

15.31 hrs

COMMITTEE ON PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

SIXTH REPORT

Shri E. K. Nayanar (Palghat): I beg to move:

"That the House agrees with the Sixth Report of the Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions presented to the House on the 28th June, 1967."

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The question is

"That the House agrees with the Sixth Report of the Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions presented to the House on the 28th June, 1967."

The motion was adopted.

15.32 hrs.

RESOLUTION RE SCHEME FOR PROCUREMENT OF FOODGRAINS

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The House will now take up further discussion of the Resolution regarding scheme for procurement of foodgrains. Mr. Bhagwan Das may continue his speech. Out of 1 hour allotted, 56 minutes remain.

Shri S. K. Tavariah (Pal): Sir, I may be allowed to move my resolution at the end.

Shri Nath Pal (Rajapur): He should be allowed to move his resolution, Sir.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: After the second resolution is concluded, I will try to give just a few seconds. I will try to accommodate him.

Shri Bhagwan Das (Aurangabad): Sir, this subject has come up for discussion several times in this House. In the Chief Ministers' conference held in New Delhi from 8th to 11th April 1967, the Union Minister for Food and Agriculture promised to prepare a

National Food Budget, but despite repeated demands from the floor of both the Houses of Parliament, such a food budget has not yet seen the light of the day.

In our country we find the strange spectacle of deficit States lying adjacent to surplus States and scarcity areas surrounded by surplus regions in the same surplus State. The surplus States of Madras and Andhra are neighbours of Kerala with 50 per cent deficit in its foodgrain production. Orissa, a surplus State, is adjacent to both Bihar and West Bengal and there are scarcity areas inside Orissa too. Madhya Pradesh is a surplus State with scarcity areas like Sarguja. The result is wide disparity of prices for the same commodity in adjoining areas belonging to two different States. The same wheat which sells for Rs. 80 per quintal in Punjab and Haryana is available in western UP markets at such prices as Rs. 140 to Rs. 150 per quintal. In Orissa the rice sells at Rs. 1/- per kilogram but the same may not be available in Purulia or Bankura even for Rs. 3/- per kilogram. In Madras rice sells at Rs. 1/- per measure in government shops but the price rises to Rs. 3/- and even Rs. 4/- per kilogram at the time of frequent breakdowns of rice supply to Kerala from Central stocks.

The situation is definitely detrimental to the cause of national unity. The people of Kerala and West Bengal will have every justification to demand that they being producers of important foreign exchange earning cash crops should be permitted to purchase rice from abroad out of their foreign exchange earnings. It will certainly not be in the national interest to ask to become self-sufficient in foodgrains by converting their cash crop acreage into food crops.

To end this unsatisfactory state of affairs it has been suggested that a national food budget be prepared. This should be on the basis of monopoly procurement of surplus foodgrains produced by big producers,