

1st February 1946

# THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY DEBATES

## Official Report

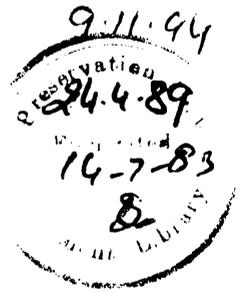
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### Volume I, 1946

( 21st January to 11th February, 1946 )

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FIRST SESSION  
OF THE  
SIXTH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,  
1946



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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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*Deputy President :*

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MR. S. DAS.

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MR. SRI PRAKASA, M.L.A.

MR. T. CHAPMAN-MORTIMER, M.L.A.

SARDAR MANGAL SINGH, M.L.A.

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Friday, 1st February, 1946

The Assembly met in the Assembly Chamber of the Council House at Eleven of the Clock, Mr. President (The Honourable Mr. G. V. Mavalankar) in the Chair.

## MEMBERS SWORN:

Dr. Vijayendra Kasturi Ranga Varadaraja Rao, M.A., Ph.D., M.L.A. (Government of India: Nominated Official);  
Dr. P. G. Solanki, M.L.A. (Nominated Non-Official);  
Sreejuti Rohini Kumar Choudhury, M.L.A. (Assam Valley: Non-Muhammadan).

## SHORT NOTICE QUESTION AND ANSWER

### PROPOSED DESPATCH OF INDIAN TROOPS TO IRAN

**Mr. President:** There is a short notice question by Prof. Ranga, but the Honourable Member is not present. If the Government Member wishes, he may answer it.

**Mr. P. Mason:** I shall be very glad to answer it. Will some one read it?

**Shri Satya Narayan Sinha:** Will the War Secretary be pleased to state if Government have decided to send or are considering the sending of Indian troops to Iran to help the British Forces to return home?

If so, do Government propose to consult the House before they take any final decision in this matter and actually despatch our troops?

**Mr. P. Mason:** As regards the first part, no Sir. The second part does not arise.

**Mr. Manu Subedar:** May I enquire whether Indian troops who are already out of this country are going to be despatched to Iran, so that the questions of new troops do not arise?

**Mr. P. Mason:** No, Sir. They will not.

## MOTIONS FOR ADJOURNMENT

### ATROCITIES BY PIONEER FORCE IN PACHLAICH VILLAGE NEAR CHITTAGONG

**Mr. President:** I will now take up the adjournment motions. The first one is No. 49 in the list of adjournment motions. It is in the name of Sree Satyapriya Banerjee, who wishes to adjourn the business of the House to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, namely, the act of wanton raid by the Military Labour Force called Pioneer Force in a village named Pachlaich about five miles from the town of Chittagong, the plundering and looting of the valuables found in the house of that village, setting fire to the houses by petrol which were reduced to ashes and the consequent destruction of all their contents including stock of foodgrains, cloth, utensils, cattle and poultry and forcible ravishing of young women and the failure of the Government to take necessary action against the miscreants and to pay adequate compensation to the victims.

**Mr. P. Mason** (Government of India: Nominated Official): These Civil Labour Units are rather peculiar units in that they do not consist of trained soldiers but merely of coolies. They are technically subject to military law. But—and I think the House will agree with me that it was wise—it was thought undesirable to subject them to the full rigors of military law because they were not trained soldiers, and therefore it was agreed by an administrative order that they should not normally be punished by military law and that if they committed any serious offence, they would be handed over to the civil authorities.

[Mr. P. Mason]

This particular incident is at present being investigated. The reports I have received show that the stories about the origin of the quarrel are very diverse. The stories given by the members of the unit are different from the stories given by the villagers. There is a joint civil and military investigation in progress. Some 95 members of the unit have been identified by the villagers and are under arrest. When it has been decided against how many *prima facie* cases exist, they will be handed over to the civil authorities for trial and there will be no military trial.

As soon as the news of the occurrence reached the military authorities, they proceeded to provide relief and it might interest the House to know what relief articles were issued. The immediate relief issued was 50 maunds of rice, 10 maunds of *dhall*, 2 maunds of salt, 2 maunds of ghee, 2 maunds of sugar, 40 pounds of chillies, 40 pounds of tea, 600 aluminium dekhis, 600 rezais, 50 I. P. tents and a large quantity of materials for building huts. So I think the military brought relief to the site as quickly as they could. We are having an investigation which will be carried out by the Provincial authorities and I suggest that all that can be done has been done and that it is not a matter of urgent public importance because the case is virtually about to be *sub judice*.

**Sir Mohammad Yamin Khan** (Agra Division: Muhammadan Rural): May I ask who is going to compensate these poor people who have suffered. Is the burden going to be thrown on the culprits who will be found guilty later on, or is the Government going to be responsible to compensate these people.

**Mr. P. Mason:** That question, Sir, is also being investigated. Sums of cash were offered immediately to the villagers but the final total to be given is being investigated. It would not fall on the persons responsible, because I do not think they have the means to provide what is necessary but I think it will fall on the Government.

**Mr. M. Asaf Ali** (Delhi: General): Sir, I do not see how this case can be considered *sub judice*. An administrative enquiry may be going on but that does not mean that the matter is *sub judice*. Further, in so far as the question of urgency is concerned, the matter is, I submit, urgent, because unless drastic steps are taken against these excesses today, it would mean an encouragement to others to misbehave themselves and nobody will mind what would happen to them. I do not see any reason why this matter should not be taken up. Unless Government are prepared to give us a guarantee that such incidents will not be repeated and that they will take all possible steps to see that such incidents do not recur, it is an urgent matter, as I do not see any guarantee forthcoming from the Government.

**Mr. P. Mason:** I do not think the Honourable Member would wish that drastic steps should be taken against these persons without enquiry and without trial. We propose to have an enquiry and a trial, which I am sure everyone would wish to be as fair as possible. I do not know what other drastic steps can be taken. I do not think I can give, no man in the world could give, a guarantee that such incidents will not recur. I can certainly say that every possible precaution that the military authorities can take to prevent them will be taken.

**Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal** (Presidency Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, there are certain questions involved in this matter. So far as the question relates to relief and compensation, whether what the Government have done is really adequate and commensurate is a matter for the decision of the House. That is a question for debate. And so far as the question of urgency and other things are concerned, I am afraid I cannot agree with what the Honourable Secretary of the War Department has said. The occurrence took place on the 7th January. It was not an incident which took place on the spur of the moment. The authorities under whom these coolies had been stationed had had ample notice of the trouble that was brewing but they did not take time by the forelock. Therefore, Sir, from all points of view the matter is such that it cannot be avoided being discussed on the floor of the House.

**Shaikh Rafuddin Ahmad Siddiquee** (Chittagong Division: Muhammadan Rural): Mr. President, an adjournment motion on the same subject stands in my name. Sir, I come from the same place where this incident occurred and the authorities did very little to mitigate the sufferings of the people. Had the authorities been a little more careful the occurrence would not have taken place. The military police and the military authorities were mere hooligans and the officers of the camp with burning torches and petrol tins marched towards the village and burnt whole village one by one and destroyed more than 62 houses. They looted several houses and the damage done would not be less than five to six lakhs of rupees. It is a matter of great public importance.

**Mr. President:** What is the number of the Honourable Member's adjournment motion?

**An Honourable Member:** 60.

**Shaikh Rafuddin Ahmad Siddiquee:** The local authorities were not sympathetic except the Divisional Commissioner, Mr. Carter. The district authority, Mr. McIrmine was not at all sympathetic and when I went to him and asked him to take steps in the matter, he did not utter a single word and turned his face away and ran away in his car. I asked the authorities to enquire about the unsympathetic attitude of the District Magistrate, who was in charge of the district, who was doing nothing practically to mitigate the sufferings of the people. Whenever any occurrence took place he simply turned his face away and did not do anything for the civilians.

**Haji Abdus Sattar Haji Ishaq Seth** (West Coast and Nilgiris: Muhammadan): Sir, with regard to the plea put in by the Secretary to the War Department, the object of discussing this motion in this House is not to find out who the culprit is or to punish him. The idea is to focus public attention on the matter in this House, so that similar occurrences may not happen in the future. For the War Secretary to say that the matter is still under investigation, I am sorry to say, shows an amount of heartlessness on the part of the Government. This incident took place on the 7th January and today is the 1st February and my Honourable friend had notice of this adjournment motion almost on the day that the occurrence took place. Yet he says that the matter is under investigation. I therefore think that this matter should be debated on the floor of the House and we must at least ensure that some steps are being taken so that these occurrences do not recur.

**Sir Mohammad Yamin Khan:** The question of *sub judice* does not arise.

(Interruption by Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal.)

**Mr. P. Mason:** There has been a press statement by the Government of Bengal.

**Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal:** That did not contradict the other statement.

**Mr. President:** It appears that the matter is under investigation and it is difficult to see how this motion can be admitted. It appears from what the War Secretary has said that steps have already been taken in the matter; but the question as to whether the measures are adequate or not is a matter for investigation, and so also the question of compensation. Considering all circumstances, I do not think I should give my consent to this adjournment motion to be discussed.

**Mr. M. Asaf Ali:** Sir, may I ask if this ruling is going to be a precedent for the future? Because, if these matters which are under investigation are not to be discussed on the floor of the House, although they are not *sub judice*, it becomes a rather difficult problem for us to talk about matters which relate to urgent matters of public importance.

**Mr. President:** So far as adjournment motions are concerned, no ruling in respect of one motion is going to be a precedent for another. Each motion will have to be judged on its own merits. All I wanted to point out was that, from the point of view of the importance and also urgency of the matter, it seems

[Mr. President] that steps are being taken by the Government and therefore it should not be a proper subject to discuss here. It is possible that one may not be satisfied with the enquiry and one may even be afraid that the enquiry may result in an eyewitness. But on a consideration of the circumstances of this matter, it does not appear to be such as should be agitated here and now.

**Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal:** For an illustration, Sir, supposing the Government wants to avoid discussion on these matters, the easiest course will be to start an investigation.

**Mr. President:** If such an investigation is started from that point of view, then we will certainly consider it at that time; and if we are convinced that the investigation is solely for the purpose of avoiding a discussion in the House, I shall not rule the motion out.

**Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal:** May I draw your attention to this particular aspect of the matter, Sir? That incident took place on the 7th January. There have been statements on it by the leaders of people and the public press. Thereafter there was no statement from Government either contradicting or repudiating the allegations made by the public and the press. And immediately after this Assembly met there was this adjournment motion. In fairness, may we ask the Honourable Secretary when the investigation was started?

**The Honourable Dr. Sir M. Azizul Huque** (Commerce Member): On a point of order, Sir, is your ruling being discussed?

**Mr. President:** He accepts the ruling but wants to get it elucidated.

**Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal:** I wanted to save the Chair from the vagaries of the Executive. Supposing you are satisfied later that this investigation was started immediately after the 7th January and not after the adjournment motion was tabled?

• **Mr. President:** There is no use discussing this matter any further. We have had it that, the very next day some measures were taken. We had it also that a communique was issued by the Government of Bengal, though not by this Government. It must take some time for investigation; the incident happened on the 7th January and one cannot expect that on the 8th everything would be all right, and the investigation would be completed. I think the matter has been sufficiently discussed. It is finished.

#### DISASTER AT DIAMOND HARBOUR JETTY

**Mr. President:** The next adjournment motion is from Sir Vijaya Ananda; he wants to discuss "the recent disaster at Diamond Harbour and to censure those responsible for their sheer neglect of duty in allowing such huge traffic to pass through without making sure beforehand of the perfect condition of the jetty and the gangway, despite the fact that they knew that pilgrims from far and near were coming in large numbers to have a bath in the holy *Gangasagar*".

I should like to know what the Government has to say about this.

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall** (Member for Railways and War Transport): Sir, this is entirely a provincial matter. When this deplorable disaster took place, the Provincial Government took action and appointed the Divisional Commissioner to hold an inquiry. That inquiry is in progress at the present moment. I repeat that the matter is for the Provincial Government and they have appointed the Divisional Commissioner to see into it.

**Maharajkumar Dr. Sir Vijaya Ananda** (United Provinces: Landholders): If the Provincial Government has accepted responsibility for this and have appointed an inquiry committee, I have not much to say; but I would like the Chair to tell us whether these Provincial Governments can always take shelter under the Chair. In view of the fact that the streets of Bombay are flowing in blood and so many other disasters have occurred in other provinces, should matters of this kind be disposed of in this way, that these matters are the

concern of Provincial Governments every time, then what are we here for? Section 98 is the present order of the day in the provinces. Surely, the least we can do is to register our dissent and tell them that their administration is defective. How long is this to go on for and on that account will nothing be taken up here? That excuse has been offered so often that it has lost its charm. May I know what your ruling is, Sir?

**Mr. President:** The Honourable Member has given me his own hint about the ruling. It seems to me that he is *prima facie* satisfied—though not fully—with the appointment of a committee to inquire into this.

**Maharajkumar Dr. Sir Vijaya Ananda:** It is acceptable to me provided this will not go on for ever—taking shelter under the plea that this is for the Provincial Government.

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** What he wants to do is to alter the constitution!

**Maharajkumar Dr. Sir Vijaya Ananda:** The constitution is made according to their wishes: that is the trouble. When it suits them, they can always shirk responsibility.

**Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar** (Madras ceded Districts and Chittoor: Non-Muhammadan Rural): On a point of information: are the jetties and gangways not connected with the railway system?

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** No; nothing to do with the railway system.

**Mr. President:** I believe the subject is in the concurrent list?

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** The executive responsibility for these matters lies entirely within the provincial field: although actually this is connected with inland waterways; the incident happened on land and it is a matter for the control of crowds by the Provincial Government and that position has been accepted by the Provincial Government.

**Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar:** The strength of jetties and gangways is a matter for this Government; this Railway Administration controls the waterways also. By whom are the waterways controlled?

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** The executive control is a provincial subject, even there.

**Shri Sri Prakasa** (Benares and Gorakhpur Divisions: Non-Muhammadan Rural): If as the Honourable Member says the incident happened on land, how could they be drowned in water?

**Mr. President:** It is on a jetty.

**Shri Sri Prakasa:** The jetty is on water.

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** No; upon the land.

**Shri Sri Prakasa:** I have never seen a jetty on land!

**Mr. President:** Anyway, considering everything, it is not necessary to admit this now.

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#### PASSPORT TO PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU FOR MALAYA, ETC.

**Mr. President:** The next motion is No. 51 by Diwan Chamman Lall; it is to discuss "the silence of the Government in connection with the application for a passport for Malaya, etc., made by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to the Government of India".

**Mr. H. Weightman** (Secretary, External Affairs Department): Sir, before notice of this motion had been received, I had already written to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru informing him that it had been necessary to consult the Burma Government in regard to his proposed visit to Burma and the South East Asia Command in regard to his proposed visit to Malaya and that their replies

[Mr. H. Weightman.]  
were awaited. A few days later their replies having been received, I communicated the result to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, and I claim therefore that there has been no silence on the part of the Government.

**Diwan Ohaman Lall** (West Punjab: Non-Muhammadan): May I ask my Honourable friend if he can enlighten this House in regard to two matters—one, whether they merely consulted the Burma Government or whether they made any recommendation themselves in regard to this application for a passport, and two, what replies were received from the Burma Government?

**Mr. H. Weightman:** In reply to the first question, Sir, this Government made no recommendations: they merely consulted the Burma Government and the South East Asia Command. In reply to the second question, the response received from the Burma Government is to the effect that in present circumstances they regret they cannot agree to a visit. The reply from the British military administration in Malaya is that they have no objection to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's visit to that country, provided his visit is for the purpose which he has stated, namely, the relief of distress.

**Diwan Ohaman Lall:** May I ask my Honourable friend whether in view of the reply received from the Burma Government they did not get into touch with the Burma Government again and insist that this passport should be given to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in view of the large numbers of Indians who are in distress in Burma?

**Mr. M. Asaf Ali:** I should like to know something further. It is very surprising. I have never heard a thing like this before, that a passport is to be granted by this Government only in consultation with the Government of another country. The Government's duty is merely to grant a passport. It is for the other Government to say "We will not allow this gentleman to enter our country". I do not see the relevancy of this.

**Mr. H. Weightman:** In actual fact a passport is not required for Burma and Malaya at all in his case.

**Mr. M. Asaf Ali:** Then why do you talk about passports?

**Mr. H. Weightman:** Because this is the way in which the motion has been framed and because Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru himself asked for his passport to be renewed.

**Mr. M. Asaf Ali:** Then the position is even easier. That means that it is possible for this Government to enter into negotiations with another Government. As it happens the Secretary of State for Burma also happens to be the Secretary of State for India and I do not see why it cannot be managed. Is Lord Pethick Lawrence absolutely helpless in this matter?

**Mr. R. N. Banerjee** (Secretary, Commonwealth Relations Department): This matter rather impinges on the functions of the Department of Commonwealth Relations too. It is true that no passport is required for an Indian proceeding to Burma. That is because the civil government has been restored in Burma. As regards Malaya, the civil government has not yet been restored. Malaya is at present under military administration and they have their own ordinances. So, the pre-war position under which Indians had free access to Malaya without a passport does not obtain now. We had to consult the Government of Burma. Honourable Members would remember that there is a very large Indian population in Burma. There is also a very large number of Indian evacuees who are waiting to go back to Burma. This matter is now in an extremely delicate stage and irrespective of the legal position we have decided in the interest not only of our evacuees but also of the Indian population there and also in order to preserve a favourable atmosphere for an amicable settlement of the Indo-Burma question that we should not let any Indians proceed to Burma without the consent of the Government of Burma, particularly as economic conditions in Burma are far from normal. That is the reason why we had to consult the Government of Burma and the British Military Administration of Malaya.

**Diwan Chaman Lall:** May I ask my honourable friend if the position now is that you have given an undertaking to the Burma Government that you will consult them regarding the issue of a passport. May I further ask whether a passport now is not necessary and if it is not necessary whether Pandit Nehru can proceed to Burma without asking the permission of the Government of India in regard to this matter?

**Mr. E. N. Banerjee:** Very technically; there is no sort of formal or statutory ban on the entry of an Indian into Burma today even without a passport but as I have explained an understanding which has been arrived at in the interest of our own countrymen in Burma should be observed and I venture to think that it would be a very unfortunate test case if Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru or any Indian were allowed to proceed to Burma without any sort of previous reference to the Government of Burma.

**Diwan Chaman Lall:** May I ask whether my Honourable friend does not consider that it is in the interest of Burma and of the Indians there and of the Indians in this country that a distinguished and world famous leader like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru should proceed at the earliest possible opportunity? Does he not consider that the millions in India and the Indians in Burma and even the Burmese would welcome the visit of Pandit Nehru at this critical juncture to Burma? Do you know of a better ambassador than Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru?

**Shri Sri Prakasa:** Mr. Jamnadas Mehta!

**Mr. E. N. Banerjee:** In view of the background I have given, I venture to think that it is entirely a matter of opinion.

**Diwan Chaman Lall:** The sooner you change your opinion the better. Is it the opinion of the Honourable Members sitting over there or is it the opinion of the people concerned—the Burmese, the Indians in India and the Indians in Burma. Whose opinion is it?

**Mr. President:** Different people may hold different opinions on this point.

**Seth Govind Das** (Central Provinces Hindi Divisions: Non-Muhammadan): The Honourable Member said that he did not recommend Pandit Nehru's visit to Burma. May I know whether he said anything against his visit to Burma?

**Mr. President:** I do not think he said that.

**Mr. H. Weightman:** I did not say anything against Pandit Nehru's visit to Burma.

**Diwan Chaman Lall:** The replies received on the floor of the House definitely reveal the facts (a) that it is the responsibility of the Government of India since they entered into this agreement with the Burma Government knowing perfectly well that there was no statutory objection to any Indian visiting Burma and (b) that they did not recommend to the Burma Government that it was in the interest of India as well as of Burma that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru should at this juncture visit Burma. They do permit men like Mr. Jamnadas Mehta who is one of their servants to go to Burma and Malaya any time he wishes to go but not a great leader like Pandit Nehru whose presence is most urgently needed at this juncture in a country like Burma. Therefore the matter being urgent, the matter being of grave public importance affecting the welfare of hundreds of thousands of Indians in Burma, I submit that this adjournment should be accepted.

**Mr. E. N. Banerjee:** On a point of explanation. No agreement has been entered into with the Government of Burma. As I explained, conditions are abnormal there. We always see that no countryman of ours proceeds without some reference to the Burma Government and without making sure that he will have the minimum facilities there. Then again, shipping and transport facilities also have to be allocated after consulting the Government of Burma. No agreement has been entered into. It is an unofficial understanding.

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** The adjournment motion refers to the silence on the part of the Government in connection with the passport. As has been explained, there has been no silence.

**Mr. M. Asaf Ali:** It is worse than silence.

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** There has been no silence particularly after this discussion. If the Honourable Member wishes to discuss the merits of the case, that is another matter but the adjournment motion refers to the 'silence'.

**Diwan Chaman Lall:** May I ask my Honourable friend the Leader of the House to look at the motion a little more carefully than he has done. His colleagues have admitted that they acted merely as a post office. I say there was silence in regard to the recommendation that they ought to have made to the Government of Burma and there was silence in regard to the action taken after the reply of the Burma Government has been received.

**Mr. President:** I do not like to be very technical about the wording of the adjournment motion. Let us take the substance of it. Leaving aside for the moment the technicalities of the language, the position seems to boil down to this. There is no statutory provision requiring the passport. That is No. 1. No. 2 is that this Government will not allow any person to visit Burma whom the Burma Government does not permit. Is that the position?

**Mr. E. N. Banerjee:** That is an unofficial administrative understanding.

**Mr. President:** Take a hypothetical case. Suppose a person under these circumstances wishes to proceed on his own, taking all the risks. The question raised in the adjournment motion, as it seems to me, is—"what is the policy of the Government of India?" Will they ban that entry and take legal proceedings? Will they issue any orders preventing the man from going? What is the position?

**Mr. E. N. Banerjee:** We will not ban his entry. It will be open to the Government of Burma to seek to enact an ordinance prohibiting his entry. The House will agree that in the present state of our relations with Burma it is most undesirable to provoke any such incidents.

**Mr. President:** Order, Order: I am not concerned with the political aspect of the situation. I am only concerned as to whether this matter has anything to do with the policy of the Government of India. If the Government of India are not going to place any ban on his entry, then, how is it that this becomes a responsibility of the Government of India?

**Mr. Manu Subedar** (Indian Merchants' Chamber and Bureau: Indian Commerce): May I add one more point, Sir? There is a very acute feeling in the business circles of all communities, which were in very close business contact with Burma before, that the Government of India are not doing everything in their power and that the administrative understanding which they have reached with the Government of Burma is contrary to the interests of the Indian business community. We understand, Sir, that great facilities have been given to the representatives of British firms to go there. Uniforms were given to them and they were sent as military people in the first instance and now unnecessary difficulties are placed in our way in reaching Burma and resuming the trade. It is the administrative understanding which my Honourable friend has referred to that we are entitled to censure and it is not merely the passport of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. What has come out is something which is much more serious and I urge that it is this aspect of it which we are entitled to censure.

**Diwan Chaman Lall:** May I add, Sir, that the responsibility of the Government of India arises by virtue of the understanding that they have entered into with the Burma Government which they were not under any compulsion to enter. They say it is an understanding and not an agreement. May I ask when an understanding is not an agreement? The understanding was that they would consult the Burma Government. They had no business to enter

into that understanding. Therefore, the responsibility arises since by virtue of that understanding they were forced to consult the Burma Government who have said 'No' to the request for a passport for Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

**Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar:** Sir, there is another aspect of it, which, according to me, is very important. The adjournment motion, in particular, refers to Malaya etc. apart from the question of Burma. Now, a number of persons are under incarceration in Malaya. The Government of India has been approached by an important Committee headed by Sir Alladi Krishnaswami and they have asked for their leave to proceed to Malaya to defend them during those proceedings. . .

**Mr. President:** Order, Order: That is a different matter. How is it relevant to this question?

**Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar:** I am coming to that point. We are all aware of the fact that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was one of the important persons who took an important part here in the defence of these persons who were arrested and whose trials proceeded. If he wants to go to Malaya for that purpose amongst other things, it is the duty of this Government to get him facilities for doing that. Therefore, it is but proper that he should be allowed to go to Malaya. It is not open to the Government to prevent him from going there, as the adjournment motion says.

**The Honourable Dr. Sir M. Azizul Huque:** Sir, my Honourable friend Mr. Manu Subedar has referred to a matter which concerns the Commerce Department and therefore I must intervene in this matter. I can assure my Honourable friend and the House that this Government has taken every possible step with a view to see that the business and trade interests of Indians in Burma are brought to their old level as soon as possible, but I hope it will be realised that in a matter like this the Government of India is not the only authority. The Government of Burma has a very large say in the matter. Right from the beginning of the time when Burma was won back, it had been our constant effort to see that every possible step is taken in that matter. The Commonwealth Relations Department as well as the External Department have taken every possible step to see that the trade is resorted and Indians are brought there as soon as possible. But I hope, when the net result is discussed, it will be realised that the attitude of the other side is a matter of very great importance. I hope my Honourable friends will not forget some of the incidents which happened in the past and some of the incidents which have been reported within recent times. Having regard to all these facts, we have not completely a free-hand to press that tomorrow everyone who has been there should go there. In this matter, as my Honourable friends know, we have taken every step to be in touch with the trade, business and commercial interests and organisations. And whatever the Government of India has done, it has done with previous consultation in this matter. I feel that so far as the Government of India is concerned in the matter of establishing the trade relations and putting Indians there, we have taken every possible step.

**Mr. Manu Subedar:** May I add, Sir, with your permission, that in spite of all the steps which my Honourable friend has taken, the results are very poor. Has he not received literally hundreds of representations from business people who have their assets there and who were not able to go there? I am myself associated with the company which has a factory there. We do not know what has happened to the factory. We are not permitted to go there. This Government has entirely failed to do its duty and all that results from the fact that this Government is a spineless Government. They have failed to send out people to Burma until the Government of Burma is willing to receive them. This Government has entirely failed in the matter of the resumption of trade relations with Burma and I feel that we ought to be permitted to censure this Government.

**Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad** (United Provinces Southern Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): On a point of order, Sir. May I draw your attention to Rule 48 of the Manual of Business and Procedure in which it is clearly said that

[Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad]

not more than one matter can be discussed on a motion of adjournment? In the present case, I think everybody has made his own speech.

**Mr. M. Asaf Ali:** With your permission, Sir, I will just say one word. You seem to be in doubt about the responsibility of the Government of India in so far as Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's desire to go to Burma is concerned. I have not heard anything which goes to suggest that it is not their, but somebody else's responsibility that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru cannot go to Burma. They have not given us any details of the reply that they had received from the Burma Government, to begin with. Further, why did they not protest against the unwillingness of the Burma Government not to receive Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who, as my Honourable friend has said, is about the best ambassador that we can think of to go out from India and who can bring about better relations even between the Burmans and the Indians. Everyone knows that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has been to Burma before; he has got friends there and he is respected there. I really do not know what objection the Burma Government can possibly have to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru going there. If there is any objection at all, it is the objection of the Department which is now telling us that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru cannot go there because they have agreed that he should not go there.

**Mr. T. Chapman-Mortimer** (Nominated Non-Official): Is it in accordance with the Standing Orders, Sir, that a debate on this motion should take place at quarter to 12 o'clock?

**Mr. President:** I wanted to be clear on the point and I quite agree that it has gone into a sort of debate and that is just the reason why I do not want to admit this adjournment motion. All that could be said has been said and so I rule this motion out of order.

#### AVOIDING OF TAKING IMPORTANT DECISIONS DURING ASSEMBLY SESSION

**Mr. President:** The next adjournment motion stands in the name of Mr. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar. It runs thus: "the persistent conduct of the Government of India in deliberately putting off taking decisions on important matters when the Assembly is in Session with a view to avoid a discussion on it in the Assembly; as for instance—

(a) the granting of dearness or war allowances to employees drawing a salary of Rs. 1,000 and more by the Government of India;

(b) further recruitment of Britishers for the I.C.S. and India Police Force, both of which were taken immediately after the closure of the last session of the Assembly, and

(c) many other cases of similar importance".

**Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar:** I will give more; I have got a list of cases with me.

**Mr. President:** The Honourable Member may have got a list but the point of order raised by Mr. Chapman-Mortimer comes in his way. Part (b) of this motion has already been discussed on a separate adjournment motion. Part (c) is vague enough to be allowed as a definite matter of public importance.

**Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar:** It is not the point or the substance of items (a), (b) and (c) that I intend discussing for which I intend to censure the Government. I have given these instances to show that they are very important. What is being done is to grant dearness allowance to persons in railway administration for persons who draw a salary of more than Rs. 1,000 and this comes to about four to five crores. It may be a much larger amount 110 lakhs in one instance, 88 lakhs in another. Yesterday while I was attending the Railway Standing Finance Committee, I went through the Budget from A to Z. If I am incorrect my Honourable friend will correct me later on. It comes to four to five crores. For a poor country like India it is a sufficiently large amount. That is what I meant. Now, Sir, the last Budget session closed about 2nd April. There was hush-hush in the Assembly. There

were rumours going on that they were going to give dearness allowance or war allowance to persons drawing salary over Rs. 1,000. The I.C.S. people were clamouring for such war allowance. Dearness allowance was being granted to people drawing lesser salary. Over the head of the Assembly, the Government granted this war allowance to people drawing over Rs. 1,000. What was the hurry for this? It has become an accomplished fact, and perhaps they will come to the Assembly with a Supplementary Demand. It is such a thing that I want to avoid in future. The subject matter contained in item (b) was discussed yesterday and so I do not wish to pursue that. I will confine myself only to item (a). My point is: the Assembly was not taken into confidence. We have got a right to be consulted. In the case of the Finance Bill, we the elected Members join together and throw it out, but you bring a certified Bill. My point is: place it before the House, and take any action later on, if you do not agree with the verdict of the Assembly.

**Mr. President:** The matter is vague, "deliberately putting off taking decisions". It would have been better had the Honourable Member confined himself to one specific matter.

**Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar:** I have already said that I will be satisfied with item (a). This is fit enough for an adjournment motion. It is sufficiently clear for the Assembly to give its verdict upon.

**The Honourable Sir John Thorne (Home Member):** In fact, I am not responsible for the decision taken in regard to clause (a). That was a matter for the Finance Department. My objection is, this is not, as required by the Rules, a definite matter. It is an assumption or an insinuation, made by these three Honourable Members. No doubt based on various matters; but there again the basis is quite indefinite. The assumption or insinuation is based on "many cases," of which only two have been actually specified. As regards the point that was discussed yesterday, namely further recruitment of Britishers for the I.C.S. and the Indian Police force. . . .

**Mr. President:** I may just tell the Honourable Member that he may argue on the assumption that the adjournment motion is limited only to item (a), not to (b) and (c).

**Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar:** I drop items (b) and (c) and confine myself only to (a).

**The Honourable Sir Arcaibald Rowlands (Finance Member):** The final decision on the grant of dearness allowance was not taken until the last few days of the last Budget session. The matter was in fact brought before the Standing Finance Committee of this House and discussed there. In the light of those discussions, instructions were issued.

**Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar:** It ought to have been brought before the Assembly, while the Assembly was in session. As a matter of fact questions were raised in the Assembly, on the floor of the House. This is an important matter, taking away a large portion of the revenues of the country and appropriating it for the grant of war allowance to highly paid officers. It is not enough if it was brought before the Standing Finance Committee.

**Mr. President:** Does not the Standing Finance Committee represent the Legislature?

**Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar:** It is only a sub-committee of this Legislature. Its decisions are neither binding on the Government nor on this House. The Standing Finance Committee gives some advice and it is reported to the House by the Government.

**Mr. President:** The matter does not seem to be urgent. The Honourable Member will have an opportunity of discussing this subject at the budget time.

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**Mr. President:** The next item, No. 53, relates to distribution of food and it is covered by the Food Debate which we are having now.

## INADEQUATE ACCOMMODATION FOR ASSEMBLY MEMBERS

**Mr. President:** The next item relates to "the great hardship caused to the elected Members of this Assembly by the inadequacy of the provision made by the Government for their housing accommodation and the unsatisfactory way in which the balloting of even the available accommodation has been carried out, and the necessity of making better arrangements immediately".

Has the Government Member got to say anything on this motion?

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** Well, Sir, this is a matter of great interest to Honourable Members of this Assembly, but I doubt whether it is a matter of sufficient public importance to adjourn the business of the House. Is it a matter of such vital importance to the country, as, for instance, the food debate? May I also suggest that while this is no doubt a very important matter to the Members concerned, it is a fit subject to be dealt with by the House Committee, which I understand is going to be appointed any moment, and I suggest it should have consideration on that.

**Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar:** One word of explanation. It is of urgent public importance in the sense that if I have no house in Delhi, I will stay away in Madras and my constituency will suffer. A number of my friends are without houses, and in the case of some houses, two of us are sharing in each house.

**Mr. President:** Let us not take up any more of the time of the House over this motion. I think the matter can be dealt with in the House Committee.

## INDIA'S QUOTA OF REPARATIONS FROM GERMANY AND JAPAN

**Mr. President:** The next adjournment motion relates to "the quantum of reparations legitimately due from Germany and Japan to India and the failure of the Government of India to get the proper quota by consenting to a very low figure out of all proportion to the sacrifices".

**The Honourable Dr. Sir M. Azizul Huque:** I do not at all agree that the Government of India has not done everything possible. In fact the Government of India has taken every possible step to bring to the notice of the Reparations conference the desirability of getting proper share in the reparations. Our representatives at the Conference have strongly put up our case for India and a number of things put up by them have been accepted by the conference. So far as the Japanese reparations are concerned, they are still premature. The stage has not yet reached. But we are taking steps to bring to the notice of the conference or the authorities that are discussing this matter as regards the position of India *vis-a-vis* Japan in the matter of reparations.

**Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar:** I do not want to argue the adjournment motion at this stage. A sum of 18,000 million rupees is the contribution of India to the war. A large portion of it has been spent on the western theatre. They are taking only 1,100 million rupees as the basis. It is wrong. The delegation did not take any non-officials. Two per cent. and 2.9 per cent. are very low. I will show that whatever my Honourable friend has done or his Government has done—he will of course justify all that—is absolutely inadequate and we have been neglected; the proper men have not been sent and we had no proper voice before that Assembly. Therefore the Government of India deserve censure in this matter.

**Mr. President:** I think this is a matter of sufficient importance and I would admit this motion. Is there any objection to its admission?

(No objection taken.)

It will be taken up at 4 o'clock today.

**Mr. M. Asaf Ali:** Sir, will it be very difficult to hold this motion over till Monday next? The food debate is very important and a lot of time has already been taken up today over these motions. So can we have the food debate today and adjourn this motion till Monday?

**Mr. President:** If the Honourable the Leader of the House agrees and all sides of the House agree, I have no objection.

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** Sir, today we are dealing with the food debate which is a matter of extreme importance. I would not raise any objection to an adjournment but, if I may say so, I think it is a very bad precedent. We have already postponed adjournment motions,—once I think for the convenience of Members opposite and on another occasion for general convenience. Adjournment motions are moved because they deal with matters of such urgent importance that the House must adjourn all other business for the purpose of a particular discussion; and I think it is a bad precedent to postpone adjournment motions for anything other than the most important reasons. Subject to these remarks I have no objection to its standing over till Monday.

**Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad:** Sir, I suggest that Monday being a non-official day it should be taken up on Tuesday.

**Lt.-Col. Dr. J. C. Chatterjee** (Nominated Non-Official): Sir, I submit that on Monday there is a party to the Parliamentary Delegation from the Parliamentary Association of which you are the President, and on Tuesday there is a party in honour of yourself. I suggest that we should not deprive ourselves of these pleasant functions to discuss the adjournment motion here. I respectfully submit, therefore, that if it is to be taken up it may be taken up today.

**Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar:** Sir, I agree that these are more important than even an adjournment motion. So it may stand over even till Wednesday.

**Mr. President:** I certainly agree with the Honourable the Leader of the House that adjournment motions being concerned with urgent matters, we should not have the practice of postponing them for one reason or other. But, as pointed out by Sir Cowasjee Jehangir the other day, we are in exceptional circumstances. A large number of motions have accumulated and I think, without prejudice to the ruling which I will give after considering the point as regards admissibility of a motion even though the Member is not present, we have relaxed the rule for the time being. We have also followed the practice of postponement. This practice may be restricted only to those motions which have now accumulated before the House. Later on, certainly, we cannot have the practice of postponing adjournment motions. As regards the other point about the date on which the motion should be taken up, I think the President's convenience or the party in his honour is absolutely no consideration for postponement. He is here to serve the House and the parties may take care of themselves in his absence also. But if the House so desires, I have no objection to postponing the adjournment motion even till Wednesday.

**Several Honourable Members:** Wednesday is a holiday; have it on Thursday.

**Diwan Ohaman Lall:** What will happen to the other adjournment motions?

**Mr. President:** We will take them up on Thursday.

**Mr. Manu Subedar:** Sir, may I suggest that the Leader of the House should give us another day for the food debate and we can have the adjournment motion today?

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** That, Sir, I regret to say, is not possible.

**Mr. President:** So that means that we have to take it over to Thursday. I will remind Honourable Members that on Tuesday, we will have the question hour for the first time and the election of Deputy President also will take some time. So there will be only a very short time left for the other debates.

**Diwan Ohaman Lall:** What I want to know, Sir, is what is going to happen to the accumulated adjournment motions. May I take it that on Monday and Tuesday you will deal with the other adjournment motions?

**Mr. President:** I will deal with them on the next day the Assembly meets, just as we have been doing now. I should not like to depart from the precedent set up by the Chair since this session began.

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** Sir, in order to meet the convenience of the House, I think it will be possible to take this adjournment motion this afternoon and to find half a day for the food debate next week.

**Mr. President:** So the motion will be taken up at 4 o'clock today.

**Mr. M. E. Masani** (Bombay City: Non-Muhammadian Urban): May I ask what day next week the Honourable Member has in mind?

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** I have in mind Tuesday but I should like to look at the programme. I will examine the position and make a suggestion to the House later.

#### ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO STANDING COMMITTEE FOR COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

**Mr. President:** I have to inform the Assembly that upto 12 Noon on Monday, the 28th January, 1946, the time fixed for receiving nominations for the Standing Committee for Commonwealth Relations Department, twelve nominations were received. Subsequently two candidates withdrew their candidature. As the number of remaining candidates is equal to the number of vacancies I declare the following members to be duly elected to the Committee for the unexpired portion of the current financial year and the whole of the next financial year 1946-47: (1) Mr. R. C. Morris, (2) Sir Hassan Suhrawardy, (3) Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi, (4) Raja Sir Saiyid Ahmad Ali Khan Alvi, (5) Lt.-Col. Dr. J. C. Chatterjee, (6) Babu Ram Narayan Singh, (7) Mr. Nagendranath Mukhopadhyay, (8) Sri S. T. Adityan, (9) Seth Govind Das, and (10) Maulana Zafar Ali Khan.

#### PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

##### APPROPRIATION ACCOUNTS, AUDIT REPORTS, ETC.

**The Honourable Sir Archibald Rowlands** (Finance Member): Sir, I lay on the table a copy\* of each of the following papers:

1. Central Government Appropriation Accounts (Civil) 1943-44 and Audit Report 1945,
2. Commercial Appendix to the Appropriation Accounts (Civil) 1943-44 and Audit Report 1945,
3. Finance Accounts 1943-44 and Audit Report 1945,
4. Appropriation Accounts (Railways) 1943-44—Parts I & II,
5. Capital Statements, Balance Sheets and Profit and Loss Accounts of State Railways including the Balance Sheet and the Profit and Loss Account of Tatanagar Workshops, 1943-44,
6. Balance Sheets of Railway Collieries and statements of all-in Cost of coal etc., for 1943-44,
7. Railway Audit Report 1945,
8. Appropriation Accounts (Defence Services) 1943-44,
9. Commercial Appendix to Appropriation Accounts of the Defence Services for the year 1943-44;
10. Audit Report, Defence Services 1945, and
11. Appropriation Accounts (Posts and Telegraphs) 1943-44 and the Audit Report 1944.

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

## MOTION RE FOOD SITUATION—contd.

**Mr. President:** The House will now resume discussion on the motion regarding the food position.

**Babu Ram Narayan Singh** (Chota Nagpur Division: Non-Muhanmadan): Sir, the other day when the House began to discuss the adjournment motion which was tabled for the day, I was referring to Government control over articles of food and other necessaries of life and ban on the movement of foodgrains from one place to another. Sir, the demand of the whole country is that this control and the ban must go at once in all its form and shape. In free countries where the Government and the people are one and the same thing, this system might be working well, but here in India the question is quite different. The people and the Government are two different things, one having very little to do with the other. In free countries Government servants have got real sympathies for the people and they are out only to serve them, but here in this country the Government servants are only out to suppress the people and also to loot them. This control has done absolutely no good to the people in general; it has of course strengthened the control of the Government over the people and also it has improved the bribe taking powers of Government officials who were already corrupt from top to bottom. Sir, this Government instead of being a pleasure to the people have all along been a terror to them, and since the moment this control and ban have been introduced, this Government has been a torture to the people. When we look at the memorandum supplied by the Government, we find it mentioned that relaxation of control will be gradual. When it was introduced, it was done at once; the introduction was not gradual. Then how is it that its removal is proposed to be gradual? The Government is very fond of the words 'gradual' and 'progressive'. The demand of the country is that this should go at once. The control was intended to facilitate the availability of food to every individual in all parts of the country, but I think that instead of helping the people it has rather augmented their sufferings. Everybody knows that all the places are not self-sufficient; whereas one district may be surplus, others are deficit. Even in one district, it is generally found that one part of it produces one thing while the other parts produce something quite different, but by mutual exchange, and according to the ordinary rule of demand and supply, the mutual needs of the people are satisfied. But the ban which has been imposed by Government has prohibited the movement of supplies from one place to another and it has greatly augmented the sufferings of people. For instance, Chota Nagpur Division, though rich in forest produce and minerals, is a deficit area so far as food production goes, and especially this year, when monsoon was unfavourable, paddy crop has altogether failed and there is great anxiety as to how to procure food and from where. Similar is the case with regard to the Saran district; though it is a very important district of my province—this is the district from which our great leader Rajen Babu comes—it is a deficit district and it has always received its supply from Champaran district. Every week thousands of cart load of rice and paddy used to go to the Saran district, but now this ban has prohibited this. When people need such vital things as food, there is no dearth of merchants. They try to get things from where they are available and things are moving, but in a very small quantity and at a very great cost. Wherever things are available, merchants go and pay something to the police and in this way they take things from those places. Here and there police checks on the way, but they are paid something and things move on; in this way things are moving from one place to another, but at a very high cost. The control was intended to check high prices, but on the contrary it has only increased the prices. All the bribes which are paid to the police are paid not out of the pockets of the merchants, but they are charged to the price of the articles. In this way one of the objects of this Control, I mean the checking of prices, has been frustrated; instead of the prices going down, they have gone up.

So far as corruption goes, as I have already said, it is rampant all over the country. The Police charge even ordinary people for carrying anything from

[Babu Ram Narayan Singh]

one place to another. I refer to one place in Champaran Thana, namely Dhanha; this is a very poor Thana of the district. It is on the border of Gorakhpur district in the United Provinces on the other side of Gandak. People from the Thana go to the other parts of the district for collecting paddy and other things and instead of getting their wages in cash they get paddy. Something they eat and something they save and after the harvest is over the labourers used to take the saving of paddy from those parts of the district to their homes in Dhanaha thana. A little of the way falls in the Gorakhpur district. On the pretext that these things are being taken away to other districts, the police take bribe even from them. Look at the meanness of the Police Department. Even the labourers have to pay a bribe to the police in order to remove their little savings from other parts of the Champaran district to a thana in the same district. In this way, Sir, this control is creating havoc among the people everywhere in the country. Not only this, every shopkeeper who wanted to deal in articles of control has to take a license. But a license is not to be granted to anybody unless the applicant has fully and financially satisfied the licensing authorities and the licensing authorities will release something for the Government and something for themselves.

Not only this, the license holders have to make regular payments to the police and to the controlling authority. In my district, rather in the subdivision of Chatra only recently cloth rationing has been introduced. First cloth coupons were distributed among the people. For every coupon every family has had to pay at least four annas to the distributing authorities. In this way, so far as that area is concerned, I was told that about Rs. 1,000 was collected from the people and Rs. 150 was deposited in the Treasury by way of donation to the Red Cross Fund and the rest was utilised by the distributing authorities themselves. Not only this, in my area, I have found that people who purchased anything from the controlled shop also had to pay something to the police and to the shopkeepers so that they may satisfy the higher authority. In one place I was reliably informed that poor people who used to come to the kerosene oil shops and who were allowed one anna kerosene oil, had to pay four annas extra in addition to what he had to pay for the oil. Of course this was to go to the licensing authorities, or to the Sub-divisional Officer, or to some other person. In this way, owing to this control, the corruption which was already abominable in this country, is getting on more and more so. Not only that, this control is the father of this black market. There would have been no black market had there been no control of this kind. Therefore, I voice the feelings of the people all over the country that this control must go and that at once in all its forms and all its shapes.

If the control is to be relaxed gradually, as the memorandum has said, so far as the inter-district ban is concerned, this must go at once. I have already said Chota Nagpur has got a lot of minerals. A lot of labourers go from outside and the supply from the Government and other sources are not quite enough. Unless this ban is removed, it is difficult for them to get their food. So I think the Central Government will advise the Provincial Government of Bihar to remove the inter-district ban at once because without the removal of this ban I think the people in my province and especially in my constituency of Chota Nagpur will suffer very much.

This memorandum which has been supplied to each of us by the Government mentions their food policy and their agricultural policy with which there can be no disagreement. But so far as achievement goes, I say it is all concoction. Rather I say it is a downright lie. They say much has been done with regard to the supply of water by the construction of wells, tanks, and canals. Sir, I wonder. How can they have the hardihood to say all these things? I know they have done nothing. I challenge them to say whether they have done anything in any part of the country. All the achievements are on paper and they must have been concocted in the Government of India office here. We are

Congress workers. We go from district to district and province to province. We see nothing of this kind. They say they have done much. They ought to have been ashamed to say that they have done all that. They have done much for the conservation of the soil, of water and the proper use of land. Sir, if they say that by the use of atomic energy they have conserved and controlled water in the sky, I may be led to believe that. But if they say they have done something like this on the surface of the earth I am not going to believe it, and I think no Member in the House can believe them. The figure quoted somewhere that in their endeavour with regard to Grow More Food Campaign they have increased the paddy acreage by 7 million acres, is, I say, a downright lie. It is not an ordinary thing to convert ordinary land into paddy fields. I am a cultivator myself. I know the difficulty of converting land into paddy fields and they say it is through their endeavour that lands have been converted to such an extent as 7 million acres?

Now they go further. They say they have done much with regard to the milk supply of the country. What have they done? I do not think they have improved the milk supply of the country in any way or form. Sir, this session is sufficiently long. I shall put certain questions to the Government and I think it will be the demand of the House according to those questions to get the figures from the Provinces and after their receipt they may be supplied to the House here.

These are the questions. What is the number of wells, tanks, dams and canals in each province and in the Centrally administered areas? And what are the names of the places where these constructions have been made and at what cost? I think they should honestly enquire about these things from the Provinces. The next question is: what are the steps taken and where to conserve water and to make the proper use of land? The Government should give figures which should tally with the facts on the spot in the provinces. They should not concoct figures in order to justify the existence of the Food Department. They have supplied they say a lot of manure to the people. This is also a downright lie. My question on this point is what amount of manure, of what kind and at what cost and where, has been supplied to the people. This ought to be inquired into and the information supplied to the House. What are the steps that Government have taken to improve the milk supply of the country? These are the questions which I wish to ask. The Government have mentioned their achievements but they ought to make enquiries from the Provinces, who in their turn will make enquiries from their district officers, and the results of the enquiry should be reported to the House here.

So far as Government's achievements go, they have done nothing and I think they ought to do something in order to justify their existence.

There is a suggestion that articles of food ought to be imported from foreign countries. I agree with this. At the present time this is the only remedy but, at the same time, there is a point which has to be considered. Supposing the imported articles of food come into the market, the people have got no money to buy them. The people are so very poor. So the Government must supply the people with work in every part of the country. I think that spinning is a kind of work which can be introduced in every home and in a very short time. Nobody should think that because I am a Congress worker I am making propaganda for *charkha* in this House. In 1858 there was a great famine and this Government did something like this. I was very young at that time.

**Shri Sri Prakasa** (Benares and Gorakhpur Divisions: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Were you living in 1858?

**Babu Ram Narayan Singh:** Excuse me, I was wrong there. I beg your pardon. I meant 1958 Sambat.

**Shri Sri Prakasa:** The difference between the Christian year and the Sambat is 57 years.

**Babu Ram Narayan Singh:** In the Sambat year 1953.....

**Mr. President:** Let the Honourable Member be not particular about the date now.

**Babu Ram Narayan Singh:** In the Sambat year 1953 there was a great famine all over the country, especially in my area and this Government introduced the *charkha* in every home. I think this can be done even now. This may be a short term remedy but at the same time it is one which will help the people in a permanent way. The Government is thinking of ways and means how to save the people from the vagaries of nature, which are the causes of the people's sufferings. But I think the Government ought to do something with regard to the production of food in a permanent way. Irrigation is one of the things which will help the people to a great extent. If the Government can make arrangements so that all the cultivable land can be irrigated in proper time, I think that ought to help very much both the cultivators and consumers everywhere. But in this matter I know the Government of Bihar is very lazy. I saw one agricultural district officer and I also heard from other government officials. They have got money to lend to the people for agricultural purposes but the rule is a curious one. Unless the people spend an equal amount from their own pocket they could not get any help from Government for agricultural purposes. This is an absurd rule. The people are so very poor that they cannot spend anything from their own pocket. If the Government is going to help the cultivators by irrigation, all the cost of the irrigation ought to be paid by the Government. At the same time, manure is also one of the things which ought to be attended to.

**Mr. President:** May I know what time the Honourable Member is likely to take?

**Babu Ram Narayan Singh:** I will take as much time as I like as.....

**Mr. President:** The Honourable Member has already had sufficient time. Today the House is adjourning at 12-45, not at 1-15 as usual, it being Friday. There are ten minutes more. If the Honourable Member finishes early, other Honourable Members may continue the debate.

**Babu Ram Narayan Singh:** Sir, I shall finish very soon. The animal power of the country has greatly deteriorated. The Government has to take steps in this matter, so that the animal power of the country on which cultivation depends is improved.

With these words I again say that the Government ought to do something with regard to the long term remedies for the improvement of agriculture, so that the people may get enough food everywhere and all the time to come. With these words I support the amendment of my Honourable friend, Mr. M. R. Masani.

**Mr. Ahmed Ebrahim Haroon Jaffer** (Bombay Southern Division: Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I rise to support the motion so ably moved by my Honourable friend from Bombay, Mr. Masani. I must congratulate him wholeheartedly on the excellent speech which he delivered two days ago and I can safely say that there is no one in my Province among non-officials who can command such a mastery of the subject of the food problem as he does.

Sir, it is admitted on all sides of the House, including the Government, that the food situation in the country today is very serious. Speaking of my own constituency, the southern division of the Bombay Province which I have the honour to represent in this House, I say that the position is going from bad to worse. In most of the villages of the three districts of my constituency, namely Bijapur, Belgaum and Dharwar the Government have declared many villages as scarcity areas. The position of the Karnatak is very bad indeed, as you all know, and I am sure the Government is fully aware of conditions there. There was a famine there not long ago of the worst magnitude just like the Bengal famine. The position today in my constituency is, that people are

selling away their cattle and in the North Kanara district people are not able to get much grain, except rice, while today in Dharwar city ration has been reduced considerably. Compared to this, the price of *jowari* has been increased in Dharwar by 12½ per cent. In rural areas we find difficulties to obtain ration permits. Even in districts where there is scarcity, attempts are being made by officials to collect corn on levy system. This should be stopped forthwith. In other parts too the position is very grave. I was reading two days ago in the *Hindustan Times* about a news, and I should like to tell you that in some parts of the districts in India, people are living on animal carcasses. I shall read just three lines:

"According to reports received from the districts of Chittorgarh, Bhilwara, Rajnagar and Kuakhera, there is great scarcity of food grains there. The poor have to go without food for days together. In a state of desperation, many in the Kuakhera division are reported to have fed themselves on animal carcasses."

I am afraid the position is disgraceful and the earlier the situation is remedied the better it will be for the country. I should like to bring to the notice of the House the position in the province of Bombay, which was briefly summed up in a resolution passed by the Executive Committee of the People's Provincial Food Council, Bombay, on the 21st December 1945. I may say that this Council was inaugurated about two years ago, when my friend, Mr. Minoo Masani, was Mayor of Bombay, and it consists of able and well-known men all over the province and its recommendations are being respected by the Government of Bombay. The resolution runs:

"The Committee takes the view that if assurances of more adequate imports of food-grains into the Province are not immediately forthcoming and if such imports do not materialise soon, the Province of Bombay will be faced with a grave shortage of foodgrains which will entail considerable hardship and even starvation on the poorer sections of the population. In particular, such a situation will endanger the maintenance of the present level of the ration which is, in the Council's opinion, inadequate from the point of view of accepted standards of nutrition."

As Mr. Masani said the other day, we need not blame the Government or the people for this sorry state of affairs. As far as the Bombay Government is concerned, I know they are doing their best and I know the Bombay Government leads the Governments of other provinces in this respect—I mean, in the matter of administration of food policy in this country—and I may also say that the Collector of Bijapur is doing his very best in the district; but we must examine the causes of this trouble.

To sum up briefly, I would say the causes are two, namely, lack of imports, and lack of co-operation between the surplus provinces and the other provinces. The Honourable Food Secretary reading his report the other day says that the provinces in which there is scope for improvement in the system of procurement are the Punjab, Sind, United Provinces and Bihar. I may say, Sir, that these are the guilty provinces. These are the provinces which should come to the help of the deficit areas. In our province there is the levy system, whereas in the surplus provinces I have mentioned, there is no levy system. To my mind, I think the Government should have a levy system in these provinces as well. The other day I was told by an official in Bombay that these provinces do not have a levy system because they believe that troops will have to be called out to collect their quota. I fail to understand how, when in our province of Bombay, where we have *Mahrattas* who are considered to be martial races and warriors, and *Deccani Mussalmans* among the peasants this levy is being collected in an arbitrary manner, without the least punitive measures being enforced, I fail to understand how the Government in those provinces cannot enforce the levy system. To my mind this is nothing but a lame excuse. In the province of Bombay, levy collections have amounted to the extent of 84.7 per cent. in 1944-45. This was done voluntarily, without any punitive measures being adopted.

**Sjt. N. V. Gadgil** (Bombay Central Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Question. That was not so. You are not fully aware of what is being done in the *muffassil*.

**Mr. Ahmed Ebrahim Haroon Jaffer:** The muffassil must be worse, I agree, Sir, I support the point brought forward the other day by Sir Cowasjee Jehangir on the question of cloth barter. We in Bombay are supplying cloth to these surplus provinces and if they are not going to come to a satisfactory arrangement with us.....

**Mr. President:** The Honourable Member may finish the sentence if he likes, but there is already a break, and we might adjourn now. Today being Friday, the House will adjourn now and meet again at a quarter past two. But before we adjourn formally I have to make an announcement.

#### NOMINATION OF PANEL OF CHAIRMEN

**Mr. President:** I have to inform the House that under sub-rule (1) of rule 3 of the Indian Legislative Rules, I nominate Mr. K. C. Neogy, Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang and Mr. P. J. Griffiths on the Panel of Chairmen for the current session.

The House will now re-assemble at 2-15 P.M.

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

The Assembly re-assembled after Lunch at a Quarter Past Two of the Clock, Mr. President (The Honourable Mr. G. V. Mavalankar) in the Chair.

#### ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO COMMITTEE RE BRETTON WOODS CONFERENCE AGREEMENTS

**Mr. President:** I have to inform the Assembly that upto 12 Noon to-day, the time fixed for receiving nominations for the Committee to examine the proposals of the Bretton Woods Conference nine nominations were received. As the number of candidates is equal to the number of vacancies, I declare the following members to be duly elected to the Committee:—(1) The Honourable Sir Archibald Rowlands, (2) Mr. Geoffrey W. Tyson, (3) Sjt. N. V. Gadgil, (4) Mr. K. C. Neogy, (5) Mr. Manu Subedar, (6) Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar, (7) Dr. B. K. Madan, (8) Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad, and (9) Seth Yusuf Abdoola Haroon.

#### ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO COMMITTEE RE ROAD-RAIL CO-ORDINATION SCHEME

**Mr. President:** I have also to inform the Assembly that upto 12 Noon to-day, the time fixed for receiving nominations for the Committee to examine the Road-Rail Co-ordination Scheme, seven nominations were received. As the number of candidates is equal to the number of vacancies, I declare the following members to be duly elected to the Committee (1) The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall, (2) Mr. H. G. Stokes, (3) Sri Bhagirathi Mahapatra, (4) Mr. P. B. Gole, (5) Shri Mohan Lal Saksena, (6) Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan, and (7) Nawab Siddique Ali Khan.

#### MOTION RE FOOD SITUATION—contd.

**Mr. Ahmed Ebrahim Haroon Jaffer:** Before we dispersed this morning, I was speaking about a point raised by Sir Cowasjee Jehangir the other day in regard to cloth barter. I said that if we are not going to get help from the surplus provinces we should be allowed to have barter with Burma in the matter of rice from where we used to import 4 lakhs tons a year for Bombay out of 15 lakhs tons total import per year. We are even prepared to go further and barter not only with Burma but if required with Indo-China and Thailand but at the same time we are not going to be selfish. We are prepared to come in the common pool if the surplus provinces are prepared to co-operate with us.

I now refer to the question of imports. It was in August 1944 that Sir Henry French who is considered to be a high official of the U.K. Food Ministry came to India. It was then hoped that the import conditions will improve as it was realised that the position of the country was grave. We have heard nothing further about it after he left. Then very recently on the 9th November 1945 the Food Member in an interview to the Press declared 'I have myself taken advantage of Lord Louis Mountbatten's presence in Delhi and discussed this matter and I am confident he will render every assistance'. What is the result? We are, where we were. These persons come and go and the position instead of improving goes from bad to worse.

I should like to refer to the question of the imports of butter and milk products. I have just received a telegram from my constituency and I should like to read it to the House:

"Indian butter Rs. 2/4 per lb. A firm offers Australian butter landed cost Rs. 1/4. Import banned. It is deplorable."

Here we are offered butter at the rate of Rs. 1/4/- landed in Bombay compared to Rs. 2/4/- of Indian butter but unfortunately we cannot import it. I hope something will be done in the matter of imports of butter and milk products as early as possible.

I should now like to refer to the question of sending a delegation to Washington. I have read in the Press that it is proposed to send an official delegation. Well, unless it is the idea of Government to send an official delegation on a holiday trip, which usually these delegations are intended to be, I would respectfully suggest that if you really want to have something done then it will be advisable to send a non-official delegation. We know the permanent Food Secretary of the Government of India, Sir Robert Hutchings went to Washington and we are well aware that he is coming back empty-handed. Why do you want to send an official delegation? Why not keep the officials of the Food Department to feed us in India instead of their being sent there to feed themselves. I would respectfully suggest that it is better to send men who command the confidence of the country, who are experts in this problem and who can handle the situation in a better way than it would be done otherwise. If I may be permitted to suggest names, I would suggest that the non-official delegation should consist of five members and I have in mind the names of Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan, Sir Manilal Nanavati who was a Member of the Woodhead Famine Commission, Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad, Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas, and of course I cannot exclude my friend Mr. Minoo Masani. I hope that my suggestions will be favourably considered and let us hope that the day is not distant when we will have a better situation in the matter of food supply. Sir, I have done.

**Shrimati Ammu Swaminadhan** (Madras City: Non-Muhammadan Urban):

Sir, I rise to say a few words in support of my Honourable friend Mr. Masani's amendment and the addition made by my Honourable friend from Andhra. I am not going to give you any statistics. I think we have had enough statistics given to us in this House both by the Honourable Government Secretary for Food and also by some of the other Honourable Members but I want to say a few words about the food situation generally and particularly with regard to the food situation in the South India where I come from. I want to put it from the point of view of a woman. I want to put it from the point of view of a human being who feels for the distress prevailing in the country, perhaps more than some of the other Honourable Members of this House. I know what Sir S. V. Ramamurti, the Adviser to the Governor of Madras said about the serious food situation in the South. I should like to quote what he said the other day when he met the Food Council in the Madras Province: "If the Government of India and His Majesty's Government take an immediate decision and keep to it with firmness and get it implemented with expedition I have no doubt famine in India can be avoided and I look forward with confidence to their doing so."

Well, Sir S. V. Ramamurti is a Government servant. I feel that if he had not been a Government servant he would have put this sentence a little differently. He would have said: If they do not take an immediate decision, we

[Shrimati Ammu Swaminadhan.]

will be faced with famine. With regard to South India I can say with the Honourable Members from Bombay that the rationing there has been very well done. The Government did what it could. But at present both our monsoons in the south, the south-west monsoon in Malabar on which we depend for all the foodstuffs in the Malabar and the north east monsoon by which the crops of the east-coast of Madras are watered, have failed and today we are facing a very serious situation all over south India.

With regard to Madras city, Tamilnad and Andhra, some of the Honourable Members have spoken already and we know that Sir S. V. Ramamurti himself has mentioned these places in his report. But with regard to the west coast, Malabar, not many people have spoken and I would like to say a few words about the situation there. Rationing in Malabar has been far below what the people should get. In Madras we have had one lb. of rice given per person per day, while in Malabar where the rationing has been district-wide—I believe that is the only place where the whole district has been rationed and no village have been left out of this rationing—we get only 10 to 12 ounces of rice per head per day, and the people of Malabar are entirely rice-eating people. Very often they have no other food to eat. Their staple food consists of rice and they are not getting enough of it to live on. We speak very grandly about the calories and about the nutritious value of food and so on, but I would like to know whether with all the experts we have in India and the highly paid officials do we go into the matter properly and see whether the people are actually getting the kind of food that they should get, the kind of food that has nutritious value.

With regard to the transport conveniences, even in the districts, my Honourable friend to my left has already spoken how difficult they have been, especially in the matter of taking rice and other foodstuffs from one district to another. The same difficulty has been felt in Malabar and they have had difficulties with regard to taking rice and other foodstuffs from one village to another. They were prohibited from doing that. There have been many such cases, but I would like to tell you of one case. As you know, in Malabar the villages are rather different from the villages of other parts of India. The houses are situated far from each other and often it happens that the rationing shop is about 3 or 4 miles away from their places of residence and very often the day labourers have to go to these shops after their work is over at about 6 or 7 o'clock in the evening and then they find the shop closed. As it happened, there was one old woman living in one village and she had a daughter who was living in another village which was about 4 miles away. The daughter was an expectant mother and she could not get rice for two or three days. So, the old woman was taking her own ration to the daughter in the other village when she was caught by the police and taken to the court. The court gave her a few days' imprisonment. This is the sort of thing that is happening. I can assure you and the Government Members that if that old woman had any cash with her and if she had paid that cash to the man who had arrested her, she could have got off and could have taken the rice to her daughter. This is the sort of thing that is happening in the villages.

Now, according to Sir S. V. Ramamurti, as I said, the rationing is going to be cut more than it had been cut before. If that happens, then we may not have perhaps exactly the famine conditions but we will certainly have many more diseases and many more epidemics in places like Malabar where people are already under-fed and under-nourished.

It was said in a communique by the Government of Madras last year that Malabar is not in need of so much grain as they have tapioca and jack-fruit. This shows how these reports are written and how little they know of the real situation. Tapioca is not a thing that you can live on and jack-fruit we have only for two or three months in Malabar and that, too, is not food. It is a thing which is cooked like curry and is eaten with rice. You cannot live on jack-fruit alone. If we did, then there will be more deaths from cholera than there are already. According to Government statistics, the number of deaths was 80,000 but many more people actually died. I think the number was well

over 50,000. How can you expect these poor people to resist these epidemics when they have not enough to eat? We have had famine in this country in 1890 and from the records which exist today we know that the ration then was  $1\frac{1}{2}$  lbs. of rice per day per person. But under this very benevolent rule of the British in this country we are not given more than one lb. a day even in provinces where we are supposed to have very good rationing. It is not enough if you write long reports and give long statistics. You should have a human view of things; you should have a realistic view of things if you want anything to be done. I feel I must take to task the Government of India in many matters. Very often we are told that there is a shortage of food at some place because the rains have failed or there have been droughts or there have been floods. But these things are not unknown in this country. We have had all these things before. But if there is a Government with any vision and if it is interested in the people of the country, if it is a Government which is interested in looking after the welfare of the country, surely these things can be looked after. We can have proper irrigation system, we can have reservoirs of water; It is not enough to have plans and programmes which are going to come into being ten years hence. It is necessary to have long-range plans. But what we need today is food and we want it without any more delay.

Another reason that is given by the Government for the shortage of food is that our population is increasing. With regard to that matter, I would like to read an article by Kate L. Mitchell, an American woman who wrote an excellent book called "India—An American view." She says:

"Between 1910 and 1930 population increased by about 17 per cent., food production by about 30 per cent. It is true that the present production is wholly inadequate, but the reasons for this inadequacy lie in the system of production and the failure to develop the available resources, not in any absolute over population. In fact, there is every reason to believe that by making full use of her resources, India could support a far larger population than at present. The cause of Indian poverty is not the rate of population growth but the fact that India is a case of arrested economic development."

That is what the American woman has said about this bogey about the increase of population of India which is mentioned as a reason for our having food shortage in this country. You have had a lesson in the terrible tragedy of Bengal a few years ago. Are you going to repeat that tragedy again in the country? Are you going to see that another famine should take place in this country? Even with regard to the Bengal food famine, I want to ask the Government what they have done beyond appointing another Committee. They have not done anything with the report of the Commission on Bengal famine and yet they have appointed another Committee with Sir Clarence Bird as Chairman. I would like to know what does he know about the food situation and why do the Government want another Committee to look into the report which is already with them? Surely that report will give you all the data you want. This is not the time for you to have another Committee sitting on that report and making another recommendation on top of that.

I would also like to say on the subject of Bengal famine that in 1948 there was an offer from the Azad Hind Provisional Government. This came out the other day in the I.N.A. trial. They said that they would send 100,000 tons of rice as a first instalment if India would accept it. They did not accept it. I want to know whether the Government would rather see the people of India die of starvation, as they were dying at that time, rather than accept rice that was going to be sent to the Indian people. It was not being sent by the Japanese if the reason was they could not accept rice or any other foodstuff from the enemy. But this Azad Hind Provisional Government was not the enemy of the Indian people and why did they not accept this offer? They had no hesitation in accepting Japanese help to safeguarding the interests of a few Dutch people in Indonesia. But only when our people are dying in this country they refuse because they stand on their dignity and they cannot accept rice from any body who has anything to do with Japanese Government. If it had been our own Government I know such a thing could not have happened and we would not have refused such an offer.

[Shrimati Ammu Swaminadhan.]

Then there is another thing. Government take credit for stopping the Bengal famine. Sir, I beg to differ from them. I do not think the Bengal famine has come to an end yet but it became better because of the bumper crop we had that year, and no credit is due to Government at all. When anything good happens in the country credit is taken by Government; when anything bad happens in the country the weather is blamed, even God is blamed, and every other thing is blamed except Government themselves. I say it is Government that is to blame. What is the use of having plans on paper? What is the use of giving us day after day lots of paper to read and going into the question of the difficulties of Government? We know the difficulties, we know the weather conditions and we know that we have got to cope with all that. But if it is a Government of the people who are looking after the welfare of the people, it is their duty to see that in spite of the difficulties that we experience with regard to weather and other conditions in this country we can cope with the thing. We must look at it in a realistic way and see that people are not starved and the people do not die out. My Honourable friend Mr. Masoni has already spoken about the future generation of India. What are the future generations going to be, I should like to know, if all the mothers are half-starved in this country? And the mothers are going to be more starved. We will have just weaklings; we will have people with no energy, we will have people with no power of resistance and if an epidemic comes people will die off by thousands.

Sir, I would also like to know why India has not asked for help from the U.N.R.R.A. We gave so much to U.N.R.R.A. but how is it that we have not asked for any help from them? I will read this little article from the press, dated London, January 28:

"No request for UNRRA assistance had been made by the Government of India, said the Under-Secretary for India, Mr. Arthur Henderson, replying to a question in the House of Commons by Mr. P. Barstow (Lab.) today.

He added that UNRRA help was primarily intended for countries which, for financial or other reasons, were unable to obtain supplies and help for relief and rehabilitation.

This would not generally apply to India, though circumstances might arise where UNRRA personnel, medical supplies, etc., might be called upon in an emergency."

I want to know why they have not asked for and got any help from UNRRA. Surely the famine of Bengal was also due to a certain extent at least to war conditions prevailing at that time? We could not get transport; at least that is what Government told us, that transport was in the hands of the army and so for civil use we could not get it. With regard to UNRRA there is one thing more that I should like to read here with your permission. This is dated London, January 29:

"There was a dramatic scene at the meeting of the Economic and Financial Committee of the United Nations when the four countries—Brazil, Uruguay, Mexico and Bolivia—which had declined further obligations to the UNRRA were swung over by a moving appeal from the American delegate, Mr. Sol Bloom.

With tears flowing from his eyes, Mr. Bloom, talked of starvation that could be prevented and lives that could be saved by UNRRA activities.

Urging the delegates to be dictated by their hearts and not their heads, Mr. Bloom asked: "Can you get peace and security when people are starving and when mothers and fathers have their little children coming to them and pleading for bits of bread and something to keep them warm? If we defer help till next year there will not be many of these people left'.

Immediately afterwards representatives of Bolivia, Mexico, Brazil and Uruguay announced that they would after all support the United States proposal."

Sir, is there no one who can make a moving appeal and with tears running down his cheeks stand there and speak about the starving millions of India? It is not a few people only that are starving in this country; mothers and children, fathers and brothers,—so many of our people are starving; and it seems we have no one to plead our case. We have a foreign Government in this country; even my own brothers who are sitting on those Benches rarely perhaps feel that they are Indians; perhaps they also feel that they belong to a system which is governed by British rule. I hope all this will be changed. Sir, and that we will see

that Government take a realistic view and that they see that something can be done very soon. It has been already mentioned about the mission on which Sir Robert Hutchings had been sent and how he was turned down. I do not understand why we should have sent Sir Robert Hutchings. Surely there are enough Indians to go with confidence, and who at least would have been heard? But he did not even have a hearing, he was just turned down. Have we not got eminent men whom we can send to any place where they will get a hearing, to any council where they will be respected, where if they put the case of India they will be listened to?

And now we read in the press about another delegation that is going headed by the Honourable the Food Member and his official colleagues. I am afraid I have not got much hope of our getting anything even if he goes with his colleagues. I feel that if we really want to get ourselves heard in any international council it is necessary to send some very prominent men of India. Do not let several people go and have a holiday in England or in America or any of those other nice places. It is very nice to live away from India now that the hot weather is coming and have a good change. But that is not all. We want someone to go who will be able to put our case, who will be listened to with respect and who will get what he wants for India, because he will put the case for India as a representative of the people of India and not as a representative of the Government of India. I have no hesitation in saying that if it is necessary Mahatma Gandhi himself would go. Then there is Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who also can go. I will not mention more names but there are so many other eminent Indians who can go and whose names are known to every one in this House. I feel that if they go our case will be listened to and we will not only be sympathetically listened to but we will get all the food that we so badly need. In regard to that why is France sending Blum? He is the most respected and revered statesman of France; they know that it is necessary for a man like that to go to an international council to have a hearing and to get what he wants for the country. If France can do that surely it is our duty—and Government themselves must realise it that it is their duty too—to see that non-official persons, Indians who have the respect of the whole country and represent the whole country should go and do something to relieve the whole situation. We will have all the schemes ready, we can think about what is going to happen ten years hence, how wonderful India will be ten years hence; but let us do something now, let Government do something at once to relieve the present very critical situation, and let us see that we are not again visited by that horrible tragedy that visited Bengal, and, perhaps it is not so well known, Malabar also in 1942-43. Mothers, fathers and children were dying in thousands and nobody cared. Government sits here calmly; it is a very comfortable House to sit in; we sit back and in the cold weather we have warmth and in the hot weather we have fans over our heads. But let them wake up and take a realistic view. I hope they will consider the whole thing before they take an official delegation again to England and America. They must realise that it is necessary to take a representative of the people, some one who will be respected and who will be heard at any international council.

Sir, I support my Honourable friend Mr. Masani's amendment.

**Mr. President:** Before we proceed further with the debate there is an amendment tabled by Sri Venkatasubba Reddiar. Will he just move it?

**Sri R. Venkatasubba Reddiar** (South Arcot *cum* Chingleput: Non-Muhamadan Rural): Sir, I do not propose to move the amendment but I shall speak on the resolution.

**Mr. R. O. Morris** (Madras: European): Mr. President, Sir, I do not intend to take up the valuable time of the House in a repetition of the criticisms directed at the Food Department, although, Sir, I agree with much that has been said by my friends in the House; and it is a matter of surprise to me that the situation was not foreseen.

There seems to be something radically wrong with the machinery as between the Central and the Provincial Governments; and presumably also between the

[Mr. R. C. Morris.]

Provincial Governments and their District Officials that a possible food scarcity of this magnitude was not anticipated earlier. Surely the fact that the Provinces were coming to the end of their reserves should alone have been a warning to the Central Government. Are we to believe that the Central Government were unaware of this position—that the reserve food stocks were fast running low? If this were so, then the description "placid, pathetic contentment" applied to the masses of India in the Montague Chelmsford Report would apply equally to the officials of the Central Government Food Department.

Sir, I have had 32 years of agricultural experience in India as a proprietary planter in the north of the Coimbatore District and, in this period, I have become acquainted with most of the grain cultivators of the Kollegal Taluk. I can say definitely that the common touch, the contact between the Government District Executives and the ryots, which formerly existed, has now deteriorated to such an extent that the ryots no longer look to Government officials for any advice or assistance in their problems, nor do they feel it incumbent on them to co-operate to the fullest extent in the matter of grain supplies.

Sir, following the Famine Commission's recommendations Government accepted "responsibility of providing enough food for all, sufficient in quantity, and of requisite quality". Has this been carried out? Unreliability of agricultural statistics was admitted in 1943 and now, three years later, we have the Central Government admitting that this is still the case: "a disturbing state of affairs. Yet I would refer my Honourable friend the Food Member to his replies to my predecessor, Sir Frederick James, in this House on Friday 25th February 1944. On that occasion the following replies were given:

"(a) That the Food Department is responsible for informing the Secretary of State about all matters connected with the supply and distribution of food throughout India and, therefore, arising out of food shortage etc., etc.

(b) That the Honourable Member was aware of the importance of ensuring that the Secretary of State is accurately and constantly informed on these matters, etc., etc.

(c) That statistical information of all kinds is collected from Provincial Governments; and tabulated departmentally by the Government of India; and that the Food Department sends a Weekly Report to the Secretary of State on the Food situation in India etc., etc."

Sir, we are assured that grain prices will be kept down to a minimum, but in parts of the Madras Presidency the control price of *ragi* has already risen by 15-20 per cent. Deputy Collectors and Taluk officials appear to have been given insufficient powers to requisition stocks known to be held in *ragi* pits. One Revenue Divisional Officer informed me that he was aware of stocks of *ragi* hoarded in such pits in his area, but was not in a position to raid and seize these stocks.

Sir, the Madras Government would do well to make more use of the Taluk Agricultural Societies, to take the Societies, into their confidence. Among the members of these societies are the chief grain producers in each taluk and their co-operation will be attained if the Provincial Government pursues a frank and open policy over the food question.

Taluk Agricultural Experimental centres should be set up and strains of millets giving increased yields should be introduced to the ryots. The ryots are a conservative class, but if they see plots giving a heavy yield in Government Agricultural Experimental Stations they will be quick to adopt them.

The development of minor irrigation schemes, Sir, should be speeded up. In the taluk in which I reside exist facilities for such projects, and these projects can be expedited by the use of the mass of mechanical equipment that must now be available from army sources.

Communications must be improved to enable grain to be acquired from the rich cultivated areas now not connected by any roads. For example, in the hilly and jungle areas of the Kollegal and Gobichettipalayam taluks of Coimbatore District, I doubt if any of the grain now produced in the many unconnected cultivated enclosures can be acquired.

The Forest Department many years ago planned a system of road construction in these parts, but this was later cancelled; and, although three foot traces were cut, in many cases these were never widened, the roads being subsequently abandoned. Had these roads been now in existence, Sir, Government would be able to acquire the surplus grain stocks of these parts: stocks that are now smuggled over inter-district and inter-province and State borders on pack animals by jungle paths.

Sir, in these areas large blocks of cultivation have been abandoned owing to annual depredations by elephants. A small herd of elephants can wipe out in one night the year's work of a family's grain plot. I recently received a letter from a Forest Officer admitting serious damage by elephants to the *ragi* crops in his division. For years, I have advocated assistance to the ryots in this connection. In the Mysore State cultivators whose fields are subjected to devastating raids by elephants now receive assistance from Government in the protection of their crops; as has been the practice for years in parts of Africa and, prior to the war, in Burma. I urge that similar measures should be adopted in the Madras Presidency.

Abandoned cultivable areas in these fertile taluks are now covered with scrub, and can only be brought back into cultivation this year by the employment of tractors and mechanical ploughs. I consider it is up to the Government to render such assistance without charge to the ryots concerned. This is the time for urgent measures, and no time should be wasted over any question or argument as to whether the ryot should be asked to bear a proportion of the cost. Let us get such areas back into cultivation without delay.

I may be regarded, Sir, as taking a too parochial view of the subject, but I have quoted examples in areas known to me; and what applies to the Coimbatore District holds good for other parts of the country. The measures I have suggested are minor measures. But in the situation we are now faced with no effort, however small, should be neglected to alleviate the acute food position.

Sir, I understand that about 70 per cent. of the population of the Madras Presidency affected by grain rationing are food producers, and are likely to receive a ration of 1 lb. per head, the remaining 30 per cent. being regarded as non-producers and will receive less. Now, Sir, I must emphasise that this 30 per cent. include a class known as heavy manual labour, a large proportion of whom work on plantations in all weathers; and the proposed distinction between the food grower, which presumably includes his food-producing agricultural labour, and the non-grower, is purely artificial and unreasonable. Under these proposals a labourer working for a food grower will receive a grain ration of 1 lb. but if he then works on a plantation, which very frequently occurs, he will get less, which is absurd. I submit, Sir, that nothing less than a ration of  $1\frac{1}{4}$  to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  lbs. of grain per head is adequate for plantation labour, which carries out exhausting work for 10 months in the year. Non-working adults should receive a ration of 18 ozs. per head;  $6\frac{1}{2}$  ozs. for children under 12 years.

The Governments of Travancore and Cochin recognised in 1944 that plantation labour should receive  $1\frac{1}{2}$  times the ordinary ration; and the rates I have just quoted were laid down and supplied. Sir, I must emphasise the grave consequences of any reduction in these rations. Plantation labour in the Madras Presidency has hitherto received preferential treatment, based on the same scales as those adopted in Travancore and Cochin; and any decrease in the food supply for plantation labour will have very serious repercussions on the industry. I trust, therefore, Sir, that the Central Government will not fail to recommend to the Madras Government that plantation labour should continue to receive preferential treatment; and that food-stuffs will be made available for this purpose.

We should like, Sir, an early statement on the proposals to reduce rations; to what extent rations are likely to be reduced.

[Mr. R. C. Morris.]

In conclusion, Sir, I should like to emphasise the necessity for concluding the Food Debate as soon as possible so that the recommendations of the House may be made clear to His Majesty's Government and to the Food Control at Washington.

**Sir Pheroze Kharegat** (Secretary, Agriculture Department): It has been mentioned by many speakers in the House that the statement of policy which was issued the other day refers only to plans, proposals and projects, but does not indicate the action taken. It is for that reason that I am getting up now in order to place the facts before the House as to what has been done and is being done in connection with the Grow More Food Campaign.

As Mr. Lawson pointed out, the first and most important prerequisite for increased production is an assurance of a remunerative price. This has now been accepted by the Government. The next step that has to be taken is to arrange to provide the necessary facilities, goods and services which are required by the cultivators in order to increase their production. In pursuance of their determination to do this I may mention that the Government of India have given loans amounting to Rs. 4.94 crores, that is, nearly Rs. 5 crores and grants amounting to Rs. 4½ crores supplemented by similar grants on a 50/50 basis by the provinces. It is estimated that when these works for which the grants have been given mature, it will result in an increase of something like 2 million tons of food in a year. Let me go into a little more detail about these grants.

[At this stage Mr. President vacated the Chair which was then occupied by Mr. K. C. Neogy (one of the Panel of Chairmen)].

The greatest need of the country is in respect of water, an assured supply of water is necessary to safeguard against famine. Accordingly the Central Government have given loans amounting to Rs. 62 lakhs and grants of Rs. 145 lakhs for emergency and minor irrigation works. These grants provide for the construction of 34,500 wells, 4,500 tanks, 7,700 other minor works, in addition to repairs to 4,600 wells and 2,000 old tanks. It is expected that when these works are completed they will add something like 700,000 tons of foodgrains per year to the annual production.

Then, Sir, grants have been given for land development, anti-erosion works and land reclamation. The loans amount to Rs. 48 lakhs and the grants to Rs. 56½ lakhs. They cover an acreage of more than one and a half million acres, mostly in the Bombay Presidency, and they are expected to produce 200,000 tons of extra food a year.

A reference has been made to manures and fertilizers, and we have been asked as to what has been done and what types of manures are being encouraged. Some years ago the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research financed a scheme for working out a suitable method of composting town refuse. That scheme was successful and what is called the Hot Fermentation Process was discovered. Then men were obtained from the provinces, one from each province, and they were trained in this new method. They went back to their provinces and trained other men in the application of this new method. That method is now being adopted in a number of large towns and we have already distributed something like 330,000 tons of that type of town refuse compost. The task has not been without difficulty. We came up against all kinds of troubles. In the first place some Municipalities did not like to spend money on this type of work. Then when the compost had been made certain people refused to take it. In certain other cases people were prepared to take it but they had not the necessary transport, so we have gone further and arranged for the necessary transport, and the necessary demonstrations, and now we have succeeded in getting these used on a large scale near towns.

Then there is manure available from oil cakes. These have been taken under control and are distributed either for cattle feed or as manure, and the amount so distributed is 262,000 tons.

Then there is the question of chemical fertilizers. About 15 years ago not a single ton was used in this country. Thanks to the efforts of Imperial  
**S P. M.** Chemicals just before the war we were using something like 100,000 tons. More could not be used because the prices of foodgrains were so low that it was entirely uneconomic to use fertilizers for the purpose. But ever since prices have gone up, we have tried to obtain fertilizers. The cultivators are only too willing to use them but our difficulty has been that we could not get them. Last year with great difficulty we were able to secure 70,000 tons, but I am glad to be able to say that for this year, that is, for the year 1945-46, we have been allocated 154,000 tons. But let me make it clear that it is not enough merely to obtain these fertilizers or to distribute these fertilizers. The work has to be done with care, because if these fertilizers are used in too large a quantity or without adequate mixture with lime or organic manure, they may do more harm than good, and therefore it is necessary to arrange that when these fertilizers are distributed, the cultivators should at the same time be taught how to use them, when to use them and where to use them. So that work has to be tackled at the same time.

Next, I come to the question of seed. For the multiplication and distribution of improved seed, loans have been given to the extent of Rs. 258 lakhs, that is, 2½ crores, and grants of Rs. 87 lakhs. These are expected to produce 700,000 tons of extra foodgrains per year. A question was asked the other day as to what area at present is under improved varieties. We have not got the exact figures but for one province we know what the result is. The Director of Agriculture, Madras, has informed me that in respect of rice one-third of their acreage is already under improved varieties and by next year he expects that two-thirds of the acreage will be under improved varieties. Possibly in other provinces the progress is not so satisfactory but considerable progress is being and has been made in this direction.

A reference has been made to tractors. The position, Sir, is very unfortunate. In 1944, or was it in 1943, we had asked for 88 tractors. We have only just received those 88, and we have received the tractors without ploughs so that we are not able to use them. In 1945 we asked for 1,700 odd tractors: not one of them has been received so far. Naturally the work is held up. Ultimately we have sent our Agricultural Production Adviser to the United States and to the United Kingdom and he has now secured promises of about 800 to 900 tractors which we hope to get before the close of the year.

**Sjt. N. V. Gadgil:** Meanwhile famine has come.

**Sir Pheroze Kharegat:** Yes, it has.

Another direction in which work has been taken up is the conversion of the acreage under cotton to food crops. The acreage under cotton in the period just before the war was 24 million acres. Last year it had dropped to 15 million acres. That is, there has been a decrease of 9 million acres under cotton, which has gone over to food crops.

Now, Sir, my friend Sir Cowasjee Jehangir said the other day that our statistics are not reliable. I admit that the figures in respect of Bengal and the permanently settled areas are distinctly unreliable. But in the temporarily settled areas I make bold to say that our acreage figures are the best in the world. There is no country in the world which has got more accurate statistics of acreage than we have in our temporarily settled areas and the cotton area to which reference has been made is all in the temporarily settled areas. So there can be no mistake about this particular figure that I have mentioned.

As regards the permanently settled areas we have encouraged Orissa to adopt the system that has been prevailing elsewhere and we have given them nearly six lakhs of rupees for the purpose. Behar has also decided to introduce the same system for collecting their acreage statistics. The only province that is still lagging behind is Bengal.

Then as regards yield statistics I must admit that our figures are unreliable. In order to ascertain more correct statistics we have spent something like 5 lakhs

[Sir Pheroze Kharegat]

in order to evolve a system of ascertaining correct yields by the random sampling method. We tried this out last year or the year before last in one province, that is the Punjab, and we found that the two figures, that is the official figures and the figures arrived at by the new method differed by 3 per cent. Last year we found that our figures were 7 per cent. above the Punjab figures but 15 per cent. below those of the United Provinces showing that the U. P. have been over-estimating their yields. The system has now been accepted by all these provinces and it will be introduced as an ordinary routine measure before long.

Now, Sir, whatever defects there may be in our figures of yield, there can be no doubt that from the increased acreage our yields must have increased by at least 1½ to two million tons during the past two years. The question will naturally be asked: "Where is it?" The answer, Sir, is obvious. It has been eaten. Let us not forget that in these three years while we have been increasing the production the population has also increased by something like 15 million people. They have been fed and from where were they fed except from this increased production? There is another item. In many parts of the country people have been living on starvation diet. Possibly some of them, particularly in the Eastern regions have been eating a little more instead of living on gram and barley water as they used to do. They have been eating a little grain. Is that to be grudged to them? Why should they not eat these? And so as all our increased production has gone to feed the people, I do not think that any complaint can be made on that score.

The Honourable the Leader of the Opposition referred the other day to what has been achieved in the United Kingdom. Their achievements are great: they are wonderful. But let it not be forgotten that when they started only 11 per cent. of the area of the country was under cultivation. They have within four years increased it to 20 per cent. But where did we start? Our cultivators were already cultivating 36 per cent. of the land and they have increased it to 39 per cent. This, Sir, is not an achievement of which our cultivators need be ashamed. I do not mean to say, for one moment, that we have done all that we should have done. We have to do ten-fold of what we have already achieved.

**An Honourable Member:** A hundred-fold.

**Sir Pheroze Khareghat:** May be a hundred-fold. I am not prepared to argue on that but at least we have to do a great deal more than what we have done. That is the long term policy which we will have to attend to.

But let me divert for one moment to the present situation. It is true we are faced by famine. It may be that the peril may be averted in various ways. We have already suggested to the provinces concerned various measures which they can and should adopt as palliatives. They cannot prevent hardship but something can be done. These measures include items such as the growing of catch crops. There are certain small millets which mature within three months. They may not be very palatable but at least they will stave off hunger and starvation. We have suggested that *kutch* wells should be dug and sweet potatoes and other tuberous crops should be grown, so that the people may have at least something to eat. The same wells can be used for the growing of vegetables. Vegetables produce sometimes ten times as much as cereals. Though they cannot entirely replace them, to a certain extent they will meet the situation. We have also addressed the military authorities in connection with the vegetable schemes that they have been running for the past few years for supply to the military and we have asked that these schemes should be continued so that they may be useful for feeding the civil population.

I may divert for one moment to refer to the question of vegetable seeds. When the war started, every ounce of seed of what are called the European types of vegetables was imported into this country. During the war we found that we could not get those imports and we have built up this industry in three short years in Kashmir and in Quetta with the result that today we are in a position to supply the needs of the whole of India. Not only that we are in a position

to export our vegetable seeds to other countries. The quality certainly needs to be improved and that is being attended to. But the achievement is one of which we can well be proud.

Then I come to the question of fruits. Quick-growing fruits have not escaped our attention. Provinces have been urged to go in for bananas, pineapples, papayas and fruits of that kind. We have given grants to provinces for the purpose, and we expect that 11,000 more acres will be put under this type of foodcrops, producing something like 100,000 tons of extra fruit per year.

A great deal has been said about fish; and here I would like to place before the House the difficulties that we have encountered. I too had thought in the beginning when we started, that all we had to do was to go to the sea or to the rivers and to catch the fish—they were just waiting there to be caught and brought in. We approached the fishermen; they turned round on us and said "Where are the boats?" So we had to start building boats for them. Having got the boats, they said "Where are the nets?" We asked: "Cannot you make the nets?" Then they said "Give us twine" and so we went to the mills and got them to make the type of twine that was required and supplied them. Then they said "We want hooks" and so we had hooks made in the country. They were used exactly for one day and the fishermen came back and said "Your hooks are no use to us: they just give way under the strain." So we had to arrange for hooks to be imported. I am just mentioning all this to show that things in actual working are not so easy as they seem to be before you actually start working. Nevertheless we have made some progress in this direction, and my information is that, particularly in connection with fish from inland waters, we are hoping to get in the course of the next year something like 45,000 tons of extra fish. In respect of marine fisheries, the position is a little more difficult. We are already getting a large quantity of fish; but as some of you might have read in the papers the other day, fish had to be thrown back into the sea because of difficulties of transport, on account of lack of ice; arrangements are being made to overcome these difficulties. We have arranged to take over a certain number of ice factories and cold stores. In course of time that difficulty will be solved, but in the meantime all we have to fall back upon is the crude old system of drying and salting. That certainly needs to be improved; but in the meantime the position is that we catch the fish; we dry and salt it and then we export it to other countries because the people in this country do not like and will not normally eat that type of fish.

One of our greatest difficulties in all our work has been the lack of trained staff. It is not enough merely to appoint staff; the staff must be fully and properly trained. If they are to guide the agriculturist, they must have the knowledge and be able to give the necessary guidance. Most of the provinces have arranged for the training of their subordinate staff, perhaps not in adequate numbers; but to a very large extent that is being done. Our difficulty is to find men who will give the training, special men who will occupy the key posts and arrange for all this work. That is where we are most lacking. We have tried to get experts and specialists from abroad—from the United Kingdom and the United States of America—but without any success whatever; and now we have had to fall back on the expedient of selecting our own men and sending them abroad for training. This certainly means that our present working is held up and we suffer in the present; but we have to think of the future and in the interests of the future we have decided to take this course and send our men away for six months to a year for training so that when they come back we may be able to proceed forward with our plans for betterment . . . . .

**Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad** (United Provinces Southern Division: Muhammadan Rural): May I ask in this connection one question? I understand they have selected or invited applications for scholarships for agriculture?

**Sir Pheroze Kharegat:** Yes; we have invited applications for agriculture: last year we sent one hundred students for agricultural training. This year also we propose to send between 75 to 100 extra students.

[Sir Pheroze Kharegat]

Now, as regards the long term plan, the first requisite to my mind is to make the necessary surveys. I know that the word 'surveys' is anathema to many people; but you cannot have planning without surveys. Until you make a survey of the area you cannot know what is needed and where it is needed. It is essential to carry out these preliminary inquiries and find out what has got to be done, where it has got to be done. Once that is done, we will be in a better position to get on with our plans and make progress with all our development schemes.

I have not the slightest hesitation in saying what I said more than a year ago, that if the necessary facilities goods and services are made available to the agriculturists of India, they will produce more than enough food than is required for the present population: they will produce enough food to keep 50 per cent. more than the existing population at the recognised standard rates laid down by nutrition workers. But the agriculturist must be given the necessary assistance. He must be provided with the requisite facilities in the shape of water or drainage or anti-erosion works where they are required. He must be given the necessary goods in the shape of manure and seed and implements. He must be given the necessary services, expert and technical guidance as to what is to do and how he has to do it.

**Maulana Zafar Ali Khan** (East Central Punjab: Muhammadan): Have you given him all these things?

**Sir Pheroze Kharegat:** We are trying our best to give him all these things; and as soon as we can arrange we will give them more than what we have done. I have already mentioned what has been done in the past few years and we propose to do a great deal more as soon as we possibly can.

In making this statement that we shall provide all the food that is required, perhaps I should make one exception, and that is in connection with milk. That we cannot do in the short term period. It is a long term problem because cattle take such a long time to mature: it may mean to a certain extent we can increase the milk production by 30 per cent. or 40 per cent.; but we cannot increase it straightaway by 300 per cent., which is our requirement. That will be a 20-year business, when we have evolved by careful selection a better breed of animals, which will produce two or three times the milk of the present animals.

Before I conclude, I would like to repeat one point, and that is, that the key stone of our whole policy depends on the assurance of a remunerative price for the cultivator. It is on this that the whole of our foundation for future development is made and provided the necessary facilities, the goods and the services, are made available and we work hand in hand with a view to help the agriculturists, I have no doubt whatever that we will be able to achieve great results in the future.

**Mr. Muhammad Nauman** (Patna and Chota Nagpur *cum* Orissa Muhammadan): Mr. Chairman, Sir, the debate on the food situation has become a permanent feature of this House during the last few years but the tragedy is that in spite of all that is said and done by the Government officials, no satisfactory situation ever existed and all the Members in the House, including perhaps Honourable Sir J. P. Srivastava himself, do feel that conditions are not as satisfactory as they ought to be. That is the most unfortunate feature of it. The reasons may be many, it may be due to failure of the monsoon sometimes; it may be due to some other factors but the result is that we are always in a position which cannot be considered to be satisfactory by any one in the country.

The Secretary in charge of the Food Department has made a speech explaining the various aspects of this question. He has begun with a basic plan and he has tried to tell us the difficulties of being able to put in practice the basic plan. The main difficulty he has stressed is that of procuring real statistics of the agricultural produce in this country but he has not referred to the damages

and loss during the storage of the procured food grains by the Department. Not a word has been uttered about it by the Government spokesman. I know that in many parts, including Calcutta and Patna hundreds of bags of wheat flour were thrown out and many more bags were given away by way of rations although it was not fit for human consumption. He should have said something about it but he did not mention anything as the report will expose them thoroughly.

As regards statistics, his remarks only show the bankruptcy of the entire Government administration. The Secretary says they have not got statistics for provinces which are permanently settled areas such as Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. I am closely acquainted with all these three provinces. They have got a village note in every province prepared during the survey administration. This is subject to revision every ten years. What has happened to those Provincial Governments? Why do they not give the average produce estimate in those areas? (*An Honourable Member on the Government Benches*: "They are out of date".) They may be out of date but you cannot say that no statistics are available. Strictly speaking, even if you procure the statistics this year, they will not be reliable next year.

Then, Sir, there are other areas which are not permanently settled areas like the U. P., the Punjab. You must have got up-to-date reports about the production in those parts as they are prepared by the Patwari every two or three years and those reports should have been available as they form the basis of the taxation on land in those provinces. To say that no report whatever is available is a thing which no reasonable person can accept.

The Food Secretary has referred to the monopoly scheme which he now proposes to introduce in my province of Bihar. I do not know how it has worked in the other provinces but the danger is that they will do it in the same bureaucratic fashion as they have been used to do all these years. They have not been able to get the co-operation or the support of the leaders of public opinion, because they have a knack of doing everything in the bureaucratic fashion which turns everything into a tyranny and does not benefit the people. If you want to work the procurement plan in the three provinces in which you have included Bihar, you must try to have the support of the non-official sections whose support and whose advice would take away the tyranny of officialdom and bureaucracy which you have been used to. If you give the procurement and the monopoly to be arranged by the police, the police only know the methods to which they have been trained for. That is the only thing which has got to be borne in mind when this is brought into existence in my province of Bihar.

About the Grow More Food campaign the Honourable Secretary was not very clear in giving the details to this House in his speech. The last speaker Sir Phiroze Kharegat gave a more real picture of the whole arrangement. Figures have been quoted of the subsidies, contributions and loans amounting to nearly 4 crores of rupees for this purpose. The position is that for securing these 4 crores a like amount must have been spent by the landowners in giving away bribes to the officials who were responsible for sanctioning and distributing this money. In Bihar if one applied for an irrigation scheme of Rs. 10,000, half the amount would have to be given to the overseer and the other officials who are responsible for sanctioning the money.

**The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava** (Food Member): You should have reported the matter.

**Mr. Muhammad Nauman**: I know that many of the landholders did it. I know we cannot help it. I am now reporting it to the public through this House. Although the amount provided, namely, 4 crores is a meagre amount, compared with what is needed, the scheme is certainly a good one and it would have given some relief but for the mal-administration and the mal-distribution of the whole fund at the hands of these small officials; this has been of not much use. Supposing I apply for an irrigation scheme of Rs. 10,000, if I do not bribe the overseer and the officials concerned they will say that the scheme was not good enough and they will say 'Rupees one thousand will serve the

[Mr. Muhammad Nauman]

purpose.' For securing a subsidy of Rs. 5,000 from Government you have to spend 2,500 in the way of bribes. I do not propose that the whole amount should be provided by the Government as Babu Ram Narayan Singh said, and I am prepared to say that half the money should be subscribed by the landholders or tenure holders who will have a permanent advantage of the produce but at the same time every effort should be made to see that this is done in a way in which a responsible government would do it. That is the only thing which I want to impress on the Government. Your intention may be good and except for a few officials, the way in which this has been done is such that people have not been able to take full advantage of the facilities. I trust that the Government will seriously consider this position and eliminate corrupt practices from this department.

Now, I would like to say a few words about the manures and their distribution. This should be done through an organisation of the tenure holders and landlords in every province, otherwise the whole position is reduced to this. A certain particular individual is able to get a recommendation from the Sub-Inspector of Police or some such other person that he may be supplied with manures although his may be a very small holding. In some cases manure was sold in the black market, which was very unfortunate, but these things cannot be avoided unless you have the co-operation of the people who are engaged in these vocations of life. An organisation of these people would be the best channel through whom you have to distribute manure in India.

Then, with regard to price control. The Honourable Secretary has said that he is trying to keep price control over all major food grains. Later on, he said that this was not possible about rice because prices of rice varied in different areas so much that it was not possible to fix it on an All-India price basis. The point is whether there has been a real controlled rate at which these stocks have been sold. I know that in all those areas where the controlled rate happened to be about Rs. 11 or Rs. 12 the rice has been sold at Rs. 16 or Rs. 17 in the open market. As I said earlier, what you get through rations is not sometimes fit for normal consumption of human beings. How they are procured—either through contractors or through Government agency—has not been clearly elucidated by the Secretary of the Department. What I want to impress is that some scheme should be brought in to see that the food grains is examined before it is to be rationed. If the procurement scheme is to be put on more solid lines, it is equally necessary that efforts should be made to see that nobody sells in the black market those commodities which have been controlled and for which statutory prices have been fixed. The trouble is of neighbouring markets in villages. Patna is a town where you have got rationing and there at certain rates rice is available. It may be Rs. 12 or Rs. 13 per maund. But if you just go ten miles away from Patna where there is no rationing and where there is only paper control, in those villages rice is being sold sometimes at Rs. 16 or Rs. 18 per maund. No attempt has been made to see that people do not indulge in that sort of black marketing. The Honourable Secretary has said that the tenants are not giving out the entire stock in the market because of the high prices. They have realised in last 3 years and they have better holding capacity today than they had in the pre-war days and that may be true.

Another aspect of the matter that I wish to impress upon him is this. Government has to buy at certain statutory rates, but the farmer or the tenant can sell his produce at his own rate at a place which is ten miles from that particular rationed area and it may be Rs. 3 or Rs. 4 more than what is being paid by the Government. Unless Government finds out a scheme through the monopoly purchase system by which every tenant is left out only with that much grain which is necessary for his seed purposes and for his family consumption, this kind of black-marketing cannot be stopped. And I would like to impress upon the Food Member and the Secretary that they should try to work out a scheme on these lines. When from a particular town where the

rationing scheme is being carried on the prices do not soar up to anything like what I have mentioned, then the farmers would have to sell to the Government for rationing purposes. That has been my experience in the districts of Patna and Gaya and in the villages near Calcutta as well. That is one fact which has got to be very seriously considered. I need not dwell more on the question of the Government depots because unless effort is made to improve the condition of those depots and keep food grains in a condition where it will be possible for Government to keep foodgrains in fit condition, then it means that the rationing scheme, instead of doing any good to the country, will be ultimately harmful to the people's health because you will be compelling a man to eat a deteriorated staff which is not fit for human consumption.

**Rai Bahadur Devendra Mohan Bhattacharyya** (Nominated Non-Official): Mr. President, with your permission, Sir, I begin by saying that I am quite new to this House. From what I have seen of the working of the House during the few days that I have been here, I feel, Sir, that we, the Members of the House, have probably got into a habit of condemning or censuring the Government for anything that is said or uttered by the Government. Sir, I am tempted to go further and say that we, the Members of this House, probably view with suspicion and distrust anything that is done or undertaken by the Government for running the administration. I may submit, Sir, that if we proceed in our deliberations with this spirit behind us, our decisions might not be as fair and as reasonable as they should be. May I, therefore, request my Honourable friends through you, Sir, to avoid censure motions as far as practicable and thereby create a friendly atmosphere wherein we may meet and discuss in a spirit of cordiality and arrive at decisions which will really benefit the people at large.

**Sri Venkatasubba Reddiar**: I rise on a point of order, Sir. Is the Honourable Member talking on food?

**Mr. Chairman**: The Honourable Member is making a maiden speech and I am awaiting to see whether he makes himself relevant to the motion.

**Rai Bahadur Devendra Mohan Bhattacharyya**: I am coming to the point, Sir, and say that the amendment moved by the Hon'ble Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmed for the abolition of the Department of Food is not at all reasonable. I find no grounds for accepting this amendment especially in view of the dismal picture of the food situation that has been given by some of the Honourable Members of this House. The urgency of the Food Department is all the greater at the present moment, but, Sir, not in the shape or in the form in which it exists now? I believe, Sir, that this department should be reorganised and worked out in a way which may well suit the needs of the people for whom the department is intended. I agree with my Honourable friend Sir Zia Uddin when he says that there are corruptions and malpractices in the department. I have no idea of the working at the top but I know some officers at the bottom as I hail from a rural area. These officers at the bottom are out in villages not to serve but to rob the villagers of the small they have. If the department wants to be useful to the people, the officers at the top must see that officers at the bottom are honest and sincere. These officers at the bottom should also be impressed that they are the servants and not the masters of the public who are their paymasters, and that they should behave towards the public with civility and courtesy and with every desire to help rather than to obstruct. Sir, the necessity for cultivating such an attitude should form part of a training course specially for those whose duties are likely to bring them into daily contact with the public.

Then again, Sir, I feel that the controlled prices of foodstuffs, now prevailing in the country are not such as to be within the easy reach of the majority of the population. We may remember that even during pre-war days when the market was normal many of our people had to go without a square meal although the price of rice used to vary between Rs. 8 and Rs. 4 per maund. I would therefore submit, Sir, that our first duty should be to devise

[R. B. Devendra Mohan Bhattacharya]

ways and means by which we can reduce the prices of common foodstuffs such as rice, wheat, pulses, etc., and that, I think, we can do by giving subsidies to the growers of food which will make the Grow More Food campaign a real and a living thing. I am confident, Sir, that this granting of subsidies to the growers of food is the only effective means by which we can easily lower the prices of foodstuffs without causing any hardships to the growers of food.

With these words, Sir, I oppose the amendment of the Honourable Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmed for abolition of the Food Department.

**Sri E. Venkatasubba Reddiar:** Sir, only the other day the War Secretary was telling us that India had emerged glorious from the war and the Leader of the House has been telling us that India has obtained a very great status. In the debate on the Bretton Woods Conference the Finance Member said that India has attained a status that Russia did not want and that she had occupied a place and the right to appoint one of the five temporary executive directors on that body in the Fund and the International Bank. But of what use is all this if we are not able to get what we want in order to live in this country and feed ourselves, if we are not able to get food from places where all these are being done, where the U.N.O. is going to function, where one of our Honourable Members there, is said to occupy a position in the social and economic society of the U.N.O.? If in these institutions the position held by India is what she is alleged to have and still Sir Robert Hutchings had to return from there without getting anything for which he went, all these positions are not going to get us anything. I am doubtful whether the deputation which will go soon will be able to get anything for us. The question is that immediately and within a few weeks we must tackle this problem of food. The urgency of the problem is not realised seriously by Government. When all the Governments which were fighting during the war all these years were able to save their people from death and starvation this Government never cared, either in the pre-war days or in the days when war was coming on in this country, that the people should be fed and saved from the ravages of starvation. People died from starvation only in this country in the progress of war and after the war has stopped people are going to die also. This Government is not in a position to prevent it.

Much has been said as to what should be done with reference to the food position in this country. India has always been a deficit country in food. It has always been imported. Even in the pre-war days the authorities said that more than 75 per cent. of our population was not getting even one square meal a day; the people were always starving, and only a small percentage of the population was able to get a full meal. But did Government, either before the war or after it started, think of providing sufficient foodstuffs that would be needed for the people of this country? When this country was entangled into the war they knew that all imports from outside would stop and this country would not have the means of feeding itself. All this Government knew but they were not able to act. Other Governments which were actually in the war had planned in advance and they had planned wisely. The leader of our party has told us how England had made preparations for feeding its people and how the people there have been well fed even during the war. I ask the Secretary of the Food Department whether he has made any inquiries of the buffer stocks which Britain has today. She is also competing with other nations in making demands on the Food Board. I should like to know if the Secretary of the Food Department has made any inquiries as to the amount of buffer stock in foodgrains and food articles which England has. It is a sorry tale. The statement was made by the Secretary the other day that they were not able to get lakhs of tons for India.

I now come to the southern part of India. So far as Madras is concerned it is always a deficit province. This year with regard to certain districts, Tanjore and the southern part of Madras, Godavari and Kistna districts in

the Northern parts of Madras which are all delta districts and said to be the granaries of southern India, the Tanjore district has suffered because there were no rains and sufficient water could not be supplied from Mettur dam, and the northern districts of Kistna and Godavari were affected in the middle of October by very serious cyclone and rains. The crops which were on the land have been affected. Instead of being surplus districts they, now themselves require food to be sent from other districts. The other districts in that presidency are rain-fed; they are all deficit. But somehow or other some districts which ought to have been classified as deficit have by a miscalculation been classed as surplus districts. The district from which I happen to come, *viz.*, South Arcot, is a deficit district. Of the eight talukas in that district only one is fed by a regular irrigation system and it is more or less part of the Tanjore district. These taluks are all rain-fed; they depend mainly on rains. The wet area in each taluq is very small compared to the entire area of the district, and paddy could not be raised with confidence or with success on dry lands with no facilities for irrigation.

(Some Honourable Members were talking between themselves.)

**Mr. Chairman:** Order, order.

**Sri B. Venkatasubba Reddiar:** Sir, my district has been classified as surplus. It is a misnomer. It has always been a deficit area. Rice from some other parts comes in to the market, but it is a deficit district.

So far as the present position is concerned, we have been receiving telegrams and letters from southern-most parts of our Presidency. The other day one of our co-members has received a telegram from his place Srivaikuntam. It runs as follows:

"Whole of Trichendur taluq many villages Srivikuntam taluq starving cases of few deaths reported present one-fourth ration stop even that will be unavailable next week situation worsening emergent relief needed."

There is another telegram which reads thus:

"Many starve on fourth ration only allowed some go even without that."

Telegrams and letters to that effect have been pouring in from the Ceded districts, Chittoor district, and Cuddappa district. Grain is not available. What is available has been taken away by the department under this intensive system of procuring during the last three or four months, and people in the villages are starving. People who grow the crops are starving because crops have failed and they are not able to live on what they have now harvested. . .

(It being Four of the Clock.)

**Mr. Chairman:** Order, order. The Honourable Member may perhaps resume his speech on the next day when the motion comes on. The House will now take up the adjournment motion.

#### MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT

##### INDIA'S QUOTA OF REPARATIONS FROM GERMANY AND JAPAN

**Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar** (Madras Ceded Districts and Chittoor: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I move:

"That the Assembly do now adjourn."

I want to discuss a matter of definite urgent public importance, namely, the quantum of reparations legitimately due from Germany and Japan to India, and the failure of the Government of India to get the proper quota by consenting to a very low figure out of all proportion to its sacrifices.

Sir, at the outset I would like to make it quite clear to this House and to the world at large that I do not want reparations from anybody personally, and my Party is wedded to this principle that a man, or a country, who has been forced much against its will by some exploiter—and in Germany and Japan, the Governments were responsible, not the people who were dragged into the war against their will—ought not to be taxed. It is immoral. They

[Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar]

have already had retribution; their houses have been damaged; their cities have been crushed; they have suffered as much as any other country which has been ravaged by Hitler on one side and those persons who are responsible for the Government in Japan. I, therefore, do think personally that it is not at all right to claim any reparations from these countries. They are as much in need of reconstructions. Their buildings have been lost, their cities have been ravaged, their families have gone to ruin; they have to be rehabilitated. But I find, Sir, unfortunately that is not the opinion that is shared by the so-called progressive nations in this world. Russia on the Eastern side has already taken a share for herself in Germany. The Eastern Zone has been already swallowed up. The other two portions have been divided between the two other great democracies in the world—England and the United States. Now, I am the third or the fourth power which went as a tail and which suffered most. We were dragged into the war although we had nothing to lose. God has placed India in such a position in the world that neither Germany nor Japan could reach it so easily. The first onslaught was delivered on Poland, then Holland and Belgium and then England was threatened. President Roosevelt of the great democracy of the West—America—thought that England was its first line of defence and if England should be lost, America would be in danger. Therefore he went into the war. India has no ambitions in the world; no territory to lose; and is safely in the centre of the world and could not be reached by either German or Japan mechanizations. But India was dragged into the war and its resources have been utilized to the full to bring the war to a victorious end. In the deserts of North Africa, the pure blood of India was shed. For a long time it was not possible to say whether the Axis could be defeated at all. India was responsible for changing the situation, and the largest number of Victoria Crosses have been given to the persons who went from India, who shed their blood in the northern portion of the African continent.

Sir, when I find that these three big powers are sharing all the spoils amongst themselves, I am also trying to understand as to why I should not get a share from the spoils. That is my only justification and I would like that this House should now see whether the Indian Government and the Secretary of State who is responsible for this administration have played their part at all well. Russia has taken away 50 per cent. of all that could be got from Germany; Barring what is necessary for the day to day administration in Germany and its current needs, the rest is being taken away either by Russia or by the United States of America, England, France or any of the other countries. Out of all this 50 per cent. is taken by Russia. It has kept the Eastern Zone and has also claimed 25 per cent. of all the capital goods that are available, all the assets that are lying in any of the neutral countries and also products that may be surplus year after year until the year 1948. That is the arrangement. She was not even a party to a conference that was held at Paris—18 nations assembled and India was also represented—to divide what? not hundred per cent. out of which shares may be given to various parties that took part in this war or who suffered damage or shed their blood, but Russia kept aloof because it already swallowed up 50 per cent. of it—a major slice. The balance of 50 per cent. alone was divided amongst other countries. In so dividing the United States of America got 28 per cent., England got 28 per cent., France got 16 per cent., and we got 2 per cent. We are the 10th in the list, though we fought side by side with the United Kingdom and the United States of America. We were second in the battlefield, but we are the ninth or tenth in the matter of reparation; our sacrifices are second in the world, our rewards have been thrown into the background. That is the position which India has been shown. My Honourable friend, Sir Azizul Huque, who has now come to reply to this debate, knows as little about this Conference as I know. He did not go there. He never thought it was his duty. He thought it was his duty to gather all his force here, send men and

try to turn every mill for the production of war goods, but when the bigger powers were sharing the spoils this man kept mum. That is the way that man behaves. It is to censure him. He deserves all the blame. Did he submit a memorandum of what is due to us? France claimed 20,000 million dollars as damages in volumes that ran into over a thousand pages. Was any memorandum submitted by India?

**The Honourable Dr. Sir M. Azizul Huque** (Commerce Member): Certainly!

**Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar**: For what? Just two loose sheets of paper claiming £60 million! Whereas France claimed 20,000 million dollars, the United States 6,000 million dollars, the United Kingdom 98,000 million dollars, but only £60 million claimed by India. He sent a Joint Secretary of his Department to the reparations conference. But the Secretary did not stay there long. He had to be called away. Another gentleman, Mr. B. K. Nehru had also been sent with the Joint Secretary. He also came away. One came away before starting the conference and the other man left before it closed. This is the delegation which represented us at that conference.

Let us see what that conference decided and on what basis. President Roosevelt said that the basis of calculation of reparations shall be in proportion to the sacrifices. So far as India is concerned, the sacrifice has been out of all proportion to her capacity to sacrifice. But this was not taken into account, though I find from the proceedings that Mr. Iyengar has done his best.

**The Honourable Dr. Sir M. Azizul Huque**: You said he left before the Conference met.

**Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar**: At the initial stages he said a few words. I am grateful for that. But you are not even doing that much. He wanted to say that India had suffered more than was consistent with her capacity to sacrifice. India's annual income is only Rs. 64 per head whereas in the United States it is 1,500 and in the United Kingdom 1,000. Should we not assess our sacrifice at that? Before the war defence expenditure was 44 crores: during the war it rose to 350 crores a year. What about the sterling balances? They are hanging in the balance. Sterling balances are all debts. We have paid for all the expenditure that was incurred for war purposes in the United Kingdom and in this country. The assessment proceeded on three heads (1) the budgetary expenditure (2) sacrifice of men and (3) damage to property. So far as the budgetary expenditure is concerned, the amounts are manipulated by my friends on the other side while our men, women and children starved—all that should have been taken into consideration. Every field of activity in the country was utilised for war purposes and every civilian spent 75 per cent. of his time doing work for the war. The other parties to the conference treated our man differently because his budget was small and the Secretary of State refused to co-operate. In the words of Mr. H. R. V. Iyengar (I am reading from the *Statesman*—not a very friendly paper to India):

“Throughout the Conference the Indian Office kept out of it and if the delegation needed any instructions it got them straight from New Delhi.”

There, this New Delhi—we have already had an inkling of what it gave. The Secretary of State was there and he did not give any instructions. Poor Mr. Iyengar, even before he left he had to drift for himself and the other man drifted away. The correct amount that was spent by India for the western war was not given before that Conference and on that basis it was not assessed. Apart from any pecuniary conditions, sacrifice should have been the first consideration. Why should I fight this war? Why should I help the other countries to get out of it and then be given tenth place? Marshal Petain said let us keep our children, women and men together. Our population has gone down. During this period let us increase our population. If I had been to the conference I would have told him that it was enough that he got back his freedom and that he ought not to ask for reparations. You must pay any

[Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar]  
price for this freedom. Czecho-slovakia and the other countries have got back their freedom. Why should they have reparations also?

Secondly, so far as the assessment is concerned, they have not taken some other things into account. What was exactly drawn for defence expenditure we do not know. There are the sterling balances and the privations that we have undergone. So far as men are concerned, it is said that on the battlefield 9,000 people alone died. I am wondering how only 9,000 could have died out of 2 million raised without conscription. How many were raised in the United Kingdom? There was no conscription here. For bread and butter our people sold themselves in this country. What a large number of people have sacrificed their lives? You say 9,000. In Bengal 3 million died from famine. Even then so far as the death rate is concerned that figure is not quite correct. Poor, Mr. Iyengar, could not press his case. Otherwise he would have lost his job. The third one was damage to property. True it is that the bomb did not directly fall on this land in many places but hunger has taken a heavier toll. My honourable lady friend spoke to you at length in a beautiful speech and showed you that the whole country was in the throes of famine or pestilence. Has the atomic bomb done more harm than the ravages due to starvation? Therefore, this damage ought to have been taken into account. And why only 2 per cent. allowed for us? It is true you are giving us capital goods. But they are such useless machinery, machinery not needed in the United Kingdom or in the United States. I may have the High Commissioner for India sitting in Council and allocating to us some of the old machinery.

**Mr. Chairman:** Order, order. The Honourable Member has exhausted his time.

**Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar:** I thought there was one minute more!

**Mr. Chairman:** Order, order. Motion moved:

"That the Assembly do now adjourn."

**The Honourable Dr. Sir M. Azizul Huque:** Sir, I was feeling some hesitation after the clear, demonstrative and devastating logic of my Honourable friend and his rigid adherence to exactitude and truth and I thought that I might wait till I heard others who are inexact and may not possess as much logic as is presented by my Honourable friend from that side!

Sir, my friend in his adjournment motion did not abide by the rules and regulations of the House. He thought probably that this might be an occasion not only to censure the Government of India but Russia, President Roosevelt, the Secretary of State, almost everybody that he could think of. I come as a very small fry and I do not think I need cover all the ground that my friend has covered. All I can say is that those who have some regard for truth and fact would recognise that myself and the Department of Commerce at least for a year have been pressing hard on all sides and it is not a fact that we are sitting mum all the time.

The question of Reparations goes back to February 1945, when the heads of the three big powers met at Yalta. The decision was arrived at there that reparations are to be based on the organisation of victory, on the burden of war and losses suffered. The next stage came at Potsdam. In July a conference of the heads of the three powers met and it ended in the signing of the Berlin Protocol, on the 1st of August 1945 and thereby the western zone of Germany and appropriate German external assets were left to meet the reparations of the U. K., the United States of America and other Allied countries excluding the U. S. S. R. and Poland. The Paris Conference was thereafter convened to discuss the respective reparation schemes and the data, on which we were asked to base our reparations claim, where loss of life involved, damage to property through enemy action, budgetary war cost and man power allocable to the war. Ever since this reparation question was discussed, even before the Potsdam Conference was convened, we pressed very strongly that apart from

the basic principles enunciated, not merely physical damages but human sufferings arising out of the conditions of the war must be taken into account. The Government of India specially emphasised that in assessing the Reparations claims human suffering arising out of the war conditions should and must be taken into consideration. In fact the attitude of India was that the allocation of reparations on a bare statistical basis of the data supplied by or called for from the different countries would be wholly unjust. We could not forget the grievous loss of life in the Bengal famine. My friend from the South was very far off. I am aware of the history. We could not also lose sight of the grim time we and our people, especially the poorer classes, had to pass through in conditions of war, in our direct sacrifices and contributions, in starvation and in the deprivation of the essential supplies.

The Paris Conference was called from the 9th November till the 21st December. With election on and with no Legislature it was not possible for us to think of anybody except a strong official delegation. Mr. Iyengar, Mr. Nehru and Mr. Radbone who is the Custodian of Enemy Property in India, were sent in the delegation with Mr. Iyengar as the head. I can assure my friend that it was not an easy task for the delegation. Most of the continental delegates had never heard of the Bengal famine and its death role, and it is a well known fact that India is so little known or understood outside India. I pay my tribute to Mr. Iyengar, the leader of the delegation, who did not leave his place till the entire result was practically concluded. Our delegates tried hard and my friends should realise more and more that international conferences are not merely the result of the formal discussions. They arise out of private talks, negotiations, informal discussions and various other categories or methods which are followed in all international discussions.

When the Conference met on the 9th November all the countries represented there put forward their claims based on the totality of their efforts against Germany on the basis of physical damages, on the basis of the budgetary war cost, loss of life and the total of man power allocable to war effort. The case of India was different and our delegates were fully instructed, and at the plenary conference Mr. Iyengar, the head of the delegation, gave a speech on behalf of India stating India's standpoint. I do not think it is necessary for me to say anything more as to the nature of our instructions than to read out a few extracts from Mr. Iyengar's speech at the Conference and I challenge my friend, at least if he has a conscience, to tell us as to whether we have not presented the case of India as best as we possibly could.

This is the speech:

"But I suggest that the Conference should go behind these figures and consider what is the human sacrifice involved in this expenditure. India is one of the poorest countries in the world with an appallingly low standard of living. She has, for generations, been underfed, underclothed and underhoused. Whereas in economically advanced countries the war has meant that luxuries have had to be eliminated, in India it has meant that people who already were undernourished had still less to eat, and people already underclothed still less to wear. In other words, while in one case it was the sacrifice, relatively speaking, of luxuries, in our case it has meant a sacrifice of the barest essentials of life. To take only one example, when we agreed to divert our supply of cloth for defence purposes it meant that the consumption *per capita* which was as low as 16 yards per year—one of the lowest in the world—dropped still further to 12 yards. In terms, therefore, of the privation involved, the effort represented by any budgetary figure is vastly greater in the case of India than in the case of the European countries and the U.S.A.

For instance, the *per capita* income in rupees of some of the countries represented here just before the war was as follows:

U.S.A. 1406.  
Canada 1038.  
U.K. 980.  
Australia 792.  
France 621.

The *per capita* income of India was only 65 rupees per year.

The third feature which is unique in the case of India is the Bengal famine. We have read with much sympathy the accounts given in the memoranda of the other countries of the undernourishment, and indeed of starvation, which has occurred in different parts of Europe, but I venture to suggest that in no country have we witnessed during the war a tragedy of the colossal dimensions that we had to witness in Bengal. There are no exact

[Dr. Sir M. Azizul Huque]

figures of the deaths that occurred during the Bengal famine directly as a result of starvation" (*I hope my friend will note here as to what we said*) "but the lowest figure, which has been adopted recently by the official commission of inquiry appointed by the Government of India, is 1½ million. This tragedy could have been averted in normal times by the import of foodstuffs into India and by provision of transport, which was woefully short in Bengal. It was because of the necessity of building up for D-Day that the ships could not be diverted to India."

Therefore, he was on safe ground in putting forward that famine was the direct consequence of war.

Sir, this is the speech. If this speech was not there, and we had not taken that attitude, then our share on the basis of damages to property would have been 0.1 per cent. Our share would have been only half per cent. on the basis of budgetary cost and it would have been 3/4 per cent. on the basis of loss of life. India's case was pressed very strongly and the proposal of Indian delegates was that the loss of life attributable to war both in the armed forces and the civilian population should be treated as an important factor in the allocation of reparations. This was unanimously accepted by the committee of heads of all delegations and ultimately agreed to by the conference. Thus, Bengal famine and the difficult position of India owing to the food situation was treated as an important factor in considering India's share. This would not have been possible if our delegates had not taken that line. The principle was also accepted by the heads of all delegations that some consideration should be shown to India in the allocation of reparation for reasons contained in the speech which I just now read out. In fact in spite of the principles having been accepted, while the actual allocation was being discussed in private circles, we gathered that it would probably be not more than one per cent. or thereabouts. Our delegates made it quite clear and very strongly protested against any such inadequate figure. By personal contacts and by private discussions, the Indian delegates pressed their case throughout and claimed a larger share, and the result was two per cent. as regards basic items and 2.7 per cent. as regards plants and capital goods and equipment. I might say here in this connection that later on it was the considered view of many delegates at the conference that we have pulled up very well and that we should make some sacrifice in order to accommodate some other countries which have been hard hit as a result of the allocation by the final Reparations conference. But we stuck to our position. I feel that our delegates did extraordinarily well in the matter of representation of India's case. I think it is a cruel tragedy of life that men who have fought India's case in that manner should be told that they are at the beck and call of the Secretary of State and that they would be dismissed by the Secretary of State if they acted against his wishes. I realise that public life would be impossible in any country if people who are fighting the country's battle are decried and the value of their work belittled.

In this case, we are exactly doing the same thing so far as Japanese reparations are concerned. My Honourable friends should at the same time remember that it is not the total cost of war that can go in consideration of reparations against a country. It is an allocation of a part which might be attributed to that country. In other words, our total budgetary cost is to go into two heads, namely, that which we should get from Japan and that which we should get from Germany. Therefore, let him not run away with the idea that the figure we presented represents the total budgetary cost, or the total estimated value of the loss which is the result of this war.

We are pursuing this matter from day to day and even just now. My Honourable friend is totally wrong in thinking that we have failed in our duty in the case of Japanese reparations. My Honourable friend perhaps does not know that the question of Japanese reparations has not yet been settled. It is still in the stage of discussion. As we have done in the case of Germany we are following the same policy. I do not belong to that faith in which I might say that I do not believe in this war, that I do not want any reparations and yet we criticise those who fight the battle of India. I hold that I am not in agreement

with my Honourable friend. In spite of what my Honourable friends say that we have not done our duty that we have sat mum, it will not take away for a moment the effect of what we have done and what we propose to do still further. So long as I am in charge of this Department, I can assure the House that I will do my best. We have already done our best to get the best possible terms, and our delegates to whom again I pay my tribute again have done their very best in this matter.

**Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar:** May I know from the Honourable Member . . . . .

**Mr. Chairman:** Is the Honourable Member exercising his right of reply?

**Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar:** No, Sir. I am only seeking information. May I know from the Honourable Member if he is making progress with respect to the negotiations with Japan? If so, what place we are likely to have in that.

**The Honourable Dr. Sir M. Azizul Huque:** I already said that we are still in the negotiation stage and it is not possible for me to say anything until at least the preliminary matters are settled. As I said before, I have been behind it.

**Sri T. V. Satakopachari** (Tanjore *cum* Trichinopoly: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I rise to support the motion for adjournment. I was listening with interest to the speech made by the Honourable Member for Government. Sir, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. The Honourable Member for Government read something from a prepared memorandum, which I believe the delegate may or may not have read at the conference. I very much doubt whether he read it.

**The Honourable Dr. Sir M. Azizul Huque:** I could not catch the Honourable Member.

**Sri T. V. Satakopachari:** I was saying that I was very much in doubt whether that memorandum would have been read at the conference. My reason for saying so is this. You have got a good case, but you lost it. Why did you lose it? In ordinary circumstances, there is an advocate and he is entrusted with a good case. He is briefed in right and proper fashion, but he loses the case. What is the inference? It is due to the bad advocacy. If the Government of India had engaged these delegates to plead the case and they lost the case, then the Government of India deserve to be censured. They cannot escape censure. The Government of India cannot say, we had a good case, but there was a bad court. I submit they had a good case, but they prepared a bad memorandum and chose the wrong delegates. What business had they to choose the wrong delegates. Why did you lose your self respect for this paltry two per cent. by pleading your case before the conference. Why did you not say: I do not want any reparations at all? My Honourable friend took credit for having fought the battle. Which battle, may I ask? The Westerners have said, "we have fought a war to end all wars". The same Westerners are sitting up at the peace table to end all peace in the world. That is what they are doing. I ask you, Sir, what is the battle that these people have fought for which they take credit. What is the single point on which they can take credit. I find they are tied to the chariot wheels of the British Empire and so they lost the case.

**The Honourable Dr. Sir M. Azizul Huque:** I am afraid my Honourable friend is misrepresenting me. I never said so.

**Sri T. V. Satakopachari:** If India had been an independent country, and if the Honourable Member had been a Member of an elected Government, then that elected Government would have been kicked out long ago by the vote of the country, because the country would have said, 'you went there and lost a good case'. We know very well, Sir, that in the army when people are fighting—the same thing happened in the recent war also—several Generals who had previous good record and who were efficient, if they are not able to make headway in a particular place, if they fight and lose battle, they are replaced by other more capable men. I ask you, Sir, is this not a fit case to censure Government.

[Sri T. V. Satakopachari]

There was a good case which was lost on account of bad handling by the Government. I find from the principles enunciated in Oppenheim's International law that it is not only material wrong that is taken into account in the way of reparations, it is also moral injury that has been suffered by people that is taken into account. You might have put in your memorandum, but did you press your case with all vigour? Were you given a good hearing? Were you really satisfied that you were heard? No, I do not think so. If really you had pressed your case and pressed it hard with vigour, then this would not have been the result.

Then, Sir, the Honourable Member for Government pleaded, "we have not yet discussed fully the question of reparations from Japan". We all know the question is still pending there. This motion for adjournment is really to censure the Government for having lost their case in the matter of reparations from Germany and it is a warning that they should not similarly lose their case with regard to Japanese reparations.

**The Honourable Dr. Sir M. Azizul Huque:** Why don't you yourself go to the conference then?

**Sri T. V. Satakopachari:** Let us get to your seat and then you will see whether we really maintain the reputation of the country and get damages and reparations for injuries in right proper fashion. We will certainly give respect to people who fight our case properly. You may take it that when this country gets independence and goes to any international sphere, then it will be respected, it will be admired, everything that it says will be heard with great respect. It is because this reparation question is pending in the case of Japan that we have tabled this motion for adjournment. We really feel that the case should not be lost on account of the mishandling by Government. Let us no more hear from the Government, "we have prepared a good memorandum, we have presented our case well, but we lost the case". I suggest that better men ought to be sent this time at least so that we can achieve better results. Sir, I support the motion for adjournment.

(At this stage Mr. President resumed the Chair.)

**Mr. President:** The question is:

"That the Assembly do now adjourn."

The motion was negatived.

#### ELECTION OF THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT

**Mr. President:** I have to announce in accordance with Standing Order 5(b) of the Legislative Assembly Standing Orders that I received by 12 noon on Friday, the 1st February, three notices in all nominating the following two candidates for election to the office of Deputy President, namely:

1. Sardar Mangal Singh,
2. Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan.

The names of the proposers and seconders are as follows:

For Sardar Mangal Singh.

*Proposers.*

Maharajkumar Dr. Sir Vijaya Ananda.

*Secunder.*

Captain Sardar Harender Singh.

For Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan.

*Proposers.*

1. Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad,
2. Haji Abdus Sattar Haji Ishaq Seth.

*Seconders.*

1. Maulana Zafar Ali Khan,
2. Seth Yusuf Abdoola Haroon.

As there are more candidates than one, the ballot for this election will, as announced by me in the House on Monday, the 28th January, be held on Tuesday the 5th February, 1946.

**Sjt. N. V. Gadgil** (Bombay Central Division: Non-Muhammadian Rural): Now that the House has rejected the adjournment motion, I suggest we should continue the Food Debate until 5 o'clock and then adjourn.

**Shalkh Rafiuddin Ahmad Siddiquee** (Chittagong Division: Muhammadian Rural): May I rise to a point of order? We cannot conduct any further business and the House should adjourn now. Otherwise the adjournment motion has no value.

**Sjt. N. V. Gadgil**: But the House refused to pass the adjournment motion.

**Shalkh Rafiuddin Ahmad Siddiquee**: This is an important matter. I should like to have your ruling on this point.

**Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad** (United Provinces Southern Division: Muhammadian Rural): The usual procedure is that if we decide that the House should not adjourn, then the normal work should continue. The Food Debate should continue till 5 of the clock.

**Mr. President**: That is exactly what I was thinking. The motion for adjournment having been rejected, the House continues its normal business.

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

**Mr. President**: The House will now resume discussion of Food debate.

**Sri R. Venkatasubba Reddiar**: Sir, I was referring to the large number of telegrams and letters received from several parts of my Presidency about food shortage which is being experienced in several parts there. The system of allotment to various districts is not working efficiently. No grain really went to Tinnevely. What was required for consumption in Tinnevely was to be sent from Travancore. They did not consume so much there and it was decided that Travancore should send 8,000 tons to Tinnevely for the months of December and January. Out of the 8,000 tons which were allotted to be sent to Tinnevely from Travancore, only 4,000 tons reached them. We are on the 1st February today. January has passed. Four thousand tons of grain are stocked idle on the borders of the land. There is only a hill between Tinnevely district and Travancore State. No sufficient efforts have been taken by the Department to import those 4,000 tons of food grains into Tinnevely district as per the telegram which I read out. People are suffering and are on the point of death through starvation. This is the state of affairs in the Madras presidency. We have also got to consider with regard to procurement, distribution, rationing and the price offered to the producer. With regard to procurement I have read in the publications that procuring is being done on a more efficient scale in Madras than in other provinces. I do not know from what record or from what source this information is being collected and circulated. I am one of those who has been the victim of procurement which is adopted by the Madras Government there. The Revenue Inspector goes to a village, gets hold of the village officer, the *karnam* or the village headman. He simply asks him, what have you got. The Revenue Inspector does not care to leave there what is required for the cultivator's consumption till the next harvest, or for seeds for the next crop year, or for the farm servants who are paid not in cash but in kind. Thus, he never takes care to calculate what should be left. Even if he calculates, the calculation is always on the wrong side. Just a month before a system of intensive procuring was adopted in the villages. These officials went to the villages. They did not give prior notice of their arrival there. When they were in the village they could not expect the ryots in their villages. When they had gone to the fields or they were absent these people did not care to wait. They broke open the locks of the houses and the doors of the rooms where the grains were kept. They laid their hands on whatever was available and without leaving a grain in some cases they removed everything.

I have a still harder case to mention. In a particular village the headman was at loggerheads with a scheduled caste person. That man had a bag of ragi which he wanted to keep till the next harvest which is about next August or

[SRI R. Venkatasubha Reddiar]

September. The Revenue Inspector and the village headman both combined and asked the scheduled caste man to purchase grain from his neighbour to make up the deficiency for that one bag and took that one bag. This is the sort of procuring that is being done. How it is being done and why it is being done in that manner I shall explain. These Revenue Inspectors and Tahsildars have no experience of the work. They never dreamt that they would rise to more than head clerks or upper division clerks. They have been promoted to these higher positions due to the exigencies of the war. People who are not competent to handle these matters have been entrusted with this work which they could not do well. They expect further promotions and when they come back from the village and report that they have been able to procure so much, these Tahsildars and revenue inspectors think that the next day they would be promoted to the collectorship of the district. That is what prompts them to act in this way. These have to be taken note of by the Government in working out their procurement scheme. If grains are not procured and they are not willingly offered, they resort to a system of requisitioning. What is the scale on which this requisitioning is being done. We have got D.S.Os., T.S.Os., F.S.Os. and ever so many S.Os. They are let loose on the villagers and the producers, who are at the mercy of these people. These people have no responsibility for seeing that enough is left in the villages for the consumption of the people there. That is the way in which these people have been behaving and how is this being distributed. Each village in those parts is not a self-contained village. Each village is not able to maintain itself from what is produced in that village. In every village, it is only a small percentage of the people, who cultivate, have a surplus. The rest of the people are landless manual labourers who are not able to keep any grain. They live on what they can get from day to day. From those places grain is sought to be procured. This grain is being taken away to places 10 or 15 miles away and then they do not care to calculate the needs of the village, whether the grain that is taken away will be required for the needs of the villagers themselves who are landless people there. When we ask why this is done the reply is—we will supply you immediately and we are in a position to get further supplies from foreign countries, from other districts and other provinces.

How is it again distributed. The grain is taken from the villagers' possession. From that village it is transported to some place 10 or 15 miles away. The cost of transport is added to its cost and also the commission of the various middlemen and when the grain comes back to the village, all this cost is added to the price. The grain is taken at a certain price and delivered at a different price. Is this the way in which it should be distributed?

So far as rationing is concerned, I have many grievances. A statement has been published. It is a combined statement by both the Agricultural and Food Departments. I calculate from this that 99 million tons are required for the whole of India in order to give the people a balanced diet. When this is divided among the population of this country it works out at 1½ pounds per head. Now, we are told we are being given one pound per head per day. If we are given one pound per day and if the Food Department thinks that one pound per day is sufficient, then why this 1½ pounds which they require further. I am not able to understand what it means. By balanced diet is meant a diet which will keep the people healthy. If with the one pound of cereals that we are now allowed we are told that 1½ pounds more is required, I ask this Department what they were doing so far to get that. It is not only cereals. It is not only grains. There are so many other things they should have managed to get all these years. It is all right for people living in the towns to have one lb. of cereals because they have recourse to other things, such as, vegetables, eggs, fish, meat and pulses in addition to the cereals. If you allot that one lb. to the manual labourer in the village or the manual labourer in the towns who is working for a few annas, I ask you how that one lb. will be sufficient for him? In most cases I have seen that one lb. was not sufficient even for one meal for a

manual labourer working in the field. He requires more than 2 lbs. A soldier in the war was allowed 1½ lbs. of cereals besides what he was getting in the shape of pulses, eggs, butter, and other things. Convicts in jail are allowed 16 ounces of cereals besides pulses and other foodgrains. Famine allowances are much more than this. I do not know who fixed this one lb. average for the consumption of the people in this country and for the consumption of those who daily toil for the production of these grains and who produce these grains by their sweat.

Now, Sir, I would like to make a few observations upon the price that is offered to the producer. I have always heard it said that the prices that are now prevailing have been fixed more with the consideration of the convenience of the consumer. If you take into consideration only the convenience of the consumer, then what is to happen to the producer, who has been suffering all these days? The agriculturist was leading an uneconomic life in the pre-war days. He is leading or made to lead an uneconomic life even now. During the pre-war days neither this Government nor anybody else took care of him; they never had a thought of him; they never interfered on his behalf; and they never went to his rescue when he was leading an uneconomic life. Now, when they find that he is making some money, they are offering a price which is not at all paying to the producer. What is the price that is offered? In December last I sold paddy at Rs. 5 per maund and the cost of producing a maund I shall give just now. According to the figures furnished by the Food Department, the average production per acre is 10 maunds. 10 × 5 comes to Rs. 50. That is the cost of grain to the cultivator. And what are his expenses? Have they been taken into consideration by the Department when they fixed the prices? On a very careful examination and calculation I shall give that the cost of production per acre comes to about Rs. 130, including his land revenue. I shall give the details of his cost. He has to prepare the seed beds; he has to raise the seedlings; and then he has to prepare the land and plough it and make it ready for plantation. Then, he has to transplant the harvest and take grain.

**Mr. President:** Is the Honourable Member likely to take long?

**Sri R. Venkatasubba Reddiar:** I will require, Sir, another 10 minutes.

**Mr. President:** Then, the House may now adjourn till Monday.

The Assembly then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Monday, the 4th February, 1946.