

STATEMENT

- (i) The target of internal procurement has been fixed 4.5 lakh tonnes of rice.
- (ii) Procurement prices for 1967-68 season will continue during 1968-69 season.
- (iii) Producers' bonus will be paid during 1968-69 season at the same rate as for 1967-68 season. A review will be made later whether the payment of bonus should continue beyond March, 1968.
- (iv) (a) Levy on producers holding 8 acres and above in irrigated and 10 acres or more in non irrigated areas.
(b) 50% levy on the production of rice mills.
(c) 10% levy on purchases by licensed wholesale dealers.
(d) Purchase through a network of agents of voluntary sales by producers.
- (v) The existing cordons around the statutorily rationed areas will continue.
- (vi) The existing licensing control on wholesale dealers, retailers and bulk consumers will continue.

PROCUREMENT OF PADDY IN MANIPUR

1664. SHRI M. MEGHACHANDRA : Will the Minister of FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) the procurement target and price for paddy fixed by the Government of Manipur for the year 1968-69;

(b) the work of procurement in detail; and

(c) the quantity of paddy procured during the last year ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION (SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE) : (a) Procurement target and price for paddy for 1968-69 fixed at 6,000 metric tonnes paddy and Rupees 52.50 per quintal of paddy.

(b) No private procuring agent shall be appointed this year. Procurement will be by the Revenue Agencies of the Government through Pradhans.

(c) About 4,600 tonnes.

BAN ON EXPORTS OF FOODGRAINS FROM PUNJAB

1665. SHRI N. K. SANGHI : Will the Minister of FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Punjab Government have requested the Central Government to allow them to ban the export of foodgrains from the State; and

(b) if so, the reaction of the Central Government in the matter ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION (SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE) : (a) The Government of Punjab had approached the Central Government for allowing them to regulate the movement of paddy from Punjab in the interest of maximising procurement. They had not asked for imposition of ban on the movement of any other foodgrains.

(b) The proposal was agreed to.

REPORT OF TRIPARTITE COMMITTEE OF STANDING LABOUR COMMITTEE

1666. SHRI JUGAL MONDAL : Will the Minister of LABOUR AND REHABILITATION be pleased to refer to the reply given to Starred Question No. 1766 on the 9th May, 1968 and state :

(a) whether Government have since received report of the Tripartite Committee set up by Standing Labour Committee; and

(b) if not, the reasons for delay ?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND REHABILITATION (SHRI HATHI) :

(a) No, Sir.

(b) The Committee could not hold meetings continuously due to certain difficulties. Its deliberations are understood to have been concluded now and the report is expected to be finalized before the end of the year.

12.19 HRS.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE
SPECIAL PROCEDURE FOR VERIFICATION OF CHARACTER FOR APPOINTMENT TO CENTRAL GOVERNMENT POSTS

SHRI VASUDEVAN NAIR (Peer-made) : I call the attention of the Minis-

[Shri Vasudevan Nair]

ter of Home Affairs in the following matter of urgent public importance, and I request that he may make a statement thereon :

"The new and special procedure laid down by the Ministry of Home Affairs in regard to verification of character and antecedents of candidates from Kerala selected for appointment to Civil Posts under the Government of India as contained in their O.M. No. 3/8(S)/67-Ests(B), dated the 6th September, 1968."

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, in September, 1967, instructions laying down the criteria for verification of character and antecedents of candidates for Central Government employment were issued to all the Ministries/Departments. The State Governments were also simultaneously requested to issue instructions to the District authorities (through whom the verification of character and antecedents of candidates for Central Government employment is made) to verify the character and antecedents of candidates for Central Government employment in the light of these criteria as and when requests are received from the Central Government Departments to that effect. They were also requested to consider the feasibility of adopting similar principles for the verification of character and antecedents in respect of candidates for employment under the State Government. A statement explaining these criteria was laid on the table of the Lok Sabha on the 16th February, 1968 in fulfilment of an assurance given in reply to a Supplementary on the Starred Question by Shri A. Sreedharan answered on the 22nd November, 1967.

In so far as Kerala State is concerned, no communication has so far been received from that Government to the effect that they have issued suitable instructions to the District authorities to verify the character & antecedents of candidates for Central Government employment on the basis of the criteria mentioned above. On the other hand, the Chief Minister of Kerala had written to the Home Minister expressing dissatisfaction with these criteria. In these circumstances, it became necessary to make other arrangements for the verification of the character and antecedents of

the candidates for Central Government employment who have resided or are residing in Kerala since the District authorities there would not be making a complete verification as required by the Government of India. Accordingly, instructions were issued to the various Ministries/Departments in this behalf. The intention is to have the character and antecedents verified by the agency of the Central Government in accordance with the criteria laid down by the Central Government in this behalf and which were set forth in the statement placed on the table of the House. No new criteria have been adopted in the case of candidates from Kerala and verification in regard to them is being done on the same principles as are applicable to candidates from other States. There has thus been no discrimination against them in any way.

SHRI VASUDEVAN NAIR : I am glad that the Minister is not denying the fact that they have issued an office memorandum to which I have made a reference in my statement. In that memorandum—for the benefit of the members I will just read out the line where it is said that it has been decided that in addition to the usual verification from the District authorities which of course should be taking place in Kerala, in the case of candidates who belong to the Kerala State or who have resided in that State for more than one year (*Interruptions*) during the last 5 years from the date of enquiry a separate verification will be made. It will even effect somebody who decided to stay there. The authority should also send a separate set of forms for verification to the Ministry of Home Affairs who will make such inquiries as may be considered necessary. The hon. Minister claims now that they have got particular criteria laid down for such inquiries. The whole point is : what do they mean by this verification ? I should like to draw your attention as well as the attention of the hon. Members to the fact that an unequivocal and categorical statement was made by the late Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri in the House on 18th May 1962 when a discussion on the same subject was raised by Shri A. K. Gopalan on police verification. For your benefit as also for the benefit of the House I will just read out one sentence.

"Mr. Shastri : Sir, I have made it clear the other day that so far as ap-

pointment or recruitment is concerned, there is no restriction imposed on anyone who belongs to any political party or holds a particular political opinion. I would still emphasize the same."

That was the statement made by Mr. Shastri, as Home Minister of India on the floor of the Parliament. The Kerala Government is carrying out a verification of character and antecedents but they have made it very clear that as far as political verification is concerned, they are not prepared to do it. Now, in the name of police verification, what was going on till the Government took over power, was political witch-hunting, and we had occasion to take up hundreds of cases where people were victimised and refused employment because they belonged to other political parties and to the Congress. Almost all non-Congress parties were victimised; that was going on in the case of hundreds of people, not only in the case of my party, and this came up before Parliament, and the Kerala Government refused to do that kind of political verification. They have made it very clear. So, the Central Government is now in a fix; what are they to do? How can they victimise the people on political grounds? Is that not a specific reason for issuing this kind of a specific order as far as Kerala is concerned, a discriminatory order, as far as the candidates from Kerala are concerned, and those who resided in Kerala, because they want to have a political screening of the candidates coming from Kerala. If that is not the intention and if the intention was only to get a report about the moral character, about some cases in respect of the candidate in the past, or something like that, then the Kerala Government is supplying that report. Over and above that report, they are to provide an intelligence report of verification. If that is not intended for political witch-hunting, I should like to know what is the need for this specific order, and what is the need for this discrimination?

SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA : I have explained this in my main statement, but I will further elucidate this point. It is our stand and this stand has not changed : that the political opinion of a candidate prior to his appointment to the Government of India has no relevance to ap-
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pointment; whatever political opinion he might have had before he was appointed to the Government of India is not considered by us for the suitability or unsuitability.

With your permission, I will read out the criteria that we have suggested and we have said that on the basis of these criteria the report should be furnished to us by the district authorities. Since the Kerala Government has not indicated to us that they have issued instructions to their district magistrates or the district authorities to verify the antecedents of the candidates on these criteria, we have to, without our liking it, make arrangements to verify the antecedents in the public interest. I would read out these criteria.

AN HON. MEMBER : What is the difference in the criteria ?

MR. SPEAKER : He is reading them out.

SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA : Specifically, the following shall be considered undesirable for employment in the civil posts under the Central Government :

- (a) those who are or who have been members or associated with any party or association declared unlawful after it was so declared, or
- (b) those who have participated in or associated with any activity or programme.
 - (i) aimed at the subversion of the Constitution;
 - (ii) aimed at the organised breach or violation of the law involving violence;
 - (iii) prejudicial to the interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India or the security of the State or which promotes on grounds of religion, race, language, caste or community, feelings of enmity or hatred between different sections of the people."

These are the only criteria that we have prescribed and we wanted to find out that a candidate who has been selected for the Central Government job fully satisfies these criteria. It is nowhere stated that a candidate should not belong to the Communist Party of India or the Socialist Party of

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India or the SSP or this party or that party. That political opinion and political affiliation have no relevance whatsoever in the selection or in the verification of antecedents. I can make it clear that only these criteria have to be satisfied and if a State Government says that even on the basis of these criteria they shall not make an investigation, we have no other option except to make our own arrangements to see that these are properly followed.

SHRI N. SREEKANTAN NAIR (Quilon): In view of the fact that the Government of India had a policy as has been admitted and enunciated by the Government in earlier years, which was referred to on 18th May 1962 by Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri, in view of the fact that the Kerala Government had not denied that they would continue to verify the candidates as required by this Government and in view of the fact that the hon. Minister has admitted in his statement that they are getting verification reports from the district authorities, may I know what led the Government to discriminate against the people who not only reside in Kerala and who are citizens of Kerala, but also who happened to reside for a year during the past 5 years in Kerala, which is against article 14 of the Constitution which gives every citizen equality before the law, article 15 which prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them and article 16 which gives equality of opportunity in matters of public employment? Against these 3 fundamental rights of every citizen of India as guaranteed by the Constitution, what led the Government to bring in additional aspects which they consider to be so important as to brush aside the Kerala Government and get things done by their own intelligence services, whose judgment, and on what is but on what may be called for, in the circular? By doing this, may I know whether the Government is ensuring national integration of this country, the people of which come from three different ethnological groups—Aryans, Dravidians and Mangols?

SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA: I have already explained that there is no discrimination as far as the Kerala people are concerned. Regarding the question of residing for one year, normally the ante-

cedents are verified not for the entire life of the candidate, but for the last five years. The antecedents will be verified if any person has stayed in any part of India for the last five years—for 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 years. So, that has been made clear.

SHRI P. VISWAMBHARAN (Trivandrum): It is a fact that the people of Kerala are being treated as second grade citizens and suspects. They are being suspected in a way which is worse than the Naga hostiles. The Minister has said that a new set of criteria were laid down sometime in 1967 and the new circular was issued in September, 1968. The district authorities in Kerala, as in other States, were carrying on verification for the last so many years. May I know whether, after September, 1967, when the new criteria were laid down, the district authorities in Kerala were not furnishing the details called for by the Central Government in respect of persons selected for employment in the Central Government? If they were furnishing the details, what necessitated the issue of such a new circular in September, 1968?

SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA: We issued these criteria in September, 1967 and we waited for a whole year. When we found that it was not being satisfactorily done, we had to make our own arrangements. (Interruptions).

MR. SPEAKER: The question is whether you were getting reports from the district authorities in Kerala or not.

SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA: We were not getting the reports as laid down in our criteria. We were not satisfied with those reports. Even if the reports came, they were not strictly according to the criteria laid down.

SHRI VASUDEVAN NAIR: You wanted some kind of reports and you did not get such reports.

SHRI VISWANATHA MENON (Ernakulam): Because the Congress Party is not in majority and has no hope of getting to power in Kerala, it is creating all kinds of mischief including this. The Law Minister, who is expected to preach the observance of law, came to Kerala and preached the breaking of laws. Now the Home Minister is saying that no person from Kerala will be given a job; it comes to that, though he has not said it in so many words. If you are going to treat the peo-

ple of Kerala like this, is it not political vendetta against the people of Kerala for not voting the Congress to power? The criteria mentioned in this hon. House clearly establish that people belonging to those parties which are not in power at the Centre will be discriminated against. So, first of all, the Law Minister goes to Kerala and preaches the breaking of laws.

MR. SPEAKER: That is not very relevant to this question.

SHRI VISWANATHA MENON: These things are happening in Kerala. Suppose a person belonging to the Congress Party takes part in a struggle and then applies for a job in the Centre. I am sure you will give him first preference for the job. Is it not a political vendetta against the people of Kerala who have fought against the misrule of the Congress? It is not for your bloody police verification and all this nonsense that we have fought for freedom.

SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA: I am very thankful to the hon. Member for paying a compliment to my political party. But I am sorry that he has cast a slur on other political parties by saying that people belonging to those parties will be disqualified.... (Interruptions). The entire case of the hon. Member is built on the premise that if a person belongs to the Congress Party he would be qualified on this basis and if anybody belongs to any other political party, he will be disqualified and this offends the Constitution. This is what the hon. Member has been saying. What I am saying is that there is no kind of discrimination against the people of Kerala. The people of Kerala are being appointed to government service. I want emphatically to deny any suggestions that there is a move to deprive them of employment opportunities. They have been appointed on the basis of this criteria and their political opinions or affiliations have never been taken into account.

MR. SPEAKER: When this matter was brought before me, there was a lot of misunderstanding. Views may differ on this matter and one side may not agree to what the other side has said. But that is a different matter. I am glad it has been discussed.

12.38 HRS.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

COAL MINES (AMENDMENT) REGULATION ETC.

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND REHABILITATION (SHRI HATHI): I beg to lay on the Table:

(1) A copy of the Coal Mines (Amendment) Regulations, 1968, published in Notification No. G.S.R. 1554, in Gazette of India dated the 31st August 1968, under sub-section (7) of section 59 of the Mines Act, 1952. [Placed in Library. See No. LT-2221/68].

(2) A copy of the Personal Injuries (Compensation Insurance) Amendment Scheme, 1968, published in Notification No. S.O. 3087 in Gazette of India dated the 7th September, 1968, under section 24 of the Personal Injuries (Compensation Insurance) Act, 1963. [Placed in Library. See No. LT-2222/68].

(3) A copy of Notification No. G.S.R. 1560 published in Gazette of India dated the 31st August, 1968, under sub-section (2) of section 4 of the Employees' Provident Funds Act, 1952. [Placed in Library. See No. LT-2223/68].

(4) A copy each of the following Notifications under sub-section (2) of section 7 of the Employees' Provident Funds Act, 1952:—

(i) The Employees' Provident Funds (Fourth Amendment) Scheme, 1968, published in Notification No. G.S.R. 1592 in Gazette of India dated the 31st August, 1968.

(ii) The Employees' Provident Funds (Fifth Amendment) Scheme, 1968, published in Notification No. G.S.R. 1809 in Gazette of India dated the 28th September, 1968.

(iii) The Employees' Provident Funds (Sixth Amendment) Scheme, 1968, published in Notification No. G.S.R. 1899 in Gazette of India dated the 26th October, 1968.

(iv) The Employees' Provident Funds (Seventh Amendment) Scheme, 1968, published in Notification No. G.S.R. 1900 in Gazette of India dated the 26th October, 1968. [Placed in Library. See No. LT-2224/68].