

introduce a Bill further to amend the Constitution of India.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the Constitution of India."

The motion was adopted.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: I introduce the Bill.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE (New Delhi): Sir. I would like to apologise to the House for not being present at 3 o'clock. I was under the impression that non-official business would be taken up at 3.30 p.m.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is all right.

CONSTITUTION (AMENDMENT)
BILL*

(Amendment of articles 124, 125,
etc.)

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE (New Delhi): I beg to move to for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the Constitution of India.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the Constitution of India."

The motion was adopted.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE:
I introduce†† the Bill.

17.30 hrs.

HALF-AN-HOUR DISCUSSION

UNIFORM PROCEDURE FOR SALE OF COM-
MODITIES AT FAIR PRICE SHOPS

SHRI T. R. SHAMANNA: (Bangalore South): Mr. Chairman. I have to state here that this is a very important matter pertaining to a uniform system of distribution of rationed articles. As long as prices go up and as long as there is scarcity of essential commodities, whether we like it or not, this system of rationing and fair price shops must continue. Whereas in the present circumstances the prices are going up, there is no sign of their coming down and the prices of essential commodities like sugar, edible oils are all going up and production is less. Therefore, we have to continue for some more years this public distribution system in a correct way.

Usually the Central Government is responsible for allotting sugar, kerosene, cement and so on and, therefore, since these commodities are to be distributed throughout the country, it will be very necessary that proper guidelines are fixed so that in the distribution there may not be lot of inconvenience to the public and there is equitable and fair distribution of these essential commodities.

In this connection I may tell you that there are variations as to the method of rationing in different parts of the country. For example, in Karnataka we allot or give so many grammes per unit per month. But I

*Published in Gazette of India Extraordinary, Part II, section 2, dated 8-8-80.

††Introduced with the recommendation of the President.

[Shri T. R. Shamanna]

am told in Tamil Nadu and, to some extent, in Kerala, they take into consideration the income of the person as also the status of the person is taken into account while allotting sugar and I am told that 2 to 3 grades are there and accordingly the distribution is done. In order to have a proper control it is better that we have a uniform system of rationing, of course, with such slight adjustments as are necessary according to the local conditions. I am not quite familiar with other parts of the country. So far as I am concerned, with regard to Karnataka State, Bangalore City has got 22 lakhs of population and people living in slums and in undeveloped areas will number about 3 lakhs. The majority of these 3 lakhs people do not use sugar. I do not say that the rich alone have to use sugar. But, as it is, most of the people who lived in slums and who are very backward and who cannot afford to use sugar—of them there are many and according to my estimate, nearly 60 per cent of these people—do not use sugar. Here what I say is that if there were to be about 4 kg. of sugar in a particular card, the ration shop dealer will give that innocent cardholder about Rs. 2 or Rs. 1.50 per kg. and he misappropriates the sugar. You know the ration shop dealers have got their own shops in their son's name or somebody else's name. So, as long as there is sale of open market sugar and rationed sugar, naturally there is scope for misusing it and most of these people take a rupee or two for a kilogram of sugar and the ration shop dealer will distribute it elsewhere. But a person who knows the tricks of the trade usually takes the sugar and sells it at a margin of Rs. 3 or 4 to hotels or to tea stalls.

I am particular that in case of sugar to be supplied to rural areas, most of the sugar is sold in Bangalore city itself. It will not even go to the rural areas. The sugar bags are sold in Bangalore city itself and most of the people in the rural areas say, 'I do not get sugar'. They use jaggery or something. To my knowledge, most of the sugar meant for the rural areas is being misused. Therefore, in order to see that sugar is properly distributed, we must have a system. To my knowledge, the number of bogus ration cards in Bangalore City may not be less than 50,000 to 60,000. So, the sugar that we distribute will be misused by the bogus rationcard holders. In these circumstances, I urge upon you to see that the rationing officers take particular care to see that these bogus ration cards are detected and cancelled.

As has been explained already, 60,000 are roughly the number of bogus ration cardholders in Bangalore City. You know how much of misuse will be there. Further, as regards the distribution of kerosene, it was scarce some days ago. Now the situation is better. In Bangalore City each cardholder used to get five litres of kerosene oil per week. If there are twenty people in a house, even then, the cardholder gets only five litres of kerosene oil. If there are two or three people in a house, the cardholder will get five litres of kerosene. A large quantity of kerosene oil is being bought by the persons from these who do not use the kerosene oil. Therefore, you have to take proper steps in this regard and take a uniform decision so that distribution of these articles at all stages is not only fair but it is done equitably also to a great extent.

With regard to the public distribution system, it is very necessary that

you take certain precautions. As long as there is bottleneck in transport, it will be very difficult to see whether the grains and other articles are distributed through the fair-price shops properly or not. In Karnataka, for example, for the last three months, wheat is not being supplied. As a result the flour mills are closed down. They have come here with a request for supply of wheat regularly. I am told that they are not supplied because the required quantity of wheat is not wanted there. Further there is a transport difficulty.

I would urge upon the Civil Supplies Department that they should request the Railways for providing them with sufficient wagons. They should see that there is no unnecessary delay in transporting these articles from one place to another. I am sorry to state here that in many cases, the storage place is not good and there is not much of a buffer stock. In this connection, I have to state the quality of rice or wheat supplied by the rationing shops is awfully bad. Even though they sell at 1.60 or 1.70 a kilo, they should see that the quality is good and it is fit for consumption. In the open market, even though it is 35 paise more, people prefer to buy more of these grains from the open market and not from the ration shops. If you do not mind, even if the consumers are to pay 10 or 30 paise more, kindly take steps to see that the ration shops supply the good quality of grains to the consumers thereby the public may not have a considerable difficulty to make use of it. I would say that the storage accommodation is defective and the wheat supplied is also bad and sometimes it is not fit for consumption. I am very sorry to say this. Proper storage must be there. Further more, while purchasing these grains, you have to be little more careful. Wheat is consumed by the labour classes. If these things are properly distributed, it will be the growers

who will be benefited; the consumers also will be benefited. I hear that there is a lot of wastage of grains because of rodents. Not only that. Godown keepers also misuse it. So, care should be taken to see that there is proper storage of grains. While taking grains in the market, care should be taken by the civil supplies department that the grains they are purchasing are of better quality as far as possible. These should be cleaned so that the consumers may not waste time and money to clean these grains and use them. Sir, in our country, rationing will continue for some more years. I am not sure how long this will continue. Therefore, it is very necessary for the Central Government to call a meeting of the persons concerned with food supplies in the States. Before that by circulating a questionnaire they should invite suggestions on how sugar or grain is being distributed to the fairprice shops in their areas. Then, there should be a proper discussion on this so as to come to some understanding. That will be very useful for equitable distribution of the grains. I am afraid the rationing will have to continue for a long time in this country. So there should be no scarcity of these grains in fair-price shops and the Civil Supplies Department should see to it that the consumers get these articles from the fairprice shops without any interruption so that there may not be any need for the consumers to go and buy the same from the open market. So, Sir, we should first try to check black-marketing in ration shops; the quality of the grain supplied should be improved and there should be proper storage done. Further there should not be any difficulty in respect of transport. Therefore, the officials of the Agriculture Ministry, Transport Ministry, Railway Ministry and the Civil Supplies Department should all sit together and chalk out a programme whereby we can make as best as possible a use of it in the interest of the consumer.

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA): Sir, I thank the hon'ble Member for raising this interesting discussion. First of all I must clarify that there is difference between rationing and the public distribution system. Whereas in public distribution system we keep on distributing items of daily need and other essential commodities all of them are not subject to statutory price control. Certain items have price control on them and most other items do not have price control. I am sure the House knows this difference between the public distribution system that we are running today and the rationing that was in vogue many years ago.

It is quite likely that in case other methods that we are adopting now do not succeed to the extent necessary and we are rebuffed at every attempt to make the public distribution system successful without resorting to rationing then we may have to think of rationing as a means of completely controlling the distribution of essential commodities through the fair price shops and ration shops.

We have already declared that public distribution system will be a permanent system built into our economy. It is not going to be a temporary measure which will be used now and given up later. For the foreseeable future and as far as we can see in future this is going to become a permanent part of the economy and in this public distribution system we want to import as much of efficiency, honesty and also service. These three elements would be imported into this system as much as possible.

We are suffering from various problems and these problems arise mostly because the supply management is not as sufficient as we would

like it to be. Various discussions have been held in the past. Various guidelines were issued. Various schemes were floated but I must admit that the public distribution system should be functioning in a far better manner than it is functioning today and, therefore, there is growing need of improving this system and we have taken in hand series of discussions with the State Chief Ministers accompanied by their Chief Secretaries and other functionaries who are concerned with public distribution system and, I am sure, as a result of these discussions we will be able to not only import efficiency into the system but also remove various mal-practices to a large extent. The first action that we are taking is to evamp the Essential Commodities Act. An essential feature of this Act is that this Act by itself is quite strict. But there were certain loopholes unwittingly left in it which were taken advantage of in various courts. We have had suggestions from various State Governments and as a matter of fact we are going beyond these suggestions, more than those suggestions, and also plugging these loopholes in such a manner that it would be difficult for a person who violates the law to get out of it, if the case is properly investigated and properly put before the court.

I will, Sir, take a little time of the House to explain the features of the proposed amendments.

Firstly, there was a provision for a statutory punishment, a minimum punishment of 3 months for every offender, but, this was always circumvented by the Proviso that followed and said that for 'reasons to be recorded' etc. etc. a punishment lesser than this could be awarded by the courts. So, some of the offenders got away even when there was sufficient proof and sufficient material to prosecute and convict the persons concerned. Now we are going to

take it away. We are going to delete that proviso completely. We will only provide that for purposes of statistics and collection of statistics or certain other information that is sought to be collected from various shops, keeping of records etc., if there is a technical fault, that may not be brought under the minimum required statutory punishment, but for all other offences (howsoever technical they may be) the minimum statutory punishment of 3 months will be imposed. The courts will have no option. For this minimum punishment we are also providing that there shall be no appeal because, the constitutionality of this provision has been upheld by the Supreme Court. We have checked it up with the Law Ministry. I hope that this will, when enacted, mean very quick disposal of cases under the Essential Commodities Act.

We are also in this Act making bail very difficult. Because, once a person gets a bail, he then protracts the proceedings. He takes it for months and months and years. There are thousands of cases pending in various courts where the witnesses do not turn up, where the lawyers from either side sometimes take the dates, enhance the dates etc. If the offender is inside the jail and he does not get the bail then at least from his side there would be no attempt to protract the proceedings. I am sure the side of the Prosecuting Authority there would also be no attempt to protract the proceedings. We would like to come to a quick conclusion to see that this offender who is being tried is punished properly. There would be one or two other consequential amendments which will mean that the offences will become cognisable offences. This is being done in the hope that the Preventive Detention Act which was promulgated for prevention of hoarding and blackmarketing would be required only in rare cases. Most of the offenders could be nabbed under the

Essential Commodities Act itself. But, should there be such people who are controlling various operations from background, who could not be caught, but there is sufficient proof and sufficient material which cannot be used strictly according to the Indian Evidence Act, but which is sufficient to convince the Advisory Boards that the person is guilty of the offence under which he has been detained, then such people, such black-marketeers and social offenders could be detained under the Preventive Detention Act. But I might say that we would like the Essential Commodities Act and other consumer Acts to be still more stronger and so much effective that recourse to preventive detention is taken in the least possible manner. I must also clarify that we are averse to using the preventive detention proceedings and this Preventive Detention Act would be used if it becomes absolutely essential. But as I said earlier, we would like it to be used sparingly and use the Act which will become very effective after the proposed amendments. We are also trying to introduce a significant improvement in the supply management and I have indicated earlier that I am holding discussions with the Chief Ministers. I have held discussions with 3 or 4 Chief Ministers and I am holding discussion with the West Bengal Chief Minister tomorrow and other Chief Ministers are coming here with their team. We will sit down with the team and understand the difficulties, put up our requirements with them, and so far we have been able to reach an absolute agreement with the Chief Ministers rather than holding big conferences and making it a debating point.

PROF. N. G. RANGA (Guntur):
Should be the Chief Ministers plus their concerned Ministers...

SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA:
Yes, their Civil Supply Ministers, Civil Supplies Commissioners, Chairmen of the Commodities Corporation or Civil Supplies Corporation, all these people come and then the system that

[Shri Vidya Charan Shukla]

we are devising has been found to be workable. I am sure when the system is introduced at the State level this should produce the desired results.

The hon. Member has mentioned various difficulties that we face in our running the public distribution system and he is very right that transport bottleneck, lack of storage facilities, supply of sub-standard goods in the ration shops, etc. are all there and it is for us to tackle them and we will tackle these things with determination and perseverance.

Another point I have made to the Chief Ministers is that it is no use putting the public distribution system alone in the hands of co-operatives and the Governmental agencies. It is also essential to regulate the wholesale trade in essential commodities at the State level. If you leave the wholesale trade of essential commodities in the private hands, it will be very difficult for you to regulate your public distribution system in co-operative system or through other means. Therefore, the State Supplies Corporation or the Commodities Corporations have been formed in 9 States and the other States have been prevailed upon that their State Chief Ministers should immediately take steps so that every State has the Civil Supplies Corporation. The Central Government can make allocation of various things to those Corporations and we can even prevail upon the private manufacturers to make the allocation of all the essential commodities to the Civil Supplies Corporation of the State concerned and then that Corporation can within their own jurisdiction and within their own States can arrange for storage of these things in the nodal points and arrange for proper distribution of those essential commodities in the State. Along with this, we have also suggest to the Chief Ministers that the Co-operatives must be given full play in this. To my distress, I find that most of the fair price shops were in private hands. Almost 3/4th of the fair price shops were in private hands. Only 1/4th of them were in

co-operative sector or run by the Department. So, we have suggested to the Chief Ministers that as quickly as possible most of the public distribution system must be brought under the co-operative sector or in the hands of the Departmental distribution and as quickly as possible the private element in the public distribution system should be eliminated. And this, I hope will bring forth better control and better management of the essential commodities in the country. This will also require the amendment of co-operative laws which were faulty in most States. All kinds of disabilities have been passing on the co-operative movement and co-operative societies. The Registrar, Co-operative Societies, Assistant Registrars and various inspectors have such powers where societies can be superseded, their resolutions can be negated and thus they are completely at the mercy of many official bodies which is against the spirit of the cooperative movement. We have suggested that the Cooperatives Act should also be advanced and made more democratic and should be put in such a manner that the co-operative societies can really function as an independent body to have good control over their own operations and it should not be that always the officialdom keeps on blaming the co-operative societies and the cooperative societies keep on blaming the officialdom for various lapses.

We have also devised and suggested popular committees to be appointed at various levels to act as watchdogs for these operations. The State level committee, the district level committee and the block level committee, as the State Government may decide, should include public representatives in a non-political manner. I would like to emphasise in this House that we want to keep the public distribution system that we want to devise and the movement that we want to devise for this purpose completely a non-political one; it should be completely out of political controversy and no political advantage should be sought to be taken by us or by any other political

party in this matter. We would like to see that these things are done only on merits and persons really interested in this and who can effectively contribute to this are included in these committees. This is what I am telling the Chief Ministers also and I hope they will accept my suggestions in this regard.

There are many other points also, but as we are coming to the end of our time, I have only indicated the broad lines on which we are trying to tackle this problem. I hope I will have the support of the House in this measure and we will be able to tackle this effectively in future.

श्री रामावतार शास्त्री (पटना) : सभा-पति जी, इन्होंने कई बातें तो ऐसी बतलाई हैं कि अगर उन बातों को ये कार्यान्वित कर सके तो ऐसी स्थिति में कुछ सुधार हो सकता है, लेकिन हमें शक है कि ये उम का ठीक से लागू कर सकेंगे

श्री विद्याचरण शुक्ल : शक है तो शक का इलाज करवा लीजिए ।

श्री रामावतार शास्त्री : इस समय जो आप का पब्लिक डिस्ट्रीब्यूशन सिस्टम है, सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली है वह क्वैलीसिंग रिफ़ाई में है । जगह-जगह के द्वारों में अस्तरों में खबरें निकलती हैं, जैसे बंगाल में दिक्कत हो रही है, क्योंकि वहां को राज्य सरकार जो सप्लाई मांगती है, वह आप दे नहीं पाते हैं । मुझे अपनी स्टेट का भी अनुभव है—वहां आप समय पर और जरूरत के मताबिक गन्ना नहीं पहुंचा पाते हैं । यह एक बड़ा गम्भीर सवाल है, जिस के द्वारों में आप को सांचना होगा । जो भी चीज आप दें, वह समय पर और जरूरत के मताबिक पहुंचे और यह भी होता है कि पहुंचने से पहले ही सीमेंट, चीनी, अनाज चोर-बाजारी में चले जाते हैं । उसको लोग शहरों में ही बेच देते हैं । गांवों तक तो वह सामग्री जा ही नहीं पाती ।

इस लिये मैं जानना चाहूंगा — जो सामग्री दें, वह देहातों में पहुंचे, हालांकि

आप क्या गारन्टी करने जा रहे हैं? मैंने अभी देते हैं वह लोगों को मिल जाय—इस की आप क्या गारन्टी करने जा रहे हैं? मैंने अभी कहा है कि यह बहुत बड़ा सवाल है और चोर-बाजारी से लिंकड है । हां नकता है आप जो नया सिस्टम इवाल्व करने जा रहे हैं, उस से इस में कुछ कमी आये, लेकिन वह कब होगा वह बाद की बात है । इस समय तो हर चीज की बड़े पैमाने पर चोर-बाजारी हां रही है । यह भी पता नहीं है कि आप क्या-क्या चीज देते हैं, हर जगह एक तरह से चीज नहीं मिलती है । कहीं दियासलाई दें देते हैं और कहीं नहीं देते हैं, कहीं चावल देते हैं और कहीं नहीं देते हैं । बिहार में बहुत कम दुकानों पर चावल सप्लाई होता है । आप को आइडम्ब निश्चित रहनी चाहिये कि किन-किन आइडम्ब का आप सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली में देना चाहते हैं । इस के द्वारों में मैं जानना चाहता हूँ क्योंकि आप ने इस के द्वारों में कुछ नहीं बताया है ।

तो यह बताइये कि लोगों को चीजें नियमित मिलें और उन का बंटवारा ठीक से हो जाए, इस के लिए आप क्या कर रहे हैं । आप ने बताया कि इस के लिए लोक-प्रिय कमेट्री का गठन करेंगे । इस का हम समर्थन करते हैं लेकिन उस में आप ने 'लोक' शब्द लगा दिया और कहा कि राजनीति से इस को दूर रखेंगे । मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि किस आधार पर कमेट्री का निर्वाचन किया जाएगा । अभी हमारे मुँह में जो विकास समितियां बनी हैं, उन में शामक दल ने अपने लोगों को ही भर दिया और दूसरे किसी दल के लोगों को नहीं रखा । क्या आधार होगा, कौन लोग रखें जाएंगे, कौन से जन प्रतिनिधि होंगे, इस बात को आप साफ़ कीजिए । जब तक इस को आप साफ़ नहीं करेंगे और ठीक लोगों को नहीं रखेंगे, तब तक जो मंशा आप की है, वह पूरी नहीं होगी । इस लिए बहुत सफाई के साथ इस बात को बताना होगा ।

18 hrs.

श्री भागवत भा आजाब (भागलपुर) : अब तो काफी हो गया, आप प्रश्न पूछिये ।

श्री रामावतार शास्त्री : मैं प्रश्न ही पूछ रहा हूँ । अब जो कोटा आप देते हैं, उस

[श्री रामावतार शास्त्री]

का आधार क्या है। किस आधार पर आप कोटा देते हैं? क्या राज्य अपनी मांग पेश करते हैं, उस के आधार पर देते हैं या एव-ल्यूबिलिटी कितनी है, कितना सामान आप के पास है, उस के आधार पर देते हैं क्योंकि सब से ज्यादा गड़बड़ी सीमेंट में होती है, अनाज तो कभी कभी मिल भी जाता है पर सीमेंट नहीं मिलता है। कॅरोसिन आयल, तेल, देहातों में सस्तं दर की दुकानों होने के बावजूद भी बहुत ज्यादा दाम पर बिकता है। इसलिए मैं यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि आप किस आधार पर राज्यों को सामान सप्लाई करते हैं।

सभापति जी, आखरी प्रश्न में यह पूछना चाहता हूँ कि क्या आप दुकानदारों को भी विश्वास में लेंगे? अभी जो दुकानदार हैं, उन को भी विश्वास में लेना होगा। उन की भी कठिनाइयाँ हैं। उन के बारे में आप ने कुछ विचार किया है ताकि वे लोग सहयोग कर सकें क्योंकि ये दुकानदार मना-फासिर नहीं हैं और बड़े बड़े व्यापारियों और गल्ले के व्यापारियों की तरह से चोर नहीं हैं। ये साधारण लोग हैं। कांआपरैटिव्स को देने की जो बात आप ने कही है, तो उन में भी गड़बड़ी होती है। हमारे सूबे में कांआपरैटिव्स बहुत गड़बड़ करती करती हैं। उन के बारे में आप ने कुछ सोचा है? अगर उन का सहयोग नहीं मिला, तो वे गोलमाल करती रहेंगी।

आखरी बात मैं यह कहना चाहता हूँ कि अभी त्योंहार आ रहे हैं। हमारे त्योंहार भी आ रहे हैं और बंगाल में भी त्योंहार आ रहे हैं। उधर ओणम का त्योंहार आ जाएगा और दीवाली आएगी और इन्ड तो नजदीक ही है। इस माँके पर ठीक से सामग्री मिले, इस के बारे में आप ने सोचा है। सूजी, चीनी और आटा, ये सारी चीजें ठीक से मिलें, इन के लिए आप ने कौन सी व्यवस्था की है क्योंकि आगे आने वाले दिन त्योंहारों के दिन होंगे। मेरे इन प्रश्नों का उत्तर मंत्री जी दें।

श्री वीरूध चन्न जेन (वाड़मेर): सभापति महोदय, मैं दो, तीन प्रश्न पूछना चाहता हूँ। पहला तो यह है कि राजस्थान प्रान्त में जो सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली है, उस

के अन्तर्गत सिर्फ शूगर और व्हीट ही दी जाती है। इन के अलावा कोई भी एसे-सियल कॉमोडिटीज का डिस्ट्रीब्यूशन नहीं होता है। तो क्या उस के अन्दर दूसरी चीजें, एसेसियल कॉमोडिटीज भी इन्क्लूड करना चाहेंगे, यह मेरा पहला प्रश्न है?

मेरा यह अनुभव है, पूरी तरह से मैन केलकूलेट किया है कि शूगर की जो कीमत आप ने 2 रुपये 85 पैसे पर कितनी निर्धारित की है, चाहे वह फेयर प्राइस शाप हो या वह कांआपरैटिव सोसाइटी हो, ट्रान्सपोर्ट चार्जेंज जो उस के लाने में लगते हैं और जो उन को कमीशन मिलता है, उस को देखते हुए, किसी भी तरीके से, वे इमानदारी से कार्य नहीं कर सकते और उन को कोई प्रॉफिट नहीं हो सकता। यह मैं ने पूरी तरह से केलकूलेट किया है। इसलिए राजस्थान की सारा कांआपरैटिव सोसाइटीज बर्डमानी से काम कर रही हैं और व्यापारी बर्डमानी से काम कर रहे हैं। तो क्या आप कोई ऐसा सिस्टम इवोल्व करेंगे जिस से कांआपरैटिव सोसाइटीज का प्रॉफिट ठीक ढंग से मिल सके और वे इमानदारी से कार्य कर सकें?

तीसरा प्रश्न मैं यह पूछना चाहता हूँ कि ये जो कांआपरैटिव सोसाइटीज हैं, उनको फाइनेशियल पोजीशन बहुत ही पूअर है; के लिये आप क्या व्यवस्था करने जा रहे हैं? क्या आप उन्हें बैंकों से लोन वगैरह दिलवायेंगे या किसी प्रकार की और कोई स्कीम चलायेंगे? इसके बारे में भी आप प्रकाश डालिये।

एक बात मैं अपने जिन दाइमेर के बारे में बतला रहा हूँ। वह मेरा क्षेत्र है। वहाँ जून और जुलाई के महीने में न शक्कर का वितरण हुआ है और न व्हीट का वितरण हुआ है। यह स्थिति मेरे जिन दाइमेर में है। इसके बारे में आप क्या विचार करना चाहते हैं?

SHRI CHITTA BASU (Barasat): I am glad that the hon. Minister has announced a certain policy approach to the matter of public distribution system. In the course of that, he has

[Shri Chitta Basu]

referred to the supply management. As a matter of fact, the supply management deficiency is causing much difficulty for the existing public distribution system wherever it exists. For example, I want to mention to the hon. Minister the case of West Bengal. The monthly allotment of food articles in the State of West Bengal is 3.55 lakh tonnes. But the experience is that in no month in the past this quantity was made available physically to the State Government to maintain the supply through the public distribution system. In reality, in July last, the actual supply had been of the order of 1.33 lakh tonnes when the monthly allotment is 3.55 lakh tonnes; that is approximately one-third of the monthly allotment for the State. I think he would concede that this is the real situation and the question is to improve the situation.

Now, he has made certain suggestions and I am glad that he has accepted the principle of wholesale State trading. I went to clarify one point. He has mentioned that wholesale trade of certain essential items will be operated at the State level, if I have understood correctly from his speech. May I know how is it possible to introduce the principle of State trading in the wholesale trade only at a State level without taking appropriate action at the national level? In this connection, I only want to refer that when from this side, we asked the Minister of Agriculture whether there is any proposal under consideration for monopoly procurement of foodgrains, he bluntly said, "No." Therefore, in a State of national policy of procurement, how is it possible to have that procurement policy successful at the State level? This point is necessary to be clarified. Again, do the government propose to fix up the price of certain essential commodities at a national level. Unless the prices are fixed statutorily at a national level, State trading at the State level will not be successful.

Therefore, my question is whether the government is considering a proposal to fix the prices of essential commodities at a national level. My suggestion is that there should be fourteen items of essential commodities for which the prices should be fixed statutorily at national level.

Then there is the question of subsidy. In order to curb the price rise and meet the needs of weaker sections of society, there is the necessity for an element of subsidy. Would the Central Government provide subsidy to the State governments who will float a corporation for essential commodities for the purchase of essential commodities and distribution through fair price shops? If there is no element of subsidy, the price rise cannot be curbed. Therefore, would the Central government give subsidy to the State governments on the matter of launching a programme for State trading in the matter of distribution of essential articles.

Lastly has any proposal of this nature been given by the West Bengal government to the Government of India, in the matter of price fixation, in the matter of 14 essential items or subsidy for State trading and larger supply of essential commodities, namely, food, kerosene, cement, sugar, edible oils, etc?

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY (Mangalore): The condition of the Indian consumer is pitiable. In most other countries the consumers are kings but unfortunately in our country consumers have become beggars. Without going further, I am asking certain questions. I want to know whether the government is thinking of entering into the production of essential commodities to enhance their availability, what steps have been taken to counter the psychology of scarcity of, sugar by stepping up releases if necessary, by ensuring proper distribution and greater production; whether monitoring supplies, credit regulations, dehoarding operations, rail movements can overcome the limitations imposed by bad crop

[Shri Janardhana Poojary]

year and a large trade deficit; whether the government is going to have a civil supplies corporation for Delhi and what steps have been taken to involve panchayats and cooperatives in the public distribution system and what type of assistance will be given to the State governments to open more fair price shops; which are the states and Union territories which have invoked in full the provisions of the Essential Commodities Act to curb hoarding and black marketing and what is the reaction of the States to enforce other orders, price display order and other orders, whether the States have been asked to set up new special courts to ensure expeditious disposal of these cases and to try other economic offenders and what is their reaction.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Your questions are all right. How much time will the hon. Minister take to explain all these things?

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: It is an important discussion and the entire country is watching. A very serious situation is prevailing in the country. Therefore, I want to know whether it is true that trade is very much responsible for the speculative rise in prices obviously helped by the banks, including the nationalised ones for cornering the stocks; whether the present price rises are mostly man-made. Is it true that 1000 fair price shops are to be opened in the next five years and they will be in the cooperative sector? I want to know, lastly, whether the Planning Commission has set up a high level working group to thrash out a fairly uniform scheme encompassing as many essential items as possible and the crux of the new scheme will be to try and procure goods directly from the producer eliminating middlemen. Please cover all these points.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Minister will take about four hours to cover all your points.

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY:

The subject is very important, otherwise I would not have put all these questions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But in this the scope is very limited. Now the hon. Minister may reply.

श्री विद्याचरण शुक्ल : सभापति महोदय, राज्य सरकार अक्सर यह बहाना करती है - जिसके बारे में शास्त्री जी ने कहा है - कि उनके केंद्र से सप्लाई नहीं मिलती है। मैं उनको बताना चाहता हूँ कि हम लोग एक राज्य और दूसरे राज्य के बीच में कभी भी किसी प्रकार का भेद नहीं करते हैं। जिस तरह उनको पुराने एलाटमेंट्स हुए हैं, और जैसे उनके यहां उन एलाटमेंट्स की सपट हुई है, उसके आधार पर एलाटमेंट्स के नियम बनाये गये और उनके आधार पर हम सब राज्यों को सामान देते हैं। जब सामान की कमी होती है, तो सब राज्यों को समान रूप से कमी होती है। यह नहीं है कि किसी राज्य में अधिक और किसी राज्य में कम--इस आधार पर कि किस राज्य सरकार को हम चाहते हैं और किस को नहीं चाहते हैं। ऐसा नहीं होता है और न ऐसा करने का कोई इरादा है।

राज्य सरकार इस तरह का गलत प्रचार कर के अपनी जिम्मेदारी से न बच पाये, इसके लिए हम इस बात का ठीक तरह से प्रचार तथा प्रसार करने का प्रयास करेंगे, रेडियो, टेलीविजन और अखबारों के द्वारा कि हम लोग किस राज्य को कितना देते हैं और किस आधार पर देते हैं। इससे हर राज्य में आम जनता को पता लग जाएगा कि केंद्र से कितना सामान दिया गया और राज्य सरकारों ने उसको बांटने में कितनी तत्परता दिखाई और वे यह काम सही ढंग से कर रही हैं या गलत ढंग में कर रही हैं। हम जो भी सामान भेजते हैं, उसमें कोई गुप्त बात नहीं है। हम उसको प्रकाशित करेंगे और उसका सूद प्रचार तथा प्रसार करेंगे, जिसके आधार पर राज्यों की जनता स्वयं तय कर पायेगी कि राज्य सरकारों को कितना सामान मिला है, उसका वितरण ठीक प्रकार से हो रहा है या नहीं। आशा है कि शास्त्री जी को इससे कुछ सन्तोष प्राप्त होगा।

हम लोगों ने सभाय दिया है—मैं समझता हूँ कि वह व्यवहारिक होगा ; अभी इसके बारे में कोई निर्णय नहीं हो पाया है, क्योंकि इसमें कुछ कठिनाइयाँ हैं— कि एक एक महीने का एलाटमेंट करने के बजाये स्टेट्स की सिविल सप्लाई कारपोरेशन को केन्द्र से तीन तीन महीने का एलाटमेंट कर दिया जाये और उसके हिसाब से सप्लाई दे दी जाये, जिससे वे लोग अपना स्टोरेज और डिस्ट्रीब्यूशन वर्गएक एक क्वार्टर के हिसाब से जमा सकें और उनका मैनजमेंट सधर सकें ।

माननीय सदस्य ने कुछ दूकानदारों की तकलीफों की तरफ भी इशारा किया है । यह ठीक है कि सार्वजनिक वितरण व्यवस्था को निर्धारित करते समय अधिकतर दूकानदारों की तकलीफों पर पूर्ण रूप से ध्यान नहीं दिया गया है । यदि इमानदारी से काम हो, तो हो सकता है कि मनाफा इतना कम हो कि वह दूकान चलाने का विशेष आकर्षण न हो । इस लिए हम लोगों का प्रयास है कि सार्वजनिक वितरण व्यवस्था के अन्तर्गत चलने वाली दूकानों में इस ढंग का नफा हो, जिससे उन दूकानों को चलाने वालों को कुछ आकर्षण हो और इमानदारी से दूकान चला कर आराम से रहने की सुविधा हो । यह हमारा उद्देश्य है । इस उद्देश्य की पूर्ति में कठिनाई अवश्य है । हम जानते हैं कि आवश्यक वस्तुओं की कीमत कम से कम कर के आम जनता को उपलब्ध करना है । इस लिए हम उसमें ज्यादा नफे का एलिमेंट, गण, नहीं जोड़ सकते हैं । इस लिए हमारा विचार है कि जिन वस्तुओं को हम पूर्ण रूप से आवश्यक नहीं मानते हैं, जो जल्दी बिकती है और जिनसे ज्यादा नफा होता है, उन वस्तुओं को भी उन दूकानों से बेचने की सुविधा दे दी जाये, जिससे आवश्यक वस्तुओं को बेचने में जो फायदे की कमी होती है, उसकी पूर्ति हो सके और वे लोग दूकानों को ठीक तरह से चला सकें । इसको पूरी तरह से लागू करने में कुछ समय लगेगा, क्योंकि यह एक जटिल बात है और राज्य सरकारों की अलग अलग राय है और उनकी एपरोच भी अलग-अलग तरह की है ।

श्री वृद्धि चन्द्र जैन ने राजस्थान के बारे में बहुत सी बातें कही हैं । सोमवार को राजस्थान के मुख्य मंत्री से इस सम्बन्ध में बात होने वाली है । मैं उनके ध्यान में ये बातें लाने का प्रयास करूँगा कि उन्हें ठीक किया जा सके और राजस्थान में आगे इस तरह की कठिनाइयाँ न हों । जिस तरह की सहायता केन्द्र सरकार से हम उपलब्ध करा सकते हैं, वह हम कराने का प्रयास करेंगे ।

श्री वृद्धि चन्द्र जैन: चीनी के बारे में बताइए कि चीनी अगर बँचें तो उसका कोई लाभ नहीं मिलता ।

श्री विद्याचरण शुक्ल : उस के बारे में बात कर के तय करेंगे ।

Mr. Chitta Basu spoke about state-trading. What I had indicated does not tantamount to state-trading. What I said was, the essential commodities which are distributed through fair price shops must be handled as far as the wholesale trade is concerned by the civil supplies corporations of the States concerned. That does not mean that others will not be handling it. Other traders also can handle those commodities for their own purposes. They can sell it from various other shops and outlets. The other shops are not going to be closed down. Various shops will continue and fair price shops also will continue. But the fair price shops must not depend on wholesale traders for their supplies. They should get their supplies from the State civil supplies corporations at a proper price and in proper time. There should be no sabotage and no element of lack of coordination, as far as the system of civil supplies is concerned. It should be properly coordinated with the State civil supplies corporations. As far as essential commodities and public distribution system shops are concerned, they should depend only on the State civil supplies corporations and on nothing else. This is our view which we have suggested to the State Governments. So far in our discussions, the State Governments have gladly accepted this view-point.

[Shri Vidyacharan Shukla]

We shall give various facilities to the State civil supplies corporations, so that they can do their work in a proper way. I must say that there is absolutely no discrimination against West Bengal. If at all, the other States have suffered a little more than West Bengal. Mr. Chitta Basu is so vocal and so far as West Bengal is concerned, we are very careful. We give more facilities to West Bengal than we normally give to other States. This should satisfy him, because it is really not a fact that West Bengal has been discriminated against.

श्री गिरधारी लाल व्यास (भीमवाड़ा) :
दस्ता बंगाल में एक शिकायत यह भी है कि
वेस्ट बंगाल में सी. पी. एम. के लोगों के
रिवाज और किमी को कुछ नहीं मिलता।

श्री विद्याचरण शुक्ल : यह शिकायत
तो जरूर है। इस शिकायत का निदान हम
लोगों को करना पड़ेगा।

The consumer resistance movement in our country is woefully weak. There is one body which has been doing some useful work. It was called the Consumers Council of India, a non-political body and it was doing good work. But for the last three years, it was put in cold storage. We propose to renew our assistance to this body and see that this body starts working amongst the consumers and brings to light various malpractices like adulteration and lack of supplies, etc. This will again be a non-political body, which will oversee various things, hold seminars, discussions and meetings so that the various problems that face the consumers can be brought to the notice of the various authorities in a proper way and those difficulties can be removed.

In my first statement, I indicated that as far as price control is concerned, we do not wish to introduce price control at this stage, because sometimes, if it is not properly administered, it brings more harm than good. Therefore, this should be thought of as a last resort. We hope that without bringing in price con-

trol, we will be able to do good work with our civil supplies mechanism. But if we come to the conclusion that without price control we cannot do it, then we will not be afraid of introducing price control. But this will depend on the judgment of various State Governments and our Ministry of Civil Supplies as to whether the stage has come when price control on essential commodities has become absolutely essential. There is certainly an element of subsidy in all supplies of essential commodities. The subsidy may not be given directly to the State Governments. But the commodities that are handled and supplied to the State Governments—for instance, imported oil and various other things—have a large element of subsidy. So, without subsidy no good public distribution system can operate and therefore, the element of subsidy is present in these things.

The hon. Member, Shri Janardhana Poojary has asked several questions. I was not able to write all his questions. If I am not able to reply to any of his questions, he will kindly, with your permission, ask them again.

Production of sugar has been the lowest last year. By advancing the crushing season and by giving incentive to farmers, we hope the production of sugar will register a significant improvement in this season. Not only sugar but sugar sub-group like khandsari and gur will be produced in much larger quantity than last year. In this regard, I may say that nearly half of the present price rise is accounted for by the price rise in sugar and its sub-group i.e., khandsari and gur. Therefore, it is very important that the price and distribution of this particular sub-group of essential commodities should be so controlled that it does not affect our price index in an adverse manner as it is doing now.

About Civil Supplies Corporation for Delhi, the Cabinet has approved this proposal and this particular Corporation is under formation.

He mentioned about special courts. We do not intend to use the Special Courts Act for this purpose because it is not necessary. And the Act that was passed, does not permit us to use it against black-marketeers, hoarders and anti-social elements. It was meant for political opponents whom they considered as enemies. But we do not consider them our enemies and we do not intend to use this Act against them. These Courts are meant to deal with persons who hold high public offices. These are not meant for other type of persons.

We have suggested to the Chief Ministers and the state High Courts to designate a special judicial officer of the rank of Additional District and Sessions Judge, to exclusively try cases arising out of the Essential Commodities Act and various other Consumer Protection Acts like Weights and Measures Act, Anti-Adulteration Act. These judges must not be saddled with other cases so that they can dispose of these cases quickly and expeditiously. This is a suggestion which, I hope, will be accepted and each District will have a special judge so that the cases which are pending in various courts, do not get delayed. He will handle only these cases.

Credit squeeze is in operation. Liquidity position has been controlled. We have already taken a decision and we have proposed to the Government and to the Planning Commission that the public distribution system and the expenses incurred in the public distribution system should be regarded as a plan expenditure and not as a non-plan civil expenditure as it has been regarded so far. It is not a non-development civil expenditure. It is a plan expenditure.

Since public distribution system is going to form part of the plan itself, it should be regarded as a plan expenditure under the various Five Year Plans that would be in operation in our country.

With these things and the cooperation of the House, I think, we will be able to make the public distribution system more effective in the country.

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: He has not said anything about releasing of more quota of sugar and other things during Ramzan and coming festivals.

श्री सत्य नारायण जटिया (उज्जैन) : माननीय सभापति जी, मैं भी एक प्रश्न आप के माध्यम से पूछना चाहता हूँ। मध्य प्रदेश, जो कि इन का अपना प्रदेश है, मैं जनवरी, फरवरी, और मार्च के लिये जो कोटा केन्द्र ने एलाट किया था, वह उपभोक्ताओं तक नहीं पहुँच पाया है ?

सभापति महोदय: ऐसे प्रश्न नहीं पूछ सकते हैं।

श्री सत्य नारायण जटिया : मेरा नाम लाटरी में था, लेकिन आया नहीं।

SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA: For the festival season we have requested the State Governments to provide special facilities to the consumers for various commodities.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The House stands adjourned till 11 a.m. on 11th August.

18.31 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Monday, August 11, 1980/Sravana 20, 1902 (Saka)