

की हुरबात देवगुज]

बना सकता है और एक कारखाने से तीन सी कारखाने बढ़े कर सकता है लेकिन किसान के बेटे के लिये यह कानून पास कर दिया गया कि वह 20 एकड़ के या 30 एकड़ से ज्यादा जमीन अपने पास नहीं रख सकता। उसके बाद उसे जो कृषि सम्बन्धी सुविधाएँ देनी चाहिए वह नहीं दी गई। उस को अच्छे बीज, अच्छी खाद व सिंचाई की व्यवस्था इन सारी आवश्यक सुविधाओं के लिये उस की उम्मीद पिछले 20 वर्षों में की गई। उसी का कारण है कि आज देश में सूखे की स्थिति है। जब तक बाहर से हमारे लिये धनाज न आये तब तक हम गुजारा नहीं कर सकते।

इसमें यह बताया गया है कि खाद्य स्थिति बिगड़ होने के कारण देश में महंगाई बढ़ रही है और वित्त मंत्री जी ने कहा कि पिछले तीन साल में 46 प्रतिशत महंगाई बढ़ी है परन्तु जो धाँकड़े हैं वह उसके बिलकुल विपरीत हैं। यहाँ दिल्ली के लोगों का यह झगल है कि पिछले तीन वर्षों में महंगाई का अनुपात बहुत ज्यादा है परन्तु जो वर्ष मास्वी है उन के अनुसार भी पिछले एक साल में 27 प्रतिशत महंगाई बढ़ी है। केवल धनाज के मामले में खाद्यान्न के मामले में ही महंगाई 39 प्रतिशत बढ़ी है। तीन साल में महंगाई अत्यधिक बढ़ गयी है। उस का हलाक इस बजट में क्या किया गया है? जितनी आवश्यक वस्तुएँ हैं जिनसे लोगों का सम्बन्ध है, कपड़ा, जूते और जो अन्य रोजमर्रा की चीजोंपयोगी चीजें हैं, रेशम का धाड़ा, सब तयाम चीजों में कीमतें बढ़ी हैं और जब इन आवश्यक वस्तुओं पर एकताईज ड्यूटी और दूसरे प्रकार के अन्य घस्रवक कर लगाये गये हैं उन से महंगाई बढ़ी है और सरकारी प्रवक्ता के अनुसार भी इन करों से महंगाई 5 प्रतिशत बढ़ेगी लेकिन

जो इनका मजदूर, कुल मिलाकर सामूहिक असर होगा वह इतने बहुत ज्यादा होगा। इसके जबाब में केवल एक बात कही गई है कि हम महंगाई नहीं बढ़ने देंगे। इस प्रकार का धारणासन पिछले कई वर्षों से हम सुन रहे हैं। रुपये की कीमत बढ़ाई गयी तब भी यह धारणासन दिया गया था। पिछला बजट पास किया गया था तब भी धारणासन दिया गया था कि कीमतें नहीं बढ़ने दी जायेंगी। पिछले पांच, दस वर्षों से हम यह धारणासन सुनते आये हैं। इस बजट के तीन साल पहले यह धारणासन दिया गया था कि कीमतें नहीं बढ़ने दी जायेंगी, लेकिन फिर भी 46 प्रतिशत बढ़ी है।

इस लिये आज जब आप आवश्यक वस्तुओं पर या दूसरी वस्तुओं पर कर लगाते हैं तो उसके बाद आप यह धारणा नहीं कर सकते कि कीमतें नहीं बढ़ेंगी।

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member may continue his speech tomorrow.

17.32 hrs.

*PURCHASE OF ISLANDS IN INDIAN OCEAN BY BRITISH GOVERNMENT

Mr. Speaker: Now, we shall take up the half-an-hour discussion.

Shri C. K. Chakrapani (Ponnani): This subject has been raised on the floor of the House several times in the past, but the replies given by Government have been consistently vague and indefinite.

As one hon. Member noted earlier, Britain was purchasing these islands not for cultivation but for establishing a foreign base. It is not a base of an ordinary type. This fact was admitted by the former Foreign

Minister on the floor of the House on the 23rd November, 1966. He said:

"So far as its strategic position is concerned, of course, it occupies a very strategic place."

Sir, he even admitted then that these were going to be defence bases.

What is surprising is the vague and callous attitude of Government towards this problem. When on the 22nd May, a question was raised in the House whether the Government of India at any stage were consulted by the U.K. Government on the purchase of these islands, the reply given by Government was simply astounding. It was:

"I do not know whether actually the Government of India was informed, to start with. When we came to know about it through newspaper reports and when we got in touch with the U.K. Government, they informed us that they had this intention of purchasing them".

I do not think that Government have ever seriously considered the military implications of this issue.

The foreign Minister even went to the extent of taking a servile position about the British base. He said on the 6th April:

"All that we can do, for the time being, is to accept their statements that they do not propose to use these islands as military base".

Here, the hon. Minister simply echoes the British version. Government do not feel it necessary to have their own investigation, independent of the British Government. Whatever the U.K. Government may say, these bases will be used as military bases. Can the Foreign Minister point out a single U.S. or British base which does not have any military significance? The U.S.A. has bases in Hawaii, Okla-

nawa and Guam Islands in the Pacific Ocean. But everybody knows that they are full-fledged military bases, and we are seeing every day what nefarious role they are playing against the Viet Nameese people. The U.K.-U.S. joint base in the Indian Ocean will play also a similar role in Asia and Africa.

As the Foreign Minister himself noted that the claim of the British Government was that this was necessary in view of the British commitments to Malaysia, Australia and Honk Kong and American commitments in the Far East, I would like to know what the commitments of Britain and America in this area are. It is just to dominate the economies of the Far East and Africa. Economic pressure, political blackmail and military subversion are the weapons freely used by the British and Americans to perpetuate their colonial and neo-colonial hold on these areas. Are we expected to support this in any way? Definitely not.

Government say that they are against any foreign military base in the Indian Ocean, at the same time they accept the British Government's version that it is not a military base.

What is most serious is the Government's attitude towards the East-of-Suez policy of the British Government.

Here I wish to quote some portions from the British Government's white paper. It said:

"We shall continue to honour our commitments to our allies and to play our proper part in defending the interests of the free world.

"It is in the Far East and Southern Asia that the greatest danger to peace may lie in the next decade. Some of our partners in the Commonwealth may be directly threatened. We believe it is right that Britain

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should continue to maintain a military presence in this area."

In the same document, it was announced that by 1968 when the South Arabian Federation should become independent, Britain should withdraw from the Aden base. The Government should have taken note of this position of Britain. The British imperialists themselves admit the need for a strong military presence in the Indian Ocean to continue the age-long loot of the Afro-Asian continent. But the External Affairs Minister has given them a certificate of clean behaviour. What else can a servile government do under the pressure of billions of dollars and sterling?

The Deputy Minister admitted that the Government of India were not even informed of this intention of the British Government. Why should the British Government consult a Government which has completely lost its self-respect, national pride and honour?

On the 6th April, the Minister said: "We shall certainly try to mobilise public opinion of like-minded countries to see that these islands do not in any way prejudice the security of the countries bordering on the Indian Ocean". Two months have passed since then and we do not know whether the Government have moved even an inch in that direction.

It is not sufficient to take this question to the U.N. While this question will be under discussion in the U.N., the U.S.-U.K. combine will continue their military build-up in the Indian Ocean threatening the sovereignty of the whole continent.

Even now the time is not lost. If the Government are really serious, they can mobilise the Afro-Asian countries against this sinister move of Britain. India can give a lead to all these countries against this dangerous move of Britain. It will enhance our prestige. It will regain our lost pres-

tige among Afro-Asian countries. I want to know whether Government are prepared to do that.

A shining example of Arab unity against the US-UK machinations in West Asia is just before our eyes. Can we not take lessons from this? Let the Government raise their strong voice in co-operation with the anti-imperialist Afro-Asian countries and make a firm declaration that the Afro-Asian countries will never tolerate the deeds of imperialist aggression in the Indian Ocean. I wish the Minister to come out with such a categorical statement.

The situation is very serious. Obviously this dangerous development has a direct and immediate bearing on our country. It poses a serious threat to our national independence and sovereignty. If despite this, the UK Government persists in their nefarious game, we should quit the Commonwealth in protest against their imperialist action. May I know whether Government are prepared to do that? This is the question. Mildly speaking, this action alone will satisfy the people of India who stand for international peace and security.

Shri P. Gopalan (Tellicherry): We have before us the news that the child of British and American imperialism, Israel, has launched a war against the Arab countries....

Shri Hanumanthaiya (Bangalore): May I say this?

Hon. Members are free to express their opinions, but this is such a delicate situation....

Mr. Speaker: What are we discussing now.

Shri Hanumanthaiya: I am merely requesting you not to allow hard remarks to be passed against any country, whether it is Israel or U.A.R.

Mr. Speaker: We are not discussing West Asia.

Shri Hanumanthalya: You by all means argue, but to say that Israel is a child of British imperialism.... (Interruptions).

Mr. Speaker: We are discussing nothing very delicate now. West Asia is coming tomorrow.

Shri Nambiar (Tiruchirapalli): Communist Members of Parliament said so, let it be like that, we will own it up, it will not come in the name of hon. Members who are afraid of it.

Shri Hanumanthalya: It is not a question of courage.

Shri P. Gopalan: Everybody knows that Israel has started a war on the Arab countries, everybody knows that Israel is the child of British and American imperialism.

Mr. Speaker: We are now discussing about the islands.

Shri P. Gopalan: South Asia is going to be made an arena of war, if the British and American imperialists are allowed to purchase the Indian Ocean islands. It is a direct threat to the sovereignty and independence of our country, but I doubt whether it is not the result of a conspiracy between the American, British and the Indian Governments, that the Indian Government is merely making a mild protest and allowed the Britishers to purchase the islands, and thereby they are participating in the American policy of containment of China. This is the real aim behind the purchase of these islands. The British Defence Department has made it very clear that they are going to make this a base when they are forced to withdraw from Iran and Singapore.

In this connection, I would like to have a clarification from our External Affairs Minister whether it is not a direct threat to the sovereignty and independence of our country.

Shri P. Gopalan: If it is, may I know whether the External Affairs Minister will come forward with a categorical statement that if the Britishers proceed with their aim of purchasing and setting up their bases in these islands, the Government of India will withdraw from the Commonwealth. That is what is expected of a self-respecting country, and I hope the External Affairs Minister will do this solemn duty.

Shri E. K. Nayanar (Palghat): On April 6th, the Minister of External Affairs replying to a question in the Lok Sabha said that the Government had sent a representation which amounts to a protest to Britain against its purchasing some islands in the Indian Ocean and to provide transit and refuelling-cum-communication facilities to the British and American military planes to the Far East.

May I know if these facilities would not necessitate the construction of military air fields which could be used as a military base? Since the islands in the Indian Ocean have already been bought by the British, may I know what was the result of India's protest to Britain?

There are also alarming press reports about these Indian Ocean islands. The British and U.S. bases have thus appeared on archipelagoes in the Indian Ocean in the Island of Chagos. U.S., British nuclear base and a big naval communications centre are being created. In the Maladive and Cocos islands, anchorages are being sought for naval forces, and landing and take-off strips are being modernised. A new chain of bases is being set up, spreadheaded simultaneously against Asia and Africa.

On the Carribean Islands and Guiana are also constructed numerous British, French and Dutch military installations. In the light of these reports from London and Washington there is no question of setting up a communication centres in the Indian Ocean. What are being set up as

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jointly by U.K. and U.S. It is common knowledge that F-111 bombers do not possess the range directly to bomb China. They can only be used against South Asia or East Africa. May I know if the Government of India will wake up?

May I know what steps are taken against the British attitude?

The Minister of External Affairs (Shri M. C. Chagla): I do not think there is any ambiguity whatsoever with regard to India's policy with regard to these islands. My statement on the last occasion is perfectly clear and unambiguous. May I repeat the position?

We were informed in 1965 by the United Kingdom that they were proposing to buy these islands. At that time we protested and we said that it was contrary to the UN resolutions. Since then, what has happened is this. The U.K. Government has made an ex-gratia payment of £3 million to Mauritius for acquiring certain islands belonging to Mauritius and they have paid a sum of £1 million to Seychelles islands for acquiring certain islands belonging to the Seychelles. They have given us a categorical assurance that these islands will not be used as military bases.

Shri Nambiar: What is the guarantee? Who will be able to check them? Have you got authority to check this up?

Shri M. C. Chagla: They are meant merely for transit staging facilities. They have pointed out to us that they have the responsibility of defence arrangements with Australia, Malaysia and Hong Kong. In order to discharge that responsibility, they need these islands.

The next thing that happened is this. There is an agreement between the United States and Great Britain which was entered into on 13th December 1966 by exchange of notes concerning the availability for defence purposes of these islands, namely,

Diego-Garci and Chagos, which form part of British Indian Ocean Territories. Only recently, Mr. Healey, the Defence Minister made an announcement in the House of Commons in response to a question in the British Parliament. Recently, about the proposal to develop the Indian Ocean Atoll at Al Dabra for defence purposes, Mr. Healey, Secretary of State said that no decision had yet been taken by the Government on whether any defence facilities were to be established at this place. He said:

"The matter is under serious consideration and I would expect a decision to be taken within 12 months from now."

Therefore, it is clear that this was not intended for military base. My hon. friend suggested as if we were in collusion with the U.K. and the U.S.A. It is a ridiculous suggestion, if I may say so with respect. Whatever facilities are set up in these islands are in order to protect Malaysia, Hong Kong and Australia with whom the United Kingdom has got defence agreements.

Our objection in this matter is this. There is a UN resolution to which we are a party that no colony should be dismembered. An independent sovereign country can do whatever it likes with its territory. But when a country is not sovereign it should not be dismembered. What is attempted to be done is to buy a part of Mauritius which is not independent and also to buy a part of Seychelles which is a colony and therefore, this goes counter to the UN resolution. We have pointed out to the United Kingdom Government on more than one occasion that this is opposed to the UN resolution to which we are a party and we cannot agree to what they are doing. We object to their purchasing these islands till independence has been given to these countries. These countries may, after independence, on their own volition decide to part with these islands; you may

buy a freehold or leasehold but you cannot buy sovereign rights of a country when that country is not in a position to decide whether it is prepared to part with the sovereignty over a part of its own territory. That is our position. That is how the matter stands.

Shri Nambiar: Will it not upset the balance of power in the Indian Ocean area? Is it not harmful to our defence if a great power has a military base in an island which is so near to us? Is it not in the interest of our national defence that we should point it out, apart from the United Nations decision or the charter?

Shri M. C. Chagla: Will my hon. friend realise that the United Kingdom has a defence agreement with Australia and Malaysia and with Hong Kong, and these islands are necessary for her transit and staging facilities and so they are carrying out arrangements for that purpose. They are not establishing military bases; they have given us a solemn assurance that there is no intention whatever on the part of the United Kingdom to establish military bases.

Shri Jyotirmoy Basu (Diamond Harbour): How do you define a military base?

Shri M. C. Chagla: Well, a military base is a military base.

Mr. Speaker: I do not think you should attempt a definition of whatever it is. It may be dangerous to do so. (Interruption) It is like what was referred to in the morning.

Shri Jyotirmoy Basu: 200 years ago, we had the same story of the British, at the time of the Battle of Plassey. Is it going to be repeated before this country now?

Some Hon. Members rose—

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. If we commit ourselves on the floor of the House, that would not be proper. It is not the Minister alone, but the whole House and whole country. Therefore, we should not ask things off-hand and which will place India in a very, very embarrassing position; it is the Government alone but the country. The House now stands adjourned till 11 O'clock tomorrow.

17.52 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Tuesday, June 6, 1967/Jyaishta 16, 1889 (Saka).