

system, it is very meagre. So, I request the hon. Finance Minister to make adequate financial provision for having an effective Public Distribution System.

Mr. Chairman : May I please ask you how much time you will need ?

Prof. K. V. Thomas : Madam, I would like to continue tomorrow.

Mr. Chairman : The hon. Member will continue tomorrow. Now, we will start the discussion under rule 193.

[*Translation*]

Shri Madan Lal Khurana (South Delhi) : Madam Chairman, an assurance was given in the morning that a clarification on the statement made by Shri Ramamurthy would be given in the evening before the House adjourns. We would like to know from the Leader of the House or from the Home Minister whether such a statement was given. This assurance was given. No Minister is here to reply.

(*Interruptions*).

[*English*]

Shri Chandra Jeet Yadav (Azamgarh) : Madam Chairman, this is a very relevant point. It was demanded by all sections of the House. The Speaker gave a direction and the Leader of the House said that he would try his best to inform this House today. Now, today's sitting is coming to an end. Somebody should come and tell as to what efforts have been made and what is the position. They cannot take the House for granted. Once a categorical assurance is given here, the House must be taken into confidence. We would like to know as to whether the Leader of the House is coming to make the statement or not.

[*Translation*].

Shri Rabi Ray (Kendrapada) : Madam Chairman, I raised this issue in the House. It was discussed here for nearly 40 minutes. The ruling given by the Speaker was that the Government would make a statement before this sitting of the House comes to an end. Observing the mood of the House, the treasury benches did not raise any objection. It shows the failure of the Government, if it is unable to obtain information from a Minister who has gone to Madras. If they do not make the statement, it means that they knowingly want to mislead the House. The entire country is waiting to know whether Shri Ramamurthy is a Member of the Council of Ministers. It is very important. Shri Chavan is present here.

[*English*]

He is a Senior Member of the Cabinet. He is also the Home Minister. The Home Minister is sitting here. I think, he can send for Mr. Ramamurthy, can contact him and ascertain his views. This is very simple. (*Interruptions*).

Shri Anbarasu Era (Madras Central) : In the absence of the Minister concerned, let us wait for his coming back. Let him come and give his personal explanation. What is the hurry ?

Shri Rabi Ray : I have never heard such an incident before. A member of the Council of Ministers who is holding an independent charge of Labour has categorically stated that he does not agree with the Government view of referring the Cauvery dispute to the Supreme Court. That means he differs from the Central Cabinet. That is the reason why the House should know. My point is, you may direct the Government to tell us what is the situation before the House rises for the day.

Shri A. Charles (Trivandrum) : I would plead with you to check up the proceedings. My information is

that no such assurance was given that it will be given today. He said, "as far as possible". There was no assurance.

[Translation]

Shri Madan Lal Khurana : It is known to the entire House that an assurance was given....(Interruptions). It was said that they would do "as far as possible" before the sitting of the House comes to an end. What has been done? Was he contacted...

(Interruptions).

My submission is that the Government should officially state what efforts have been made. The House should be told whether contact was made with Shri Ramamurthy. Why the House is being taken so lightly? The Speaker had said that a statement would be made before the sitting came to an end. It was the mood of the House at that time....(Interruptions). would like to know about the further progress.

[English]

Shri Guman Mal Lodha (Pai) : The action of the Minister is total contempt of the Supreme Court because the matter is *sub judice* and no Member can make adverse comment on the issue. This is a very serious matter. If the Minister can go and condemn it, the Supreme Court judge will say, "We will not go into the matter, if some of the Members in the Council of Ministers themselves are against this." It is contempt of the Supreme Court.

Shri Nirmal Kanti Chatterjee : He is concerned with the court. I am concerned with the people's court.

There was a promise made in the morning. We are not exactly sure how far Madras is from New Delhi. Mr. Chidambaram can enlighten us how long it takes us to reach Madras either by radio or by telecommunication or by FAX. (Interruptions).

In the morning after a good deal of discussion, the House took a consensus view that urgent steps would be made and in the course of the day, contact would be established and a statement would be made in the House.

Now we are taking up an issue which also relates to Tamil Nadu but we have not heard from anyone from the Government what efforts have been undertaken up to now and with what kind of consequence. We do not still know whether the Minister has made a statement contradicting the decision of the Council of Ministers. Is it true that he has the support of the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu unlike Mr. Chidambaram whom she has decided to boycott and he is rather sorry for that?

Shri Somnath Chatterjee (Bolpur) : Mr. Chidambaram is not sorry.

Shri Nirmal Kanti Chatterjee : Madam, the Ministers are there and a very Senior Cabinet Minister is here.

The Minister of Home Affairs (Shri S. B. Chavan) : May I say something? Madam Chairman, you have heard the views from both the sides and you are pleased to state that you will check up the records and find out as to whether the statement is to be made before the House rises for the day or after sometime when the information becomes available. If the information is not available, then certainly Government will have to make a statement after the information becomes available. But unless you check up the record, I do not think that we can possibly debate the same thing. This discussion under 193 is going to take some time. Before that, if the information becomes available, certainly they will make a statement.

Shri Nirmal Kanti Chatterjee : After one hour, we will try to know the position from you.

Shri S. B. Chavan : *He said that he will try his best to get the message.*

Shri K. V. Thangabalu (Dharmapuri) : If the hon. Leader of the House gets the message, certainly he will come to the House. Mr. Ramamurthy is not here in town. It is wellknown. He is away in Madras. The moment he comes, he will be allowed to make a statement on his own. That is better. The Government have very clearly said that they will do their best.

Shri Chandra Jeet Yadav : It is not a question of record or something like that. I do not know whether you were present in the House at that time or not. The whole thrust of the debate was that a Minister has made a public statement, has abandoned his collective responsibility as a Minister. I would like to know whether he can make a statement without resigning from the Government on such an important issue which is a very great national sensitive issue. Even the Leader of the Opposition intervened three times and everybody including Mr. Raj Ray said that this is an urgent matter. This is an important issue. Madras is not far away. You have many other ways to reach your Minister. Please find out and make the statement today. The whole thrust was that today at the earliest the statement should be made. In reply to that, the Leader of the House said "I will try my best". Now, let him come and say at least whether he has tried, whether he could not reach him or whether he has got some information. Let him come and tell the House. It is a question of taking the House seriously. This is what we demand before the House rises. That is all.

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs and Minister of State in the Ministry of Law, Justice and Company Affairs (Shri Rangarajan Kumaramangalam) : Madam Chairperson, let me have your attention for a moment. The issue is that in the morning the Leader of the House categorically stated that he would try his best to get the information and report to the House, if possible, today. The information which we have at the moment is that the hon. Minister of Labour is on his way to Delhi by the evening flight. He has already started from Madras. I think the normal landing is at 6.40 PM. If the House is going on when he comes, we will inform the House. Otherwise definitely tomorrow.

Shri Chandra Jeet Yadav : I think that is enough.

Mr. Chairman : I think that is enough.

Shri A. Charles : Some hon. Members of the Opposition have stated that a categorical assurance was given by the hon. Speaker that the information available will be given to this august House today. If my memory is correct, no such assurance was given. So, some of the hon. Members have tried to mislead the House. I would request the hon. Chairperson to check up the proceedings and let us know the correct position.

Mr. Chairman : No more time should be spent on this. If the other side is satisfied with the statement made by the Minister, I think we should proceed to our next item. Before that, there is a message from Rajya Sabha. I call upon the Secretary-General to convey that message to the House.