

[अभ्यक्ष महोदय]

हो जाता कि मरडर की कोशिश की जा रही है तो मरडर ही क्या होता ।

Really, we are all very sorry that such a tragic death has taken place of an eminent lawyer, a great citizen and servant of the country.

I hope that I shall be voicing the wishes and the sentiments of all Members of the House if I ask the hon. Home Minister to convey our condolences to the members of the bereaved family.

I must also say that this is a great warning for us, and Government should take precautions to see that such a thing does not happen. That is all that I can say at this moment.

I learnt about it at midnight, soon after the incident. Of course, nothing could be done at that moment, because by the time information was received, these culprits had already made their escape. Considering the place of the occurrence, this is a very daring thing. Just near at hand is the Prime Minister's house, where there is so much guard and all might they keep watch. If such a thing can happen in such a locality, we ought to take care and see what further steps are necessary in this direction to be taken by Government, because otherwise we cannot be sure about the security of our people, of even the Prime Minister, if this can happen in that locality in this manner. Therefore, Government should think over it, as to what steps are really necessary at this moment.

I hope our sentiments would be conveyed to the bereaved family.

Shri Nanda: The sentiments expressed by you are shared by the whole House. As I said in the beginning, I would certainly convey the sentiments of the House to the bereaved family.

In addition, I assure you of one thing. A new situation has arisen now and has confronted us. I promise you and the House that every possible step will be taken to see that conditions are made more secure, as secure as they possibly can be.

16.17 hrs.

RE: DISCUSSION OF NO-CONFIDENCE MOTION

Shri N. C. Chatterjee (Burdwan): I would like to know if you could give us a particular date when we could start the debate on the No-Confidence Motion.

Mr. Speaker: There were about 7 hours still left for the Motion regarding the food situation when we started today. We might have taken about 4½ hours and there still remain 2½ hours. There was a demand made in the morning that time should be extended. If the Government has no objection, upto half past three tomorrow hon. Members may participate and at that time I would call the Minister and we could conclude the debate by tomorrow evening. Then the No-confidence Motion would be taken up on Friday Morning after the Question Hour.

There was another question put by Shri Kamath about time for discussion of the Murud incident. I would make it clear that on Monday we would proceed with the No-confidence Motion. On Tuesday, in the morning, the first 2½ hours would be taken up for the discussion of the Murud incident.

MOTION RE: FOOD SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY—contd.

Dr. L. M. Singhvi (Jodhpur): Mr. Speaker, the food debate has now assumed the proportions of a truly national debate. It is a debate which

for once has to be down to earth, the debate of the market-place, of public careers and of the *chaupal* of the village. It is a debate when a good deal of angry words, accusations—even diatribes and insinuations—are understandably pressed into service, and in which the defence mechanism of the ruling party reveals, and even exposes, itself.

First of all, let me commiserate with the Food Minister who finds himself in the notoriously runaway car of Food and Agriculture. One wonders whether he holds this portfolio as a measure of penance or punishment or as a consequence of the merest chance in the ministerial musical chairs. Beyond commiseration, I also want to wish him well, for in his portfolio he holds the key to the stability of our Republic and the prosperity of the enterprise of economic growth within the framework of law in our country. This is what makes the food problem crucial to our nation and to the way of life we have adopted.

Above all, it must be realised that this is not a temporary phase or a passing crisis.

16. 20 hrs.

[SHRI SONAVANE in the Chair]

We are now in the 18th year of our freedom, and yet we have to depend on large-scale imports and buying from foreign countries. This is not a very flattering situation in which we find ourselves. We find that in spite of the fact that we are in the 18th year of our freedom adolescence of thinking in our policies still afflicts us, particularly on the food front. We find that like Walter Mitty, our planners and our policy makers have more often than not chosen to revel in a world of their own creation, a world which does not find it convenient to enter into any meaningful or workable correspondence with the world of reality. We find that too long we have sought to take refuge

in escape, too long we have tried to wish away our difficulties and our problems. Our present predicament, in my humble opinion, is a cumulative apothecosis of prolonged neglect, studied indifference and ineptitude both in administration and in the formulation of policies.

On the food front it is quite clear that we must face our problems bravely, patiently, skillfully and relentlessly not only for providing the common man with the wherewithal of his life, but also for the protection and preservation, maintenance and promotion of our democratic way of life.

We must remember that four out of every ten human beings in the world are hungry men, and that one out of them is always an Indian. Almost 50 per cent of our population perhaps can rightly be classified as hungry population. Perhaps even a higher percentage could be classified as hungry if we were to apply the international standards which are far more advanced.

We must also remember the bleak and suffocating fact that between the years 1951 and 1961 alone our population has risen by 21.5 per cent or so—a demographic flood, which threatens to drown our fledgling progress, and to defeat our future hopes.

Thirdly, we must remember that increased money supply and inordinate Government spending, which has been rising in a very indiscriminate, thoughtless manner over the past years, holds the whole nation and its economy to ransom, and the convulsive spiral of inflation holds us its captives. It seems that in this inflationary spiral we will be caught and enmeshed almost inextricably, unless something decisive is done not only on the front of food production, but in the field of monetary and fiscal policies.

Added to this is, of course, the impact of inclement weather, of floods and famine, all aggravated further by

[Dr. L. M. Singhvi]

administrative incapacity and bureaucratic ineptitude.

Legitimately and in fairness, only a small part of the blame attaches to the grain merchant who has been made a scapegoat in season and out of season by a Government which has not been too willing always to admit its failures and its pitfalls. The administrative procedures and policies are indeed the major culprits in this whole complex situation, and it is impertinent, irrelevant, I would even go to the extent of saying that it is dishonest, to make an effort to find a readymade scapegoat in the grain merchant and in magnifying the sins of omission and commission of the grain merchant. This may sound different from the note sounded by many of my friends, but I do think that unless we are prepared to face problems squarely, we will never get at any of the solutions.

We must realise, as is conceded by all these Government publications, that prices are very intimately related to production, and it is mainly because of the failure of production that we have not been able to achieve a proper price. It is clear that the grain merchant, who has his own shortcomings and faults, is not the villain of the piece as many of my friends in the Congress Party, as indeed in the Communist Party,—for, politics always makes strange bedfellows—would like to portray him to be. I would like in this debate to draw the attention of the House to the admittedly rising spiral of prices in which we find ourselves. It appears that within a year between 1962 and 1963 the prices had risen by 7 per cent. In less than another year, subsequently, the prices have risen by another ten per cent. In the latest issue of *Economic Weekly* dated 29th August, 1964, a journal of current economic and political affairs we find this statement which has caused a great deal of discomfiture. It quotes the indices published in the *Economic Times* which have been

found to be fairly accurate. It says that this index stood at 156.9 yesterday as compared to 154.6 a week ago, 148.3 a month ago 136.2 three months ago and 119 on the same day a year ago.

The magnitude of the rise in prices which is a major problem before us is realised by the new Food and Agriculture Minister who is known for his balanced approach to the problems, an approach which is neither dogmatic nor fettered by doctrinaire commitments. But we have yet to cleanse our thinking of the kind of statement which one finds in the review which has been supplied to us and which appears to disclose a highly confused kind of thinking in the governmental circles which formulate policies. It appears to me that it is not fully realised that the problem of prices in our country is not so much a problem of availability of foodgrains but it is a problem which is essentially a problem of distribution. In the larger context I think it is a problem of monetary and fiscal policies. Too long have we permitted ourselves to spend almost recklessly through various government agencies; too long have we ignored the rather alarming thought that this Government spending may lead to disastrous results; too long have we ignored the sound advice of sober economists. I think it is very necessary, therefore, that the magnitude of the rise in prices is not laid merely at the doors of our failure on the production front but also it should be fairly apportioned to our monetary and fiscal policies which have been causing inflation inevitably.

In this context I should like also to mention that certain economic home truths cannot be ignored by the Government except at the peril of the future of our country. For instance, I feel that the ratio of wage rates to production output has to be held stable if inevitably we are not to be imprisoned in a spiral of inflation.

What are we doing about it? There are wage demands which are not necessarily related to the productive output. There are wage demands which meet with our sympathy because we know the lot of the common man is not very happy; he is embattled for subsistence. At the same time, realism dictates that we must secure a proper and balanced study of this dynamic factor, this phenomenon, in our economics? What we should create, therefore, a national council of wages and prices, because this is where inflation will always arise if only we let ourselves ignore this factor.

I also feel that the Price Stabilisation Board should be brought into existence and it should have effectiveness. In 1957, a suggestion was made by the Asoka Mehta Committee that such a Board should be established. Every now and then in Parliament we have been assured that the Government is giving its most earnest consideration to the suggestion, but the earnest consideration which the Government has been assuring us does not appear to have yielded any offspring. It has been a wholly barren consideration. I would hope that a Price Stabilisation Board which is effective, which is well-armed with competent people, would come into existence not only on paper but in a functioning way, in an effective way.

I also feel that we should review and re-assess the levels of technology at which our agriculture today operates. It appears to me of the essence that if our agriculture is to make any meaningful strides, the technological levels of our agriculture must improve substantially. The improvement hitherto has been quite insignificant and quite inconsequential. Indeed this is so even in the intensive cultivation package plan districts. Neither have we devised new and effective implements for agriculture nor have we given enough attention to the problems of irrigation and of finding good seeds for the agricul-

turist, nor have we been able to persuade and provide incentives to the agriculturists to adopt new and more progressive methods. It appears to me that this is another pitfall which the Government has taken in, and I hope that the Minister will pay particular attention to the improvement of the levels of technology in the field of agriculture, because no amount of physical inputs would improve our agriculture unless the level of technology is improved.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Member's time is up.

Dr. L. M. Singhvi: I am the only speaker from my group and I hope that all possible time would be given to me as was given for others.

Mr. Chairman: I think you will be able to finish within 15 minutes.

Dr. L. M. Singhvi: I would also like to suggest to the Government that a crash programme for the production of fertilizers should be undertaken. As a matter of fact, a Sindri or two Sindries would hardly meet the requirements of agricultural production in the perspective of our growing population and even in the perspective of our present requirements. Unless this is done we cannot have bumper crops, because that would be merely wishful thinking. In this, I am sure the Government would give its fullest priority and serious consideration.

I would also like to raise the question of the hope, a very unwitting expression of the hope, found in the Review by the Government that the co-operative sector would be enlarged in order to improve distribution and in order to improve food production generally. It appears to me that it is as impractical as it is unrealistic. The co-operative sector so far, unfortunately, has proved only one thing; that is, how perfectly sound ideas can be distorted and perverted out of recognition; how a sector which was supposed to be the people's sector, a sector which was supposed to be the

[Dr. L. M. Singhvi]

representative of the people's initiative and energies, can become a sector of political corruption. Today,—I would defy the Minister to say—that the co-operative sector in the country, small though it is, is perhaps the most corrupt sector; it is the Augean's stable of our economy.

To enlarge it and to hope that it would yield results would be really unfortunate. I do hope that the various scandals which surround the cooperative sector in this country would be a sufficient guide and a sufficient deterrent factor in the Government deciding upon embarking on any programme of enlargement of this sector, which has proved to be corrupt, inefficient and useless.

I would also like to impress upon the Government that large tracts of land in the country are still lying fallow. Take for instance the desert and arid zones of Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Rayalaseema and the arid zone of Ladakh itself. Unless superior technology is applied to the cause of agricultural development in this country and unless, as I have suggested many times before, a desert development authority is separately brought into existence to embark upon an ambitious programme of desert development, we will have no hope that these areas would be able to participate in the economic prosperity and the future well-being of this country.

I would also like to suggest that for a realistic appraisal of our food policies, the kind of review produced and supplied to us by the Government is very unpromising. I do very much hope that we will have very much more meat in the speech of the Minister and much more promise for extricating ourselves from the problems with which we are confronted today.

Shri Inder J. Malhotra (Jammu and Kashmir): Sir, I have been listening to the food debate for the last three days. The same arguments and the

same points have again been emphasised. Probably the only new thing we have in the debate is the hon. Minister. In my opinion, the food situation in the country has attracted our attention due to the fact that there was rise in prices. I agree with Dr. Singhvi on so many points he made. But I certainly cannot ditto his clean certificate to the grain merchants.

Dr. L. M. Singhvi: I have not given a clean certificate. I only said that they should not be made ready-made scapegoats and the whole blame cannot be apportioned to them. Only a small part of the blame attaches to them.

Shri Inder J. Malhotra: I am glad he has realised that he can never give them a clean certificate. In my opinion, the main cause of the rise in price, which is absolutely artificial, is due to the role of the middlemen in the handling of the foodgrain trade. I am very happy to note that the Government has taken the decision to have a State Trading Corporation and the Government will be entering the wholesale market on commercial lines. He has pointed out that this is only the beginning, the first phase of this programme and ultimately the Government shall have to take over the distribution and marketing of the foodgrains in this country. Till that point is reached, I am afraid that this artificial fluctuation of the prices, specially of foodgrains, shall always remain with us as an agricultural problem, just as shortage in food production is with us.

There is another factor about prices of foodgrains. We have emphasised this in the past also that to achieve the desired increase in agricultural production, one of the major factors, one of the most important incentives to the farmer, would be a guaranteed fair price for his produce. I would say that for all kinds of crops that a farmer produces on the farm he should be given a fair price. I do not know

when the Government would realise that. To check the price at the consumer's level is important no doubt, but to pay the right price to the farmers is as important as to see that the consumers do not pay very high prices for foodgrains. Therefore, I would appeal to the hon. Minister, where he listens very attentively to my hon. friends who sit in the Opposition when they complain about the rise in the prices of foodgrains he should also equally pay his attention to see that by adopting all the ways and means possible a farmer is induced to put more effort to produce more.

In my opinion, one of the major factors for this is that a farmer must have a guaranteed remunerative price for his produce. I would appeal to the hon. Minister to appoint a commission or a committee, I would say, rather, he should create a sort of a permanent cell in the Ministry constituting technical experts and representatives of the farmers also, to review from time to time the price prevailing, the price the farmer was getting in the past and the price he will be getting for his produce now. They should then consider how this programme should be phased in the future.

This is one aspect of the problem. The other aspect which forms the whole base is how to increase our production. Beyond any doubt we can say that during the last 17 years agricultural production has increased in this country. But with the resources we have at our disposal, with the policy statements made by the Government from time to time and with the efforts put in, the desired results have not been achieved. In my opinion, the main reason for this is that our administrative machinery has become so complicated that nobody is prepared to take any responsibility. Starting from the level of gramsevak right up to the level of the central ministry I hardly find anybody who can stand up and say that if there is a failure in a particular village, if the production does not increase in a

particular village it is his responsibility. The Minister at the Centre always says that the implementation of the agricultural programme is in the hands of the State Governments. The State Governments say that they send their schemes regarding agricultural development programme to the central ministry but certain difficulties are put in their way by the central ministry. I just want to know, how long we are going to tolerate this kind of chaos in the administrative machinery. The problem is basically a very simple one. It looks also very simple. How can you increase agricultural production. You need better seeds, better fertilisers and better irrigation projects. All these three things are being provided by the Government. But, unfortunately, to the tune these things are required these are not available to the farmers. We have a score of governmental agencies, universities and institutes which have been conducting research for the last so many years. I would just give an example of the Pusa Institute here in the capital. It has done remarkable work. It has produced very good strains of wheat and other foodgrains. But when we compare the adjacent field of the farmer who has also been cultivating his land for all these years with the Pusa Agricultural Research Institute farm, we find that though the experts of the Institute claim an average yield of 40 maunds per acre in their farm, the average yield of the farmer's farm hardly comes to 20 maunds per acre.

When this is the kind of situation that exists, anybody can see that what is required to be done is that the knowledge which is available at the Pusa Institute must flow quickly to the farms outside. How can this knowledge flow? The only agency which can do this is the Agricultural Extension-Service, which has not been put on the right line now. If it had been put on the right line, if the Ministry of Community Development had been doing the job which we

[Shri Inder J. Malhotra]

entrusted to it, that is, giving technical knowledge to the farmers, we would certainly have achieved the desired results. So, I say it is high time that we learn from our past mistakes.

If there is something basically wrong with the Community Development programme—Shri Dey is sitting here and I am sure he will not mind my saying so—let us scrap that programme. If we find that programme is good, let us fill the gaps up in that programme so that there will be no failure of this programme in future. Without a strong Agricultural Extension Service and a sound Community Development programme we cannot achieve the desired results.

Here I would say that instead of having a gram sevak, who is only a matriculate, why do we not increase the pay of the post and have agricultural graduates so that they can be more useful, more helpful to the farmer?

Dr. L. M. Singhvi: We do not have enough agricultural graduates.

Shri Inder J. Malhotra: Every year we are opening an agricultural university or agricultural college. So, if agricultural graduates are not available today, they will be available after four years. That is not the problem. When we have a scheme in which the gram sevak is the pivot of the programme, the man behind, the main force behind the programme, that poor fellow is now hardly getting Rs. 100 and he is a matriculate with the result he is not interested in the job which he is asked to do and the effect is nothing goes ahead in the Community Development programme. So, I would suggest that instead of having 100 gram sevaks in one block, let us have only ten agricultural graduates as gram sevaks. We have to entrust them with the work and say: this is the present production of this group of five or ten villages; in

the coming season we want you to put your efforts to improve the position, let us see how far you can help in increasing agricultural production. Again I would emphasize, let us strengthen the Agricultural Extension Services and see that the amount which we are spending every year on agricultural research really reaches the farmers; otherwise, it is no use having the Pusa institute in the capital.

Now I will refer to the two points raised by Shri Brij Raj Singh of Jan Sangh. He complained about land reforms. Actually, the position is the reverse. My complaint is that the State Governments have not implemented the land reforms in the country on the right lines. I would say exactly the opposite thing to what Shri Brij Raj Singh has said. I would appeal to the hon. Minister that the State Governments must be asked, or made known in unequivocal terms that the land reforms programme, which forms the very basis of our economy, which forms the very basis of our agriculture, must be implemented as quickly as possible.

Shri Nambar: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would request the hon. Minister of Food to see that food is given to the people. He knows that today proper distribution of food to the masses is not taking place. We are not accusing the Government for the sake of accusation; we are not accusing the Government for the reason that something should be found fault with. Hon. Members on the other side stated that the Opposition mainly, particularly the Communists, are here to accuse the Government. The point is: What is the reason for the accusation? Whether the Government is in a position to give food to the people is the question.

I come from a surplus district in Trichinopoly where we are supposed to produce more than what we require in the district; but, unfortunately, today we, the people in that district,

are unable to get sufficient rice and foodgrains even at the rates that have been declared by Government. I contacted the Collector and the officials concerned there and the rice mill owners. They say that though the price has been fixed for rice, the price has not been fixed for paddy. Not only that, paddy is not available for the mill owners. I am residing very close to Tanjore District which is considered to be the granary of the South. Paddy is not forthcoming from Tanjore. The hon. Minister must know why it is so. The reason is that the paddy that is available has gone underground and has been cornered by the hoarders. So, if foodgrains that are available are not brought to the people, then whom are we to accuse?

It is not that we enter into doctrinaire arguments for State trading. When the normal trade channel which is in the hands of the private trade is not functioning, the Government must step in. That is the only way out. It is not because we feel that the Government would do it better. We know, in many cases the Government has been a hopelessly bad organiser and administrator; but we have no go. We have to live under the roof of this Government because it is there. Therefore we say, "Please take it over". They are hesitant because their policy is to support the hoarders. I accuse the hon. Minister of Food because the Government knows where the hoarding has taken place. It has been admitted by Government that there is money advanced by banks for purchasing and cornering foodstuffs. They know that. To the extent of 50 per cent it has been stabilised now. That money is already in use. The Government knows where the money has been given and where it has been hoarded. If the Government is not taking effective steps to de-hoard it and make it available to the people, then what are we to say? Are we to say that the Government is against the hoarder? Or, are we to say that the Government is in support of the

hoarder? They must answer that point. There is no question of saying that we simply want to accuse.

After all, why is it that the urban population, the workers and the ordinary toilers, had to come forward to go in for strikes and demonstrations on the streets? Is it for the simple reason that they want to find fault with the Government? Do you think that thousands and thousands of workers, middle-class employees and others will go on strike for nothing? Therefore the Government must see the writing on the wall. They should not simply find scapegoats of the Communists or the Opposition saying that the Opposition is creating a situation. That is exactly what I want to drive home.

Shri C. K. Bhattacharyya (Raiganj):
Why not give a list of the hoarders?

Shri Namblar: We can. We know the hoarders. We know where hoarding has taken place. Let the Government allow us to de-hoard. We accept the challenge. We will form people's committees in every city and taluk and with the help of the people's committees, the worker, the peasant and the ordinary man who wants to take food, we will find the stocks. We will inform the Police and if the Police does not come, we will go and see that it is de-hoarded. But then do not bring in the question of the Defence of India Rules.

Shrimati Yashoda Reddy (Kurnool):
If they know the hoarders, instead of attacking the Government, they can go and attack the hoarders to bring out the grain.

Shri Namblar: We know the hoarders. If we take the law in our own hands, do not accuse us that we are breaking the law of the land. Of course, if you do not do it, it is going to happen. The question is one of distribution. It has been agreed that if the normal distribution process has failed, the Government has to step in. The sooner they do, the better it is.

[Shri Nambiar]

The other points have also been raised saying that we are not co-operating with the Government with regard to the food production or with regard to the causes of shortage which are to be removed. We have been repeatedly saying that the causes are created by the Government.

The question of deficit financing and other points have also been raised. I say, to a certain extent, in a planned economy, you may have to resort to the deficit financing. But here we have gone to the extreme end, beyond the limit, with the result that it has created a spiral rise in prices. Further, I could quote instances as to how the amount created through deficit financing has been used for industrial production and not for agricultural production.

Shri Hanumanthaya (Bangalore City): That is Mr. Masani's argument.

Shri Nambiar: It is a fact also. It has not been given to the actual tiller of the soil. The money has not been given in the form of loans to the actual tiller of the soil, the peasant who is in need of them. On the other hand, the taccavi loans and such other loans are being given to the rich peasant who is in a position to control certain areas and because of the loans he could have diversification in agriculture from foodgrains to cash crops. The facts that are available with the Government will show that the poor peasant with 1 acre or 2 acres or 3 acres could not have diversification to sugarcane crop whereas the rich peasant with 20 or 50 acres with loans that he got could divert it to sugarcane or such other items. The poor peasant who needs loans for producing rice or wheat or whatever it is, the commodities which are in shortage, does not get the loans.

I know the facts from my personal experience. I live with the peasantry. I go to the villages every week and I have represented many cases to the Collector for taccavi loans. It is very

difficult to get these loans. I for one tried to get loans for the poor peasants through the panchayat unions and I have met many Commissioners and officials. It takes 4 to 6 months to get a loan and what the Minister has said is correct that if anything is to be done, it can be done in the villages only by bribery and corruption. The Minister, Mr. S. K. Dey, has himself said it. In the circumstances, do you think that whatever the money you give in the form of loans reaches the poor peasant or the man who actually tills the land?

I have to refer to certain points which were hurled against us about P.L. 480 imports. We are not against the import of foodgrains. You can import foodgrains whenever necessary. But during the last 17 years, every year you have been importing foodgrains from America under the head P.L. 480 and so far there have been imports to the extent of Rs. 1800 crores. And today, because you find ready-made food available through imports, the Government do not think in terms of long-term measures of permanently eradicating the evil of shortage. On the other hand, they find it convenient to import and they are allowing so much of uncertainty in the villages whereby they do not even think in terms of land reforms. They do not think in terms of helping the actual tiller of the soil. They say publicly that they are for land reforms but in effect they do not enter into land reforms. Further, this P.L. 480 is a dangerous thing because it is because of the ready-made food available that the diversification to cash crops has also been increased. Therefore, there is the permanent danger of not having at all the articles of foodgrains in sufficient quantities even for a century.

Therefore, you must discourage the PL-480 imports.

17 hrs.

Dr. L. M. Singhvi: It is a little better than starvation.

