

[Shri Shyam Sunder Mohapatra]

was an expert committee which was to give its report by the end of August, about the utility of the project, about the dimension of the project, the complete picture about this multi-purpose project and of the three participating governments, West Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. I think, the expert committee has not given this report, and the Government of Orissa has also not given its final feasibility report. The hon. Minister should impress on the Government, on the respective Department, so that this project may be taken up immediately and Balasore district, at least the northern part of Orissa, is not threatened by floods any more.

MR. CHAIRMAN: This debate will be taken up tomorrow.

17.35 hrs.

HALF-AN-HOUR DISCUSSION

DETERIORATING RATIONING CONDITIONS IN KERALA

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, we take up the half-an-hour discussion.

Mr. Chandrappan.

SHRI C. K. CHANDRAPPAN (Tellicherry): Answering a question on 23rd July, the hon. Minister had said:

"Distribution of foodgrains within the State is the responsibility of the State Government. Keeping in view the overall availability of foodgrains in the Central pool and the needs of other deficit and drought-affected States, the reasonable requirements of the Government of Kerala are being met from the central pool. The following quantities of foodgrains were supplied to Kerala from the central pool during May and June."

He said that in May they have supplied, considering the reasonableness

and the requirements, 85,300 tonnes of foodgrains and in June, it is slightly more—86,100 tonnes. This was a rather misleading statement, a statement by which the Minister had tried to hide the fact from the House. That is how this half-an-hour discussion rises.

Nobody can dispute the fact that the distribution of foodgrains in the State is the responsibility of the State. But, with regard to Kerala, as you know, there is a special situation. In 1965, when the Central Government had abolished the Southern Food Zone and set up a single State Food Zone, they have made certain solemn promises to the State of Kerala. They have promised that they will give 12 ounces per head per day for every adult individual in that State and to maintain that ration they also said that they will supply 80,000 tonnes of rice and 80,000 tonnes of wheat per month. Our point is that this Ministry, Central Government had failed so miserably in fulfilling its own promises. That has created a serious situation in Kerala, a State which is chronically deficit in the matter of food.

The requirements of Kerala is 27 lakhs of tonnes of food every year and the production there is only 13.5 lakhs tonnes. The deficit is 50 per cent and this deficit the Central Government had agreed that they would make up and because of their continuous failure in fulfilling their own promises made to that State, the situation in that State now is pretty serious, serious to the extent that the normal life in the State has come to a standstill. That is the fact of life. The Government might say so many things. There are series of *bandhs*. People are coming to Delhi to demonstrate in front of the Parliament. Every day in the State buses are pelted with stones by the students. The educational institutions are not functioning normally and in the ration shops—there are 12,000 of them through which the Government used to distribute foodgra-

ins to 95 per cent of the population in that State—what is happening today? Because of the wagon shortage, even the paltry amount of rice the Centre has allotted to Kerala has not reached. So, in many places, the ration shops are kept open with no rice. Then the Centre has made promises. I am not referring to their big promises. When the people are starving, an all-Party deputation headed by the State Chief Minister visited Delhi. They came, they met the Prime Minister, they met the hon. Minister, Shri Shinde and Shri Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed. Everybody was nice to them. Everybody talked very politely and they have promised, 'We will give you some more rice and wheat.' But that promise has never been fulfilled. Not only that, most shameless is the fact that we in Kerala in the past used to get our rice requirements from the State of Andhra Pradesh. Andhra Pradesh is under President's rule. This Government is responsible for whatever now happens in Andhra Pradesh. Kerala Government has been allowed, as has been mentioned in the answer itself, to go and purchase rice. But, even the rice which has been purchased from that State was not allowed to be lifted from there under the President's rule. This is the position, Sir. The representatives of the Centre have done that big service to our State! Whose responsibility is this? We are not coming here with a begging bowl. If any body has got that impression it is totally wrong. Sir. This is a State which is producing lot of agricultural crop, but I don't say, unfortunately, but fortunately, all these are mainly of cash crops. We earn thereby a lot of foreign exchange which comes to the Central exchequer. We have a right claim or rather, a rightful claim, and we demand that the Centre should fulfil its obligations and its responsibilities.

Also, Sir, one thing also has to be understood. This is not something which has happened suddenly this

year. What was the situation in 1971? They could supply for three lean months, June, July and August. These are the three lean months in Kerala; because of accidental monsoons, flooding and all sorts of things, in 1970, Government had supplied 2.27 lakhs tonnes. In 1971 this figure was 2.54 lakhs and in 1972, 2.30 lakhs. This is just 50 per cent of what was promised. Coming to this year what is the performance? It is very low. They have sent in the month of June they have sent 45,000 tonnes of rice in place of 80,000 tonnes and 30,000 tonnes of wheat in place of 80,000 tonnes of wheat. As a result of that what happened? Ration had been cut in Kerala. Instead of 160 grammes of rice, we are giving 100 grammes of rice to the people. Instead of 160 grammes we are giving 80 grammes of wheat. In the past the Government at the Centre have been telling the people of Kerala and they have been advising the people of Kerala saying, change your food habits. The Kerala people have changed their food habits, Sir. Mr. Shinde knows it, that Kerala people have changed their food habits. They are ready to use wheat. But is Mr. Shinde in a position to supply wheat? He cannot supply wheat, he cannot supply rice. This is the situation and this has created the worst type of conditions there and conditions have come to a standstill, I should say. This situation should be remedied.

In two weeks there will be a national festival in Kerala, Onam. It is known for its festivity, for its colour, for affluence, for prosperity. But this year, I am afraid Mr. Shinde will give us an Onam which will be an Onam with starvation.

He had promised. When the Ministers had come from Kerala when the Kerala Finance Minister and Food Minister had requested Shri Shinde and the Prime Minister that they should give some rice, some wheat, to the people of Kerala so that at least, during these four days of Onam, they will have something to eat, we were told that

[Shri C. K. Chandrappan]

they had been promised 10,000 tons of foodgrains. I had read this in newspapers. I would like Shri Shinde to listen to me because he has made the promise before, earlier also, but he had failed to fulfil that. My request is that if you can make the promise on the floor of the House that you will supply without fail 10,000 tons of foodgrains to Kerala during Onam at least, that will make the people a little happy. It will not of course solve the problem but they will feel a little bit happy about it. But, to solve the problem, the Government must have a different approach to the whole question. This morning I had been seeing Shri Shinde being reluctant in answering a question on whether he was going to take over the wholesale trade in rice. He did not answer that. He did not even accept the fact that the Government had failed in the matter of wheat procurement and as a result my State has been made victim of it. Otherwise they could have supplied us with wheat even if they had no rice. So, the solution to the problem in Kerala will be found only if the Government will have a new policy, a policy, by which they can procure not the marketed but the marketable surplus of rice and wheat and send that on to our people in Kerala. I am not saying that you should not send food to other drought affected areas and deficit areas. They should also be definitely sent. But, considering the special situation and special conditions of Kerala, the Government should give some priority. It should take the matter most seriously. My complaint is that he gives a routine answer that it is the responsibility of the State. He has given an impression that 86,000 tons have been sent in May-June this year. But, we should not be misled by the figure of 1 lakh tons. It is only just over 50 per cent of the requirements which they have promised to fulfil.

So, my request to you is to make a categorical statement right now on the

floor of the House that you will immediately take appropriate measures by which you can at least send enough food materials for the people of Kerala to celebrate their national festival 'Onam'.

Now coming to the deficit, at least what is your commitment which you may fulfil? I would like you to make a statement on the floor of the House about this.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE (Kanpur): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am happy that my friend, Shri Chandrappan has correctly voiced the feelings of the case of the people of Kerala.

It is surprising that even after the delegation which was led by the Chief Minister himself which not the Food Minister, the Prime Minister and all others, they made very tall promises and it was assured that it would be the responsibility of the Centre to see that adequate supplies were made of rice and wheat-both to meet the requirements. I would like to know from him what was the demand of the Chief Minister of the State in this regard-quarterly, six-monthly or even yearly? To which extent the Centre has been able to meet that? Whether it is a fact the condition is deteriorating there and it has become a law and order situation there and almost all colleges were closed? And then, the Chief Minister, to overcome this situation, had sought the help of the Centre. I would like to know what is the quantity that was sent and what were the other promises made during the interviews that the Chief Minister and his colleagues had and whether those promises were likely to be fulfilled or they are still waiting? This is a law and order situation in Kerala. Is it because the ministry is headed by a non-Congressman that has led to the step-motherly treatment that is given to this State?

SHRI SHYAMNANDAN MISHRA: (Begusarai): I would only preface my question with a few general remarks. The food situation is now very disturbing in Kerala, and it has

been particularly so since May last. But we find that the Government have been misleading the House by giving wrong figures about the supply of foodgrains to the State. I had asked the Government a few weeks back about the supply of foodgrains made to the State, and the Government said that they had been fulfilling their obligations. But now the figures reveal that Government had been fulfilling their obligations only to the extent of 50 per cent. I would like to know from Government whether it is a fact that they are fulfilling their obligations to the State Government only to the extent of 50 per cent.

Secondly, I would like to know whether it has not come to the notice of the Government that a number of people in Kerala have died due to sheer exhaustion I would not use the word 'starvation', but 'sheer exhaustion'. It has been very widely reported in the press in Kerala. Recently, a report appeared in *Manorama* that a carpenter with a family of about six or seven with an earning of about Rs. 4 went from one ration shop to another and when he could not get enough food, he went to a toddy shop and purchased five bottles of toddy and his entire family was in a drunken state, and the entire family became so intoxicated that they created a scene and the neighbours came there to watch this pathetic and tragic scene. May I know whether it has not come to the notice of the Government that people have now switched on from food to toddy in Kerala, because food is simply not available in that State? May I also know whether it is not a fact that the food situation, already very disturbing, has been compounded by the floods in certain areas; and particularly in the coastal areas, now the situation is extremely difficult; the State Government have declared the coastal areas as famine-affected area, because the fishermen and the persons who are engaged in the coir industry are unemployed and they do not have

the purchasing power necessary to buy foodgrains?

It is because of this that we find that a large number of people are coming to Delhi to stage a dharna before Parliament on the 30th of this month, and particularly all the office-bearers of our organisation there are coming under the presidency of our PCC president to offer *dharna* in search of food. May I know whether it has not come to the notice of Government that the situation is so difficult that now the people think that the only course that they can take is to come to Delhi and stage *dharna* here?

May I know whether it is not a fact that this situation has been created because the Centre has reduced the ration supplied per adult to half of what was earlier available, and whether they propose to restore the ration that was available to them before the month of May? How do they propose to help the State Government to run 12,000 retail shops that they have been maintaining for their food distribution system, if they are not going to supply all that is required for that purpose?

The last question that I would like to ask is this. The State Government have sought the Centre's assistance for tiding over the situation in terms of the grant. They have asked for a grant of Rs 270 lakhs and probably also a loan of Rs. 218 lakhs. Do they propose to help the State Government to this extent?

*SHRI S. A. MURUGANANTHAM (Tirunelveli): Mr. Chairman, Sir, in the Half-an-hour discussion that has been raised by my hon. colleague Shri C. K. Chandrappan, he has explained in detail the disturbing food situation in Kerala and the callous approach that has been adopted by the Central Government towards the foodgrains requirement of Kerala State.

When the Chief Minister of Kerala, Shri K. Achutha Menon, led a delegation to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Agriculture Shri Fakhr-

[Shri S. Muruganatham]

ddin Ali Ahmad and the Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture, Shri Shinde, he was assured by the Central Government that 5,000 tonnes of rice would be despatched immediately from the Central Pool and another 5,000 tonnes of rice could be procured by the Kerala Government in Andhra Pradesh. The Kerala Government did procure 5,000 tonnes of rice from Andhra Pradesh. But Andhra Pradesh Government, which is now directly administered by the President, did not permit the Kerala Government to take 5,000 tonnes of rice to Kerala. The starving people of Kerala have been denied this rice purchased by the State Government after having been permitted by the Central Government from a State which is under the President's rule. It is really painful that Andhra Pradesh should have denied the permission to the Kerala State to take the 5,000 tonnes of rice purchased there for the purpose of feeding lakhs of hungry people. As has been pointed out earlier, Kerala has not come with the begging bowl to the Centre for foodgrains. Kerala earns crores of rupees in foreign exchange by the export of high quality cashewnuts, cardamom and other species. All the foreign exchange earned by Kerala goes to the national exchequer. Naturally, the State has got the right to demand foodgrains from the Central Government. When the Central Government leaders talk ceaselessly about the untiring efforts to be made for achieving national integration, the Andhra Pradesh Government being administered by the President has refused permission for the Kerala State to take 5,000 tonnes of rice purchased there to Kerala. I would request the hon. Minister Shri Shinde to look into this and ensure that such a thing does not recur anywhere in the country.

Sir, in such a critical situation, the Kerala Government is exerting its every nerve to feed the people of the State. The State Government buys

tapioco at 40 paise per kilo and sells it to the people at the subsidised rate of 25 paise per kilo. The coir industry workers and in fact all the workers in Kerala are supplied with food items at subsidised rate. Besides, the people in the coastal area which has been affected by famine are given rice free of cost by the State Government. I would like to know from the hon. Minister to what extent the Central Government has come to the rescue of the State Government which is endeavouring earnestly to tackle the most difficult situation of famine and disturbing food situation in the State.

The Central Government, I may say frankly, Sir, are not in such a bad situation as to express inability to supply the required quantity of foodgrains to Kerala. The famine and floods are not a new phenomenon to the Government. I have heard the Government saying that the deficit in foodgrains is only 60 lakhs tonnes. I have no doubt in my mind that it is mainly due to the faulty implementation of procurement policy and in consequence such a situation has come about. If the hon. Minister could tell the House the total quantity of rice production, we would be able to understand the situation in a much better manner. I am sure in my mind that the Government must forthwith modify the procurement policy of getting only the marketable surplus. The procurement policy must be implemented with vigour and verve. Then only the country can be saved from the catastrophe facing it.

I would urge upon the hon. Minister that before the Onam Festival, the festival of prosperity and affluence, begins in Kerala, the Central Government should despatch the required quantity of foodgrains to Kerala. I would like to know what steps have been taken by him in this direction.

DR. HENRY AUSTIN (Ernakulam): As is well known, Kerala is facing a serious food shortage. An all-party delegation recently visited Delhi and

met central leaders including the Prime Minister and apprised them of the acute food scarcity situation there. Since then, recently, a delegation led by the Home Minister, Shri Karunakaran, also came here. I represent a constituency in Kerala where a number of coastal taluks are situated. I know the acute food situation particularly in the coastal region.

These aspects of the matter have been well-represented to the Centre. When the delegation led by the Chief Minister came here, according to the Chief Minister's own words and according to the versions of others who participated in the talks, barring a few who would not view things objectively, the Centre was convinced of the seriousness of the situation and was making honest efforts to help the State tide over the difficulty. At that time, the promise was that they would see that 5,000 tons of rice would be immediately rushed to Kerala. I know all efforts are being made to see that rice reaches the State before Onam, a festival for the celebration of which rice is very essential because it is our most important staple food. Onam is a festival of affluence now a pretence of affluence. I am sure this commitment would be met.

Again last week, when Kerala Ministers came here, the Central leaders had convinced them that all efforts would be made to procure another 5,000 tonnes in spite of the difficulties being faced by the Central Government in procuring rice either from within or without the country. The announcement has already appeared in the press, that 10,000 tonnes of rice would be rushed to Kerala, over and above the rice already supplied. I think, is about 45,000 tonnes. So, this is the situation. It would be against objective factors if one were to say that the Central Government is lukewarm or the Central Government is not taking interest in this situation.

18 hrs.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please put a question; you are replying; you are not putting a question.

DR. HENRY AUSTIN: I would agree with Mr. Chandrappan who raised this question that we are facing a serious situation in Kerala and that all efforts should be made to meet the situation. I would like further to urge on the Central leaders to make all efforts to supply rice and to mop all the rice that is available. I do know that surplus rice is available in Nepal and efforts should be made to procure the rice from there. Whatever may be the obstacles in the way of transportation of rice from there, it should be overcome and Government should see that rice is purchased and adequate transport arrangements made to send it to Kerala where people are suffering.

If there is any bottleneck or any impediment in the way of procuring or transporting rice from Andhra, stern measures should be taken against any official, however high he may be, who stands in the way procurement or transportation of rice from Andhra Pradesh, where it is said rice is available.

Only today, I put a question to the hon. Minister of Shipping, and he assured us this morning that over and above the train facilities, facilities by coastal shipping would also be made available for the transportation of rice.

I would join the hon. Members of the House in the sentiments expressed by them that this problem should be faced on a very urgent basis, on a war-footing or something like that so as to see that adequate rice is sent to Kerala, more so because we are on the eve of the Onam celebration when everyone looks forward to have at least one square meal to feed themselves and also the guests who come even from other parts of the country.

This being the situation, I would once again urge on the Minister the need for the speediest transportation of foodgrains. But I would dissociate myself with those who try to tarnish the image of the Central Government by saying that they are not taking interest. It is not so. The Government of India is making every effort. If

[Dr. Henry Austin]

some Members say that starvation deaths have been brought about, it is motivated; there is no evidence to show that there is any starvation death in Kerala. But the people are suffering, and I congratulate the people of Kerala for meeting the situation with courage, confidence and hope.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ANNASAHAB P. SHINDE): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would crave your indulgence to elaborate this point. Normally I am very brief, but this debate, though a half-hour discussion, is, to my Ministry, to the Government of India, to the Government of Kerala and to the people of Kerala, a very important debate. The people in Kerala are very much agitated, but there seems to be an impression that the Government of India is not fair to the Government and the people of Kerala. Therefore, I would like to elaborate the points in a little more detail. This matter is being debated not only on the floor of this House but also outside, and therefore, it deserves an adequate explanation from the Government of India. Therefore, I would require a little more time. I hope the hon. Members also will just show me a little more indulgence.

SHRI SHYAMNANDAN MISHRA: Had we known it, we also would have been a little more expansive than what we have been. It is all right.

SHRI ANNASAHAB P. SHINDE: Thank you. I am thankful to my very enthusiastic colleague and a very respected friend, Shri Chandrappan, for raising this debate on the floor of the House. I would make a very earnest effort to explain the points raised by him. But must say he was a little harsh to us when he made some statements. Perhaps his harshness was due to the suffering of the people. (Interruptions). I can only submit for the information of the hon. House and the hon. Members that as far as the Kerala people are concerned, in our

food allotment, the food administration, Kerala has the highest priority. Let me assure my hon. friends that Kerala's cause will never be allowed to be neglected in anyway by the Government of India.

A few facts and figures which I would like to give for the information of the House will clear the position. The Kerala people are agitated. I could share their sufferings and hardship. I am not saying that there is no hardship. What happened in this country last year? We had one of the worst droughts in recorded history. You all know what happened in Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan etc. One of the bravest battles on the food front was fought during 1971-72 and part of 1972-73. The historians of the future will record their judgment. We are too close to history to pass an objective judgment. Relying on our own efforts, without much of international aid, we fought this battle single handed. The morale of the people was quite high and it is only with the cooperation of the people that we could fight this battle.

Shri Chandrappan made an observation that there was a gap in the food-grains promised by us and the food-grains actually supplied to Kerala. This is inconsistent with facts. The following statement shows the allotment and the actual supply to Kerala from January to July, 1973.

Month	Allotment	Actual supply
	tonnes	tonnes
January .	77,000	80,200
February	67,000	65,700
March . .	67,000	69,200
April . .	74,000	69,400
May . . .	83,000	853,000
June . . .	85,000	86,100
July . . .	80,000	87,000
	5,33,000	5,42,000

In some months there were marginal surpluses and in others there were marginal shortfalls.

SHRI SHYAMNANDAN MISHRA: This is half of what is required. You had undertaken to give 1,60,000 tonnes a month.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: I have got the figures of the demands of Kerala. The first point is that the supplies are a little more than the allotment; there was never a breach of any promise or understanding between the Government of Kerala and the Government of India. There has been excellent understanding between the Kerala Government and ourselves and the Kerala Government knows how sincerely we tried to meet the difficulties of Kerala in spite of our all India difficulties.

SHRI SHYAMNANDAN MISHRA: You had undertaken to supply 80,000 tonnes of rice and 80,000 tonnes of wheat. But you are supplying just half of that.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: That is not correct. The demand of the Kerala Government is as follows: January—90,000 tonnes; February—95,400 tonnes; March—87,000 tonnes; April—85,000 tonnes; May—85,000 tonnes; June—1,05,000 tonnes. The total quantum has not been reduced, but the ration of rice has gone down and wheat has gone up. Naturally, the availability of rice in Kerala became difficult and the price of rice has gone up in Kerala. Up to April—in January, February, March and April—the rice supply was 70,000, 60,000, 60,000 and 67,000 and wheat was only 6,000 to 8,000 tonnes. After May rice came down to 53,000, 50,000, 45,000 etc. but wheat has gone up to 30,000, 35,000. The total supply has not gone down: it has been 75,000 to 80,000 tonnes but the rice component has come down because of overall difficulty about rice. Last year we had a very severe setback in kharif. Rice being

the most important kharif crop, there was a setback in production and procurement of rice. In M.P. and a few other States, there was a substantial fall in rice procurement. So, the total rice supplied to the Central pool has not been adequate. Despite this, we are making very serious efforts to supply the maximum rice possible to Kerala. Sometime back the Chief Minister of Kerala, the Home Minister of Kerala, the Finance Minister of Kerala and other leaders came to Delhi and said that Onam is a very important festival and whatever the difficulties of the Government of India may be, at least 10,000 tonnes more of rice should be given to Kerala. We have many difficulties, but despite all that, we said, we will spare no efforts to ensure that 10,000 tonnes more of rice are supplied to Kerala for Onam. So, there is no lack of sincerity on the part of the Government of India.

Fortunately this year the current monsoon has been very favourable. The press makes the allegation that I am an incorrigible optimist. I accept this allegation. I think what I am saying is a realistic assessment of the situation. We have one of the best monsoon years on record and the crop prospects at the moment appear to be very bright. The kharif crops are extremely good this year. Even in drought-affected areas like Gujarat, Maharashtra and Rajasthan the crop prospects are very good. Therefore, the difficulties are likely to be only for 6 or 8 weeks. If we can explain to the Kerala people that they had to undergo some hardships because there was a very severe drought in the country, I am sure they will understand. In about six weeks, the bajra crop would be there in Maharashtra, Gujarat and Rajasthan and our responsibility will be much less towards them. We shall then concentrate on helping States like Kerala and West Bengal. Our crisis period started from August last year and practically 12 months are over.

SHRI SHYAMNANDAN MISHRA: I am told rice is selling at Rs. 8 a measure.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: That is because of the present crisis. This is the leanest period of the year. The difficulties are very temporary. Already there is a downward trend in prices even in the worst affected areas.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: It is selling at Rs. 8 to 9 a kilo.... (Interruptions).....

SHRI B. V. NAIK (Kanara): There is a very unprecedented situation because of a steep fall in the prices of coarse grains.... (Interruptions).

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: The hon. Member, Shri Naik, is correct. There is a very steep fall in the prices of coarse grains like bajra and jowar. Therefore, the most difficult and worst period is over. May I assure the hon. friends from Kerala that we will continue to make efforts to supply whatever we can? We require understanding and appreciation from the Kerala friends. We will never let them down. The Kerala cause is as dear to us as the cause of any other State. Whatever may be the temporary difficulties, please do not try to misunderstand us and do not create a wrong impression. I hope Shri Chandrappan will be able to explain the position to his Kerala friends because there are elements in Kerala which are exploiting the situation.

I would like to correct a statement which has been made here that rice is being sold at Rs. 8 or 9 a kilo. It is not consistent with facts. It is exaggerating things. (Interruptions).

SHRI C. K. CHANDRAPPAN: The Minister has tried to clarify the position. I am reading from the memorandum given by the Kerala All GIPND—1414 LS—J.C. 2142—27-11-1973—1010.

Party Deputation, led by the Chief Minister:

"The commitment was 80,000 tonnes of rice per month and equal quantity of wheat to be distributed through ration shops."

The Minister has stated that in July 45,000 tonnes of rice and 30,000 tonnes of wheat have been supplied. It is true. But July was the month when Kerala suffered the most. So, facts speak against his argument.

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: I would repeat that we are at the fag end of the worse period of food crisis. With the co-operation and understanding of the hon. Members we are confident that we shall be able to overcome the situation.

DR. HENRY AUSTIN: If there is surplus rice in Tamil Nadu or Andhra, will you procure it and distribute it to Kerala?

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: If rice is available in any part of the country, we will supply it to Kerala.

SHRI SHYAMNANDAN MISHRA: So far as Onam celebration is concerned, you are going to supply 10,000 tonnes over and above the normal supply. But the normal supply itself is 50 per cent of the requirement. How are you going to raise the supply to the required quantity? Are you going to augment the supply to Kerala or not?

SHRI ANNASAHEB P. SHINDE: As I have already explained, normally we are supplying 45,000 tonnes of rice and 35,000 tonnes of wheat. For Onam we are going to supply them 10,000 tonnes extra.

Coming to the point of Dr. Henry Austin, if rice is available anywhere on trade account from State to State, we will permit the Kerala Government to obtain it.

18.20 hrs.

The Lok Sabha tenth adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Tuesday, August 28, 1973/Bhadra 6, 1895 (Saka).