

(ii) REPORTED FAMINE CONDITIONS IN
RAIPUR AND BILASPUR DISTRICTS OF
MADHYA PRADESH

श्री शरद यादव (जबलपुर) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, छत्तीसगढ़-इलाका कई सालों से अकाल से ग्रसित रहा है। लेकिन इस समय जितने बड़े पैमाने पर अकाल की छाया वहां पर है उतना शायद पहले कभी नहीं रहा। अभी मैं एक कार्यक्रम में उधर गया था। बिलासपुर जंक्शन स्टेशन से हजारों लोग काम की तलाश में अपने गांवों को छोड़ कर भाग रहे हैं। यानी जो छत्तीसगढ़ कभी धान का कटोरा कहलाता था आज वह अकाल का कटोरा है।

अकाल के मामले में हिन्दुस्तान में कोई नीति बनती नहीं है। हमेशा जो नीति बनती है वह तात्कालिक होती है।

उपअध्यक्ष महोदय : आप ने जो स्टेटमेंट दिया है उसी को पढ़िए।

श्री शरद यादव : मेरा अनुरोध है कि अभी प्रांतीय सरकार या केन्द्रीय सरकार कोई इसकी ओर ध्यान नहीं दे रही है। यहां जो कृषि मंत्री बैठे हैं उन से मेरा यह कहना है कि रायपुर और बिलासपुर जिले और उनमें जांजगीर तहसील और बलौदा बाजार, इन में अकाल का बहुत ज्यादा असर है...

श्री श्यामनन्दन मिश्र (बेगुमराय) : आपका क्षेत्र कहाँ पर है?

श्री शरद यादव : मेरा क्षेत्र तो अलग है। लेकिन अकाल जैसी स्थिति पर क्षेत्र नहीं चलता। अकाल तो समूचे देश का दर्द होता है।

मेरा यह कहना है कि छत्तीसगढ़ के बारे में सारे अखबार रंगे हुए हैं लेकिन सरकार का ध्यान उस पर जाना नहीं है। अकाल के बारे में धीषणा करने की जो सरकार की नीति है वह बहुत ही घटिया किस्म की है। हमारे यहां जो पटवारी होते हैं उनके हाथ में दे दिया जाता है कि अकाल है या नहीं यह लिख कर भेज दो। अब पटवारी इनना छोटा, इनना घटना घादमी है कि सरकार अगर चाहे कि अकाल मन लिखी तो वह लिख नहीं सकता। इसलिए मेरा कहना है कि छत्तीसगढ़ के इलाके में बहुत बड़े पैमाने पर तत्काल राहत पहुंचानी चाहिए, वहां से बहुत बड़े पैमाने पर जो पलायन हो रहा है उसको रोकना चाहिए, भूखमरी से जो मरने वाले लोग हैं उनको बचाना चाहिए और फूट फार बर्क की योजना वहां बहुत बड़े पैमाने पर चलानी चाहिए।

श्री श्यामनन्दन मिश्र : राज्य सरकार क्या कर रही है?

श्री शरद यादव : राज्य सरकार भी सां रही है और केन्द्र की सरकार भी सी रही है। कोई सरकार जागे यही मेरा कहना है। कृषि मंत्री वहां बैठे हैं, इस पर उन्हें बचाना देना चाहिए। आप उन से कहिए कि वह इस पर कुछ बोलें।

(iii) DEMANDS OF OLD AGE PENSIONERS

SHRIMATI PARVATHI KRISHNAN (Coimbatore): I wish to draw the attention of the Prime Minister, the Finance Minister and the Government to the present plight of old age pensioners who are on the verge of starvation and beggary.

Firstly, there is the problem of the pensioners who have commuted part of the pension. In spite of several appeals, individually and collectively by various pension associations for the restoration of the commuted portion after the lump sum amount paid in commutation is realised (which is normally after a period 10 to 11 years), the Government is turning down their justifiable request. The plea made by Government is that it is a contract between the Government and the pensioner as enunciated in the outmoded Pension Act of 1871. So many Acts and Laws are changed, the Constitution has been amended 44 times but the 1871 Pension Act is sacred. Of course, some amendments have been made which safeguard pensions of officers who may choose to become Ministers or Members of Parliament, but those who had commuted their pensions cannot get the full pension even after the full amount commuted has been repaid to Government! Today there are these few people who have, in effect, repaid the Government many times over what they have drawn as commuted pension.

An Accounts Officer, aged 84 years, retired from the office of the D.G. P&T. He could be said to have paid as much as Rs. 12,026 upto July, 1977. He retired in 1957 and drew Rs. 8000 and could be said to have repaid the Government Rs. 28,000. A Deputy

[Shrimati Parvathi Krishnan]

Collector, retiring in 1947, who received a commuted amount of Rs. 16,510 can be deemed to have paid the Government Rs. 42,285. And so the sad tale can be continued. Is this not amoral? Not a single one of these poor pensioners is below 75 years—that means, younger than the Prime Minister—and the amount being received by them is not more than Rs. 40 to Rs. 100.

Another demand of the old age pensioners which is a valid one is that between 1964 and 1977, two months Death-cum-Gratuity was being recovered from pensioners who elected to opt for the Family Pension Scheme. This faulty rule was dispensed with in 1977. I hope, Dr. Sushila Nayar is going to convince the Prime Minister of what I am saying. But the Government refuses to pay back the amounts to those from whom this wrong deduction had been made. They have also requested that those old age pensioners under the DCG scheme who have outlived the period of ten years should be paid at 4/8 rate as they retired when pay scales were in any case lower and are suffering from today's high prices.

The pensioners who retired before 1973 are being paid 30/80 of the average pay while those who retired after 1973 are paid 33/80 of the average pay. There should be no discrimination when pension rules are revised and all pensioners irrespective of the year of retirement should get the full benefit of all revised pension rules.

I would once again like to remind the Government of the remark of the Petitions Committee of the Lok Sabha in November, 1974 :

"The Government may review their whole scheme of commutation of pensions with a view to liberalise the relevant rules to mitigate the hardships of such pensioners and to enable them to live their last days with dignity and without helplessness."

Lastly, all discrimination in respect of pension rules should be removed and family pensions and pensions for disabled children should apply to all pensioners equally and not only to those who retired after January, 1964.

On behalf of all pensioners in the country, I make this fervent plea once again and, I hope, that it will not fall on deaf ears.

PROF. P. G. MAVALANKAR (Gandhinagar) : Sir, I have a point of order on this. You will have seen that sometime back I had raised a point of order about the matter, like the one which you just now heard Shrimati Parvathi Krishnan raising under rule 377. A point was made which the Speaker upheld that some rules must be provided for including these items in the agenda papers so that the members know and the Ministers know which items are coming up. The Speaker ruled that he would like to go into the matter sympathetically.

I have another point that such an important statement affecting the lives of deserving good old pensioners should not fall on deaf ears. Of course, the Prime Minister is present now. But the Finance and the other Ministers to whom this is addressed are not present here. Don't you think that a practice should be established that the concerned Ministers should be present in the House? When the members are so serious and earnest about raising certain issues for which time is spent by the House, the Ministers should come forward to make a statement and give an indication as to what they are doing in these matters. About this matter, how are the pensioners to know, how are we to know, what the Government is doing? We remain uninformed about the whole thing.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Jadavpur) : Until these items are put on the List of Business, at least the concerned Ministers should be present here.

SHRIMATI PARVATHI KRISHNAN : My notice under 377 is addressed to the Prime Minister, the Finance Minister and the Government.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : This has been started only a few months back. The practice is that as soon as the mentions are made under rule 377, the Ministers concerned are immediately informed of the entire proceedings of the House so that they can take action within ten days. They are informed immediately and they are expected to take some action within ten days. I suppose, that would satisfy the Members.

PROF. P. G. MAVALANKAR : I am glad that you have clarified the position that the Ministers concerned are informed immediately of these matters, and within ten days action is expected to be taken. But my point is this. In certain cases, such as the one mentioned by Shrimati Parvathi Krishnan, we are entitled to know further in the House itself from the Minister as to what has happened, so that we can pursue the matter more seriously.

SHRIMATI PARVATHI KRISHNAN : At least give the right to the Member who raises it and to read the reply in the House.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : There is also the option to the Minister; if he feels the need, he can come and make the statement in the House.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : The Member who raises it should be informed.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The particular Members are informed in any case.

Mr. Mhalgi.

(iv) REPORTED INDEFINITE STRIKE BY THE EMPLOYEES OF HINDUSTAN ANTIBIOTICS LTD., PIMPRI, PUNJAB.

SHRI R. K. MHALGI (Thana) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, under Rule 377, I draw the attention of the hon. Ministers of Petroleum & Chemicals and of Labour to the following matter:—

Over 2,000 employees of Hindustan Antibiotics, a prestigious public sector

unit at Pimpri, Pune, Maharashtra, very recently converted their earlier tool-down strike into an indefinite strike demanding the withdrawal of dismissal orders against their colleagues. The contention of the Union of employees is that the high-handedness and pressure-tactics of the new management of the last eighteen months had culminated in the strike and a sense of insecurity had been created among the workers.

The production of streptomycin and penicillin as a result of strike has been badly affected. Indeed, it is a national loss.

It is, therefore, the prime duty of the Petroleum and Labour Ministers of the Government of India to find out an early solution to settle the points of dispute between the management and the Union of employees of Hindustan Antibiotics.

I hereby demand a statement soon from the concerned Ministers in this hon. House.

(v) DECISION TO IMPORT AN ADDITIONAL QUANTITY OF NATURAL RUBBER IGNORING THE INTERESTS OF SMALL RUBBER GROWERS.

SHRI GEORGE MATHEW (Muvattupuzha) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I would like to bring to the notice of the hon. Minister of Commerce, under rule 377, the following matter of urgent public importance. This is regarding the import of an additional quantity of 15,000 metric tonnes of natural rubber.

The announcement of the Central Government to import an additional 15,000 M.T. of natural rubber, in excess of the 15,000 M.T. already imported in answer to Question No. 3694 on the 15th December 1978, is really deplorable. We had already pointed out to the Minister that, even before the distribution of the 15,000 M.T. of natural rubber imported during September, the prices in the market fell to Rs. 775 in October. This clearly showed that the hue and cry of the manufacturers that there was a shortage of natural rubber was a hoax. The price increase during