to save Bengal from starvation?

(d) What is the total quantity of various food commodities required for the Bengal Province to relieve the distress completely until the new crops are available?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** (a) According to the latest information received 225,000 tons of foodgrains were imported into Bengal from the 1st of August to the first week of November.

(b) and (c). Special relief measures have been taken throughout the distressed areas of Bengal. These include the opening of about 6,000 free kitchens, at which over 2 million people are fed daily, of hospitals, reception centres, relief camps for destitutes and orphanages. The rate of delivery of foodgrains into Calcutta and the districts has been increased. Reports from District Magistrates show that there has been perceptible improvement in certain districts as a result of these measures.

(d) Estimates vary. The minimum quantity of foodgrains required to be imported into Bengal has been estimated at 250,000 tons for the three months October to December.

**Mr. K. O. Neogy:** Has the Honourable Member received any recent report regarding the distress that prevails in some parts of the districts of Tippera, Chittagong and Noakhali?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** Yes, Sir; we have received reports.

**Mr. K. O. Neogy:** What do these reports indicate?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** Well, Sir, conditions are still bad and we are not yet out of the wood, but there is a steady improvement.

**Mr. K. O. Neogy:** Is there any system under which the Government of Bengal is expected to keep the Central Government regularly informed about the position in each district separately?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** We get fortnightly reports describing the conditions in each district.

**Mr. K. O. Neogy:** Is the Honourable Member satisfied with these fortnightly reports? Does he not think that having regard to the seriousness of the situation, the Government of India may as well ask for weekly reports?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** In addition to these fortnightly reports, we get daily a Secraphone message from our Regional Food Commissioner.

**Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad:** May I ask the Honourable Member what quantity of rice has been imported into Bengal out of the foodgrains?"

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** It does not seem to arise out of the question and I have not got the information ready with me here.

#### IMPORT OF FOODGRAINS FROM AUSTRALIA AND AMERICA.

**227. \*Khan Bahadur Mian Ghulam Kadir Muhammad Shahban:** (a) Will the Honourable the Food Member be pleased to state whether it is intended to import foodgrains into India from Australia and America to meet the shortage in the country, particularly in Bengal?

(b) When are the imports expected to reach India, and in what quantity, and in what grains?

(c) Until the imports arrive, what steps are being taken to prevent deaths from starvation in Calcutta and other parts of India?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** (a) and (b). Arrangements have already been made with His Majesty's Government to import substantial quantities of foodgrains into India from abroad. Several ship-loads carrying wheat have already arrived at Indian ports and more are expected shortly. The sources of supply are those which are the most convenient from the shipping point of view. It is not in the public interest to reveal either the quantities expected or the names of the countries from where imports have been arranged.

(c) Arrangements have been made to procure grains from areas with surpluses and despatch them to areas in deficit.

**Mr. N. M. Joshi:** May I ask within what period Government propose to import 1½ million tons of foodgrains into India?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** I am sorry I cannot indicate any period. I am doing my best to expedite imports.

**Mr. N. M. Joshi:** Will the Honourable Member give us some rough estimate of the time?

(No answer.)

**Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad:** In view of the fact that rice is the staple food in Bengal, may I ask what is the proportion of rice among the foodgrains now imported into Bengal?

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

**Mr. Lalchand Navalrai:** May I ask how much time it took to receive the quantity of the grain that the Honourable Member says has been received from Australia and other places? How much time has it taken after the requisitions had been made for it?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** I regret very much I cannot give any indication of time.

#### INDUSTRIAL ORGANISATION OF INDIA.

**228. \*Khan Bahadur Mian Ghulam Kadir Muhammad Shahban:** (a) Will the Honourable Member for Industries and Civil Supplies be pleased to state what has been or is being done for the industrial organisation of India with a view to ensuring a decent and dignified existence to all her citizens?

(b) What steps are being taken to provide for equitable adjustment between capital, labour and consumer so as to ensure Indians against want and insecurity?

(c) Has the Post-war Policy Committee started functioning? If so, what progress has been made by it so far, and when does it expect to complete its labours?

**The Honourable Sir M. Asizul Huque:** (a) and (b). I am afraid it is not possible to reply to these questions in answer to a question.

(c) The Post War Policy Committee has started functioning. Its first meeting was held on October 21st and 22nd. It has approved of the issue to industrialists of an Industrial Questionnaire intended to elicit information on the basis of which plans can be made for the future of industry. The date of the completion of its labours will naturally depend upon the progress that is made.

**Mr. N. M. Joshi:** May I ask whether the Government of India has made any provision for the representation of labour on the post-war Committee for industrial development?

**The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque:** I am sure it must have been there, but if the Honourable Member wants a specific answer, I should have notice of that question.

**Mr. N. M. Joshi:** May I ask whether the Government of India agree to the policy that labour should be represented on the post-war Committee for industrial development and I wonder whether he wants any notice for this reply?

**The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque:** As I have said, Government of India must have considered and taken representatives of labour in various Committees, but if my Honourable friend wants a specific answer, I should have notice of that question.

**Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari:** May I ask if the Honourable Member will keep the Members of the Legislature informed of the progress made by these various Committees?

**The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque:** I will always try my best to give as much information as is required by the Honourable Members of the House. I hope, however, Members will realise that we have to follow the rules of procedure and, as such, it is only when exceptional circumstances demand that it is possible for us to make a statement without any specific question.

**Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari:** Is it right and proper to keep the Members of the Legislature completely in dark as to what is going on in these Committees?

**The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque:** I am sure Honourable Members will have an opportunity of knowing the activities of these Committees when discussions take place about them in the House.

#### BEVERIDGE REPORT FOR POST WAR SOCIAL SECURITY.

**229. \*Khan Bahadur Mian Ghulam Kadir Muhammad Shahban:** Will the Honourable the Labour Member be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have considered the Beveridge Report for post-war social security;

(b) whether they have any social security plan in view for India after the cessation of hostilities;

(c) whether, if the matter has not yet engaged their attention, they will take it up now with a view to evolving a plan similar to what is known as "Beveridge Plan" for this country; and

(d) on what lines, if any, the Post-War Reconstruction Committee is working?

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:** (a) It is not for the Government of India to consider the Beveridge Report submitted to the Government in the United Kingdom. The Government of India are, however, aware of the Report.

(b) and (c). I would invite the attention of the Honourable Member to the resolution on this subject passed at the last meeting in September, 1948, of the Tripartite Labour Conference. Copies of the resolution are placed on the table of the House. The Government of India is giving active consideration to the question of implementing the resolution.

(d) I would invite the Honourable Member's attention to the statement laid on the table of the Council of State on the 4th August, 1948, by the Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava in reply to question No. 74 by the Honourable Pandit H. N. Kunzru.

*Resolution passed at the Tripartite Plenary Labour Conference held at New Delhi on the 6th and 7th September, 1948.*

This Tripartite Labour Conference recommends that with a view to provide adequate materials on which to plan a policy of social security for labour the Central Government in co-operation with the Governments of the Provinces of British India, the Indian States and the Chamber of Princes should immediately set up machinery to investigate questions

of wages and earnings, employment and housing and social conditions generally, and that as soon as possible after receipt of the required statistics and data, the Central Government should appoint a mixed Committee to formulate plans of social security.

**ADMINISTRATION OF THE DELHI RESTRICTION OF USES OF LAND ACT, ETC.**

**230. \*Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani:** Will the Secretary for Education, Health and Lands please state:

(a) the total number of persons appointed or employed for the administration of the Delhi Restriction of Uses of Land Act, 1941, and the number of Muslim (i) officers, and (ii) men;

(b) the total number of officers employed in connection with Ribbon Developments Scheme in Delhi, and the number of Muslim officers;

(c) the description and number of schemes approved and the number of such schemes taken up; what arrangements have been made to protect and exempt graves and burial places, under the provisions of the Delhi Restriction of Uses of Land Act, 1941; and

(d) the names of officers or persons-in-charge for looking after the protection and exemption of graves etc., under the provisions of the said Act?

**Mr. J. D. Tyson:** The information has been called for and will be furnished to the House in due course.

**PRODUCTION OF AND FORECASTS FOR FOODGRAINS.**

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

(a) the total production of foodgrains for 1942-43 and forecasts for the year 1943-44;

(b) the quantity of foodgrains required for (i) the civil population and (ii) the Military Department in India;

(c) the total quantity of foodgrains exported from and imported into the country during 1943-44; and

(d) the total quantity of foodgrains purchased for military purposes in 1942-43 and 1943-44?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** (a), (b) and (c). A statement is laid on the table.

(d) It is not in the public interest to furnish this information.

(a) The total production of foodgrains in 1942-43 was about 52.1 Millions Tons.

Complete information about forecasts for 1943-44 is not available.

(b) The quantity of foodgrains required for civil consumption on the basis of average production plus net imports during the five years ending March, 1942 is about 53.9 Million Tons. The quantity required for military consumption is about 650,000 tons of all foodgrains.

(c) The following are the figures of exports from India of foodgrains during April to October 1943.

Foodgrains	Export from India (Tons)
Rice	26,874
Wheat	30,991
Wheat products	10,215
Barley	24
Milletts	9,594
Oats	114
Pulses	9,390
Others	8
	87,210

Total imports from April to October 1943 amounted to about 100,000 tons. Rice exports stopped in July.

**Mr. K. C. Neogy:** With reference to part (c), do I take it that the figure of the exports of food grains included in the statement includes exports made on Government account or does it indicate merely exports made on private account?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** No exports, as far as I am aware, are made on Government account, excepting whatever the army takes out of the country out of their own quota. I am not aware, I can give no information about what the army takes with it to the various battlefields.

NEGLECT OF LAWNS IN FRONT OF ORTHODOX CLERKS' QUARTERS IN D. I. Z. AREA, NEW DELHI.

**232. \*Sardar Sant Singh:** (a) Will the Honourable the Labour Member please state whether it is a fact that the lawns in front of orthodox clerks' quarters in the D. I. Z. area of New Delhi are not properly maintained?

(b) Is it a fact that most of the ground is covered with dried up stunted grass?

(c) Is it a fact that the roads bordering these lawns have almost in all cases lost their alignment, and that some portions of the road are covered with grass, while in other cases the grass has completely disappeared and is covered by bajri and soil?

(d) Is it a fact that there are *malis* regularly employed by the Horticultural Division to look after these lawns?

(e) Is the Honourable Member aware that these *malis* water the lawns only once or twice a month and do not pay any attention to anything else?

(f) Are Government prepared to take action to see that these lawns are properly maintained?

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:** (a) No.

(b) No.

(c) No.

(d) Yes.

(e) The *malis* not only water the lawns but also keep them in proper order.

(f) The question does not arise, but Government will be prepared to enquire into any *bona fide* complaints on this subject.

**Sardar Sant Singh:** Has the Honourable Member simply given the reply on the note prepared by the Department or has he taken pains to see the conditions of these quarters to satisfy himself whether the allegations made in the question are correct or not?

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:** I have no reason to suppose that the information supplied to me is not correct.

**Sardar Sant Singh:** Will the Honourable Member take the trouble of going and seeing for himself the conditions there and he will find out that the Department is not working properly.

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

BAN ON KEEPING MILCH CATTLE IN CLERKS' QUARTERS IN NEW DELHI.

**233. \*Sardar Sant Singh:** (a) Will the Honourable the Labour Member please state whether it is a fact that Government have banned the keeping of milch cattle in clerks quarters in New Delhi, other than the A and B type of quarters?

(b) Is the Honourable Member aware that very few of the occupants of A and B types of quarters are keeping milch cattle in their compounds?

(c) Is the Honourable Member aware of the very high price charged for milk and milk products in New Delhi, and of the difficulty of the Government of India staff in obtaining supplies on account of this increase in price?

(d) Are Government prepared to allow the occupants of all types of quarters generally to keep milch cattle in their quarters, especially in view of part (b) above, at least for the duration of the war? If not, why not?

(e) Is it a fact that Government are daily advising people to grow more food?

(f) Are Government aware that a general permission to keep milch cattle in their quarters will go a long way to help their staff who propose to keep such cattle in obtaining some substantial food and thus relieve pressure on the market for the benefit of others who may need it?

**Mr. J. D. Tyson:** (a), (b), (d) and (f). The Honourable Member is referred to the reply given to his starred question No. 146 on the 13th November, 1943. As I then stated, the New Delhi Municipal Committee is examining means of augmenting the milk supply.

(c) and (e). Yes.

†234\*.

†The question was withdrawn by the questioner.

## EMPLOYMENT OF SOUTH AFRICAN WHITE EVACUEES FROM BURMA FOR UTILISATION OF INDIA'S MINERAL RESOURCES.

**235. \*Sir Abdul Halim Ghaznavi:** (a) Has the attention of the Honourable Member for Indians Overseas been drawn to the editorial comment of the *Hindusthan Standard* of Calcutta, dated the 21st August, 1943, on the employment of South African White evacuees from Burma in the utilisation of India's mineral resources?

(b) Is it a fact that the Government of India have entrusted South African White evacuees from Burma with the work of carrying on prospecting operations and of helping towards the utilisation of India's resources, specially the mineral wealth in the Indian States? If so, how many of the South African White evacuees from Burma have been employed, and on what terms?

(c) Why have Government employed such South African White evacuees when the South African Government have recently passed the Pegging Act against the Indian settlers?

**The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare:** (a) Yes.

(b) Two South African nationals who had served in Burma have been employed in the Utilisation Branch of the Geological Survey of India. One of the officers has been in charge of prospecting operations in connection with the re-opening of the lead and zinc mines at Zawar in Mewar State. The other has been employed as a Mining Engineer in the mica production section of the Utilisation Branch, Rajputana. This section is engaged in assisting mica miners in Rajputana in obtaining stores and increasing their production of mica. The first officer has been employed on contract, terminable on one month's notice by either party. His salary is Rs. 1,500 per mensem. The second officer has been temporarily released from military service. His services will be terminated when his work in the Utilisation Branch is finished or when the war Department establishes a higher claim to his services. His pay is Rs. 800 per mensem.

(c) Both officers possess exceptional qualifications for the work they are doing which is of the greatest value to the War effort. They were employed because no Indian was available with such qualifications. The appointments were made before the recent "Pegging" Act was passed by the South African Legislature.

**Sardar Sant Singh:** May I know if the Honourable Member could not get an equally expert officer from any other nationality than that of South Africa?

**The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare:** I want notice.

**Sardar Sant Singh:** May I know if the Honourable Member represents the policy of this House that no South African should be employed on any account in India?

**The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare:** I represent the policy of the Government of India.

**Sardar Sant Singh:** What is the policy of the Government of India in regard to the employment of South Africans? The whole of India is against the employment of South Africans in India on any account?

**The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare:** I know that.

**Sardar Sant Singh:** Then what is the Honourable Member doing to frame the policy of the Government of India that no South African should be employed in India?

**The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare:** I have already said in my answer that these appointments were made before the Pegging Act was passed.

**Sardar Sant Singh:** Will the Honourable Member then terminate the appointments by giving notice on account of the irritation that it causes to the people of India in seeing South Africans employed in India?

**The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare:** I am aware of the irritation and share it myself and the question of terminating the employment of these people will be governed by the decision which the Government of India will take in this matter.

**Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh:** Have the Government framed any rules, have they been put forward for the sanction of the Government regarding the employment of these persons in the service of the Government of India?

**The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare:** I do not think that this question arises.

**Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh:** The question arises because this question relates to the employment of South Africans in the services of the Government of India.

**The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare:** Rules are being framed; some have already been framed, others are to be framed.

**Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh:** Have any rules been framed regarding the appointment of South Africans in India?

**The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare:** Yes.

**Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh:** Have they been forwarded to His Majesty's Government for approval.

**The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare:** I am not in a position to disclose correspondence between the Government of India and His Majesty's Government.

#### OPERATION OF THE PAYMENT OF WAGES ACT ON EAST INDIAN RAILWAY.

**236. \*Nawab Siddique Ali Khan** (on behalf of **Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi**): Will the Honourable the Labour Member be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cases of contravention of the Payment of Wages Act (Act IV of 1936), detected on the East Indian Railway during each of the years 1941, 1942 and upto the 15th October, 1943;

(b) the number of applications made to the authority appointed under section 15(1) of the Payment of Wages Act by the Inspectors for offences committed by the East Indian Railway authorities since the Act was brought into force in 1937; and

(c) the number of cases in which penalties were imposed under section 20 against the East Indian Railway officers?

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:** (a) The number of cases of contraventions of the Payment of Wages Act on the East Indian Railway were 334 during 1941-42, 481 during 1942-43 and 123 from 1st April to 15th October 1943.

(b) Nil.

(c) Nil.

#### OPERATION OF THE PAYMENT OF WAGES ACT ON EAST INDIAN RAILWAY.

**237. \*Nawab Siddique Ali Khan** (on behalf of **Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi**): (a) Will the Honourable the Labour Member please state if it is or it is not a fact that the Inspectors of Railway Labour have to obtain prior sanction from the Supervisor of Railway Labour for any action they may intend to take against offenders under the Payment of Wages Act?

(b) If the reply to (a) above be in the affirmative, what is the number of instances when such permission was sought and sanction accorded relating to cases of contravention of the Payment of Wages Act on the East Indian Railway year by year from 1937?

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:** (a) It is only the Supervisor of Railway Labour and his Deputy who have been appointed Inspectors under Section 14 of the Payment of Wages Act, 1936, any formal action under the Act has therefore necessarily to be taken by these two officers and the question of taking their prior sanction does not arise.

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

#### OPERATION OF THE PAYMENT OF WAGES ACT ON EAST INDIAN RAILWAY.

**238. \*Nawab Siddique Ali Khan** (on behalf of **Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi**): (a) Will the Honourable the Labour Member please state if it is or it is not a fact that lack of effective and proper supervision of the conduct of the Payment of Wages Act is responsible for such frequent contravention of the Payment of Wages Act on the East Indian Railway?

(b) Do Government propose to consider the advisability of making changes in the existing machinery with a view to affording proper and effective check on such contraventions of the Payment of Wages Act by the Railway officers?

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:** (a) What the Honourable Member suggests is not a fact. The very fact that such a large number of irregularities

are brought to light every year and rectified at the instance of the Supervisor of Railway Labour proves the effectiveness of the machinery which now exists for this purpose.

(b) Does not arise.

REPRESENTATION FROM MR. V. G. BALWAIK re WAR BONUS TO WORKERS.

239. \*Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Will the Honourable Member for Labour please state:

(a) if he has received a representation from Mr. V. G. Balwaik, President, Central Provinces and Berar Provincial Workers' Federation, Nagpur, in the month of October, 1943, in connection with war bonus to workers;

(b) if Government have arrived at any decision regarding the condition attached to the additional war bonus by the Empress and Model mills, *vis.*, the Government of India to decide whether more than two months' wages as war bonus can be treated as expenditure on which the company will have to pay no tax; if so, what their decision is; and

(c) if he is aware of the decision of the Working Committee of the Central Provinces and Berar Textile Workers' Federation to go on strike from the 15th November, 1943, if the mill-owners in the Province will not pay this additional or second instalment of the war bonus by the 14th November, 1943?

**The Honourable Dr. B. B. Ambedkar:** (a) No.

(b) No. The general question of limitation of bonuses admissible as revenue expenditure is under consideration and it will not be expedient to give further details at the present stage.

(c) Yes.

**Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh:** May I know the reasons why it would not be possible to arrive at a conclusion at an earlier date and give details?

**The Honourable Dr. B. B. Ambedkar:** We are doing our best to arrive at a conclusion as early as possible.

**Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh:** What time it will take, because the withdrawal of the strike has been made under my instructions that the Government of India will decide this question and the strike had better be postponed?

**The Honourable Dr. B. B. Ambedkar:** I am unable to give any detail.

**Mr. N. M. Joshi:** May I ask whether the Government of India is aware that there is very great discontent among the textile workers of Central Provinces on account of the fact that the Government of India have not decided this question early?

**The Honourable Dr. B. B. Ambedkar:** I have no information on the point.

#### STATUTORY PRICE CONTROL.

240. \*Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Will the Honourable Member for Food please state:

(a) if Government have decided on Statutory Price Control; and

(b) if Government have exempted any province from the operation of this Statutory Price Control; if so, on what grounds?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** The Government of India have accepted the majority opinion of the Foodgrains Policy Committee, which was endorsed by the Fourth Food Conference, that statutory price control should be instituted for all major foodgrains in all Provinces. The Government of India agree with the Committee as to the importance of ensuring that certain conditions exist when statutory price control is introduced. The Government are of opinion that in the present emergent conditions which exist in India All-India Statutory Prices for all food grains are an impossibility. In accordance with the recommendation No. 74 of the Foodgrains Policy Committee, therefore, the Government of India have decided that pending the enforcement of statutory control of prices throughout India, such Provinces as desire to enforce statutory control should be permitted to do so subject, however, to the approval of the statutory price by the Central Government. These decisions apply to all Provinces without exception.

**Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh:** Will the Government of India consult the growers before fixing the price and issuing any ordinance about price control?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** The point of view of the growers will be fully taken into account.

**Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh:** What will be the procedure for taking their views into consideration?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** I am associating an advisory council with my department and I hope it will be possible for me to get the benefit of their views on many questions like that.

**Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh:** May I know if any Members of this House will be associated for that purpose?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** That matter is still under consideration. But, as I explained the other day, I have agreed to a standing committee of 15 Members of the two Houses of Legislature, and as I consider that standing committee to be a supreme body I do not know whether the Members of this House would like to lose their importance and supremacy by being associated with minor committees.

**Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh:** My question is, will the question of procedure about the fixing of prices be referred to this food committee?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** As I have said, I will use every means in my power to ascertain the viewpoint of everybody. I have got several committees associated with me now and I hope there will be representatives of the growers or, at all events, people who will put forward the views of the growers to me.

#### INDIANS SHOT IN POLICE FIRING IN MAURITIUS.

**241. \*Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh:** (a) Has the attention of the Honourable Member for Indians Overseas been drawn to the news reported in the *Hindustan Times* under the head "Cry from Mauritius Four Indians shot in Police firing"?

(b) Can he state the circumstances under which the Police firing took place?

(c) Do Government propose to institute an enquiry of its own to find out the full facts? If not, why not?

**The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare:** (a) Yes.

(b) and (c). I have received a telegraphic report that disturbances occurred on 4 estates pending the settlement of a demand for higher wages. The police are reported to have been assaulted and in the course of firing which followed 3 persons were killed and 3 wounded. A Commission of Enquiry is investigating the causes of the outbreak and Conciliation and Wages Board are examining the adjustment of wages. Fuller details are on their way and after receiving them I shall consider what further action, if any, is required.

**Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh:** May I know the designation of the person on the spot, if there be any, who is to look after the interest of Indians and report matters immediately to the Government of India?

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

#### STUDENTS ADMITTED TO DHANBAD SCHOOL OF MINES.

**242. \*Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani:** Will the Honourable the Labour Member please state:

(a) the number of students admitted to the Dhanbad School of Mines, and the number of Muslims therein during 1941, 1942 and 1943;

(b) whether any quota is fixed for the admission of Muslims; and

(c) the total number of Muslims who applied for admission during the last three years?

**The Honourable Dr. B. E. Ambedkar:** (a) 24 students were admitted during each of the years 1941, 1942 and 1943. No Muslim student was admitted in 1941 and 1942. In 1943 two were admitted but one did not join the School.

(b) No; and

(c) 34.

**Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad:** What is the reason for the non-admission of Muslim students?

**The Honourable Dr. B. E. Ambedkar:** That is because they do not qualify themselves at the entrance examination.

**Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad:** As for academic qualifications I can prove that there are any number of Muslims who are fit to join that institution. But is it not a fact that scholarships are not given to Muslims?

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:** I cannot say: I shall want notice of that.

**Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani:** Is it a fact that last year qualified Muslims applied but they were rejected outright?

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:** No. If I may explain to the Honourable Member, the method of admission to the school is that first of all 50 per cent. of the places are filled as a result of an entrance examination which is open to all students. After that a certain quota is filled for the purpose of representing each province according to a quota that has been fixed. After that the balance of students is taken purely on the basis of merit. At this school there is no reservation with regard to any particular community at all.

**Mr. Kailash Bihari Lall:** Do Government propose to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the matter?

#### ESTABLISHMENT OF CENTRAL NURSING COUNCIL.

**243. \*Sir F. E. James:** Will the Education Secretary be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Advisory Board of Health, at its fourth meeting held in January, 1942, recommended that the Central Government should consider, at an early date, the constitution of a Central Nursing Council to co-ordinate the activities of Provincial Nursing Councils, to advise on nursing problems generally, to establish uniform standards of nursing and training, to inspect the conduct of examinations, to maintain an All-India register of nurses and nursing qualifications, and to arrange for reciprocal registration with other countries;

(b) whether any steps were taken to carry out that recommendation;

(c) whether the Central Advisory Board of Health at its fifth meeting in October, 1943, again recommended *inter alia* that in view of the extreme shortage of nurses and of the urgent importance of the development of nursing services, Provincial Governments should be consulted forthwith with a view to the early establishment of an All-India Nursing Council as previously recommended by the Board; and

(d) what steps have been or are being taken to prepare a scheme for the establishment of such a Council for the urgent consideration of the Central and Provincial Governments, and generally to carry out the recommendations of the Board referred to in (a) and (c)?

**Mr. J. D. Tyson:** (a) Yes, save that there was no specific recommendation regarding an All-India Register.

(b) No, As the proposal involved central legislation which could not be regarded as immediately essential and Provincial Governments were fully occupied in dealing with urgent administration problems no steps were taken to carry out the recommendations.

(c) It recommended the creation of a Central Nursing Council at an early date as previously recommended by the Board.

(d) A scheme is under preparation.

**Sir F. E. James:** Will my Honourable friend assure the House that once that scheme which he said is under preparation is completed no further time will be lost in sending it to the provincial and State Governments concerned?

**Mr. J. D. Tyson:** Yes, Sir; I think I can give that assurance.

#### SUPERINTENDENT OF INDUSTRIES, DELHI.

**244. \*Mr. Muhammad Ashar Ali:** Will the Honourable the Commerce Member be pleased to state:

(a) the duties and functions assigned to the office of the Superintendent of Industries, Delhi;

(b) the yearly cost of maintenance of this office; and

(c) the necessity of maintaining the office in Delhi?

**The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque:** The information is being collected and a statement will be laid before the House in due course.

**ISSUE OF PERMITS OF WHEAT AND OTHER FOODGRAINS BY SIRDAR MEHTAB SINGH.**

**245. \*Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali:** Will the Honourable the Commerce, Member be pleased to state:

(a) since how long Sirdar Mehtab Singh was entrusted with the duties of issuing permits for wheat and other foodgrains;

(b) the total quantity of permits of foodgrains and sugar issued by him;

(c) if Sirdar Mehtab Singh was the Chief Adviser of the District Magistrate in fixing the prices of commodities from time to time; if not, what hand he had in this; and

(d) what hand Sirdar Mehtab Singh had in fixing selling agents of sugar, gur, etc.?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** Information to supply a complete answer to the question is not available with the Central Government. A report has been called for from the Chief Commissioner, Delhi, and his reply is awaited.

**CAUSES OF PRESENT FOOD CRISIS IN BENGAL.**

**246. \*Mr. H. A. Sathar H. Essak Sait:** Will the Honourable Member for Food be pleased to state:

(a) the correct reasons which led to the present food crisis in Bengal, and how much the following causes contributed to it—

(i) the change from food crop cultivation to jute cultivation during the last three years, stating the area thus changed over;

(ii) the "denial policy" under which foodgrains were removed from certain parts of Bengal;

(iii) exports from Bengal; and

(iv) Government's purchases for military purposes;

(b) whether the Government of India and/or the Government of Bengal had foreseen the possibility of shortage of foodgrains arising out of the above causes; if so, what preventive measures were taken by these respective Governments, and the reasons for their total failure; and

(c) how much the frequent and four-fold transfer of the food portfolio in the Central Government during the last two years contributed towards the present crisis in Bengal?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** (a) The Honourable Member's attention is invited to the answer given to starred question No. 36 by Mr. Amarendra Nath Chattopadhyaya on 9th November 1943.

As regards the factors referred to by the Honourable Member (i) the area under jute in Bengal in 1939 was 4.9 million acres and in 1942, 2.7 million acres, but the present acreage under rice in Bengal is also larger than the acreage in 1940. (ii) The foodgrains in question amounted to only 40,000 tons of rice, most of which was redistributed in Bengal. (iii) Before export of foodgrains was stopped 3,500 tons had been exported from Bengal this year against a normal pre-war figure of 160,000 tons annually. (iv) No. rice has been purchased in Bengal this year for military requirements.

(b) Yes; the 'Grow More Food' campaign and the reduction of exports.

(c) There is no connection between changes in the Government of India and scarcity in Bengal.

**Mr. Lalchand Navalrai:** With reference to the answer to (a) (iv) that there was no purchase for the military, was it because they had already hoarded or was there any other reason for not purchasing for them?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** No, Sir. We knew there was going to be scarcity of rice in Bengal and so we did not purchase for the military in Bengal at all. We obtained their requirements from elsewhere.

**Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad:** With reference to the answer to (a) (iii) may I know why the Government of India allowed the export from Bengal in view of the fact that they already had a loss of about 165,000 tons of rice on account of the loss of Burma?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** As this relates to a period some months back I should like to have notice of that question.

**Mr. H. A. Sathar H. Essak Salt:** Arising out of his reply to part (iv), where he stated that the Government did not make purchases because they knew of the scarcity of foodstuffs in Bengal, may I know why under part (iii) exports were permitted by the Government?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** These exports were the barest minimum which could not be stopped at that time. The Honourable Member's attention is drawn to the fact that against the normal export of 160,000 tons annually, there was an export of only 3,500 tons. It was a very drastic cutting down of the export quota.

**Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta:** Why export at all.

**Mr. K. C. Neogy:** Is it a fact that the import figures also went down considerably?

(No reply was given.)

#### PROVINCES FACING FOOD SHORTAGE.

**247. Mr. H. A. Sathar H. Essak Salt:** Will the Honourable Member for Food be pleased to state:

(a) in what provinces other than Bengal the food position is serious or going to be serious in the near future;

(b) whether it is a fact that in some of the deficit provinces a grave situation is to be expected at the end of the winter; and

(c) what measures are being taken by Government to prevent a repetition of the Bengal situation in those provinces?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** (a) The food position is most difficult in certain coastal districts of Orissa and also in certain parts of Bombay and Madras.

(b) On present reports of crop conditions there is no reason to apprehend a worsening of the situation in these areas.

(c) So far as Orissa is concerned, it is expected that the winter rice crop will relieve the situation. As for Bombay, the Government of India are taking steps to supply foodgrains from the surplus areas as well as foodgrains imported from abroad. In addition, the Provincial Government is taking measures to procure a considerable part of the crops which are being harvested or will be harvested shortly. Steps have also been taken to supply Madras with millets but the position there is reported to have improved considerably.

**Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh:** Was any attempt made to ascertain the food situation in the Central Provinces and Berar?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** Yes.

**Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh:** What is it like?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** The position, so far as I know, is very satisfactory.

**Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh:** When was this enquiry made?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** We are in constant touch with the provinces and the conditions prevailing therein.

**Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad:** What is the position in Malabar?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** I admit conditions in Malabar were bad, but since then relief has been sent and we are doing what we can.

**Maulana Zafar Ali Khan:** And what is the position in Cochin?

(No reply was given.)

**Mr. H. A. Sathar H. Essak Salt:** Arising out of his reply to part (b), it appears that the Government is still pursuing its policy of complacency because it draws a very rosy picture of the future. May I draw the attention of the Honourable Member to the proceedings of the Conference at Hot Springs, to which a reference was made in Parliament, and request him not to let complacency have the upper-hand, and see that rationing, which is supposed to be the only method, is introduced by the Government of India in the provinces?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** I need not assure the Honourable Member that we are not complacent.

**Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani:** May I know whether the Honourable Member knows the food situation in Bihar?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** Yes, Sir.

**Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani:** May I know what is the price of rice at which it is being sold in Bihar?

(No reply was given.)

#### POST-WAR SHIPPING POLICY.

**248. \*Mr. K. O. Neogy:** (a) Will the Honourable the Commerce Member be pleased to state whether Government have now received a full report of the Debate in the House of Commons on the subject of post-war shipping policy? If so, does he propose to make a statement on the policy of the Government of India regarding post-war shipping of this country?

(b) Is it a fact that in declaring the policy of His Majesty's Government regarding post-war shipping, the following three basic propositions were stated in the House of Commons by Mr. Noel Baker, Joint Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of War Transport, on the 14th July last:

(i) "The first is that, for us, the Merchant Navy is a vital national interest and will remain so in peace time as it is in war".

"It is that this country must—I ask the Committee to observe the word 'must'—continue to serve the world with a large and efficient mercantile marine. The word 'must' is fundamental. It governs all the rest. It declares the general object of our policy which we are determined to achieve".

(ii) "Secondly, His Majesty's Government will be prepared to collaborate with other like-minded Governments in establishing conditions under which shipping of the world can be efficiently and economically carried on."

(iii) "The third is that when the Government speak of the efficiency of the Merchant Navy, they include in that term the best attainable conditions of employment for the officers and men who are now serving the country so well"?

(c) If the answer to (b) is in the affirmative, do Government accept the substance of the aforesaid three propositions in relation to their future policy regarding Indian shipping, and are determined, like His Majesty's Government, to develop and expand a national Merchant Navy in such a manner as would enable India to serve the world in future with a large and efficient Indian mercantile marine?

(d) Have His Majesty's Government consulted the Government of India and indicated to them the lines of collaboration on the part of India on which shipping of the world can be efficiently and economically carried on? If so, what are the broad lines on which they have been consulted and the broad principles on which they are expected to collaborate?

(e) What are the general lines on which Government propose to develop and expand an Indian Merchant Navy, both for the carriage of India's maritime trade and for securing its due place in the carriage of world maritime trade? What steps are proposed to be taken to obtain "the best attainable conditions of employment for the officers and men" serving the Indian Merchant Navy?

**The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque:** (a), (c) and (e). Government have received a full report of the statement made by the Joint Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of War Transport. They have asked for further information and clarification on certain points, and on receipt of this, consideration will be given to post-war shipping problems as part of the wider question of post-war trade and industrial policy. I am, therefore, not in a position at this stage to make a statement.

(b) Yes.

(d) The answer to the first portion is in the negative. The second portion does not arise.

**Sardar Sant Singh:** In view of the achievements of the Eighth Army and Fifth Army in the conquest of Italy, may I know if the Government of India will make a request to His Majesty's Government to allot the Italian Navy to India for the services rendered by India.

(No reply was given.)

## DEVELOPING SHIP-BUILDING INDUSTRY IN INDIA.

**249. \*Mr. K. C. Neogy:** (a) Will the Honourable the Commerce Member be pleased to state if his attention has been drawn to the following statement made by Sir Arthur Salter, the Joint Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of War Transport, in the House of Commons on the 14th July, 1943:

"I believe we all feel that that effort has been one of the most remarkable things in the history of the British Commonwealth. Take the shipping side only. Canada between the two wars built no ocean-going ships at all. She is now building, in addition to corvettes and other protective craft, approximately, the same merchant tonnage as we in this country?"

(b) If the answer to (a) be in the affirmative, what steps have been taken by Government and what encouragement have they given for developing such a shipbuilding industry in India so far?

(c) Are Government aware that Canada, which did not previously build any ocean-going ships, will be building this year 900,000 tons of merchant shipping, i.e., merchant shipping to the same extent as would be built by Great Britain?

(d) If the answer to (c) be in the affirmative, how many ocean-going ships and of what tonnage will be built in Indian yards in 1943? If no ocean-going ships could be built, what are the reasons for this, and what steps do Government propose to take for bringing about conditions whereby such ocean-going ships can be built in India in the near future?

**The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque:** (a) No, except what has appeared in some press reports.

(b) Government have made full use of India's capacity for building small ocean-going vessels and were extending all possible assistance to an Indian concern which had a scheme for developing merchant shipping; the scheme had to be abandoned temporarily owing to circumstances over which neither Government nor the Company had any control.

(c) Government have no information.

(d) Numerous ocean-going vessels will be built in India during 1943 but it is not in the public interest to give information about their number or tonnage.

**Mr. K. C. Neogy:** Is it a fact that the tonnage in all these cases is negligible?

**The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque:** No, Sir.

**Mr. K. C. Neogy:** What is the maximum tonnage?

**The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque:** I cannot give that information.

**Mr. K. C. Neogy:** Not even that.

**The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque:** No.

## DROP IN THE OUTPUT OF COAL.

**250. \*Mr. K. C. Neogy:** (a) Will the Honourable the Labour Member be pleased to refer to his statement in reply to starred question No. 349, asked by me in the Legislative Assembly on the 20th March, 1943, to the effect that the drop in the production of coal was so slight that no detailed enquiry had been held into its cause, and state whether it is a fact that there has been a considerable drop in the output of coal both in British India and in the Indian States since January last?

(b) If the answer to (a) be in the affirmative, is the Honourable Member in a position to indicate the extent of such drop, month by month, ever since it was noticed?

(c) Was any warning given about the threatened coal shortage by any trade organisation or any individual member of the trade to the knowledge of Government? If so, when did such warning come to the knowledge of Government for the first time, and what steps, if any, were taken thereupon?

**The Honourable Dr. B. B. Ambedkar:** (a) Compared with the corresponding months of last year, the output of coal in British India and Indian States has shown a decrease during 1943. During the first 5 months of the year the drop was slight; but from June onwards it has become more considerable.

(b) 1940 was the peak year for coal production. Since then production has

fallen slightly year by year. The fall assumed serious proportions from June 1943. Compared with the corresponding months of 1942, the output in June, July and August of this year fell by about 353,000 tons each month, while September showed a decrease of 299,000 tons.

(c) A warning was given by an individual member of the trade in August 1943. Government were already well aware of the situation by that time and were actively considering remedial measures. The following are some of the principal steps that have been taken to improve the situation.

(1) More wagons have been provided to take away coal, particularly in the Bengal and Bihar fields.

(2) Efforts are being made to ensure the prompter delivery of colliery stores and machinery.

(3) Women have, since August, been permitted to work underground in the Central Provinces and Berar coalfields.

(4) Action has been taken to prevent interference with colliery labour from military activities in the coalfields.

(5) Schemes are under preparation to provide a greater quantity of consumer goods for collieries and in particular of food, and arrangements are being made to ensure an adequate ration at concession rates to the miners.

(6) Welfare officers are about to be appointed in the Bengal and Bihar coalfields to promote the health and general welfare of miners.

**Mr. K. C. Neogy:** Is the Honourable Member in a position to indicate the principal factors that contributed to this coal shortage?

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:** Sir, the principal factor that contributed to the shortage of coal is undoubtedly the shortage of labour. That was due to the fact that labour was drawn away from coal fields by the 'Grow More Food' campaign and by the military works that were started near about the area where the coal mines are situated.

#### THE COAL TRADE CONFERENCE AT DELHI.

251. **\*Mr. K. C. Neogy:** (a) Will the Honourable the Labour Member be pleased to state whether the principal object of the Conference of representatives of coal trade and other interests, that was held in Delhi on the 23rd October last under his chairmanship, was to consider the question of increasing the output of coal? If so, what were the circumstances that led to the decision to hold the conference, and the result of the discussions thereat?

(b) Has the present effort to increase the output of coal been influenced in any degree by the necessity of stimulating an increased export of coal from India for war purposes or otherwise?

(c) Is it a fact that in a letter issued by the Department of Labour to the invitees at the Conference, mention was made of the persistent and increasing fall in the output of coal coupled with the increasing demand for Indian coal, both inside and outside India, which was stated to have caused the Central Government acute anxiety? When was such anxiety first caused to the Government of India and due to what circumstances, and what action has been taken ever since for the purpose of improving the situation, and with what result?

(d) Is the internal supply of coal in the country likely to be affected in any manner by any policy that Government may have in view with the object of stimulating the export of coal on Government or private account?

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:** (a) Yes, Government believed that one of the principal reasons for the decline in output was shortage of labour. If this shortage could be made good, the fall in production would be arrested and an increase to the target figures would become probable. Government were anxious to secure the full co-operation of employers in any measures they proposed for this purpose. The principal result of the discussions was an agreement that in Bengal and Bihar the Employers' Associations should initiate schemes on uniform lines for the supply of foodgrains and other commodities to their labour and the Government of India should assist the Associations in giving effect to such schemes.

(b) An increase in output of coal is necessary to meet the internal requirements of Indian industry as these have increased and output has diminished.

(c) Yes. Since the beginning of the War, Government have been anxious to maintain the output of coal at its maximum. The peak year for coal production was 1940. There was a very slight fall in 1941 on the 1940 figures and a further slight drop in 1942. It seems more than likely that the 1943 figures will show a further drop on the 1942 figures. From about June of this year, it became plain that output was not going to be sufficient to meet the increased demands for coal being made by essential consumers such as War Industries, railways and for military projects of the first importance. Supplies of coal for all consumers have accordingly been rationed. In order to meet these rationed demands, and such outside demands as it might feel necessary to meet, Government have to ensure that 25.65 million tons of coal per annum will be made available for consumption. This is a larger quantity than has ever been made available before; and measures to increase production have, therefore, become of the utmost urgency.

As regards the action that has been taken to improve the situation, the Honourable Member is referred to the answer given to part (c) of his starred question No. 15. It is too early yet to assess the results of these and other measures.

(d) No.

**Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh:** Is it a fact that in order to increase the output of coal production, female labour has been employed underground in coal mines?

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:** I said so.

**Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh:** If it is so, will the Honourable Member say how long female labour will be employed in these mines?

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:** Well, while the emergency lasts.

**Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh:** Will the Honourable Member tell me what precautions have been taken to look after these female labour employed underground in the mines?

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:** We are contemplating measures and if my honourable friend will table a question some time in the next Session, I will give him some information.

**Mr. K. C. Neogy:** Has there been any suggestion from His Majesty's Government for the purpose of stimulating export of coal?

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:** I have no information on the point.

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

#### RESIGNATION BY HOUSE SURGEONS OF LADY HARDINGE MEDICAL COLLEGE HOSPITAL, DELHI.

252. \***Mr. K. C. Neogy:** (a) Will the Secretary for Education, Health and Lands be pleased to state if it is a fact—

(i) that 7 out of 18 House Surgeons of the Lady Hardinge Medical College Hospital, Delhi, tendered resignation of their services in a body on the 30th September, 1943, and if so, what may be the cause of their resignation;

(ii) that before resigning the House Surgeons addressed three successive representations to the authorities for increase in their maintenance allowance owing to the prevailing rise in prices; but not only did the Principal refuse to consider their representation but also prevented the House Surgeons from having their meals supplied from outside with a view to economising their expenses;

(iii) that the Principal ordered the House Surgeons who resigned on the 30th September, 1943, to leave their quarters by 12 midnight on that very date, although some of them had been assigned hospital duty till 1 A.M., following, and no train was available till the next day; and

(iv) that these 7 House Surgeons have been refused payment of their dues for the month of September, and further that they have not only been denied any certificate but also threatened by the Principal that suitable action will be taken against them, so as to debar them from obtaining employment elsewhere?

(b) Have allegations of this character reached Government? If so, what inquiries, if any, have been made thereinto, and with what result?

**Mr. J. D. Tyson:** (a) (i). Yes. The cause of their resignation is understood to be the rejection by the Executive Committee of the demand of the House Surgeons for an increase in their stipend from Rs. 50 to Rs. 75 p. m.

(ii) It has been reported to Government that the House Surgeons submitted three representations, the first one of which was considered and rejected by the Executive Committee. There was not sufficient time for the Committee to consider the other two representations before the House Surgeons concerned left the service of the hospital.

The practice of obtaining food from outside was stopped for administrative reasons.

(iii) No.

(iv) In accordance with the usual practice one month's stipend was withheld as the House Surgeons did not give one month's notice before leaving their duties. The issue of certificates was not refused but the House Surgeons were told that the reason for their resignation would be mentioned in them.

(b) It has been ascertained that the Executive Committee have made recommendations in the matter of stipend to the Governing Body of the College.

**Mr. K. C. Neogy:** I should like to have a more specific answer to part (b) of my question. I should like to know whether any independent enquiry has been made by Government into these allegations.

**Mr. J. D. Tyson:** No independent enquiry has been made. We have had fairly full details supplied by the Acting Principal of the Institution and the Secretary of the Executive Council.

**Mr. K. C. Neogy:** So I take it that the Government is content to read out the substance of the report of that very official against whom these House Surgeons had complained.

**Mr. J. D. Tyson:** No, Sir. I do not know quite who is meant by "the very official against whom these House Surgeons had complained", as there was at the time an officiating Principal and in her absence another officiating Principal, but I have certainly made a number of enquiries from the Secretary of the Executive Council since we received a reply to our first enquiry.

**Mr. K. C. Neogy:** Is the Executive Council going to reconsider the matter at an early date?

**Mr. J. D. Tyson:** I have already said, Sir, that the Executive Committee have made recommendations in the matter of stipends to the Governing Body.

#### APPOINTMENTS OF MANAGERS OF GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PRESSES, NEW DELHI AND CALCUTTA.

253. **\*Mr. H. A. Sathar H. Essak Saït:** Will the Honourable Member for Labour be pleased to state:

(a) whether he is aware that for the recent appointment of Managers of the Government of India Presses, New Delhi and Calcutta, the claims of the senior-most Muslim Assistant Managers were overlooked; if so, the reasons therefor;

(b) whether it is a fact that the Manager of the Government of India Press, New Delhi, refused to relieve a Muslim clerk recently selected for a clerical job in the office of the Controller of Printing and Stationery, while he relieved a number of non-Muslim clerks selected for clerical posts in the Controller's Office, Assembly Department and Supply Department;

(c) whether it is a fact that the Assistant Manager of the Government of India Press, New Delhi, ordered the transfer of six Muslim piece-compositors of the Lino Section; if so, the reasons for such wholesale transfer of Muslims from this Section;

(d) whether it is a fact that the post of a correction checker in the Government of India Press, New Delhi, was recently filled by the officiating Manager by the appointment of a junior new-scale man, overlooking the claims of the senior incumbent in the old scale; if so, why;

(e) whether the Managers and Assistant Managers of Government Presses are empowered to make appointments and promotions and order transfers and declare certain posts selection posts; if so, whether any rules have been laid down for their guidance in these matters;

(f) whether the Honourable Member proposes to institute an enquiry to find out whether these rules are strictly observed by these officers in all cases; and

(g) in view of the frequent and increasing complaints about arbitrary and unjust actions in these matters by the authorities of the Government of India Presses, whether the Honourable Member proposes to consider the advisability of constituting an independent committee with powers mentioned in (e) above?

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:** (a) No.

(b) No.

(c) Yes. This was done in the normal course of sectional interchange which takes place every 3 months to allow each worker periods of easy and strenuous work. Three non-Muslim piece compositors were also transferred; along with the Muslims and 2 Muslim piece compositors brought on to the Lino Section.

(d) Yes. The post of Correction Checker being a selection post, the best man available was selected on merit.

(e) Managers of the Government of India Presses are empowered to appoint and promote men to certain classes of posts in accordance with the rules laid down in the Departmental Handbook. They are not competent to declare any post as selection post.

(f) and (g). No specific irregularities of the nature mentioned above have so far occurred necessitating the action suggested.

**Mr. H. A. Sathar H. Essak Sait:** With reference to part (d) my Honourable friend admitted that the claims of a Muslim were overlooked for certain reasons. Is he aware that the Muslim whose claims were overlooked had worked for 22 years?

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:** I am prepared to accept that from my Honourable friend, although I have no information.

**Mr. H. A. Sathar H. Essak Seth:** Then he said that the answers to (a) and (b) were in the negative. Will he take it from me that with regard to (a) the appointments have been made this year?

**The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar:** I must have notice of that.

#### DEARNESS OF VEGETABLES AND FRUITS IN BENGAL.

†254. **\*Mr. K. O. Neogy:** (a) Will the Honourable the Food Member be pleased to state whether he has any information as regards the percentage of increase in the price that has taken place during recent months of vegetables and common fruits which are in use in the different provinces of India, particularly in Bengal, and how the quantities in which they are available to the civil population have been affected in any manner during the same period?

(b) Is the Honourable Member aware—

(i) that apart from the high prices and scarcity of foodgrains in Bengal, the vegetables and common fruits that used to supplement the food of the people throughout the country are no longer available to them except at very much enhanced prices;

(ii) that there is a comparative scarcity of these vegetables and fruits in Bengal, and that their high prices place them beyond the reach of a large section of the people, and that this has resulted mainly from large purchases of such vegetables and fruits made for the consumption of the fighting forces (including non-combatant personnel) now stationed in Bengal; and

(iii) that suppliers of these articles to the fighting forces have recklessly put up the prices thereof in the markets of Bengal?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** (a) A statement to show the monthly prices of vegetables and fruits in the Calcutta market since January, 1948, is laid on the table. There is considerable variation from month to month in the prices of vegetables and fruit. Information as regards prices in

† Answer to this question laid on the table, the questioner having exhausted his quota.

other parts of the country or about the quantities available to the civil population is not readily available.

(b) (i) The prices of vegetables and fruits are generally higher than before. (ii) and (iii). My information is that the Army is largely self-supporting in the matter of vegetables, and local purchases are made under the control of local purchase officers who are directed to consult freely the civil authorities regarding stocks and prices. The system of purchase is by lowest tender after consulting current market prices.

*Monthly prices of vegetables and fruits at Calcutta.*

Month.	Potatoes (Desi Nainital) per Md.	Cauli- flower per one.	Cabbage per one.	Pulbul per seer.	Squash per seer.	Tomato per seer.	Pineapple (Assam) per 100.	Mangoes (Madras) per doz.	Oranges per 100.	Apples (Kashmir) per 100.	Banana (Sabri) per doz.	Grapes per 20 seers.	Mozam- biqua per 4 doz.
	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.
1943.													
January	4 14 0	4 6 0	0 6 0	0 12 0	0 3 0	0 100 0	0 0 0	3 6 0	0 10 0	0 0 0	0 5 0	0 0 0	5 0 0
February	5 10 0	4 6 0	0 6 0	0 4 6	0 3 0	0 80 0	0 0 0	2 8 0	0 8 0	0 0 0	0 4 6	0 0 0	2 12 0
March	8 14 0	0 9 0	0 8 0	0 4 6	0 2 0	0 90 0	0 0 0	4 4 0	0 15 4	0 0 0	0 7 0	0 15 14	0 2 4 0
April	8 2 0	0 0 0	1 2 0	0 5 6	0 3 6	0 0 0	0 0 0	4 4 0	0 18 0	0 0 0	0 9 0	0 18 0	0 2 14 0
May	8 12 0	1 2 0	1 10 0	0 2 6	0 10 0	0 0 0	0 0 0	3 6 0	0 42 0	0 0 0	0 10 0	0 42 0	0 4 2 0
June	10 6 0	0 0 0	2 4 0	0 2 0	0 11 0	0 0 0	0 0 0	8 6 0	0 30 0	0 0 0	0 12 0	0 30 0	0 8 0 0
July	12 0 0	0 0 0	3 0 0	0 4 6	0 8 0	0 0 0	0 0 0	9 0 0	0 14 0	0 0 0	0 14 0	0 36 0	0 4 0 0
August	20 4 0	0 0 0	1 8 0	0 5 0	0 6 0	0 75 0	0 0 0	5 8 0	0 15 0	0 0 0	0 13 0	0 45 0	0 4 4 0
September	16 12 0	0 9 0	1 8 0	0 7 0	0 6 0	0 100 0	0 0 0	7 0 0	0 8 8 0	0 0 0	0 8 0	0 40 0	0 3 12 0
October	27 0 0	0 10 0	2 4 0	0 7 0	0 6 0	0 105 0	0 0 0	4 0 0	0 10 0	0 0 0	0 13 0	0 36 0	0 3 0 0
October 1942	11 6 0	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0	61 4 0	0 0 0	8 0 0	0 6 3 0	0 8 0 0	0 5 0 0	0 27 0 0	0 3 12 0

\* Shillong variety.

REPRESENTATION BY THE INDIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, CALCUTTA, FOR UTILISING SHIPPING SPACE FOR IMPORTING FOODGRAINS.

†255. \*Mr. K. C. Neogy: (a) Will the Honourable the Food Member be pleased to state if Government have received representations from commercial bodies in the country, especially the Indian Chamber of Commerce, Calcutta, urging the necessity of utilising all available shipping space for importing foodgrains into this country from abroad, rather than luxury goods? If so, have Government taken any action thereon?

(b) What quantity of foodgrains has been imported so far from abroad, and what further quantities can be reasonably expected to arrive within the next three months?

(c) Has air transport been utilised for bringing foodstuffs into India, as suggested by Mr. Clement Davies, M.P., President of the India Relief Committee in Britain?

(d) What quantities of whisky, toilet articles and other luxury goods, have of late been imported into this country, in view of the improvement of the shipping situation? What are the countries from where such goods have been imported? Was the question of utilising the shipping space taken up by these goods, for the purpose of bringing food articles (other than whisky), ever considered by Government?

**The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque:** (a) Yes. The Chamber was informed that the luxury goods would occupy only a fraction of the space that would be required to make any appreciable difference to the food situation and that the greater proportion of these goods were to be shipped from areas in which foodgrains were not available.

(b) About 50,000 tons have arrived since September, 1943, but it is not in the public interest to reveal what further quantities are expected to arrive in the next three months.

(c) No.

(d) Figures for imports of whisky are not separately available but according to information at present available 320 gross tons of liquors were imported in September and October 1943 for civil purposes from all sources. The corresponding figures for toilet requisites is 78 gross tons. If the Member will indicate more precisely the other luxury goods to which he refers, I will endeavour to provide the figures for which he asks.

The figures given include imports from the United Kingdom, North America, Australia, South Africa, the Middle East and South America. With regard to the last portion of the question the Honourable Member's attention is invited to my answer to part (a).

DIFFERENTIAL TREATMENT TO INDIAN AND NON-INDIAN SHIPPING ON INDIAN REGISTER.

†256. \*Mr. K. C. Neogy: (a) Will the Honourable the Commerce Member be pleased to state if any differential treatment is meted out to Indian and non-Indian shipping on the Indian Register in matters of requisitioning of ships?

(b) Have Government been able to provide tonnage to Indian-owned companies to replace the tonnage requisitioned by them? If not, why not?

(c) Is it a fact that the benefit of the Empire Chartering Scheme has not been extended to India, although Indian shipping interests were agreeable to co-operate in the working of the scheme on the same terms and conditions as British shipping interests?

(d) Do Government propose to formulate a scheme like the "Replacement Tonnage Scheme" obtaining in the United Kingdom, so that Indian ship owners could replace their lost tonnage and regain their position in the trades built up by them after years of enterprise and effort?

(e) If the answer to (d) be in the negative, how do Government propose to safeguard the position of Indian shipping interests in the post-war period, in the absence of any scheme of replacement of tonnage and of a national ship-building industry?

†Answer to this question laid on the table, the questioner having exhausted his quota.

**The Honourable Sir M. Asizul Huque:** (a) No.

(b) No; because opportunities of securing tonnage for replacement have been negligible.

(c) Yes; the exigencies of the war have made it impossible for India to get any ship allocated to it under the Empire Chartering Scheme.

(d) Government are taking steps to obtain a copy of the scheme and will consider on its receipt the practicability of adopting a similar scheme for India.

(e) Does not arise.

**MUSLIM ASSISTANTS REVERTED FROM THE FOOD DEPARTMENT.**

**257. \*Maulana Zafar Ali Khan:** (a) Will the Honourable the Food Member please state whether it is a fact that some Muslim Assistants have been reverted recently from the Food Department? If so, what is the number of such men?

(b) Have any Hindu Assistants also been reverted from the Food Department?

(c) What were the charges against the persons reverted? Were they allowed to present any defence as required by rules of Government Service, particularly the Classification, Control and Appeal Rules?

(d) If no defence was allowed, why not?

(e) Is there any Establishment Committee to consider and adjudicate on such cases, as is the case in the Supply Department?

(f) Is there any Muslim officer in the Food Department dealing with cases concerning the establishment of the Department? If none, why?

(g) Are the Superintendent of the Establishment Branch, Assistant Secretary, Under Secretary and Deputy Secretary dealing with Establishment cases, Hindus?

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

(b) No.

(c) There was no charge against him. He was reverted because he was found incapable of performing the duties required of him.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) No.

(f) None. Such an appointment has not been found necessary.

(g) Yes.

**OPERATIONS OF THE "GROW MORE FOOD" CAMPAIGN.**

**†258. \*Mr. K. C. Neogy:** (a) Will the Secretary for Education, Health and Lands be pleased to make a statement giving the latest details of the 'Grow More Food' Campaign in its operation in the different provinces?

(b) With what object has the Honourable Member in charge of the Department of Education, Health and Lands paid visits to different places in Bengal recently, and what special action, if any, is proposed to be taken for the purpose of increasing the output of foodgrains in Bengal as a part of the 'Grow More Food' Campaign?

(c) Is the Department satisfied about the sufficiency of the supply of seed paddy of the better-yielding varieties, and adequacy about the arrangements of its distribution at the instance of Government, throughout the Province of Bengal so as to improve the yield of paddy as also to counteract the effect of consumption of any stocks of seed paddy by the cultivators due to the present famine conditions?

(d) Has the Department made any enquiries as regards the accuracy of reports that have been current that in many cases the cultivators of Bengal have parted with their cattle as well as implements of cultivation under the stress of famine conditions? If so, what action is proposed to be taken for the purpose of rehabilitating these cultivators in their occupation?

(e) Is the Honourable Member aware that the smaller cultivators have been selling away their agricultural lands in different parts of Bengal as a result of the famine conditions? If so, is the Honourable Member in a position to indicate the extent of these transactions, even approximately? In

†Answer to this question laid on the table, the questioner having exhausted his quota.

favour of which classes of the people generally are such transfers taking place? Are they actual tillers of the soil, or do they belong to the category of non-cultivating ryots or other middle-men?

(f) Are Government in communication with the Government of Bengal in regard to the various aspects of this problem, and have they under consideration any scheme under which the smaller cultivators may not be reduced to the position of landless labourers, and the ranks of non-cultivating middle-men may be unduly enlarged?

**Mr. J. D. Tyson:** (a) A statement giving brief particulars of the "Grow More Food" Campaign schemes in different provinces, for which the Government of India have given financial assistance in the shape of loans or grants, is laid on the table of the House. These are supplementary to the measures which the Provincial Governments are themselves undertaking. The details of the latter are not readily available with the Government of India. The target aimed at in British India during the current year is an increase of area by 100 lakh acres for rice and millets together and by 85 lakh acres for wheat and gram over the acreage of the 3 pre-war years 1936-39.

(b) The Honourable Member's main object was to acquaint himself with the problems of Bengal relating to the food production drive by personal discussion with the Honourable Minister for Agriculture and the officers of the local Agriculture Department. The Government of India are assisting and will continue to assist the Government of Bengal in every way possible to increase the area under paddy and other food crops, particularly wheat, pulses, mustard, potato and sweet potato.

(c) The first rice forecast reveals an increase in the area under paddy in Bengal by 25 lakh acres, compared with the corresponding figure of the previous year. On this basis, the area under rice during the current year, of early and late varieties taken together, is likely to reach the record figure of 232 lakh acres, against the average of 220 lakh acres of the 3 pre-war years 1936-39, and 288 lakhs acres which is the maximum attained in the past decade. There was, therefore, in fact, no shortage of seed for growing paddy during the current year. The Provincial Government distributed a large quantity of *Aus* and *Aman* paddy seeds for areas newly brought under cultivation or which were affected by floods and cyclone. Details of the *Aus* seed distribution scheme, for which no financial assistance was asked from the Centre, are not known to the Central Government. Three lakh maunds of *Aman* seed were distributed involving an outlay of about Rs. 60½ lakhs. The Government of India assisted the Provincial Government in financing this scheme and also in appointing additional staff required for the proper distribution of the seeds. The result shows that the arrangements made were adequate and satisfactory. The Government of India and the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research are assisting the Provincial Government to extend the area under better yielding varieties, but it will take some years before the huge paddy acreage in that province can be covered with improved seeds.

(d), (e) and (f). The information is being obtained from the Provincial Government with which the Government of India are in close touch in all these matters, and will be laid on the table of the House in due course.

*Statement showing brief particulars of the Grow More Food Campaign Schemes in different provinces for which the Government of India have given financial assistance in the shape of loans or grants.*

Name of Province or State and schemes sanctioned.

1. Madras.

(1) Paddy seed multiplicatoin scheme in Vizagapatam, Chingleput, Guntur, Chittoor Districts.

(2) Meeting half the cost of the permanent advance to the Director of Agriculture, Madras for financing supply of Manures to Cultivators.

(3) Distribution of paddy seeds to the Cultivators.

(4) Free distribution of Manures to poor deserving ryots.

(5) Grant\* of loans to actual Cultivators at Rs. 2 per acre for the reduction of cotton cultivation.

(5) Incidental expenses and overhead charges of the scheme for the distribution of paddy seeds, to the cultivators [Scheme (3) above].

(7) Annual overhead charges (except transport charges) of the scheme 2 above for the purchase of groundnuts cake and fishguano for sale to ryots as manure and losses which may be incurred by the sale of this manure.

## 2. Bombay.

(1) Interest free taccavi advances repayable in 3 years for the cultivation of cultivable waste lands.

(2) Scheme for the distribution of improved seeds of rice, wheat, jowar and gram and ordinary seeds of bajra.

(3) Supply of Manures at concession rates to cultivators provided the Central Government's share does not exceed Rs. 20 per ton, (no manure will be transported from outside the province. C. R. P. will be consulted for rail movements).

(4) Supply of 200 tons of bone-meal manure to cultivators in Kanara District at concession rates for manuring paddy.

(5) Cash rewards to cultivators of cotton tracts for growing food crops in place of short staple cotton.

(6) Grant to the Provincial Government as 80 per cent. of the loss sustained by them on supply of food crop seeds at concession rates.

## 3. Bengal.

(1) Distribution of 3 lakh maunds of *Aman* paddy seeds for lands newly BROUGHT UNDER cultivation and for areas affected by natural calamities last year.

(2) Additional staff for the intensification of food production drive.

(3) Emergency Irrigation projects (6 schemes).

(4) Purchase of 50,000 maunds of wheat seed for distribution to cultivators.

(5) Purchase and distribution of 42,000 maunds of gram, lentil, and mustard seeds for rabi season.

(6) Purchase of 1 lakh maunds of potato seeds and 75,000 maunds of oil cakes for distribution to growers.

(7) Substitute crops in flood affected areas in the Province to encourage the growing of rabi crops in place of rice by purchase and distribution of 56,400 maunds of seeds.

(8) Irrigation by Persian wheels—wheat and potato crops.

(9) Drainage schemes in furtherance of the "Grow More Food Campaign" in the Districts of Bakarganj, Mymensingh, Nadia, Bogra, and Khulna.

## 4. United Provinces.

(1) Distribution of oil cakes (1 Lakh maunds) to cultivators covering 20,000 acres of paddy.

(2) Emergency Irrigation Projects.

(3) Compost making and preservation of Urine earth.

(4) Opening of 20 new seed stores in the backward state—Tubewell areas.

(5) Opening of 84 new seed stores for the multiplication and distribution of improved paddy seeds and the stocking of pedigree seeds for renovating the seed stocks in the existing seed stores.

## 5. Punjab.

(1) Reclamation of 50,000 acres of 'Sailab' (riverain) lands for cultivation of wheat gram and barley.

## 6. Central Provinces and Berar.

(1) Scheme relating to the sinking of wells.

(2) Construction of field embankments for converting single crop areas into do-fash-areas.

(3) Free distribution of gram seed for newly-broken lands.

(4) Free distribution of sann-hemp seed for green manuring 20,000 acres of land most of which should go under wheat.

(5) Purchase and distribution of oil cake manure (10,000 tons) for 54,000 acres on condition that these oil cakes will be used for manuring rice crop only.

(6) Additional staff for the intensification of the food production drive.

(7) Muramnala Irrigation scheme.

(8) Extension of Potato cultivation.

## 7. Bihar.

(1) Distribution of improved seeds of paddy and manure for 2 lakhs acres at concession rates.

(2) Additional staff for the intensification of food production drive.

(3) Six ganges river side pumping sets.

(4) 76 Standard 1½ cusec tube-wells each with 3 miles channel, 1 mile long 11 K. V. line and transformers.

(5) 12 river-bed percolation pumps energised by 2 mobile generating sets.

(6) A 70 mile long 33 K. V. main electric feeder line from Patna Power Station through Bakhtiarpur and Bihar to Ruanger Sarai.

## 8. Assam.

(1) Scheme for the distribution of seeds and manures at concessional rates.

(a) Paddy seeds.

(b) Pulses.

(c) Wheat and barley.

(d) Oil Seeds.

- (e) Manures.  
 (f) Potatoes.  
 (g) Contingencies and storage (26 seed stores) for above items.  
 (2) Emergency Irrigation.  
 (a) Small projects.  
 (b) Staff for minor Irrigation Projects.  
 (c) Sale of 50 Persian wheels to cultivators at 50 per cent. of cost.
9. *Orissa.*  
 (1) Reclamation of waste lands to the extent of 66,000 acres.  
 (2) Scheme for increasing do-faali areas to the extent of 39,000 acres.  
 (3) Purchase and distribution of green manure seed free of cost for the paddy crops.  
 (4) Provision of tendas for irrigation from existing wells for wheat and rabi crops.  
 (5) Additional staff for the intensification of food production drive.  
 (6) Supply of 15,000 maunds of groundnut cake manure to cultivators at concession rate for manuring 5,000 acres of paddy lands in the canal irrigated tracts of the Province.
10. *Sind.*  
 (1) Purchase of improved paddy seeds in Kharif 1944.  
 (2) Raising of Rice seedlings in Karachi District.  
 (3) Purchase and distribution of Millet seeds.
11. *Coorg.*  
 (1) Grant of bonus to actual cultivators at Rs. 7-8-0 and Rs. 20 per acre for the cultivation of waste lands to the extent of 1,500 acres of dryland and 1,500 acres of wet land respectively.  
 (2) Additional Staff for intensification of food production drive.
12. *Ajmer-Merwara.*  
 (1) Grant of bonus to actual cultivators at Rs. 2 per acre for diverting areas from short staple cotton to food crops.  
 (2) Distribution of wheat gram and Barley seeds.

#### MALARIA IN DELHI PROVINCE.

†259. \*Mr. K. C. Neogy: (a) Will the Secretary for Education, Health and Lands be pleased to refer to the statement made by Lord Linlithgow in his address to the Legislative Assembly on the 2nd August, 1943, to the effect that Delhi is a model so far as the anti-malaria campaign is concerned, and make a statement showing, month by month, for the period of the past twelve months, the incidence of malaria in the cities of Old Delhi and New Delhi as well as in the Delhi Province, separately, as compared with the corresponding periods of the previous two years?

(b) What steps, if any, have been taken in recent months for the purpose of reducing the incidence of malaria in these respective areas?

(c) What supplies of quinine have been made available to the people inhabiting these respective areas during the past twelve months, and at what prices generally? Is the Honourable Member satisfied, that there has been an adequate supply of quinine in these areas to cope with the situation?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: (a) A statement giving the desired information is laid on the table of the House. I should, however, add that for a proper appraisal of the position the figures of 1942 and 1943 should be compared with the last epidemic year—1933—and regard should be had to the increase of population since that year.

(b) In addition to the usual control measures, e.g., application of larvicides, use of paris green, spray-killing of adult mosquitoes and minor drainage works, the following further steps were taken during recent months—

(i) 6 patrol-driven sprayers were acquired;

(ii) two additional inspectors were added to the staff of the Delhi Anti-malaria Organization and two important anti-malaria engineering works were approved and are to be taken in hand shortly.

(c) Information regarding the quantities of quinine made available for each of the areas specified has not been received but the total allotments to Delhi Province since August 1942 amount to 1,173 lbs. It is believed that the quinine supplies have on the whole been adequate. At Government depots quinine is sold at the rate of 3 tablets for one anna and quinine mixture at the rate of 6 doses for 2 annas.

†Answer to this question laid on the table, the questioner having exhausted his quota.

*Incidence of Malaria in Old Delhi, New Delhi and Delhi Province for the years 1940-41, 1941-42 and 1942-43.*

Month.	Old Delhi.			New Delhi.			Delhi Province excepting Delhi Urban Areas.		
	1940-41	41-42	42-43	1940-41	41-42	42-43	1940-41	41-42	42-43
November	4364	4678	8216	1424	2039	2844	1417	1412	4087
December	3806	2693	3915	1242	1035	1626	786	832	2938
January	1913	1397	1561	564	561	799	475	512	737
February	2160	1575	1144	768	656	786	538	519	583
March	2412	1604	1086	909	693	754	724	554	970
April	3978	2161	1872	1599	878	815	980	679	918
May	2453	1569	2286	1201	644	1375	1058	764	1564
June	1744	1401	2471	1029	665	1915	1077	516	1807
July	2529	1416	3518	1178	798	2045	930	733	1640
August	2472	2649	6199	1103	1184	2695	900	2616	1959
September	4803	15329	16839	2028	4978	5687	1210	7794	4369
October	4783	15646	16064	1980	6369	6801	1327	9494	not available

FACILITIES FOR MANUFACTURE OF MANURES AND FERTILIZERS.

†260. \*Mr. K. C. Neogy: (a) Will the Secretary for Education, Health and Lands be pleased to state if Government have given any orders, or granted any facility, to any firm or firms in India for the manufacture of manures or fertilizers?

(b) If the answer to (a) above be in the affirmative, what are the quantities for which orders have been placed, and what is the nature of facilities thus granted in the case of each firm?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: The question should have been addressed to the Honourable the Supply Member.

MAKING INDIA SELF-SUPPORTING IN QUININE AND CINCHONA PRODUCTS.

†261. \*Mr. K. C. Neogy: (a) Will the Secretary for Education, Health and Lands be pleased to state whether Government have under their consideration any scheme for the purpose of making India self-supporting in the matter of necessary supplies of quinine and other products of cinchona? If so, does the Honourable Member propose to explain the scheme in detail?

(b) Have Government taken any action on the report of Mr. A. Wilson, Deputy Director of Agriculture, Cinchona, Government of Madras, regarding development of cinchona cultivation in the country?

(c) Have Government received representations from Indian pharmaceutical concerns and other private parties expressing a desire to cultivate cinchona in India? If so, what are the parties from which such representations have been received, and what replies have been given to their representations?

(d) Have Indian manufacturers been given any supplies of quinine for the manufacture of injectibles and other medical preparations?

(e) Have Government received any representations from any technical associations, such as the Indian Chemical Manufacturers' Association of Calcutta, on this subject? If so, what action has been taken on such representations?

(f) What have been the rates of quinine per pound fixed by Government from time to time during the last twelve months as compared with the approximate cost of production?

(g) What has been the level of retail prices of quinine in the principal centres of India during each of the past twelve months or so? Is there any proposal under the consideration of the Government to bring down the price of quinine in the near future?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: (a) and (b). Quinine production has been increased from 70,000 lbs. to 90,000 lbs. as a result of extension of cultivation by the Governments of Bengal and Madras. The question of further long-term development will be considered in the light of conditions likely to prevail after the war and of developments in the production of synthetic anti-malaria drugs. In the

†Answer to this question laid on the table, the questioner having exhausted his quota.

meantime the Government of India have taken steps to encourage the short term production of quinine in order to increase quinine supplies within the shortest possible period.

(c) The Government of India received a representation from the Standard Pharmaceutical Works, Ltd., forwarding schemes which they had proposed to the Government of Bengal for the grant of land to the Company on certain terms for the cultivation of cinchona. The representation was referred to the Government of Bengal who stated that they required all the suitable land available for extension of their own cultivation and the Company was informed accordingly.

(d) and (e). Under arrangements made by the Government of India 300 lbs. of quinine bihydrochloride have been supplied by the Madras Government to certain firms for the manufacture of quinine in injectable form to meet the requirements of certain Provincial Governments for sale to the public. It has also been suggested to the Bengal Government that they should make arrangements for the manufacture of quinine in injectable form to meet the requirements of Bengal. No supplies have been made available for the manufacture of other medicinal preparations as all the available supplies are required for distribution under Government control for the treatment of malaria.

(f) The price charged for quinine sold from the central reserve is Rs. 25-8-0 a pound. The cost of production of this quinine which has been acquired at various times and from various sources is not known.

(g) Complete information regarding prices charged by Provincial Governments for Government quinine sold to the public is not available but it is understood that the prices charged by Provincial Governments for quinine sold to the public vary from Rs. 32 to Rs. 38 a pound. It is understood that where stocks of other quinine are available in the hands of dealers they are being sold at much higher prices. The question of the control of the price of quinine under the Drugs Control Order, 1943, is under consideration.

#### TRANSPORT OF RICE AND WHEAT TO BENGAL AND DISTRIBUTION THEREOF.

†262. \*Mr. K. C. Neogy: (a) Will the Honourable the Food Member be pleased to state the amount of rice and wheat that has been arriving in Bengal month by month since the 1st August, 1943, and how much of it has been earmarked for consumption of all priority organisations, and how much has been supplied to the public?

(b) What special facilities in respect of transport have Government arranged for bringing food supplies to the famine-stricken people of Bengal from all the different provinces which are sending foodgrains to Bengal?

(c) How much of shipping space has been arranged for transport of foodgrains from Karachi to Calcutta and how much foodgrains have already arrived in Calcutta by ships?

(d) Is it a fact that the Government of Sind refused export permits to donors willing to purchase foodgrains for relief of the people of Bengal and ship them by a steamer of the Scindia Steam Navigation, free of freight?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: (a) A statement is laid on the table.

(b) The quota of wagons for movement to Bengal from various parts of the country has been increased in accordance with the amounts of foodgrains expected to be moved from different areas to Bengal. In addition, special trains have been run when large quantities were immediately available. Shipping has also been arranged from Karachi to load foodgrains available there for shipment to Bengal.

(c) 41,000 tons of shipping was made available for transport from Karachi. The quantity shipped exceeded 40,000 tons.

(d) No Sir. The Honourable Member's attention is invited in this connection to the answer given on 13th November, 1943, to starred question No. 124 by Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh.

† Answer to this question laid on the table, the questioner having exhausted his quota.

*Statement showing arrivals of rice and wheat in Calcutta month by month since the 1st of August, 1943.*

	Tons.
<b>Rice—</b>	
August . . . . .	21,000
September . . . . .	8,500
October . . . . .	14,000
	43,500
<b>Wheat and wheat products—</b>	
August . . . . .	29,000
September . . . . .	64,000
October . . . . .	55,000
	148,000

In addition, a quantity of about 5,000 tons of wheat was also received during this period but the quantity monthwise is not known. Of these quantities about 4,025 tons of rice was earmarked by the Central Government for certain priorities. The Bengal Government also supplied part of the requirements of certain priorities out of their stocks; the exact quantities so supplied are not known to the Central Government.

**DIFFERENTIAL TREATMENT TO INDIAN AND NON-INDIAN SHIPPING ON THE INDIAN REGISTER.**

**263. \*Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi:** (a) Will the Honourable the Commerce Member be pleased to state why differential treatment is meted out to Indian and non-Indian shipping on the Indian Register in matters of requisitioning of ships?

(b) Have Government been able to provide tonnage to Indian-owned companies to replace the tonnage requisitioned by them? If not, why not?

(c) Why has not the benefit of the Empire Chartering Scheme been extended to India, although Indian shipping interests were agreeable to co-operate in the working of the scheme on the same terms and conditions as British shipping interests?

(d) Do Government propose to formulate a scheme like the "Replacement Tonnage Scheme" obtaining in the United Kingdom so that Indian shipowners could replace their lost tonnage and regain their position in the trades built up by them after years of enterprise, efforts and in the face of heavy losses?

(e) If the answer to (d) be in the negative, how do Government propose to safeguard the position of Indian shipping interests in the post-war period, in view of the absence of any scheme of replacement of tonnage and particularly of a national shipbuilding industry?

(f) Have Government received any representation made in this connection by the Indian Chamber of Commerce, Calcutta, in which attention has been drawn to the statement of Mr. Noel Baker to the effect that "in the interests of all traders and customers of the nations of the world" an imperial or an international shipping policy has to be evolved?

(g) What steps have the Government of India taken on the basis of the statement of Mr. Noel Baker, to obtain for India her due place and her proper share in the quantum of the world tonnage?

**The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque:** (a) to (e). The attention of the Honourable Member is invited to the reply given today to Mr. K. C. Neogy's question No. 256.

(f) Yes.

(g) The attention of the Honourable Member is invited to the reply given today to Mr. K. C. Neogy's question No. 248.

**Mr. K. C. Neogy:** On a point of order. These questions to which the Honourable Member referred in the course of his reply are now to be treated as unstarred questions and the House will have no opportunity of knowing the answers to the starred question just put by Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi. Is it not right in such circumstances that the Government should give a complete answer to any starred question that might be put by some other Member though covering the same ground as another question?

**Mr. President** (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I do not see what difference it makes by which Member a question is put if the answer had already been given. It may be expected that the Honourable Member will put the question and every other Member interested in the matter will make himself familiar with the answer. It is possible for any Member who is interested in the matter to put any supplementary questions that may legitimately arise.

**Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad:** We will lose the privilege of asking supplementary questions.

**Mr. President** (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The rule does not prevent supplementary questions being put to a question when it is starred.

**Mr. K. O. Neogy:** The Honourable Member has referred to the starred question put by me.

**Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi:** Has the answer been laid on the table?

**The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque:** I have answered 248 verbally today; it is only about No. 256 that it was ruled that it will not be answered verbally.

**Mr. K. O. Neogy:** May I draw the Honourable Member's attention to the fact that the points raised in No. 263 are not identical with the points raised in 248?

**Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi:** That does not cover my question at all. I want the answer to question No. 263. 248 has nothing to do with my question.

**The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque:** It was with reference to part (g) that I referred to No. 248 where reference was made to Mr. Noel Baker's statement; but so far as Mr. Neogy is concerned, it was to 256; there I am in your hands, Sir.

**Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi:** But apparently you referred to the answer to 256.

**The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque:** I know; I am quite prepared to read the answer, if allowed.

**Mr. K. O. Neogy:** What about parts (c) and (d) of No. 263?

**The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque:** You will find that in the answer to 256; it is exactly the same thing. 256(c) reads:

"Is it a fact that benefit of the Empire Chartering scheme has not been extended to India?"

263(c) says the same thing:

"Why has not the benefit of the Empire Chartering scheme been extended to India?"

Our difficulty is that so many identical questions are put to us that we have to refer to some previous answers.

(b) Written Answers.

#### MOGUL LINE SHIPS GIVEN TO SHIPPING COMPANIES OF EGYPT FOR CARRYING PILGRIMS TO JEDDA.

**264. \*Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi:** (a) Will the Honourable the Commerce Member be pleased to state if the steamers of the Mogul Line come within the control of the Government of India for the purpose of requisition?

(b) If the answer to (a) be in the affirmative, had that Line given on Charter or on hire their steamers to the Shipping Companies of Egypt or any other country for the carriage of pilgrims to Jedda during the last three years, and is it a fact that such steamers given either on Charter or on hire carried over 10,000 pilgrims each way?

(c) If the answer to (b) be in the affirmative, were the steamers thus given on Charter or on hire given the consent of the Government of India? If so, were not such steamers required for the trades in which the Mogul Line usually plies or for other requirements of the Government?

**The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque:** (a) to (c.) The attention of the Honourable Member is invited to the reply given on the 13th November, 1943, to Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari's question No. 157.

#### REPRESENTATION BY THE INDIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, CALCUTTA, FOR UTILIZING SHIPPING SPACE FOR IMPORTING FOODGRAINS.

**265. \*Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi:** (a) Will the Honourable the Food Member be pleased to state if Government have had several representations from

commercial bodies in the country, especially the Indian Chamber of Commerce, Calcutta, urging the necessity of utilising all available shipping space for importing foodgrains into this country from abroad rather than luxury goods?

(b) What is the quantity of foodgrains so far imported from abroad, and the further quantity which can be reasonably expected to arrive within the next three months?

(c) Has air transport, as suggested by Mr. Clement Davies, M.P., President of the India Relief Committee in Britain, been utilised for bringing foodstuffs into India?

(d) What quantity of consumable goods, such as whisky and luxury goods, have so far been imported into this country, in view of the shipping situation having appreciably improved?

(e) What are the countries from where such consumable goods, such as whisky and toilet products, have been imported?

**The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque:** The Honourable Member's attention is invited to the reply which I have given to Mr. K. C. Neogy's question No. 255.

#### OUTCOME OF THE "GROW MORE FOOD" CAMPAIGN.

**266. \*Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi:** (a) Will the Honourable the Food Member be pleased to state to what extent the "Grow More Food" campaign has helped in increasing the food crops in the country?

(b) What was the estimated yield of 'Aus' rice crop this year? What quantity of 'Aus' rice crop have the Government of Bengal purchased from the surplus districts in the province, and through what channels? What was the rate at which Government purchased it, and how the same has been distributed?

(c) What will be the estimated yield of the 'Aman' rice? Has any quantity of it been already purchased by the Bengal Government? If so, what is the quantity, and how do the Government of Bengal propose to distribute it?

(d) To what extent, and how do Government propose to assist in the manufacture of fertilisers in India for growing more food crops?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** (a) As a result of the 'Grow More Food' campaign, the area under principal food crops increased by 80 lakh acres during 1942-43 as compared with 1941-42. For 1943-44, it is proposed further to increase the area under rice and millets and that under wheat and gram to 1 crore and 36 lakh acres, respectively, above the average area of the three pre-war years 1936-39. It is too early yet to say whether this objective will be achieved.

(b) The estimated yield of the *aus* crop this year is 1.7 million tons. Purchases reported to-date amounted to 30,000 tons. They were made through agents appointed by the Government of Bengal at the controlled prices fixed by the Government of Bengal or slightly lower, the controlled prices being:

Rs. 30 from 28th August, 1943.

Rs. 24 from 10th September, 1943.

Rs. 20 from 25th September, 1943.

The quantity purchased has been distributed among the deficit districts.

(c) The *aman* crop is estimated to yield over 8 million tons. No quantity has yet been purchased and the last part of the question, therefore, does not arise.

(d) Government proposes to encourage the manufacture of Ammonium Sulphate for use as fertiliser in India. A conference of representatives of industries and Government was held a few weeks ago and certain enquiries have been issued to certain firms who are interested.

#### FACILITIES FOR MANUFACTURE OF MANURES AND FERTILIZERS.

**267. \*Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi:** (a) Will the Secretary for Education, Health and Lands be pleased to state if orders have been placed or any facilities granted by Government to any firm or firms in India for the manufacture of manures or fertilisers?

(b) If the answer to (a) be in the affirmative, what is the quantity for which orders have been placed, if any, and the nature of the facilities extended?

(c) What are the names of the firms with whom such orders have been placed or to whom such facilities granted?

(d) Is it a fact that the Imperial Chemical Industries, Limited, have been granted facilities or given orders for the manufacture of sulphate of ammonia?

(e) When do Government propose to set up a Central Commission consisting of members of the business community, attached to the Food Member, as suggested in the Note of Mr. D. P. Khaitan attached to the report of the Foodgrains Policy Committee? Will a businessman be the chairman of the Commission?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** (a) to (d). The question should be addressed to the Supply Department.

(e) The question of the machinery to be set up to ensure that technical advice is available to the Department when necessary is under examination. I am not yet in a position to make an announcement.

#### DEATHS DUE TO STARVATION IN BENGAL.

268. \***Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi:** (a) Will the Honourable the Food Member be pleased to state the number of deaths from starvation in consequence of the present food famines in Bengal, district by district, and in Calcutta, during the period July to October?

(b) If starvation be the principal cause, do the Central Government believe that the Government of Bengal will be able to cope with the situation by the introduction of rationing?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** (a) No reliable information is available.

(b) The introduction of rationing is expected to bring about limitation of demand, regular and equitable distribution, and restoration of public confidence, all of which are likely to have a good effect on the general situation.

#### INCREASED DEATH RATE IN CALCUTTA AND OTHER DISTRICTS OF BENGAL.

269. \***Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi:** (a) Will the Honourable the Food Member be pleased to state the daily average number of deaths taking place in the whole of Bengal, district by district, and in Calcutta?

(b) Was any statement supplied by the Central Government to Mr. Amery, Secretary of State for India, regarding the death rate, on the basis of which the Secretary of State for India, recently made a statement in the House of Commons to the effect that 1,000 deaths were occurring in a week in the whole of Bengal?

(c) How far does Mr. Amery's statement tally with facts?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** (a) The Honourable Member's attention is invited to the reply given to part (a) of starred question No. 140, asked by Mr. K. C. Neogy on 13th November, 1943.

(b) and (c). No, Sir; but information was supplied to the Secretary of State for India, on the basis of which he replied to a question in Parliament on October 28th, in the following terms:—

"It is estimated that between August 15th and October 16th about 8,000 persons have died in Calcutta from causes directly or indirectly due to malnutrition. No reliable figures are available for the districts but conditions in South East and South West Bengal are, I fear, worse than in Calcutta."

#### DEVELOPMENT OF CINCHONA CULTIVATION IN INDIA.

270. \***Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi:** (a) Will the Secretary for Education, Health and Lands be pleased to state if Government have taken any action on the report of Mr. A. Wilson, Deputy Director of Agriculture, Cinchona, Government of Madras, regarding development of cinchona cultivation in the country?

(b) Why have not Government so far extended, on the basis of Mr. Wilson's report, the cultivation of cinchona bark to a larger area, thereby overcoming the shortage of quinine as also checking the rise in the prices of this drug?

(c) Have Government received representations from several Indian pharmaceutical concerns, desiring to cultivate cinchona in India, and do they intend giving proper facilities to these concerns? If not, why not?

(d) Why have not the Indian manufacturers been given any supplies of quinine for the manufacture of injectibles and other medicinal preparations?

**Mr. J. D. Tyson:** (a) to (d). I would invite the Honourable Member's attention to the reply just given by me to the Honourable Mr. K. C. Neogy's question No. 261.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF CINCHONA CULTIVATION IN INDIA.

**271. \*Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi:** (a) Will the Secretary for Education, Health and Lands please state if Government intend helping the pharmaceutical and chemical industries of the country by granting facilities for cultivation of cinchona? If not, why not?

(b) What measures do Government propose to undertake to bring down the price of quinine?

(c) What steps do Government propose to undertake, for the sake of public health, to check the adulteration of quinine?

(d) Why have Government raised the price of quinine from Rs. 18 to Rs. 45/8/- per lb. while the cost of production of quinine is only Rs. 9 per lb. as stated by the Drugs Enquiry Committee?

**Mr. J. D. Tyson:** (a) The grant of land for the cultivation of cinchona in the Provinces is a matter for Provincial Governments. The Government of India will examine any application for the grant of land in centrally administered areas which may be received.

(b) Reference is invited to the reply given to part (g) of Mr. K. C. Neogy's starred question No. 261 answered to-day.

(c) The Rules to be made under the Drugs Act, 1940, will enable action to be taken to check adulteration of quinine.

(d) The Government of India have not raised the price of quinine sold by them from the central reserve to Rs. 45-8-0. The present price at which stocks from the central reserve are sold is Rs. 25-8-0.

#### UNSTARRED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

##### KEROSENE SCARCITY IN AJMER.

**34. Rai Bahadur Seth Bhagchand Soni:** Will the Honourable Member for Industries and Civil Supplies be pleased to state:

(a) if it is a fact that there is an acute scarcity of kerosene in Ajmer and it has become difficult for the poor people to purchase kerosene even in the smallest quantity;

(b) if it is a fact that retailers refuse to sell kerosene for more than half an anna to one individual at a time and that, too, after a long waiting in queues; and

(c) whether the Honourable Member proposes to enquire into these conditions and consider the advisability of increasing supplies of kerosene for the civil population in Ajmer?

**The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque:** (a) No specific complaints have been received by Government from Ajmer-Merwara. \*

(b) and (c). Enquiries are being made and such remedial measures as may be necessary and are possible will be taken.

##### TRADE UNIONS SUPPLIED WITH GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS, ETC.

**35. Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali:** Will the Honourable Member for Labour please state:

(a) the names of the Trade Unions, both registered and unregistered, separately, whose objects are not confined to one province;

(b) the names of the Trade Unions, both registered and unregistered, separately, who are supplied official publications free of cost;

(c) the names of the Trade Unions, both registered and unregistered, separately, who were invited to take part in the Tripartite Labour Conference and Committees; and

(d) the reasons for the differential treatment, if any, in the subject matters referred to in parts (b) and (c)?

**The Honourable Dr. B. E. Ambedkar:** (a) A list of registered trade unions, whose objects are not confined to one province, compiled from materials readily available is attached. Particulars regarding unregistered trade unions are not available.

(b) I presume the Honourable Member is referring only to unions whose objects are not confined to one province.

Copies of certain bulletins, annual reports, etc., have been furnished free of cost, on request, to the two All-India Associations of workers, namely the All-India Trade Union Congress and the Indian Federation of Labour. No official publication is supplied free of cost to any individual trade union as such.

(c) The constitution of the Tripartite Labour Conference and the Standing Labour Committee provides for the nomination of workers' representatives in the following manner:

(i) For the Labour Conference—

11 representatives of employees, of whom 4 will be nominated by Government in agreement with the All-India Trade Union Congress, 4 will be nominated by Government in agreement with the Indian Federation of Labour, and 3 will be nominated by Government as representatives of other employees' interests.

(ii) For the Standing Labour Committee—

5 representatives of employees, 4 of whom will be nominated by the Labour Member in agreement with the two All-India Associations of workers and the fifth nominated independently by the Labour Member.

The nominations to the Conference and the Committees have been in accordance with their constitution and there has been no question of any differential treatment between different unions.

(d) It will be clear from the replies to (b) and (c) that no differential treatment has in fact occurred.

*Central Trade Union registered in the various provinces.*

*Printing Presses.*

—1. Government of India Press Workers Union.

*Seamen.*

2. Indian Merchants Navy Officers Association, Bombay.

*Miscellaneous.*

3. The All-India Telegraph Line Staff Union, Lahore.
4. The Indian Sugar Industry Employees Association, Lucknow.
5. Indian Sugar Mills Association, Calcutta.
6. Indian Jute Mills Association, Calcutta.
7. Imperial Bank of India, Indian Staff Association, Calcutta.
8. Central Council of Tobacco Manufacturing Workers Union.
9. All-India Telegraph Workmen's Union, Lahore.
10. The Indian Southern Provinces Sugar Marketing Board, Madras.

*Railway and Transport.*

11. N. W. Rly. Junior Clerks Association.
12. Bengal Assam Rail Road Workers' Union.
13. Assam Bengal Rly. Employees Association.
14. E. I. Railway Employees Association, Calcutta.
15. Bengal and Assam Railway Employees Association.
16. B. N. R. Employees Union, Calcutta.
17. B. N. Rly. Indian Labour Union, Kharagpur.
18. N. W. Rly. Employees Union, Karachi.
19. G. I. P. Railwaymen's Union, Bombay.
20. G. I. P. Railway Accounts Staff Union, Bombay.
21. B., B. & C. I. Railway Employees Association, Ahmedabad.
22. B., B. & C. I. Railwaymen's Union, Bombay.
23. National Union of Railwaymen of India & Burma, Bombay.
24. B. B. & C. I. Railway Employees Union, Bombay.
25. G. I. P. Railway Contractors & Licenced Coolies Union, Bhusawal.
26. N. W. Railway Accounts Union, Lahore.
27. N. W. Railway Union, Lahore.
28. E. I. Railwaymen's Union, Lucknow.
29. Railway Workers Association, Moradabad.
30. E. I. Railway Guards' Association, Lucknow.
31. Railway Workmen's Union of India, Allahabad.
32. B. N. Railwaymen's Association, Gorakhpur.

33. E. B. Railway Workers' Union.
34. Association of Accountants, E. I. Railway.
35. Association of Accountants, N. W. Railway, Lahore.
36. All-India Railway Mechanical Workers' Federal Union, Lahore.
37. Delhi-Sonapat Bus Service Union, Sonapat.
38. Ittehad Motor Union, Panipat.
39. N. W. Railway Guards Association, Lahore.
40. Federated Union of the N. W. Railway Workers, Lahore.
41. Union of the E. I. Railway Ticket Checking Staff, Calcutta.
42. E. I. Railway Joint Hands Union, Hooghly.
43. All-India Railwaymen's Union, Nagpur.
44. United Union of N. W. R. Workers, Lahore.
45. Delhi-Garmuktesar Motor Association.
46. East Indian Railway Muslim Employees Association, Lucknow.
47. S. S. Light Railway Employees Union, Saharanpur.
48. B. N. W. Railway Workers Association, Gorakhpur.
49. E. I. Railway Workers Association, Calcutta.
50. The Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway Employees' Union, Perambur, Madras.
51. The South Indian Railway Labour Union, Golden Rock, Trichinopoly.
52. The South Indian Railway Employees Association, Villapuram.
53. The All-India Railwaymen's Federation, Mylapore, Madras.

POINT OF ORDER RE MOTION PROPOSING COMMUNICATION OF FORMAL ADDRESS TO H. E. THE GOVERNOR GENERAL.

**Mr. Sami Vencatachelam Chetty** (Madras: Indian Commerce): Sir, I desire to raise a point of order in respect of a request I made to you to permit me to make a motion under S. O. 74. Under that Standing Order, the Assembly is competent to send a communication to the Governor General.

**Mr. President** (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member wants to raise a point of order, will he mention the point of order?

**Mr. Sami Vencatachelam Chetty**: The point of order is this: I am coming to it. A communication can be made by means of a formal address. To this I received a reply from the Secretary that you, Sir, have decided that the motion which I am raising is one which deals with matters of general public interest and that it would not, therefore, be allowed unless the Honourable Member incharge of the particular subject gives his consent; and you have also further informed me that the Honourable the Leader of the House who, you think, is the Member concerned with this subject, has not given his consent. My submission is this, that so far as communications to His Excellency the Governor General are concerned, it may comprise all subjects which are of general interest and also subjects which are of particular interest which can only be represented to His Excellency.

**Mr. President** (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Under what rule or Standing Order does the Honourable Member wish to present his address or rather to make a motion to that effect.

**Mr. Sami Vencatachelam Chetty**: Under Standing Order 74.

**Mr. President** (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): It only provides the machinery for communication, once the motion is made and passed. The Standing Order only says that communications from the Assembly to the Governor General shall be made by formal address after motion made and carried in the Assembly. But the question is how is the motion to be made?

**Mr. Sami Vencatachelam Chetty**: The motion is to be made under Rule 24A, which expressly excludes this kind of motion from the rules incidental to ordinary motions. I am not a lawyer, Sir, but yet . . . . .

**Mr. President** (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): This has been considered before?

**Mr. Sami Vencatachelam Chetty**: If you will permit me, I will refer to only two instances before. One was in respect of a motion made by Mr. V. J. Patel to the then President, Sir Frederick Whyte, that the sittings of the Assembly might be postponed to a later date to enable the election of the President for the next Session. It was ruled out by Sir Frederick Whyte, not on the ground

that it did come or did not come within the mischief of Rule 24A, but he seems to have taken the limited view that this Standing Order can be invoked in respect of a difference of opinion between the two Houses, in respect of any legislation agreed to by one House. The second instance was when Rao Bahadur T. Rangachariar made a motion when certificate of the salt tax was announced in the Assembly, that the Assembly make a representation to His Excellency the Governor General that the House does not approve of the certification procedure. Both these cases are not relevant to my motion . . . .

**Mr. President** (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): How has the Honourable Member made out his case with reference to 24A?

**Mr. Sami Vencatachelam Chetty**: With regard to Rule 24A, it says expressly, "Save in so far as is otherwise provided by these rules or in any case in which a communication is to be made to the Governor General under any provision of the Act, of the Government of India Act etc., etc.," the rules governing the moving of a resolution or motion apply. Therefore, my submission is that in so far as communications under Standing Order 74 are concerned these are not the rules which govern my case. But it may be said whether it would be reasonable to suppose that there is no rule governing procedure of this sort . . . .

**Mr. President** (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Rule 24A does govern all motions not otherwise provided for.

**Mr. Sami Vencatachelam Chetty**: By giving me an Atlantic Charter, so far as the rules are concerned . . . .

**Mr. President** (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Very well; the Honourable Member's contention is that Rule 24A does not apply to the motion which was sought to be made by him; but I do not know of any other rule which would allow such a motion to be made. This is a matter of general public interest—there is no doubt about that; and therefore I think it is clear that the Honourable Member must comply with Rule 24A, and since the Government Member has refused his consent to this motion being moved, the motion could not be allowed.

#### ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO THE DELHI UNIVERSITY COURT.

**Mr. President** (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I have to inform the Assembly that the following further four members have been elected to the Court of the University of Delhi:

- (1) Nawabzada Muhammad Liaquat Ali Khan,
- (2) Raja Bahadur Kushalpal Singh,
- (3) Mr. Ksilash Bihari Lall,
- (4) Nawab Siddique Ali Khan.

#### STATEMENTS LAID ON THE TABLE.

**The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman** (Finance Member): Sir, I lay on the table a copy\* of each of:

- (1) Appropriation Accounts (Civil) 1941-42 and Audit Report, 1943.
- (2) Commercial Appendix to above.
- (3) Finance Accounts 1941-42 and Audit Report, 1943.
- (4) Appropriation Accounts (Railways) 1941-42, Parts I and II.
- (5) Capital Statements, Balance sheets, etc., of State Railways, 1941-42.
- (6) Balance sheets of Railway collieries and statements of all in costs of coal, 1941-42.
- (7) Railway Audit Report, 1943.
- (8) Appropriation Accounts (Defence Services) 1941-42.
- (9) Commercial Appendix to above.
- (10) Audit Report, Defence Services, 1943.
- (11) Appropriation Accounts (P. and T.) 1941-42, and Audit Report, 1943.

\*Not included in these Debates, but copies have been placed in the Library of the House—Ed. of D.

• [Sir Jeremy Raisman.]

- (12) Corrections to Appropriation Accounts (Civil) 1941-42 and Audit Report 1943.
- (13) Corrections to Railway Audit Report, 1943.
- (14) Correction to Commercial Appendix to the Appropriation Accounts (Civil) 1941-42, and the Audit Report, 1943.
- (15) Corrections to Appropriation Accounts (Railways), 1941-42.
- (16) Corrections to the Capital Statements, etc., of State Railways for 1941-42.

#### THE INDIAN TEA CONTROL (SECOND AMENDMENT) BILL.

**The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque** (Commerce Member): Sir, I move:

"That the Bill farther to amend the Indian Tea Control Act, 1938, be taken into consideration."

I do not think I need take very much time of the House except that I should explain that this amending Bill consists of only a few clauses. The first clause is with reference to certain amenities in the shape of small gifts of parcels of tea which are sent to troops under the auspices of the Directorate of Welfare and Amenities, G. H. Q. But, as the law stands, strictly speaking, it is only the Red Cross which may be permitted to send this export quota. We thought that it was better to regularise this by changing the law. The Red Cross, I may say, is mainly concerned with the sick, wounded and prisoners of war, but quite apart from the sick, wounded and prisoners of war, there are many troops abroad who occasionally will undoubtedly appreciate a little gift even in the shape of a small quantity of tea. That is why we wish to introduce this clause and nothing more than that. So far as sub-section (5) of section 17 is concerned, there is power in Government to direct the Licensing Committee to postpone the issue of special export licenses as there is a similar power in the Central Government to authorise the Indian Tea Licensing Committee to grant it in the case of general licenses. Unfortunately there is no such power to direct it to refuse such special export licenses, as it can do in the case of general licenses. We thought that in the case of both these licenses the law should be exactly the same and that is why this amending Bill is brought in, making the necessary provision for that. The next clause is really to make the intention clear. By an unfortunate mistake, as it stands, it is only the land which was planted on the 31st March, 1943, which can get the benefit of the section. But the intention was that not merely areas which were in existence on the 31st March, 1933, but all areas which were under tea, but lying fallow between 31st March, 1931, and 31st March, 1933, should also be brought in and receive the benefit. When once tea is not planted, it remains fallow, for about two years before it can be re-planted again. So, in order to make it apply to land which was on cultivation on the 31st March, 1931, but left fallow with a view to re-cultivate it, this Bill makes provision to include all such land. So far as section 33 is concerned, I draw the attention of the House to the amendment which was made in section 12, sub-section (4). Section 12, sub-section (4) says:—

"No tea or tea seed shall be taken by land, sea or air out of British India to any place in India other than the States of Travancore, Mysore, Cochin, Tripura and Mandi, unless covered by a permit issued by or on behalf of the Committee."

The object is to guard the smuggling of tea, and it was found when there was that provision, there is no provision for the breach of the law and we want to make a penal provision for a breach of the provisions of sub-section (4) of section 12. That is all I have got to say on the Bill. There are three amendments which have been given notice of by my Honourable friend, Mr. Abdur Rasheed Chaudhury. First of all, they are not in time, but I may explain as regards his first amendment, that the words "or any organisation" have been introduced with a view to regularise small amenities sent to troops abroad. As regards the second amendment, I think he may leave the drafting matter to the Legislative Department. As regards the third, it is really again a negative provision—the omission of the words "the general or" will make the law still worse. That is all I have to say. I move.

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

"That the Bill further to amend the Indian Tea Control Act, 1938, be taken into consideration."

**Mr. Abdur Rasheed Chaudhury** (Assam: Muhammadan): I have got one or two points in doubt, and that is why I would like to speak. Amendments were made in 1942 and 1943, in working some of which the small tea garden was placed at a disadvantage. As regards presents to troops I am in perfect sympathy, but I only want to make this clear. If in the Bill it had been said, Red Cross or some other philanthropic institution, or some such thing, the matter would have been clear and there would have been no objection. There may be confusion in working if you have the words "any organisation". Take, for instance, the Liptons or Brooke Bonds. They may wish to send parcels to the troops. How much will they send without any control on the part of the Director of the Licensing Committee? This point needs to be made clear and the best thing would have been to have the words, "any such philanthropic institution". That would have made it clear.

**The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque**: May I interrupt my Honourable friend? There are two restrictive provisions as against that. The first restrictive provision is whether it is a philanthropic organisation or the Red Cross, it must be within the quota prescribed under an executive order by the Central Government, and secondly, there must be the previous sanction of the Central Government before anybody can be authorised. Therefore, if my Honourable friend says, philanthropic organisation, the Central Government will have to consider whether it ought to be permitted to do so or not. We did not make it purely official on the ground that there may be an occasion in which a non-official may be permitted by Government.

**Mr. Abdur Rasheed Chaudhury**: I have heard the arguments put forward by the Honourable the Commerce Member and I think I am almost satisfied with what he has said. But in order that there may be no confusion in working, it would have been better, according to me, if some such words as "Red Cross or some such institution or some philanthropic institution," could have been inserted here instead of leaving it as "any organisation". That is my view. But if the Honourable the Commerce Member thinks that the purpose will be served without putting in those words I am agreeable. I do not see any reason to move any of my amendments as the most objectionable part has been met. I agree to the motion.

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

"That the Bill further to amend the Indian Tea Control Act, 1938, be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

Clauses 2, 3, 4 and 5 were added to the Bill.

Clause 1 was added to the Bill.

The Title and the Preamble were added to the Bill.

**The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque**: Sir, I move that the Bill be passed.

I have nothing more to say except one sentence, that as a lawyer everybody knows that the term "philanthropic" in legal language might be just the opposite of "philanthropic". That is why I did not do it. I move.

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

"That the Bill be passed."

The motion was adopted.

#### THE INDIAN COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) BILL.

**The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque** (Member for Commerce): Sir, I move:

"That the Bill further to amend the Indian Companies Act, 1913, be taken into consideration."

The position of the banks under the law was such that a certain revision in Form F of the Schedule was necessary in 1937. It has been the practice all along, not only here but elsewhere, that had and doubtful debts, in regard to which the auditors are satisfied that adequate provision has been made elsewhere.

[Sir M. Azizul Huque.]

were not specifically mentioned. That has been actually the existing law in India from 1927. When the law was changed, this was not specifically amended and it was thought that a change in the form will do. That change took place in 1937 but a recent judgment of the Bombay High Court said that that notification by executive order is beyond the power of the Government of India under its rule-making power. It is only with a view to bring this law into line with the actual working practice, as it has been existing in this country since 1927, as also the conditions in England, that I have brought in this Bill to amend the law as it stands. It is a purely formal matter. It has been the existing law, except that in 1937 it was done by notification, which has now been decided by the Bombay High Court to be *ultra vires*. Therefore, the law requires to be amended. Consequential amendments have also been made in one or two other sections. That is why this Bill has been brought up. I move that the Bill be taken into consideration.

**Mr. President** (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The question is: "That the Bill further to amend the Indian Companies Act, 1913, be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

Clauses 2, 3, 4 and 5 were added to the Bill.

Clause 1 was added to the Bill.

The Title and the Preamble were added to the Bill.

**The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque**: Sir, I move that the Bill be passed.

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

"That the Bill be passed."

The motion was adopted.

#### THE CENTRAL EXCISE BILL.

**The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman** (Finance Member): Sir, I move:

"That the Bill to consolidate and amend the Law relating to central duties of excise be referred to a Select Committee consisting of the Honourable Sir Asoka Roy, Mr. Muhammad Hussain Choudhury, Mr. Muhammad Nauman, Mr. Hooseinbhoj A. Lalljee, Mr. Kailash Bihari Lall, Mr. T. Chapman-Mortimer, Mr. H. Greenfield and the Mover with instructions to report on the opening day of the next Session of the Assembly and that the number of members whose presence shall be necessary to constitute a meeting of the Committee shall be five."

Sir, the character and object of this Bill are fully explained in the Statement of Objects and Reasons and I shall detain the House only for a few minutes with a few further observations.

For many years, the Government of India's only revenue from the consumption of goods produced within the country was derived from salt and the rate of the tax was periodically varied in accordance with budgetary requirements. In 1917, an excise was laid on motor spirit in order to restrict civil consumption of petrol, but was later retained for revenue purposes and in 1922 a similar duty was imposed on kerosene. In 1930, a duty of excise equal to the customs duty was imposed on silver. 1934 saw the imposition of excises on sugar, on matches and on iron and steel and these were followed in 1941 by an excise on tyres and, last year, by excises on tobacco and vegetable product.

There being till now no general excise law such as we possess in regard to Customs, each of these imposts had perforce to be constituted by a separate, self-contained Act, giving power to attract provisions from the Sea Customs Act where necessary, and supplemented in each case by a set of Rules for carrying into effect the purposes of the Act; and to these there had presently to be added a group of rules providing for the refund of duty on certain exports. The Central excise machinery has thus undergone considerable expansion in recent years and the time has now arrived when, in the interests of public convenience and administrative efficiency, both the law and the regulations should be consolidated and arranged in a comprehensive Central Excise Code.

The inclusion of the salt laws in the proposed consolidation follows logically from the nature of the tax. Moreover, certain excise operations, particularly those affecting tobacco, are conducted in mofussil areas, to which a number of

the machinery provisions of the salt laws are better adapted than the similar provisions of the Sea Customs Act to which we have hitherto had recourse.

Each of the several taxing systems covered by the proposed consolidation was adapted to the particular features of the commodity to which it related and, since the circumstances in which these commodities are produced vary considerably, it follows that there are material differences between the several systems; and these variations are reflected in the respective Acts. The purpose of consolidation is, of course, to provide a measure which will embrace all the subjects dealt with by the individual enactments. It follows that certain provisions of the consolidation measure which previously applied only to particular subjects will, following its enactment, be applicable, or susceptible of application, to the whole field. For example, the provisions of Chapters III and IV of this Bill now appear only in the salt laws and, where similar provisions were necessary in regard to Central excises, they were attracted from the Sea Customs Act. Those in Chapter III closely resemble kindred provisions in the provincial excise laws and are clearly desirable features of any comprehensive law for the administration of Central excises and are accordingly given general application. Those in Chapter IV on the other hand, while necessary for the security of certain excises, are not required for all and power has, therefore, been taken to exempt from the operation of this chapter excisable goods in regard to which the provisions would not be necessary. Certain provisions which are relatable only to salt have been included in a separate Chapter. For the rest, with the exception of a small addition made to the rule-making powers, the Bill is simply a consolidation measure and the sources from which the various provisions are drawn have been indicated in the notes on clauses. I need not, therefore, take up the time of the House with further explanation.

Sir, I move.

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

"That the Bill to consolidate and amend the Law relating to central duties of excise be referred to a Select Committee consisting of the Honourable Sir Asoka Roy, Mr. Muhammad Hussain Choudhury, Mr. Muhammad Nauman, Mr. Hooseinbhoj A. Lalljee, Mr. Kailash Bihari Lall, Mr. T. Chapman-Mortimer, Mr. H. Greenfield and the Mover with instructions to report on the opening day of the next Session of the Assembly and that the number of members whose presence shall be necessary to constitute a meeting of the Committee shall be five."

The motion was adopted.

### THE HINDU CODE, PART I (INTESTATE SUCCESSION).

**The Honourable Sir Asoka Roy** (Law Member): Sir, I move:

"That the Bill to amend and codify the Hindu Law relating to intestate succession, as reported by the Joint Committee, be circulated for the purpose of eliciting opinion thereon by the 1st June, 1944."

Honourable Members will have observed that in the concluding paragraph of their report the Joint Committee have expressed the opinion that the Bill has been so altered as to require republication. An expression of opinion in this sense by a Joint or Select Committee has commonly been taken to convey a recommendation to the Member in charge that his next motion should be for circulation or re-circulation as the case may be and not for consideration. I have no hesitation in accepting the recommendation and I move, Sir, for circulation. I may observe that although the Bill was circulated by executive order, there has been no circulation within the meaning of our Standing Orders.

The report of the Joint Committee shows that the Committee have made certain important changes in the Bill, and in my view the changes made render it imperative that the interested public should have a further opportunity of expressing their opinion before the Bill, as reported by the Joint Committee, is taken into consideration.

Sir, I need not now deal with the changes in any detail, but I should say that the changes made by the Joint Committee by no means exhaust the case for circulation, for I find it impossible to repudiate the contention forcibly

[Sir Asoka Roy.]

urged in the course of the debate on the motion for reference to a Joint Committee that particularly in the Province of Bengal interested parties had not had an adequate opportunity of expressing their views in response to the original circulation of the Bill and that the original publication was inadequate. In my view this is emphatically a measure with which we should not proceed without the fullest consultation with public opinion.

**Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra** (Presidency Division: Non-Muhammadian Rural): Will the Honourable Member kindly see that it is done more effectively this time?

**The Honourable Sir Asoka Roy:** Certainly.

There is another recommendation of the Joint Committee to which I should refer. The Committee have said:

"We think that steps should be taken to resuscitate the Hindu Law Committee and to encourage the formulation and enactment of the remaining parts of the projected Code in the interval which is to elapse before the present Bill, when passed, comes into force. It may well be found that the present Bill requires, before it is allowed to come into operation, re-adjustment and amendment in the light of decisions taken in connection with other branches of the Hindu law."

This is an important recommendation and at the present stage I need say no more than that it is engaging my earnest attention.

Sir, I cannot conclude without paying a tribute to the Honourable Sir Sultan Ahmed and the Members of the Joint Committee for the painstaking care and patience with which they dealt with this difficult and complicated piece of legislation.

Sir, I move.

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

"That the Bill to amend and codify the Hindu Law relating to intestate succession, as reported by the Joint Committee, be circulated for the purpose of eliciting opinion thereon by the 1st June, 1944."

**Mr. Lalchand Navalrai** (Sind: Non-Muhammadian Rural): Sir, no one need be afraid that I am going to make a long speech on this motion. All I wish to say is that from the Hindu point of view this measure is very important. This Bill was considered at great length in the Joint Committee and I am glad to say that our Honourable friend Sir Sultan Ahmed became in the Committee a Hindu Pandit. He gave us such a lead that sometimes I was wondering if in his last three incarnations he was not a Hindu and perhaps in the next birth also he might become a Hindu because he has taken so much pains over this measure. This measure is not without difficulties; it has very many difficulties. We took nearly one month over this measure and we also consulted several persons who are supposed to be very competent on Hindu law. We are actually codifying the Hindu law and this is only the first stage. Therefore, we have to be very careful. I find that there was a difference of opinion in the Joint Committee too and the very fact that there were so many minutes of dissent shows clearly that the measure requires a great deal of labour to be spent over it from all points of view in order to make the law suitable for all the Hindus. I must say that it was very wise on the part of the Joint Committee, to which the House is now agreeing, to re-circulate this measure. Bengal holds one view and the other parts of India hold a different view. Therefore, it is very necessary that different provinces should be fully consulted.

Sir, I support the motion.

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

"That the Bill to amend and codify the Hindu Law relating to intestate succession, as reported by the Joint Committee, be circulated for the purpose of eliciting opinion thereon by the 1st June, 1944."

The motion was adopted.

#### MOTION RE THE FOOD SITUATION—*contd.*

**Mr. President** (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The House will now proceed with the motion relating to the food situation. I take it that the time-limit of 20 minutes will apply to the debate today.

**Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh** (Nagpur Division: Non-Muhammadian): Sir, I hope somebody will be in the House to represent the Food Department before I finish my preliminary remarks.

**The Honourable Sir Sultan Ahmed** (Leader of the House): I represent the Food Department.

**Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh**: The Honourable Member represents everybody. Sir, there is a maxim in Sanskrit which says: *Raja kalasya karanam*. Literally, it means that the king is the cause of the times, but it really means that it is the Government which is responsible for the times that exist in a country and there is no doubt that we are passing through terrible times. If the Government is the cause of all that happens in the country, good or bad, if the Government is such that certain terrible events are happening in the country, then it logically follows that that Government must be removed in order that those circumstances which are existing in the country at a particular time may disappear and may give place to another situation. Now, Sir, formerly there were two ways of changing the Government. The King used to abdicate and go to the forest . . . .

**Mr. President** (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member must confine himself to the food situation. The Honourable Member must not deal with extraneous matters.

**Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh**: What I am saying is this. The Government are responsible for the situation that arises in a country. If the Government have created a situation which is ruinous to the country, then that Government had better give way to a better Government . . . .

**Mr. President** (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member had better stick to the motion before the House.

**Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh**: Well, Sir, this morning I asked the Honourable the Food Member to ascertain the situation as regards food in C. P. and Berar. He said that it was satisfactory and that the situation was being ascertained from time to time. I wish to tell the Government that the situation in C. P. and Berar is not what it appears to be to the Government. It was alleged that the situation is satisfactory. We were given certain statistics last time. It was said that the population of C. P. and Berar was one crore 68 lakhs 22 thousand; the average quantity of rice, millet, etc., available for consumption and seeds was said to be 33 lakhs 37 thousand and the production for 1942-43 was given as 37 lakhs 30 thousand tons and the surplus was said to be 3 lakhs 97 thousand. It would therefore appear to anybody, if one were to go by statistics, that this was a surplus Province. Statistics are all right, but the actual situation one faces is this. In most of the districts, the villagers live on a piece of oil cake of the size of a biscuit, and a little piece of jaggery, that is all. If there was surplus in the Province, where was the necessity for the villagers to live on such a frugal meal a day in the villages which are the actual producing centres for foodgrains. Cases of such under-feeding are frequent. Why did this situation arise? Either there was no surplus, or if there was surplus, it became deficit. I have elicited by putting questions that on the basis that this was a surplus Province, the C. P. Government are exporting grain from this Province. First of all the Government have an idea that so much crop is likely to be harvested and they proceed on that basis. They hardly realise that by the time the grain actually comes to the hands of the grower, many things may happen and their calculations may go wrong resulting in disaster. They proceed on certain estimates which are not realised. They go on calculating and conducting their proceedings on those lines. We are having in C. P. and Berar what they call dry farming. As there is dry farming and no irrigation, the result is that a shower of rain which is wanted makes all the difference to the grower. If the grower does not get the shower, then the calculations about the crops by the Government do not materialise and no crops reach the hands of the grower. It may also be the other way. If there is heavy shower, all the crops are destroyed. There also the calculations of the Government go wrong. In the case of dry farming, a shower more or a shower less makes all the difference in

[Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh.]

the Province and the calculations of the Government go wrong. But the Government proceed on the assumption that this particular crop will reach the agriculturists. On that basis they start exporting. By putting questions, I have shown that foodgrains have been exported from C. P. and Berar. So far as this Province is concerned, apart from the fact that there are military contractors from other Provinces coming and purchasing, there is also the Local Government purchasing, and the third one is the Central Government purchasing. Thus there are three purchasers of the foodgrains in my Province. The Local Government purchases for provincial reserve, the Central Government purchases for its reserve and the third one is the military reserve. All these three different bodies proceed on different lines. The Provincial Government wants to have a provincial reserve because it thinks it must have a reserve in order to meet any eventuality that may occur. The military people have an idea as to how much they will require to build up their reserve. So, if the military people and the Central Government get their own reserves, why should still an inroad be made into the provincial reserve. If your rationing scheme and other schemes are based on the theory that there should be sufficient produce in the Provinces, then and then alone rationing scheme or the scheme for prices will work properly. Neither the Central Government nor the military department has got any business to make inroads into the provincial reserve and thereby increase the price of foodstuffs for the civilian population or for others. I have also shown that this Department instead of making inroads on the Provincial Governments should direct its energy to other departments.

By putting questions, I have already pointed out that the Central Government should economise. For instance, I suggested that they should repatriate the Italian prisoners. I suggest that negotiations should be carried on with His Majesty's Government to see that those Governments make sufficient provision for troops which come from different countries. The problem of scarcity of food is sought to be tackled by two methods, firstly by procurement and secondly by the "Grow more food campaign". First of all there must be more food grown, otherwise you cannot procure food. It was said that the Government was giving Rs. 2 per acre as subsidy for bringing land which was under cotton cultivation to *jowar* cultivation. Let me give an instance as to how this works out in C. P. An agriculturist brings land which was under cotton cultivation to *jowar* cultivation. Take for instance 50 acres; according to the Government calculation of subsidy, the agriculturist should really get Rs. 100 as subsidy; but he gets only Rs. 5 in hand in cash and for the balance of Rs. 95 he is given a receipt saying that he contributed the same to Red Cross fund. Is this kind of procedure for growing more food likely to appeal to any agriculturist? You must see that the grower receives this amount which he is entitled to and it should not be taken from him unless it is voluntarily given in the form of charity to Red Cross fund or some investment to bring down inflation. That is one instance which I have given.

Let it not be forgotten when people talk of price control and think of arbitrarily fixing prices that for a cycle of 10 or 11 years the agriculturist has had to suffer. He went underground; there was depression. You may say that it was world depression, but the consequences were that the agriculturist had considerably to suffer. Not only the crops failed but the prices went down. The result was that the agriculturist who was already heavily indebted got still more heavily into debt. Then, fortunately or unfortunately, this war came in and as a result the prices went up. Then everybody started complaining that the prices of foodstuffs had gone up very high and that the agriculturist was not entitled to the profits he was making. But these very gentlemen who complained had not, in those 10 or 11 years during which the agriculturist had suffered, started any relief fund for him. The Government did not start any relief fund nor did any charitable institutions. And now when there is a chance for the agriculturist to wipe out his debts,—he may be able to wipe out his debts if these prices continue for a long period,—there is a hue and cry that there should be statutory price control. It may be that I am a solitary voice in this House so far as the price of agricultural produce is concerned. but I am going to put

my view before this House. Sir, it has been said that the prices must be brought down. But what will be the result of that? If they bring down the prices to a considerably low level it will reduce, as it has already reduced, the standard of living of the agriculturist. He is on the border-line of starvation and this is the time when he can meet the needs not only of his sustenance but the needs of his children's education and his medical needs. And if just at this time you bring down the hammer and reduce or "dehydrate" the prices he will not know what to do. If you wish to maintain his standard of living you should help him with subsidy. They are thinking not only of bringing down the prices but thinking that the grower is hoarding and they want an anti-hoarding drive. People who talk in that way talk nonsense. The plight of the ordinary agriculturist who has no other means of livelihood except agriculture is not known and understood by many. Even Government come down on him and want the revenue in time. He has to dispose of his grain, pay the moneylender from whom he has borrowed money, failure to pay whom will involve his field being auctioned; then there are his social needs. I am not talking of the big landlord but the ordinary agriculturist who has nothing else to rely on. In my province Government agents are being sent to collect what they consider to be the surplus crop left with the agriculturist. They do not take the villagers into their confidence and calculate what can be the surplus. They have their own ideas about it, and one of the Sub-divisional Officers who perhaps wants a title or quick promotion issued a notice that tehsildars and revenue inspectors, etc., will go and the surplus must be given to them. Is that the voluntary way of procurement? If you wish to procure, there are two ways. According to you it will be requisition and according to me it will be voluntary sale. If you fix a proper price that shall be an inducement to the cultivator to bring his produce to the market. If there is compulsion to disgorge all that he possesses you shall have difficulty to get all that you want. If you proceed on the line that you shall requisition the surplus the difficulty is how you shall calculate the surplus. And if you fix the price arbitrarily how do you expect the food to come into the market? Therefore in fixing the prices you should take into consideration, as I said before, his various needs, like sustenance, education of his children, medical needs, his needs like seeds, etc., for the next year. Then I have already said that particularly in my province where there is dry farming you must allow him to keep something by way of provision for failure of crops. Only when you do all this can you expect him to have a good surplus and if you give him a good price I have not the least doubt that he will come forward and sell his grain.

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

**Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh**: I will finish in two minutes, Sir.

**Mr. President** (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I cannot allow the Honourable Member any more time.

**Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh**: These things should be taken into consideration in fixing the prices.

**Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad** (United Provinces Southern Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I have given notice of a motion and as it is a very long one I should like to read it in the manner of Sir James Grigg. I beg to move:

"This Assembly views with great surprise. . . . the control of price without controlling the stock. . . . origin and causes of the food famine in Bengal. . . . men and women of young age."

I do not like to waste the time of the House by reading the whole thing which is before you.

This food problem is essentially a war effort. For the successful prosecution of the war it is necessary that we must keep up the morale of civil population, and consequently it is necessary that this problem should be included in the programme of active work of those who are devoting their attention to war efforts.

Sir, I first come to the speech of my Honourable friend, Mr. Hutchings. In his speech he laid down a dictum which ought to be the guiding principle of the Food Department of the Government of India. He said, "Food is the common

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property to which rich and poor has equal share and equal right." I wish he would judge the merit of each question by the dictum which he himself has laid down. In addition to this dictum, I would like to add one more for his guidance, and that is "Corruption in food is inexcusable and should be heavily punished". I would also like to add, as a kind of rider or corollary, another proposition which was laid down by Sir Frederick James and that is "Wastage of food should be a criminal offence." Now, these are the three guiding principles by means of which we ought to judge the policy of food department.

**Mr. President** (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I do not know what the Honourable Member was reading from. If he was moving an amendment, that could not be allowed now.

**Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad:** I had moved my amendment first.

**Mr. President** (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I did not hear what he read out

**Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad:** Every problem that arises should be judged according to these dictums. But how are you going to translate it into practice? For this purpose I gave notice of a Bill which I called "Anti-hoarding Bill" in order to safeguard all these three principles which have just been enunciated. I requested the Government to take up that Bill as Government Bill so that it may be passed through very quickly and we may be relieved from the distress of 1944. I did not receive the permission of the Government of India to move that particular motion, but I am sure that during the next Session the Government will come forward with an Anti-hoarding Bill, because without a Bill of that kind it is impossible to carry into effect all the three principles which I have just enunciated.

Sir, I agree with my Honourable friend, Mr. Hooseinbhoj Laljee, when he challenged the Government Treasury Benches that in all their food committees and conferences they assiduously leave out the Members of the Assembly. On page 8 of the Gregory Committee's Report, they say that in these committees there should be representatives of the Government, representatives of the trade people and representatives of the growers. But the consumer is always overlooked in all their committees and conferences. And who are the representatives of the consumers? Certainly, the elected members of this House have got every right to speak on behalf of the consumers. I challenge the Honourable Member to give a single example of a committee or conference, held by the Food Department, in which they appointed a single elected member of this House. On several occasions I have said that they ought to include us, but no attention has been paid by them, and that is the reason for protesting day after day on the floor of this House that the Food Department takes very little care about the elected members because they are very inconvenient to them. And I can tell you why they are very inconvenient to them. I take this opportunity of pointing out that I came across certain merchants—I am not going to tell you the names of those merchants, because it is no use—who deal in foodgrains and they told me in the presence of a very honourable company that they spent 6 crores of rupees in bribing various agencies dealing with foodgrains during the last year. It is only the members of the Assembly who can expose the corruption of the Department, and that is why they are very inconvenient to them and they assiduously try not to nominate them in any of their committees and conferences. I do not propose to give particulars of those merchants, but if the Government of India becomes serious to make any particular enquiry, I will give them the particulars also.

Coming to the question of distress in Bengal: I confine myself to two points. The Government knew in December 1941 that Bengal had lost Burma rice amounting to 185,000 tons. Since then what steps have the Government taken to make up for this deficiency. Several courses were open to them, but they never utilized any. For example, it was suggested by Mr. Neogy, I think, or by some other speaker, that we have got plenty of land in Assam and we have got plenty of labour in Bengal, and the Government never made any attempt to

utilize the labour of Bengal in order to grow more rice on the soil now in charge of Assam Government. This was one obvious step which they ought to have taken. Now, Sir, the distress which is prevailing at present may again appear in 1944. Unless vigorous steps are taken to grow more rice for the people of Bengal. From the figures supplied to us, we find that as a result of the 'Grow More Food' campaign there has been an increase of 6 million tons in foodgrains, but the quantity of rice has fallen down by 2 million tons, and therefore the loss of rice, which is the staple food of Bengal, has become very serious.

**Sir Cowasjee Jehangir** (Bombay City: Non-Muhammadan Urban): What is the increase in the quantity of foodgrains as a result of the 'Grow More Food' campaign?

**Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad:** It is given on the first page of Gregory Committee's Report. It is 6 million ton.

I would like to know what steps are the Government taking now in order to avoid the same catastrophe which has overtaken Bengal at the present moment; what long-range-policy steps have they taken? That was one step which they could take.

The second step is that they should have a planned crops. They should know how much rice can be produced in other provinces. They should consider how much land they could allot for the production of jute in Bengal, how much for cotton in Bombay, and how much more rice could be grown in the U. P. and the Punjab so as to make up the deficiency of rice in India on account of the loss of import from Burma.

The second thing is: What is the staple food of Bengal. It is not rice alone. It is rice-cum-fish. In certain river areas they have taken away the boats of fishermen and these men cannot now catch fish; the men residing in those areas are suffering seriously and they are dying of hunger. Therefore in the interests of meeting the present situation to which the world's attention has been drawn, I would like to urge the Government of India to take the long-term policy into consideration and see that we have more rice production in this country during 1944 and ample provision for fishing should be restored, so that the people of Bengal may have their full quota of food, i.e., rice-cum-fish.

I now come to the important question of rationing which follows directly from the principle of Sir Frederick Jams, i.e., wastage is a criminal offence. I agree with Mr. Kirby that it should be introduced, but if there is going to be corruption in the distribution of food and in rationing, then the task will be exceedingly difficult. We have heard from Mr. Jamnadas Mehta about the condition of the flour supplied to Bombay. We heard another speech praising the distribution of food in Bombay. Putting these two together one concludes that the distribution of food is not on an even scale. We must follow the dictum of the Secretary of the Food Department, Mr. Hutchings, that food is the property of all and all should be equally treated with regard to it.

The next point is that if you introduce the rationing system, there must be two essentials. The first is that you must have a reserve. I agree with the report of the Gregory Committee that we should have a reserve of 500,000 tons as minimum. But I would request the Government that this reserve should be obtained, as far as possible, by import from outside like Australia. The next important thing is that you must know what stock is available in the country and where it is, and for this purpose I moved my Bill for a system of licenses. The third condition which will follow is that you must fix the price. Here I come in direct conflict with the people of the Punjab. My friend Sardar Mangal Singh is not here, but I would have reminded him that we showed great sympathy to the people of the Punjab while Lyallpur wheat was being sold at Rs. 1-12 a maund by imposing a fine on every consumer in India of one rupee per maund by putting import duty on Australian wheat. Now when other people are in trouble it is not fair to say: "We are not going to listen to you". This question of price is closely connected with the question of the monetary policy of the Government of India. If you want to maintain the monetary policy and the price level of your paper note, you must take into

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account the purchasing power of this rupee. People are misled into believing that the trouble is due to Provincial Autonomy. They shield their inefficiency by finding wrong excuses. It is a problem, as I have said above, of stabilising the purchasing power of your paper rupee. I think it is fair that the purchasing power should be fixed at 50 per cent. higher than what it was in 1929. This should apply to silver, to foodgrains and to everything.

**Mr. President** (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member's time is up. I think I made it clear that the Honourable Member could not be allowed to move any amendment at this stage. This is the fourth day of the debate and thirty Members have already spoken. I could not follow him properly but no amendment could be moved at this stage. I am, therefore, not going to put it to the House.

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.

**Mr. Muhammad Nauman** (Patna and Chota Nagpur *cum* Orissa: Muhammadan): Mr. Deputy President, Sir, I rise with a heavy heart to discuss the food problem which is not only appalling in Bengal but has made the situation in the entire country rather miserable. It is unfortunate that the Food Member is not in his seat even as yet to hear from us what comments we make on the present situation. I would not like to enumerate the different factors which are responsible, as they may be so many—failure of crops in some parts, export to other foreign countries, inflation of currency and many others. There is one very patent fact which I want to point out to the House and it is this: that all these factors are the corollaries of one single fact existing today—the condition of the world war; and as such I believe the chief cause should be tackled for this rather than any other. I am not trying to discuss how this war has been foisted on us. This is no occasion for it; but I would certainly say that as the war is directly responsible for this condition which is existing and for the condition which has been brought about in the matter of food supply, it is the war exchequer which should pay and nobody else. It should be through a subsidy from the war exchequer and none else. It is said, that this is a man-made famine; and as such I believe that the Government as represented today should at least see that this man-made famine is redressed by man-made efforts. I do not know what financial implication the subsidy programme may ultimately involve, but I would just point out the figures which have been given about the Food Department establishment at the centre and its cost. On calculation you find that it is costing about Rs. 2½ lakhs monthly or Rs. 30 lakhs a year. This is for salary alone. The paraphernalia and establishment for safeguarding the food interest in this country; and probably another 30 lakhs per year for the travelling allowance bills, for the staff, for the housing and for other things. So you are already spending Rs. 60 lakhs a year at the centre alone besides those in provinces. According to the speech of the Honourable the Food Member, there was a deficit of about 1½ million tons in Bengal. What would have been the cost if that grain was subsidised by purchases from the Central Government in the way that they should have been purchased from those parts of this country and other dominions which were in a position to spare at reasonable rates, and should have been sold to Bengal or such other affected areas, by subsidised rates of practically half the purchase rate. On my own calculation I believe it would not have cost more than about Rs. 100 millions or Rs. 10 crores. Whether it was to be debited to the Defence Department or the Offence Department I am not concerned. But as this war is responsible for this situation, it is certainly right that that Department should be debited with this amount. This Government could have given this even as a loan to Bengal Government on certain terms of moratorium for five or ten years, which that government could have repaid in the heydays or through her excise duties

of jute and income tax but all those things never occurred to the mind of the present bureaucracy which sits there. I would just like to refer to the speech of Mr. Hutchings, the Secretary of the Food Department made yesterday.

He was very proud to mention the control ordinances of food rates, but he does not realise that this mischievous system of control has, instead of producing any healthy effect, been responsible for creating the situation to what it has come in many places. I am not trying to say that this is the only cause which is responsible, but this is certainly one of the chief causes. Who are the controllers? Those people whose duty it has always been to preserve the British bureaucracy, through the British bayonets. They never realised what the sympathy of the people means, and what the co-operation of the people can amount to. I say that this government stands self-condemned, and it has forfeited the right to exist as a government when it says it cannot control the black markets. Mr. Hutchings was very proud of the ordinance about food control; but he did not refer to the results which he has been able to achieve out of it. I say they have forfeited the right to call themselves a responsible Government or a civilised government even because what do we find? The Government machinery is always capable to control all kinds of sabotages, conceivable and inconceivable, all kinds of secret societies existing or not existing; they are able to control every man here or there whom they for reasons or no reasons believe to be fifth columnist; they can hunt out any Hur hiding in a certain jungle in Sind; they can find out a Jai Prakash living in the remotest corner of India, but they can not find out the black marketeers, and the hoarders and profiteers. They cannot control the black market or those culprits who are selling commodities at an exorbitant rate. What happened in Bengal? It was not exactly that rice was not available: it was available in many places in the black market, at Rs. 40 a maund or above; but it was not available at the so-called controlled rate of say Rs. 20 or even Rs. 25 a maund. That was the whole situation.

**Mr. K. O. Neogy** (Dacca Division: Non-Muhammadian Rural): Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas has remarked in a note appended to the Gregory Committee's report that the Government are understood to have resorted to the black market for their own purchases.

**Mr. Muhammad Nauman:** I do not know what the Honourable the Food Member has got to say about what Mr. Neogy has just told him, that even the Government itself resorted to black market for their own purchases, and in that case probably, they are responsible for establishing that black market as well.

**Mr. K. O. Neogy:** It is Sir Purshotamdas's note, not mine.

**Mr. Muhammad Nauman:** I want an answer from the Food Member. The Home Member can hunt out a culprit anywhere for any subversive movement which his Department thinks may exist, but he and his Government cannot find out a man who is selling in the black market openly and in the daylight; and that is not one individual or ten or a hundred, but thousands of such profiteers who have been doing it in every part of this country for over 2 years. I do not believe that the Honourable the Food Member who is an Indian and who has been in politics for a long time, who knows conditions in this country, and who probably knows a lot more about these black market people himself, should have sat like that and shaken his head in that manner as if he does not know them. So, what is the position and to what conclusion do we come? The only conclusion to which we can come is that this famine is not only man made but, it is British patent famine, brought about in this country for a particular purpose, sinister or otherwise.

I now come to another important factor. Am I to believe that the British administration has failed miserably not without a purpose? What is the position of the British administration in England? I would just refer to the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the 22nd June, 1943, in which he said that in England two pound loaves were to be sold for 12 annas or one shilling, and sugar was being sold at a rate of four pence per pound which comes to seven annas a seer. That means that the market in England was being con-

[Mr. Muhammad Nauman.]

trolled at about 10 to 15 per cent. above the pre-war level prices. And that is the story of a country which does not grow any appreciable quantity of foodstuff of any kind, and has to depend for supply on imports from different sources, whether from Dominions or other countries. What has the Honourable the Food Member to say to that? I do not think that the British administration in England is spending even one-third of the amount which this Government is spending on the so-called Food Department. Government of India brings out experts from England. They have one Mr. Kirby from England. Has he had any knowledge of the conditions of India, and has he been able to study what is the position of the country in the present condition? He was trying to tell us what rationing was. Well and good, I do not want to comment on that, but that is only for urban areas. Probably he does not know that a very small percentage of people probably less than one per cent. live in the urban areas in this country and the conditions in this country cannot be compared to those in European countries.

Sir, it is said that people are not co-operating. What co-operation does my Honourable friend in the Government expect? People have tried to give all sorts of benevolent and desirable suggestions from different platforms, and newspapers had been writing about the situation here and there. The Food Conferences that they have held here have resulted in fiasco, without any active part being taken after the deliberations were over. I have no time to comment fully on what Sir Theodore Gregory and other so-called experts have tried to report to the Government and make the situation still worse. One of the striking passages in that report is that Sir Theodore Gregory feels that the farmers when they are getting more money out of the sale of their produce are using more foodstuff than they could have done in normal times. But he forgets that the unfortunate farmer is not in a very comfortable position too. I agree that if twenty acres of land yielded 500 rupees before it may yield now about rupees three thousand, but does Sir Gregory realise that for the commodities which the farmer requires for existence, he has to pay six times. Say for instance, if it cost him in pre-war days Rs. 500, now it costs him Rs. 3,000 or even more, and leaves him as miserable and as wretched as he was before 1939 with that amount of money which he used to get as a return on the sale of the produce that he grew? That is the position. Sir Gregory should have studied these factors also.

As I said earlier in my speech, there should be a definite programme of subsidising the sale in such areas where you find that there are famine conditions existing. In my own province, Bihar, you can see the result of this paraphernalia of the Food Department. They said on the 5th August 1943—so late as that—that Bihar was a surplus province—that was the statement made in reply to a question of my Honourable colleague. In the Gregory report they have said that Bihar is a deficit province. Report was published only two months after that statement when the mischief to Bihar had been done. I do not know what mechanisation is there to produce any figure that they may like to have and that may suit them. I want to impress on the House that it is high time that the Honourable the Food Member and the entire Government of India should try to co-operate with the people, in giving them at least as much relief as is humanly possible. I am not prepared to concede for one moment that it is not within the powers of this administration to control things and to subsidise their purchases in manner that the entire rate for the country would be one and the same. If they want to do it, they can do so, but when they do not want to do it they can make all sorts of pretensions as they have been doing. With these few words I would only ask the Government to take this House and the entire country into confidence and would ask the Food Department to co-operate with elected food committees in the different centres in towns and in rural areas. The entire organisation of purchase and sale should be through agencies which would work either at a sacrifice or on a very nominal profit. I hope the Government would accept the amendment which has been moved by my Party. With these few words I take my seat.

**Mr. G. Rangiah Naidu** (Madras City: Non-Muhammadian Urban): I am a new Member of this Assembly who took seat on the 26th July last. At that time I could not take part in the discussion on food because my mouth was under lock and key. Now, Sir, I am free as my Party has decided to attend the sittings of the session and take part in important questions. Now, I am free to speak on this important question of food problem.

Sir, India is a country where the basic industry is agriculture. It is a proverbial fact that India was giving food to several foreign countries, and still has been giving food—countries where there is no agriculture at all, where people do not know what is agriculture, where people do not know how to make cloth. And yet this country, such a country, is in a state that her children are driven to emasculation and death. People in such a country from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin,—the sons and daughters of that country, have been suffering for want of food.

On the first day, I carefully heard the statement made by my Honourable friend, the Food Member. In that statement I find that no practical suggestion has been made as to how to proceed with the control of food in the country. I have heard the speeches of my Honourable friends in this House but no member made any practical suggestion that can be adopted by the Government or by the people. Without the co-operation of the people, you cannot do anything. (*An Honourable Member*: "You want national government".) Yes, we are a national government. We are in our country. These are the days of democracy. We cannot deny it. (*An Honourable Member*: "Are they?"). Certainly they are. We are forgetting that we are in our own country. We are forgetting that we are free in our country. Though the British Government is there, we are free. If we say we are free, we are free. If we think in our minds that we are free, we will be free. We are always free.

Now, I come to the practical suggestions. I am referring first to the recommendations of the Gregory Committee. The first recommendation is that for the duration of the war India should be a net importing country. It should be accepted by each and every one. We must import during the crisis of this war. The second wonderful recommendation is this: In order to get foodgrains from the cultivator, an effort must be made to increase the supply of the goods he needs, this problem being given a rank next only to that of munitions. Unless the cultivator is supplied with the goods that he needs, how can he produce food. Without food how can you fight your enemy. First the needs of the agriculturist must be supplied. The agriculturist is the most important man in the country. He should get his materials supplied by the Government. Without the agricultural implements, the agriculturist cannot produce food in the villages. Without food, how are the soldiers going to fight? What is the use of manufacturing munitions if you cannot give food to the soldiers? Food must be the first consideration. Then the third recommendation is that rationing should be introduced in the urban areas on the principle of a daily minimum ration of one pound of rice. As early as the 14th century, Sultan Allauddin Padshah of Delhi allow the people to purchase in the market 3½ pounds of rice and foodgrains. Now, one pound is recommended. A man of my stamp can eat at a time one pound of rice. I am a man of 75 years. If I get my belly full of food, I will be prepared to take arms in my hand and fight our enemy and lead an army to fight the enemy. Not only myself. There are persons of my age in our country, stalwart persons, vigorous and energetic persons who will fight the enemy if they are well fed. Even my Congress friends will be prepared to fight the enemy and take up arms in their hands if our national demand is conceded. That is the question to be considered first by this Government. They want our co-operation. If they want the co-operation of Indians, they must first concede the demand of the national parties in the country. The biggest and the oldest national organisation is the Congress organisation. Next comes the Muslim League and then there are other national organisations. They want India to be independent. That demand must be conceded if you want us to present a united front to

[Mr. G. Rangiah Naidu.]

fight the enemy and send him out if he at all comes into India. We do not want anybody to come into India, to step into the Indian borders. We will fight with the Britishers, and wrest independence from them. That is our policy. But the policy of the British Government is to put the Congress leaders in jail. Although the Congress offered their aid to fight the enemy, their help has not been sought and the Government has not accepted our proposals. They do not want to part with power. I say that this recommendation about one pound of rice must go and the quantity must be doubled. Unless it is doubled, people cannot go on with their activity.

Another thing is that I am a Madras man and I want to speak about my province. It is my bounden duty to speak about my province. I say that these blessed recommendations of the Gregory Committee are worthless. They do not want to help the cultivator. They do not want the cultivator to eat more than a pound. They want Indians to fight for them but they do not give them food. Madras is a province where agriculture is the basic industry. There are 25 districts in our province. Out of these 25 districts, eight are delta districts. The food that is produced in these eight delta districts can be supplied all over the districts where there is famine. In the Ceded Districts, there is famine. The food that is produced in our province can be provided for all these famine areas in our districts provided it is not exported to foreign countries. It was exported and it is being exported now from our province.

3 P.M. It was exported to Ceylon and to the Indian States like Hyderabad, Mysore, Travancore and Cochin. This export has, I think, now been stopped after so much hubbub and protest. Sir, Madras Presidency is always self-sufficient in the matter of food if exports are not made. You can make exports to Indian States which are within our presidency like Travancore and Cochin, but food should not be exported to Hyderabad and Mysore.

I come, Sir, from the City of Madras and the food situation there now is quite satisfactory because of the introduction of rationing system. I put up a strong fight with the responsible persons in the Provincial Government and with the Collector of Madras in the beginning when the food trouble was very acute because there was no control over it. I told them that they did not know the method of controlling food. I said you accompany me to the villages where food is produced. Please remember that in India every agriculturist is a food expert; in India every merchant is a food expert; everybody in India is a food expert because the basic industry of India is agriculture. Everybody knows what is agriculture and everybody knows how to produce food. Every body knows how to distribute food. Such is the condition of India. Our friends on the Treasury Benches want to import food experts into India as if we have no food experts in India. So, I said to the Collector of Madras to let us go to the villages because our food experts are there and let us consult them. If you want to control the prices of foodstuffs, you must go to the villages. A villager is a responsible man. Ask him what is your rate of taxation? What is your expenditure on labour? What are your family expenses and what is the expenditure on your cattle? Calculate all these and then fix a rate. This is the practical suggestion. A bag of one hundred and sixty-four pounds of paddy, you sell at the rate of Rs. 6. Go to the wholesale dealer and ask him to sell it with a profit of four annas a bag. Then, the retail dealer who gets his grains from the wholesale dealer, fixes a rate. You may say how it is possible? The Collector of Madras also put the same question to me. I will tell you how it is possible. Let us go to the villages. You have got some Government employees in the village, you have got a *chaprasi* there. You have got village munsiff and *Karnam* there. You can form a Committee of non-officials in the village. Make responsible villagers the members of this Committee and give them powers to control the food prices. What is required for a village should be kept there and the remainder can be sold to the wholesale dealer. You should allow free trade. Government need not trouble about controlling food. There is the machinery there from top to bottom. There is the Collector, the Deputy Collectors, the Assistant Collector, the

Tahsildars and so many other people to work. Without doing the right thing, they are speaking here whatever they like. They are mentioning things here which are not practicable at all. Impracticable things cannot be taken into consideration. The Collector and other responsible persons do not accept my suggestion because the people's representatives, the producers and the merchants are treated by this blessed Government as mosquitoes. I am a man of 20 years' service in the Madras Corporation. I am a man of practical experience. I am a man who comes from an agriculturist family. I hold lands now and I hold gardens. I am a cultivator. I know how to produce food and how to distribute it. And yet a suggestion that is made by a man of my position in life is not taken into account by the Government. Then, what is the use of this Government? What is the meaning of this administration when suggestions made by responsible public men who have got experience of the country and who have got respect in the country are not taken notice of. My practical suggestion is this. Let us go to the villages.

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

**Mr. G. Rangiah Naidu:** So, my only practical suggestion is: Go to the village. If I am allowed to speak on this subject, I can speak for two hours giving practical suggestions.

**Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta):** The Honourable Member has one minute more.

**Mr. G. Rangiah Naidu:** If my speech is required by my friends in the House and if the Deputy President allows me to speak, I can speak for two hours. So, these are my practical suggestions. It is no use having all these speeches; it is no use having all these reports. It is no use to have a Royal Commission which will consume six lakhs of rupees. It is also no use having a Committee and waste our money on their daily and travelling allowances. My practical suggestion is you must try to obtain the confidence of the people's representatives, the confidence of the producers and the merchants and get their co-operation. You must go to villages and there commence your control of food prices.

That is all I have to say.

**Raj Bahadur Seth Bhagchand Soni (Ajmer-Merwara: General):** Mr. Deputy President, I have ventured to join the debate not with a view to side-track any help that might and should go to the suffering Bengal, but to remind the Central Government about a centrally administered area, called Ajmer-Merwara which I have the honour to represent. It is well known that Ajmer-Merwara, with its total population of 5½ lakhs, is ever a deficit area. To our misfortune, it has had in recent months the sad experience of unprecedentedly heavy floods, rendering the food situation even more acute. The people in my constituency had always been dependent on the Punjab, U. P. and the neighbouring States. We still need their help. But we need their help not only to the same extent but even more this year, because of the effects of the floods, if the people in my constituency are not to experience what has been the fate of our Bengali brethren. I am not complaining, I am only pleading. I am also appealing to the Central Government which is in charge of Ajmer-Merwara to remember us in any allocation of foodstuffs under the basic plan that may be devised. As the House is aware, industrially Ajmer is poor, except for the railway workshops that are at present engaged in war effort. Therefore, our people have not got purchasing power to the extent that obtains in several other parts of the country. Yet, they are accustomed to taking only wheat and wheat is now being sold at a price which is not within the reach of the poor. Not only is the price high, even the quality has suffered considerably in recent months and this point requires the vigilance of the Government whenever they procure food for this area. I do not wish to labour the point, but would request the Honourable the Food Member to give my people an assurance that their claims for a reasonably good quantity

[Seth Bhagchand Soni.]

and quality of food at fair price are not ignored in any calculations for procurement and distribution. As for our part, we shall offer you our utmost co-operation in any measures that may be devised. Ajmer City having a population of more than 1½ lakhs comes under the proposed scheme of rationing that is to be introduced shortly. I would urge the Honourable the Food Member to see that in order to make the rationing scheme a success, a continued supply of good quality of wheat and other food commodities is arranged without delay. We, in Ajmer City, are not averse to rationing or price control, but we expect the authorities to make the scheme workable in the conditions prevailing there. The help and co-operation of the leaders of that locality will, I feel confident, be forthcoming.

May I turn now, Sir, to the needs of the country at large and offer just a few observations? Several Honourable Members have spoken in different voices and I think Mr. Frank Anthony was frank enough in his analysis of the disease, though one may not agree with all his conclusions. There is no gain saying that there is enormous wastage in the Army which should have been checked and can be checked even now. Again, one would like to know what proportion of the Army in India belonging to all nationalities is stationed in Bengal and to what extent they have been responsible for the acuteness of the food situation. I would like the Honourable the Food Member to take the House into confidence on this aspect of the question to enable us to understand the position. It is suggested, Sir, that one of the means for alleviating the situation is that the Army in India should be fed totally by imports from abroad, thus making this the concern of the United Nations. Is it too much to hope for an assurance on this point? In this connection one cannot fail to take note of the boldness and quickness with which His Excellency Lord Wavell has been devising measures to tackle the famine situation in Bengal and other areas. But, I feel an equal degree of purposefulness must inspire the activities of all those engaged in battling against the famine. Otherwise, the fear of our Bengali friends about the *aman* crop might turn out to be real. The Government of India should be more decisive in their policy and even-handed in their treatment of the Provinces. I was pleased to read this morning a Press communique in which the Central Government have ordered the Sind Government not to amend or cancel the order fixing the maximum prices of food grains in the province without the previous approval of the Centre. This is a welcome sign and shows that the Government of India mean to be businesslike. It is in accordance with the policy enunciated by the Food Member himself initiating the Food Debate. But it is not enough to order only Sind. There are other areas which do and may require similar treatment and I trust that the Government of India will not flinch from doing their duty in order to save the people from further starvation.

**Sardar Sant Singh** (West Punjab: Sikh): Sir, I associate myself with my Honourable friend Dr. Deshmukh in offering our thanks to those countries which have rendered help to India in her distress, particularly Ireland and China. Sir, after this, I want to express my thanks to the Central Legislature for coming to the help of the Punjab grower in those days of distress when economic depression set in and he was getting much less than what he actually spent in growing wheat in the Punjab. My Honourable friend Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad referred to this matter just to remind the Punjab that the Central Legislature was not remiss at the time. I am fully alive to that suggestion. I know what efforts I had to make in the Central Legislature in the early days when I became a Member of this august House to bring good deal of pressure upon the Government of India to introduce the first Wheat Import Duty Bill which was passed by this House. Sir, in the present debate on Food, it has been blitzkrieg on the Punjab, mass assault made on the Punjab that the Punjab is heartless, inhuman and atrocious Province which does not feel for the famine conditions of their brethren in Bengal and which fills in her stock of wheat only to get profits out of the distress from which the sister province is suffering.

**Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra** (Presidency Division: Non-Muhammadian Rural): Bengal never said that.

**Sardar Sant Singh:** I must say that in the White Paper that has been presented to the House of Commons, probably under instructions or under brief given to the Secretary of State for India by the Government of India, the Punjab has been held up as a guilty Province. Sir, I take this opportunity of completely repudiating this charge. This charge is as untrue as it is fantastic and ridiculous. The Government of India were not honest in not sending the full debate in this House on the food situation and withholding the views of the opposition. The speech of the then Food Member alone was embodied in that White Paper, as appears from the press reports. It is really surprising that the British Parliament should not be made aware of the suggestions made by the opposition in this House to meet the situation that had arisen in Bengal. It is also surprising that the British Government and the Members of Parliament should not have cared to fully appreciate the blunders and the bunglings committed by the Government of India in dealing with the food situation and bringing about this famine in Bengal.

I am not concerned with that today but one point in the speech of Sir Frederick James has surprised me; I am sorry he is not in his seat just now. He said that to give publicity to the famine news to the world was to affect the morale of the people. That has been the policy followed by the Government of India and still they think that if they had concealed the matter and concealed the number of deaths that are taking place in Bengal it would have been better for the Government of India. I quite appreciate such line of argument coming as it does from those quarters who believe that they are here in India to govern, and to govern means to maintain order, not even law. Such a callous, heartless and wooden Government complaining and citing the Scriptures from those benches now has been rightly cartooed by Shānkar today in the *Hindustan Times*; it is a sermon not on the Mount but from the Treasury Benches, given to the starving and dying people of Bengal. However, the point that I want to make is this; who is the guilty party? Does the guilt lie on the Punjab or does it lie somewhere else? That is the issue with which I will try to deal in the short time at my disposal. I will first deal with the charge of profiteering made against the Punjab. It is alleged that the grower in the Punjab has withheld the stocks from the market. But the best refutation of this charge is to give the figures of stocks that arrived in the Lyallpur market from the beginning of this year up to the end of September.

**Mr. R. H. Hutchings** (Secretary, Food Department): Who is accusing the Punjab?

**Sardar Sant Singh:** That question should be addressed to the Food Member, Mr. Amery, and to some speakers who made speeches here. The arrivals of wheat in the Lyallpur market were as follows in 1941, 1942 and 1943, in bags:

	1941	1942	1943
January . . . . .	13,200	Nil	1,800
February . . . . .	7,750	Nil	19,180
March . . . . .	22,800	Nil	30,900
April . . . . .	22,300	5,900	8,910
May . . . . .	...	158,800	94,790
June . . . . .	68,600	145,400	89,300
July . . . . .	80,600	23,100	58,000
August . . . . .	54,400	6,780	68,600
September . . . . .	50,600	13,650	100,780

These figures disclosed that the growers in the principal grain growing centres of India, i.e., Lyallpur, were sending their stocks to the market in quantities greater than what they sent in the corresponding months in the previous two years.

**An Honourable Member:** It was withheld in 1942.

**Sardar Sant Singh:** That may be, but in 1943 they are sending foodgrains, and I understand that Government became alive to the famine conditions in Bengal in 1943, not in 1942.

[Sardar Sant Singh.]

These figures speak for themselves. Then I come to the charge of profiteering, which is still more ridiculous. The charge was made in complete and stupendous ignorance. As regards profiteering I will first draw attention to the oft-repeated charge made here against the Government of Sind. They made a profit of over 2½ crores of rupees at the expense of the Sind grower. What right had they to make that profit? I know that the Bengal Government whose sheep were dying under the very nose of the shepherd who was controlling the administration were making a profit. I will presently quote the figures at which the Bengal Government sold wheat to the people who were dying in the streets of Calcutta. Then there is the Central Government which is now a more human Government than the Provincial Governments. And what did this human Government do? They purchased wheat in the Punjab at Rs. 10-8-0 per maund and sold it at Rs. 11-10-0 per maund to the provinces after controlling the exports from one province to another. That is to say the Central Government made a profit of Rs. 1-2-0 per maund. Doesn't it strike horror in the minds of those who sit in this House that the Government of India should make the famine conditions in the country as a source of revenue to themselves. The Honourable the Finance Member is here. I will expect him to tell me whether it is a fact or not that they have made a profit of one crore of rupees on the wheat purchased from the Punjab and sent to other deficit provinces.

**The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman** (Finance Member): Sir, I am willing to give the Honourable Member ten rupees for every one rupee that he can prove that the Government of India has made on all its food operations.

**Sardar Sant Singh:** I am very happy that the Honourable Member has made this statement which the Government of India had not so far made. Probably the Government of India are aware that the Punjab Ministers have been making this statement in the press for the last three to four months, and the Government of India never came out with their contradiction.

Now, I will ask the Honourable the Food Member: Is it or is it not a fact that the average price paid to the Punjab wheat grower was Rs. 10-8-0 per maund by their agents who purchased wheat in the Punjab, and whether they supplied this wheat at Rs. 11-10-0 to other provinces or they did not? The question is specific and definite and calls for an answer in yes or no.

**The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman:** Will the Honourable Member support the taxation proposals which will be necessary in order to cover the loss on food operations which the Government of India makes?

**Sardar Sant Singh:** I will deal with that question when it comes up in the Budget Session. Till then we can safely wait. But may I ask the Honourable the Food Member to deny the fact that they have been selling wheat to the deficit provinces at Rs. 11-10-0 after purchasing it at Rs. 10-8-0 in the Punjab. In the case of Bengal, freight charges were to be met by that Government, and not by the Government of India. Why do you deny that fact?

**Dr. G. V. Deshmukh** (Bombay City: Non-Muhammadan Urban): He does not.

**An Honourable Member:** That is not profiteering.

**Sardar Sant Singh:** What is profiteering then?

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava** (Food Member) I will reply to your question in due course.

**Sardar Sant Singh:** I will await it with anxiety and interest.

**Dr. G. V. Deshmukh:** The Food Member followed the profits!

**Sardar Sant Singh:** Sir, I will read a passage from September number of the *Modern Review* in this connection:

"The purchase price of wheat paid by Central Government in the Punjab markets is not more than Rs. 9-8-0 to Rs. 10-4-0 per maund (82 lbs.). As against this purchase price, the Central Government charges Rs. 11-10-0 per maund to the Bengal Government, Railway freight being borne entirely by Bengal Government. The difference between the selling prices of the Government of India and the purchase price of the Government of Bengal is from Rs. 1-6-0 to Rs. 2-2-0 per maund."

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava:** This is ancient history.

**Sardar Sant Singh:** My dear, Sir, if this is ancient history, then the Honourable Member will become a remnant of archaeological importance because he has been with us for a year!

Then, Sir, I come to profiteering. Sir, I appreciate the point of view expressed by my Honourable friend, Sir F. E. James, when he said that those who profiteer at the expense of the lives of poor Indians should be publicly ridiculed.

**An Honourable Member:** Hanged.

**Sardar Sant Singh:** I do not say 'hanged'. I say that they should be arrested and publicly ridiculed, so that what happened in Egypt should happen in India too. That is to say, profiteering must cease. May I ask the Honourable Member whether he has the same remedy to offer to the millers of Bengal. The Bengal Government got wheat from the Punjab at something like Rs. 13 per maund and sold it at Rs. 15 per maund (subsequently it was reduced to Rs. 14-8-0 or Rs. 14-4-0 per maund). That is to say after making some intervening profit for themselves, the Bengal Government sold this wheat to the millers. With what result? I will tell you. The millers charged tremendous amount of money as milling charges. And not only this, an indirect subsidy was paid to them; for every 100 maunds of wheat flour they were given 105 maunds of wheat—i.e., 5 maunds extra. Why was it so? Milling charges in the Punjab have been comparatively much less. And then, Sir, the wheat flour was sold at a considerable profit by the millers. I have no time to go into figures . . . . .

**Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta):** The Honourable Member has got one minute more.

**Sardar Sant Singh:** . . . . . but I want to draw the attention of the House to the fact that profiteering has been going on.

I come now to my next point—I don't think I can deal with others—and that is the transport question. The Honourable the War Transport Member told us that a number of wagons came empty from the Punjab because no wheat was to be found at the stations. Here I have got figures which I will quote of undespached balances on account of lack of wagons to lift the stocks of wheat.

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

**Sardar Sant Singh:** I have only to give these figures, Sir, and then I have finished.

	Undespached balances.
May 1943 . . . . .	179,325
June 1943 . . . . .	158,969
July 1943 . . . . .	141,637
August 1943 . . . . .	78,463
September 1943 . . . . .	63,006

Sir, it is easy to say that the wagons came empty, but here are the figures which prove things to the contrary. Therefore, Sir, to say that the Punjab was withholding food stock to Bengal to relieve the distress there is to say what is not correct.

**Mr. K. S. Gupta (Ganjam cum Vizagapatam: Non-Muhammadian Rural):** Sir, I come from a place which was visited for the first time by the Japanese on the 6th of April, 1942. My constituency is peculiarly situated. I have got a part of it in the Orissa Province, and the rest is in Madras Presidency. The Orissa Province is considered to be a surplus province; it is alleged to be a surplus province. But with yearly visitations of famine thousands of people export themselves to the sister provinces, that is Bengal in the North and Madras in the South for domestic and menial services. Of course it is a paddy-growing area; it is a granary for the circars. Berhampore is the most important place of the Ganjam District, most of which has now gone to Orissa. In Berhampore deaths have started due to starvation. In the month of August 32 people died and they had to be removed by the Municipality of Berhampore. In September about 60 people died and in October the death roll had gone up

[Mr. K. S. Gupta.]

to 90. Is it worth congratulating the Ministry that is now existing in the absence of the real representatives of the people? The real representatives of the people are in jail. They have not been allowed to come out and do the work of helping the poor, of helping the destitute, of helping the starving and the dying. Who is responsible for this? Are they the people who are prepared to lay down their lives for the sake of the poor? Is the spiritual sanction of the Government of India or of His Majesty's Government, which is 6,000 miles away which has brought this calamity by imposing this war on us, required to release? We never wanted war. We do not want it. We could have avoided it if we had not this British connection. It is only the presence of the British that is an eye sore to any other nation whether east or west.

Sir, this is the province where the Ministry gloats, as it has boasted the other day that it is capable of exporting four lakhs of tons of rice to deficit provinces when its own people are dying in thousands and lakhs. Isn't it a shame on the part of the Ministry to be ready to export to the deficit provinces or the Government of India to accept such a decision on the part of the Ministry of Orissa? Sir, Mahatmaji said after his extensive tour some years ago: "India is the poorest country in the world and Orissa is the poorest province in India."

Then, this Orissa province has already exported a good portion of its rice. Who is responsible for it? The free trade policy of the Government of India is responsible for the depletion of the stocks which would have stood in good stead for the poor and dying people of Orissa.

Sir, there was a cyclone of unprecedented ferocity in October 1942. There was a terrific rise of the waters of the Lake Chilka and it inundated thousands of acres around it—that was paddy growing land and the crops failed. It would be heart-rending to note these figures. There is a village called Palur near Ramba where 438 people perished in the rising waters of Chilka. 7,169 cattle were drowned, and 42,115 homes were washed away by the rising waters of the Chilka. Not a tear was shed; not a Minister did go there, and is it a matter of congratulation to anybody either of this Government at the Headquarters or the Ministry in Orissa? The Centre and periphery are both rotten. They are not only rotten but to the core. So something must take the place of this kind of rotten jugglery and boasting. When his people are dying in thousands for want of food, the Chief Minister of Orissa takes pleasure in visiting Bombay; Calcutta and Delhi but not the villages which are absolutely devoid of food and raiment. There is another cry in addition to that for food.

Sir, if Bengal is suffering from want of food, Orissa has been suffering and is suffering from want of raiment also, *i.e.*, clothing. I know in certain villages thousands of women do not see the light of day for want of proper dress, for want of a cover of their shame, and isn't it a shame that the British Government should remain a moment longer as long as this pitiable state of affairs exist in a province which is considered to be a surplus province. Under no circumstances should it be treated with scant courtesy and lack of sympathy on the part of the Central Government.

Sir, the other day one friend said: What about fish in Orissa? Sir, the fishermen were the first to suffer because their boats were burnt. This is due to the denial policy of the Government of India. Who is responsible for making the poor the poorer and who is responsible for depriving people of the few morsels of food from their mouths. I know, Sir, there are women throwing their children into wells, and into the rising waters of Chilka because they have not been able to spare a morsel of food or a drop of milk from their breasts which had already become dehydrated. There is no good of elation here in the Central Government due to inflation. Away with it. The rise in prices has gone so high that, Sir, there are places where rice is not available even for love or money. There are places where two bags of rice, *i.e.*, four maunds are distributed to 1,500 people per week  $\frac{1}{4}$  seer per family. Is that sufficient for one single meal of a family? They have to sustain themselves upon this half

measure. In rural parts four annas worth of rice means half a measure because two measures can be had for a rupee. This half measure would not be enough, even for my friend Mr. Rangiah Naidu, although he is 75 years of age, for one gulp. Now you want this half a seer of rice to satisfy a family for a week. How on earth can anyone tolerate such conditions in a province which is said to be a surplus province! Who has declared it? Is it a man from Bedlam or a lunatic asylum who has declared this as a surplus province which can afford to export four lakhs of tons of rice to Bengal and other deficit areas?

Sir, who are the people suffering most? They are the Bouris who are considered untouchables. They are the landless labourers. Then we have the low castes and aborigines Savanas, Hadis and Kondras. You might not have heard of these names at all in the history or geography written by our friends from 6,000 miles away and these are the people most affected. Fishermen are very much affected for the want of boats in which they go about fishing. They were forcibly and most unwillingly removed. They are deprived by whom? By God? No, Sir. It is man who is responsible for removing their grain from their granaries, for removing their boats from their canals and waters, and this is the pitiable state of affairs; several people have not been paid at all for taking away their boats, and some were paid but not paid properly. Who will hear the cries of those poor people who are afraid of approaching even the village chowkidar? Yet in those villages tahsildars and karnams go about for collecting the war fund! What does it amount to? It is an ignominy; it is something which is absolutely false; and not the real Government that is existing; it is a Government corrupt and rotten to the core. My friend the other day said Government of India was famished in the head but bloated in the body, it is this head-famished Government which is responsible for this chronic poverty of the province as a whole.

Recently my friend, Dr. Kunzru had been to this area. Sir, I forgot to tell you one thing. On the 31st October, 1943—it is adding insult to injury—these people who were deprived of their homes a year ago, constructed some hovels and these hovels were ill-roofed but even these roofs were torn away by another gale of unprecedented ferocity on the 31st October, 1943. On account of this gale, the mail from Madras to Calcutta had to be diverted via Raipur and Nagpur for three days. Was there any tear shed or a rupee subscribed for those people there? Pundit Kunzru had been there, and also my friend Mr. Santhanam, an ex-member of this House, they made extensive tours. They have written lots of reports about the calamitous conditions and they are very definite and detailed, and it is worth the while of government perusal. Sir, if you have not read them, send for them; talk to them and take practical lessons from these two great men who have done their best for the poor and devastated country of Orissa. Here I would read a statement from Dr. Kunzru—I shall not trouble you with details:

“Orissa is a poor country. The economic condition is such as always to cause anxiety. It should therefore have received special consideration at the hands of the central authorities; but instead of showing any sympathy in its distress they have unfortunately accentuated its misfortune by their policy.”

The policy of free trade and denial is of course foolish and shortsighted—I feel sure that Orissa would have been treated with greater consideration, had the public been more fully aware of its sorrow. As Orissa is a poor country, it has no paper of its own to extend its publication to all parts of India. The several thousands of people are dying unwept and unsung. The other day the Minister of Finance of Orissa had the good sense to go to certain areas of the Puri district. After returning from his glorious tour he made a speech at Cuttack, in which he said:

“The conditions are unthinkable bad. (*Note every word*). The people have been reduced to bags of bones from extreme want of food. (*Here is another pitiable sight*). I saw emaciated people trying to ask for food but, falling down, were speechless.”

They could show signs of hunger and starvation. As they were at the threshold of death; they could not speak, they were speechless. This is from the Minister of Finance of Orissa. There is no good of any complacency on the

[Mr. K. S. Gupta.]

part of the Central Government, Sir! You must immediately send for the Ministers, if you can and if you think they will obey you. They could disobey you because you allowed them to do so on previous occasions. Please do not, for a moment longer, allow a grain of paddy to go out of that province. Otherwise, the dying people will become spirits and haunt you in your sleep or in the life after death.

Coming to my place, Vizagapatam, the district of Vizagapatam is considered to be a famine district in a deficit area. In Vizianagram and Berhampore there was rationing; it was introduced some four months ago and it was working well. God only knows why the rationing had to be cut down by 50 per cent. each adult was getting half a seer of rice per day; suddenly it was reduced to a quarter seer. Those who sit at home and work with their brains can afford to be satisfied with one-fourth seer, but what about those who work from morn to eve—the wage earners, the field workers and the landless labourers? I tell you the people are subsisting on things ranging from horse gram to coir dust. I have seen with my own eyes people eating the remains from the chaff, they go to the mills and take the chaff and winnow it several times and pick out bits of rice that may be left behind; such is the poverty stricken condition of the people in the villages. Rationing! we welcome on an all-India basis. It is worth trying as an experiment. If any one says it is impossible, I would say it is an idle excuse on the part of those who say it. The whole of Europe and Russia are now on rations because of responsible and representative Governments . . . . .

**Mr. Deputy President** (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): You have got one minute more.

**Mr. K. S. Gupta:** -I tell you Sir, that goodwill is absent. Confidence cannot be found even with a torch. If you think that all is well, you are mistaken beyond redemption. There is a tragedy, a worse tragedy to be enacted in Orissa and in the Andhra Provinces. The Ceded Districts have been a hotbed of famine for several years, from time immemorial. In fact nothing has been done to alleviate the dire and distressed condition of those people. Of course the Government of Madras is tackling it in its own way, but that is not enough. Several people have suggested several remedies. The organisation of grain banks in villages, etc. etc.

**Mr. Deputy President** (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): Your time is up; you must stop now.

**Mr. K. S. Gupta:** One sentence, Sir. Mahatma Gandhi and his followers, our leaders, should be set free; they will have a tearing all-India campaign to do the best for the poor and drive distress out of India.

**Shaikh Rafiuddin Ahmad Siddiquee** (Chittagong Division: Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I hail from Chittagong, the land of wonders of India, which has withstood wonderfully the onslaughts of Japanese aggression and barbarism. I do not like to talk much on the food debate as the matter has been discussed and brought to light by many Honourable Members of this House, and it would be a repetition of the same if I discuss again by wasting the valuable time of this House.

4 P.M.

I wish to bring only a few facts before this House regarding the food situation in Chittagong. Chittagong being the south eastern frontier of India, near the enemy land, the affairs and conditions of Chittagong are neither published by the Government nor the public and the press are not allowed to give any publicity although terrible famine broke out in Chittagong long ago. Rice was not available in Chittagong even at one seer a rupee from the beginning of the year 1943. I wrote several letters to Mr. K. G. Ambegaonkar, the then Deputy Secretary of the Food Department, setting out the crying needs of the people of Chittagong, but to no effect.

With the beginning of the Denial Policy in the year 1941, prominent merchants, exporters and importers were compelled by the Government to leave Chittagong with their bag and baggage. A major portion of Chittagong being

hilly, her production in rice was always insufficient to a considerable extent. With the fall of Burma, her population has been increased by more than two lakhs, totalling more than 20 lakhs. A great majority of the people of Chittagong had to depend upon Burma for trade, commerce and industry and foodstuffs. But the Government fully realising the future situation did not make any provision to feed the people although the people of Chittagong were courageously defending the eastern gate of India against Japanese aggression. The people of Chittagong have been playing a very important role in merchant ships and the navy throughout the world, more than any other part of India, in the successful prosecution of the war, and thousands of her brave sailors have already sacrificed their lives in high seas for defending the shores of India and the Empire. But no consideration has been made, even to feed the widows and children of those who have sacrificed their lives. On the contrary, the military police killed hundreds of poor and destitute persons by kicking when the unfortunate persons went to beg in search of food near the military areas. Vast areas of fertile paddy fields have been made aerodromes in several places of Chittagong. Moreover, they destroyed many green paddy fields by donkeys and always prevented the civil population from bringing rice or any other foodstuffs in sufficient quantities from outside to Chittagong with the result that thousands of people died every month in towns and villages long before the so-called Bengal famine was made known to the public. Public were prevented from representing their cases of food scarcity to any authority. My humbleself being the President of the Muslim Chamber of Commerce of Chittagong and Chairman of the Chittagong Central Relief Committee, the Calcutta Muslim Chamber of Commerce offered me one wagon of rice and several pounds of condensed milk every month as free gift about a month ago provided I could secure priority certificate for booking those articles.

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

But to my utter misfortune I was flatly denied any facility by a high official although we are feeding thousands of distressed daily, irrespective of caste or creed in different centres. On my failure I wired and wrote to the Bengal Premier and Minister of Civil Supplies to take necessary action, but I do not know how far they have been successful, and I have left all papers with my Secretary for securing those articles somehow.

Sir, may I ask if still the Denial Policy is going on in Chittagong? I see no reason why foodstuffs should be denied for feeding the poor and the needy in Chittagong.

Sir, another problem has arisen in Chittagong, and that is about livestock. With the military concentration in Chittagong, fifty per cent. of her cattle were consumed by the military and the rest have been dying in hundreds every day owing to a serious epidemic unprecedented in history, threatening the total extinction of cattle in Chittagong. Pure milk in Chittagong town and mofussil places has become the problem of the day. Pure milk is not available even at one rupee a seer. Unless the Central Government comes forward to supply cattle in thousands to the agriculturists before the next cultivation begins there, there is every likelihood of a great majority of the lands remaining uncultivated.

Recently another more serious problem has arisen in Chittagong. A very large number of paddyfields, valuable agricultural and horticultural lands have been occupied by the military people and very little compensation has been paid in a few cases, and in many cases no compensation has been paid yet to the sufferers. Over and above, the military Department have been requisitioning the civil population houses in such large numbers that the civilian population are dying for want of accommodation and food in open fields and on public roads. In the opinion of civil authorities the military authorities have gone far beyond the top limit in requisitioning the civilian houses. A house which was rented at Rs. 10 a month a year ago is not available even at Rs. 100 a month, as building materials are not available to the public. Ordinary bamboos which were selling at Rs. 2 to 3 per 100 have risen to more than Rs. 80 per 100. The Government is not considering at all the question

[Shaikh Rafiuddin Ahmad Siddiquee.]

of giving any adequate compensation according to present circumstances, to the evacuees, nor are they considering the housing problems of the evacuees. The Government have got abundant resources in their reserve forests in Chittagong for building houses for troops. Unless the Government of India take up the whole matter for the people of Chittagong in the matter of food for and housing the civilian population, there is every likelihood that the whole civilian population would die with a very few exceptions. The condition in Chittagong is so critical and complicated that even a man of my position would not be able to live in this world unless God helps me. I appeal to the Government of India in the name of God and humanity, especially to His Excellency the Viceroy and His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief to take up the whole matter of Chittagong directly under the Government of India; otherwise, the Provincial Government would not be able to save the people of Chittagong under the frequent interferences of the military authority.

**Mr. Kailash Bihari Lall** (Bhagalpur, Purnea and the Sonthal Parganas: Non-Muhammadan): At long last I have got the opportunity to say what I wanted to say on my amendment. I find that most of the things have been said on this debate food—I deliberately use the words, "debate food", because it has been converted from food debate into debate food, and we have already consumed a sufficient quantity of this food, of this debate food, for the last four days. Now, I want to say something about the amendment that I have placed before the House.

Of course, many amendments have been tabled on this subject and I find that most of them have tried to dig up the dead bones and some have gone to the extreme of condemning the Viceroy and the Secretary of State. To me, it seems that these are all impracticable things and however much we may exercise our lungs and liver here, the net result is already a foregone conclusion. So, it is better that we contribute some practical suggestions that may be taken up by the Government and some relief may be given to these dying people, because those who are stranded and are crying for food have little interest in censuring the Government or asking for the impeachment of any high officials. With that point of view, I have urged that a committee of officials and non-officials should be appointed to go into the matter, so that the recurrence of such things may be stopped in future and for the present they may take some steps at once so that those who are starving in the affected parts may be helped. For this purpose, I have suggested gruel kitchens which have already been opened in many parts. I have suggested orphanages for lodging the orphans. I have got practical knowledge of the fact that people have been asked to take charge of some orphans from Bengal in one of the established orphanages. We have heard the story narrated yesterday by Mrs. Ray, as to how people are snatched away from their own family members and how the family is disintegrated, how the young children are taken away from their parents and the parents are crying in the streets of Calcutta. In order to avoid these things, I think the best course would be to start public orphanages by the Government where these orphans may be lodged and the parents may not have to undergo the pangs of separation indefinitely. I have got no words to emphasize the points that Mrs. Renuka Ray placed before the House yesterday. She placed it so nicely that the hearts of most of the members must have been moved by the facts brought to light by her. So, it is only to emphasize that point that I have mentioned that the remedy lies in opening the orphanages. I have also suggested the opening of poor houses and industrial factories in important towns and the stopping of beggary. If you do this, you kill two birds with one stone. We see how much people have become demoralised when we travel on the railways. When a passenger puts a morsel of food in his mouth, he is surrounded by a large number of young boys and beggars and it is difficult for the man to eat. This has been the practical experience of most of us. In order to stop this demoralising thing, I suggest the opening of poor houses. You will urge the difficulties of finding funds for this purpose but you are finding money for bigger and higher purposes. But

I can say that so far as this country is concerned, this is the most pressing problem and you can help the solution of this problem by diverting some of these persons, who are reduced to the demoralising position of begging in the streets, and who are being reduced to the position of beasts, to useful occupations. At present you find 50 people gathering round a man who is eating and waiting for a morsel or crumb from him. In order to get rid of such demoralising things, you can open poor houses. This thing should be done immediately.

Then a great deal of discussion has taken place about the question of taking food to the affected parts. We have heard about the difficulties. We have been told how even the Railways have stood in the way. My view is that the result is due to the different angle of vision and the conflicting interests of the Government and the people. Instead of wasting so many words in discussion, there should be a heart to heart talk between the representatives of the people and the Government and they should settle as to how these two interests can be made to coincide. If you think that you must have food for the military and do not care even if hundreds of thousands of people die in this land, then of course we can never find out a solution, because you will go on thinking from your own angle of vision and the representatives of the people will go on thinking from their point of view. Both sides must come to a common settlement. I do not mean that we should in any way hamper the war effort. We have heard from several speeches during this debate how even the Government is resorting to black markets. I had a shrewd suspicion about this control business from the very beginning. When I was a member of the Control Committee in my district some one from the merchant class came to me and said 'You are only fixing the price but after fixing the price the Government goes the next day and takes hold of all the food grains in the market. Keep this secret. We don't want to disclose any names'. Even the merchants tell us how the things are being taken away from them and how the farce of fixing the price is being enacted. I know myself that the food stored in the granary of jails is sufficient for the consumption of the jail population for two or three years and yet Government is placing orders in advance for the purchase of foodgrains even before the harvest is ready. If these things are true and if there are different interests and different angles of vision in tackling the same problem, then it is beyond the power of any human being to bring the facts home to the Government. When a man is asleep he can be roused but if a man is really awake and pretends to sleep, he can never be roused and no attempt of any kind on the part of any one can wake that man. If you really think that the problem has been made so much complicated that it requires an urgent solution, it can be done. If you have this attitude of mind, then, of course, remedies can be found. Suggestions have been made and they can be acted upon.

So far as I am concerned, I am going to mention a few points about my own province of Bihar. I have here a letter published in the *Search Light* by R. C. Pandit, the Manager of the Bank of Bihar. He is a well-known man and is engaged in trade and commerce and you can understand what importance can be attached to his letter. He says:

"I had asked what is the Bihar Commercial Corporation? Is it a fact that it is a very new concern, something like a 'war baby' sucking all the milk while the war lasts? Is it a fact that this concern does a good amount of sales and purchases of the Government through the Trade Adviser? Is it on a commission basis or buying at Rs. 10 or 12 a maund and then selling at Rs. 16, 18 or 20 and pocketing the difference over deals of thousands of maunds of rice a day? Who are the proprietors? Why are not open tenders called for or mills dealt directly? Why does not the Government release the large stocks it has accumulated. The rains will spoil the large portion of it."

So, the trend of this letter is that things are going on in a way which do not come to the notice of the public. We know that a Corporation in Bengal was also engaged in this very way as this concern is connected with the Government of Bihar. After all, such under-hand dealings are going on. If for the show of the public some explanations are offered here to solve the problem, then the problem will remain where it is and there will be no solution at all.

[Mr. Kailash Bihari Lall.]

Then, Sir, I have a point which I was anxious to place before the House and which I am glad to say has already been mentioned by my friend Mr. Muhammad Nauman. Last time it was said that Bihar is a surplus province. We, who come from Bihar, were so eager to challenge this statement during the last debate but not one of us was given an opportunity. This time also we thought it will go unheard and we will remain in the background. Fortunately, my friend Mr. Muhammad Nauman got an opportunity and I have also got an opportunity of placing before this House the fact that after all the Government of India has found out that Bihar is a deficit province. So far as the starvation deaths are concerned, the other day I put a supplementary question to the Honourable the Food Member and he said that no information was forthcoming from Bihar. I have myself seen in the streets of my town of Bhagalpur people dying of starvation. I do not know whether any notice is taken of these persons by the Provincial Government or whether this is also a part of the policy of Government to keep these things unnoticed so that they may conveniently say that there are no deaths by starvation in Bihar. If the Honourable the Food Member does not get any reports from Bihar, I may inform him that people are dying of starvation in the streets of Bihar. If he cares to call for a report from the Provincial Government and if they are truthful enough, he will get the same information. I think the bubble of Bihar being a surplus province has now been pricked and the Government should now know that it is a deficit province. In connection with this very point I may also say that the people who are dying of starvation in the streets of Calcutta are not all from Bengal. It is a well-known fact that most of the labourers that are working in Calcutta hail from Bihar and also from some parts of the United Provinces. Of course, Calcutta is such a cosmopolitan city that people from different provinces are expected to go there. But most of the labourers that migrate to Bengal for earning their livelihood go from Bihar. Honourable Members know that Biharis have never migrated to any other province for holding the posts of a High Court Judge or any other responsible position. They have always migrated in search of labour. I hope my Honourable friend the Law Member who hails from Bihar will bear me out when I say this.

**The Honourable Sir Sultan Ahmed:** The Law Member hails from Bengal.

**Mr. Kailash Bihari Lall:** I meant the Leader of the House, who hails from my province, will bear me out that Biharis mostly have migrated to Calcutta in search of labour. It is they mostly who are dying like flies in the streets of Calcutta. It is not for the pleasure of dying that they have gone to Calcutta. The real thing is that the conditions at home are such that they are compelled to go out. The fact of the matter is that there is very little scope for giving publicity to the matter. Of course, the papers in Bihar do not publish generally the news that is controlled by the Government. Even here, when I attempted an adjournment motion, it was not published. I do not know what is the condition that is prevalent in Bihar that frightens the Government so much even to publish it. Even the press does not publish that sort of news.

**The Honourable Sir Sultan Ahmed:** There is no internal censorship.

**Mr. Kailash Bihari Lall:** What do you mean by 'internal censorship'?

**The Honourable Sir Sultan Ahmed:** That is, within India.

**Mr. Kailash Bihari Lall:** But is it not a fact that the Government of Bihar or somebody on their behalf have stood in the way of the two papers of Bihar, the *Search Light* and the *Indian Nation*, from publishing such a thing?

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

**Mr. Kailash Bihari Lall:** As my time is up, I leave the subject there. The point that I have tried to bring to the notice of the Government is that if they try to find out the actual conditions prevailing in Bihar they will find that Bihar is as bad a sufferer as any other deficit province.

**Maulvi Syed Murtaza Sahib Bahadur** (South Madras: Muhammadan): Mr. President, I thank you for giving me an opportunity to ventilate my views on this

Food question so far as my Province of Madras is concerned. Sir, when my Honourable friend Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar was the Commerce Member of the Government of India, when there were no indications about famine, even then he acted up to the principle of prevention is better than cure. What did he do? He invited all the representatives of several Provinces and consulted them as to what measures should be adopted to see that famine does not occur. My humble view is that had his successors followed the noble procedure, the sympathetic procedure adopted by him, much of the suffering, particularly the sufferings of our Bengali brethren would have been alleviated, would have been minimised at least. Unfortunately this was not done. My Honourable friend had to quit India for some time and take the place of War Minister in England. He might have proved himself very useful there, but so far as India is concerned, it sustained a great loss by his going there just at the time. Sir, attempts have been made to prove as to who is to blame for this miserable and appalling condition not only in Bengal but also in Orissa and in certain districts of Madras and so forth. There is unanimous opinion so far as non-officials are concerned that the Central Government is to blame. They had not acted up to the principle laid down by one of their own Members, I mean my Honourable friend Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar. If they had taken a sympathetic attitude regarding certain indications which were already visible, of course this catastrophe would not have transpired. That is my humble and candid view. The head of the Government in this land—I am sorry I have to speak in his absence, but all the same I cannot but give expression to it—has been sleeping over this important question and did not mind as to what was taking place in the Provinces. Some say that the British Government have opposed this. These are our custodians, these are our trustees, these are our guardians and they regard us at least for names sake as their wards, but in reality they have failed in their duty. I have completed my 85 years of age, I am now in my 86th year and so I have seen enough ups and downs of life in the history of India. In those days, there were famines, there were pestilences, there was dearth of food, and also of other necessaries of life. We have been subjected to all these kinds of difficulties and calamities. Fortunately for us, the present Viceroy is very sympathetic, he thought it incumbent upon him to visit at least Calcutta and some other important places. Being a gallant Viceroy, he enlisted the co-operation of the military department from whom some help, not much help—I am very careful regarding the use of the word 'some'—some help is being rendered to the civilian population in the distribution of food grains.

Sir, I am obliged to pass this remark that the military people though very gallant, yet they are actuated by selfishness. They store any amount of food-stuffs for their own soldiers. They are very miserable in paying Indian sepoy when compared to European soldiers, they pay the Indian sepoy very negligible amount, but so far as rations are concerned, they give ample rations to the military personnel at the expense of the civilian. This is the result. Now, Sir, even the present Viceroy's visit to Bengal has not proved very effective. There is a Persian saying among Iranians which says:

*"Chamcha Zadu Chamcha Zadu Halva ko (kujast)."*

Oh! spoon you have been moving again and again in the jar, but where is the halva. Halva is not forthcoming. The sweet is not forthcoming. What is the meaning of your moving here and there and making regular noise. The chamcha may be compared to the Government. The outcome of all their efforts is nothing.

**An Honourable Member:** The Food Member is born with a silver spoon in his mouth.

**Maulvi Syed Murtuza Sahib Bahadur:** Yes, that is why he can do things as he likes. He has got his own licence while sitting on the Treasury Benches. So far as Bengal is concerned, I may tell the House that I visited some of the districts of Bengal as a Member of the Haj Enquiry Committee. Mysensing district as has been stated by Chaudhuri Ismail Khan is really a rice producing district in former days and yet it is subject to famine. A doleful picture about our suffering Orissa brethren was given a few hours ago. The other day my Honourable friends Mr. Sami Venkatachalam Chetty and Mr. Krishnamachari,

[Maulvi Syed Murtuza Sahib Bahadur.]

both coming from Madras, brought to the notice of the House the appalling conditions in some of the districts of Madras. Madras, Sir, could have been a self-contained Province, but unfortunately this 'grow more food' campaign has not been given effect to there by the authorities. As has been pointed out by some of the speakers, this grow more food campaign has been only a farce. So far as Assam is concerned, there are lakhs of acres lying waste. The lands there are also very fertile and many Bengalis want to go and till the lands there and reclaim the lands at their own expense, but yet they will not be given permission to do so. Even one or two acres per head will not be given to them. When such is the case, what is the meaning of crying hoarse and advising us to grow more food. This is nothing but farce. If you go deep into the question, you come to one and only conclusion, namely the absence of national Government is the cause for all this misery. The absence of a sympathetic responsible Government is the cause for all this misery. As I have told you there are one or two exceptions among Indian Members of the Government of India who are true sons of India who want to help these poor souls, but they are quite helpless.

Sir, some mention was made about Travancore and Cochin and British Malabar. I know something about these places. Some Honourable Members might have heard about 30,000 deaths in one district of Malabar in a few months. Not 3,000 but 30,000 deaths. What was the cause? It was due to cholera. All these deaths were brought about by cholera, not plague. Fortunately Malabar was free from plague. There was cholera raging for many months. And what is cholera due to? Starvation brought about diarrhoea and that developed into cholera. So all these 30,000 deaths, in one district of Malabar were due to starvation, but this fact was not given publicity in the press. Unfortunately for us, although we happen to have a paper like the *Hindu* which is the best managed paper in India, this fact was not laid strong stress upon even by that paper. So far as the ceded districts are concerned, our friends have spoken about it. And though I belong to Trichinopoly which fortunately is not a deficit district and we are prepared to send paddy, jowar and other grains to other districts, we are prevented from doing so. The same is the case with Tanjore. Godavari and Kistna are the other two districts in Andhra and the same difficulty stands in their way. Therefore Indians are not in a position to solve their own problem for want of their own Government. And so far as Bengal is concerned, many of our colleagues might have read the speech of the Premier of Bengal Sir Nazimuddin. He as Premier levels this charge against the Central Government and it is not a charge by an irresponsible non-official like us but by the responsible Premier of Bengal. He says that the Central Government did not act up to their promise. Having promised that they would give 8 lakh maunds to Bengal they gave only one-tenth of that. Yet, so far as the military are concerned, so far as their own agents are concerned, so far as other Governments are concerned, they are allowed to make money out of this. When Indians are dying for want of food, these persons,—and not only Indian merchants but also Government,—have made money and they do not come forward and say that they have not done it; even if they do say that they cannot substantiate their statement. The Food Member has been challenged by certain speakers; I want to see what kind of reply he is prepared to give them.

Sir, before I close I shall recite one Persian couplet which is appropriate to the occasion. The poet says:

"*Bi tarā az āhe marlooman ki hangāme dūā kardān*  
*ljabat az darē Huq bahre istiqbal mi dyed.*"

"Be afraid and tremble; when the tyrannised people lodge a complaint against you, (i.e., the Government, profiteers and hoarders), to the divine power, acceptance goes in advance and takes those complaints to God."

It is the state of affairs which Government, the profiteers and hoarders should be afraid of, otherwise they will have to hold themselves answerable before the Divine Tribunal.

**Sri K. B. Jinaraja Hegde** (West Coast and Nilgiris: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, the Foodgrains Policy Committee have given several reasons in their report as affecting the supply position. The first reason given is shock due to

the eastern theatre of war. I wonder what they mean by it. If they mean that all the food supply dried up as soon as there was shock of war in the eastern front, I do not know what would happen to a great country like Russia which has been maintaining a length of 1,200 miles of war front and facing the enemy for more than 27 months. If it means that on account of Eastern war front some denial policy had to be undertaken by Government and these by boats, roads and houses had to be destroyed and villagers had to be left to find shelter and food for themselves, I certainly agree that it is a very good reason.

The second reason that is advanced is "political troubles". I do not know who is the father of this political trouble. Is it His Majesty's Government or the Government of India or the people? If all of them are responsible then the Government of India must thank themselves. Political troubles are not new in this country; they have been existing even before this war was declared and they will exist even after this war comes to a close. Therefore it is meaningless to say that the food situation has become very severe on account of political troubles. If they mean that there were some few derailments of trains here and there, they ceased long ago; they were not in Bengal; and the Bengal famine, the Orissa famine, and the famine in some parts of Madras Presidency were all subsequent to and long after these sporadic derailments of trains. On the other hand, several Members have challenged the Government of India, specially the Transport Member, by alleging that wheat was lying in the Punjab continuously for several months together without being moved, but he has not chosen to give a proper reply. Definite dates were given, definite quantities of wheat that were lying at different railway stations were given, but still he has not chosen to reply. Sir, may I bring my own personal experience to the notice of this House? I take one meal a day out of wheat and one meal out of rice; and it is now eight months since my house has seen wheat. If transport is not responsible for not carrying wheat to the district of South Canara, who else is responsible? And it is only about three weeks back that I was supplied by the Collector of South Canara with half a maund of wheat.

There is the question of sugar. Our country is self-sufficient so far as sugar is concerned; rather we produce more. But is it not a general complaint that sugar is not properly and equitably distributed? When I mentioned this matter to the Collector of my district he said the Railways were responsible and they were not bringing sugar to the District. I will give you my own personal experience. For the last 18 months my household has seen only 2 lbs. of sugar—I am not exaggerating. I refused to pay the blackmarket price and so I had to go without sugar.

**The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar** (Supply Member): Then in that case the Railways must have brought sugar to your district.

**Sri K. B. Jinaraja Hegde**: Most certainly, they ought to have. But my experience is.

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall** (Member for Railways and War Transport): May I inform the Honourable Member that the sugar movement programme is very well up-to-date.

**Sri K. B. Jinaraja Hegde**: It may be, but what I am telling you are hard facts. The Food Member is an Indian. I very much sympathize with him. He is an honest and straightforward man, but he is made a scapegoat by three departments of the Government of India and they are the War Transport, the Finance and the Home. I am going to support this statement from what I submit hereafter.

Sir, returning to the subject, it must be admitted—and it is admitted in this Report—that transport was responsible for not carrying food grains in time. This country was mortgaged long long ago for the sake of this transport. A large number of them are called 'State Railways' and they are expected to feed the people of this country, and it is no satisfaction to this House, which has been supporting every year the Railway Budget, to say that they had no wagons. I know where these wagons have gone; I know where our rails have gone. They went to supply food in Iraq and Iran. And these Railways failed to supply food to the people of my country.

[Sri K. B. Jinaraja Hegde.]

Sir, the next reason is 'expansion of currency'. I will deal with this last. Before that the following reason is given:

"increased consumption by the cultivator who in the depression period was probably eating less than was requisite for full efficiency. . . ."

What does it mean? It means that there are a large number of people in this country who are living on the margin of starvation. When did this blessed Government come to know about this? Was it only when thousands of peoples starved to death in Bengal that this Government came to know that there are a large number of people in this country who are living on the margin of starvation. Sir, this was a patent fact. Great men in this country, as well as outside this country, have pointed out that it is the British Government in this country which is responsible for reducing the people to poverty. Professor Radha Kumud Mukerjee has written a very valuable book on this subject. According to him more than 30 per cent. of the people of this country live on the margin of starvation, and this blessed Government now comes to know, after several thousand deaths in Bengal, that famine is due to the fact that many people were living on the margin of starvation.

Sir, attempt is made in the report to put the blame on merchants, on cultivators, and on consumers. The report says that these people are hoarding. I would like to take each class separately. But who is responsible for this hoarding, how this hoarding came about, what is the reason behind this hoarding? Not a single Member on the Treasury Benches has given reasons why hoarding came about. Sir, it has come about on account of the deplorable policy pursued by the Finance Member. The prices were rising—I will give you figures. From 1941 onwards there was never a fall in any market. Certainly, it encouraged traders to make profits, it encouraged consumers to hoard a little quantity—just enough for a week or two weeks' maintenance—and it is a natural consequence when the prices were rising. Sir, it is false to say that cultivators are hoarding. I would like to know whether they have got any definite report on this matter. This House is entitled to know from the Government in which province they found that cultivators were hoarding. I would like to know whether this Government at any time cared to define what is 'hoarding'. Did they care to make it an offence?

**The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar:** Yes, they did.

**Sri K. B. Jinaraja Hegde:** When was it, Sir?

**The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar:** Anti-hoarding Ordinance was passed.

**Sri K. B. Jinaraja Hegde:** When was it issued?

**The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar:** In 1941.

**Sri K. B. Jinaraja Hegde:** Sir, I know of cases in connection with the control of Foodgrains Ordinance. I would like the Member concerned to ask for the reports as to how many cases of hoarding were reported by traders, as to how many prosecutions were made in different districts in India, how many of them were withdrawn by the Collectors of districts and what were the reasons for withdrawing. If you want to know, I can tell you. I know of cases in which when people contributed to the war fund, prosecutions were withdrawn.

**An Honourable Member:** In Bengal that happens everyday.

**Sri K. B. Jinaraja Hegde:** What then is the use of these Ordinances. Sir, I want definite figures. Let us have them by the next Session. How many cases were reported; how many were filed, how many were withdrawn and in how many cases sentences were awarded? Sir, I have heard the officers who were in charge of these prosecutions say: "What shall we do; the Government is like this; cases are withdrawn by them". I am not exaggerating. I am a lawyer. I know facts and I will not exaggerate, but put them as they are. I request this Government once more to see that figures are collected. Then they can see for themselves how far they succeeded by this Ordinance.

Now, Sir, there is the question of cultivator's profit. I do not see my Honourable friend, Sir Cowasjee Jehangir, who made a big point yesterday. He

said: "The cultivators must be encouraged, must be given a profit, a big profit, a large profit". Sir, I would like to know whether there is any expert in the Government of India, or anywhere in the world, who can fix the price of rice or wheat and say this is the basis on which you can find the price and this is the fair price of rice and wheat. Instead of publishing such voluminous reports, I would have appreciated if they had given the basis on which we could arrive at a fair price for rice or wheat. They do not do that. On the other hand they say that provinces are going to fix ceiling prices. The ceiling price should not be high everywhere, people who are concerned with the fixing of prices should not make room for large profits. It is meaningless to say powers are given to the provinces for fixing ceiling prices without giving basis for it. I say that at the time of fixing prices certain considerations should be taken into account.

Now, for instance, for a long time the Government claimed that they would support agriculture and that they would give money to grow more food. It is a patent fact that of the 34 lakhs of acres which were brought under cultivation a large area of it was only a conversion from cotton to rice cultivation. It is false to say that 34 lakhs of acres of waste lands were brought under cultivation of foodgrains. I would like to know at least from the provinces through the Central Government as to how much each province spent on the programme of Grow More Food campaign. We heard long lectures and pious talks. That is all bluff.

Further in the recommendations I find that due provision should be made for supplying water so that immediately more food could be grown. I know, Sir, that in my province of Karnatak, the Tungabhadra project was undertaken long ago. Commissions were appointed. Ministers have come and gone, and today there are districts and districts that are lying waste for want of water.

The next point is the question of manure. I would like to know from the Government how much they have spent in getting manure to the villages.

My friend Sir Cowasjee Jehangir said that cultivators were being taxed less. Their taxes were not increased and whereas the tax on industries had been increased. I am sure he is quite ignorant of the fact. I would tell him that in this country if it were not for the agricultural tax none of the Provincial Governments could be sustained. We pay in relation to the total revenue 8 to 10 annas in the rupee: Whereas in England and in every other country in Europe the maximum land revenue is two annas in the rupee. Still my friend says the agricultural tax is low. But of the total area under cultivation in this country 62 per cent. of it is governed by the Ryotwari Law. This law means that every tenant or cultivator who has cultivated the land, irrespective of the area, has to pay fifty per cent. of the net income he gets from that land. Does he mean to say that still the agriculturists are not paying enough? They are paying enough.

When agriculture was at its lowest ebb, in this very House, I remember, I wanted that rice that is imported from Burma should be taxed. What did this Government do? They taxed the broken rice; as if the merchants could not import whole rice and break it up. I challenge the Supply Member just to see what is the tax they collected. This tax was useless. Nothing was collected because it came from Rangoon and whatever broken rice came to India no tax was paid on it here.

This was the treatment given to the rice-growing people. If you take the population of the cultivators, you will find that 2/3rds of that population grow rice and 2/3rds of the population are rice eaters.

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

**Sri K. B. Jinaraja Hegde:** Therefore, my submission is that when the price is going to be fixed, due care must be taken of all considerations relevant to the question. The cultivator's interest must be considered before any decision is taken.

The Assembly then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Thursday, the 18th November, 1943.