

[Secretary]

on the 18th April, 1953, and transmitted to the Council of States for its recommendations and to state that the Council has no recommendations to make to the House of the People in regard to the said Bills:

- (1) The Finance Bill, 1953.
- (2) The Central Excises and Salt (Amendment) Bill, 1953."

✓ ALLOTMENT OF TIME FOR PRIVATE MEMBERS' LEGISLATION

Shri M. L. Dwivedi (Hamirpur Distt.): May I solicit your indulgence in asking that in view of the fact that Members of this House are greatly interested in private legislation.....

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: What about this piece of legislation?

Shri M. L. Dwivedi. I find that very little time has been given for discussion of private Bills in this House. If you go to England.....

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: What does he want?

Shri M. L. Dwivedi: More time should be allotted for discussion of private legislation.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: We must sit this afternoon.

Shri M. L. Dwivedi: In the House of Commons two days are allotted every week for discussing private legislation. Here we get only two days in three and a half months.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: We have now passed a rule whereby half a day on every Friday will be allotted for non-official work in addition to three half hours or such longer time as may be fixed for other important work either arising out of questions or independently on any public matter of importance. I think we can utilise all that hereafter.

Shri M. L. Dwivedi: We may be prepared to sit on Saturdays in case those days are allotted for discussion of private legislations.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Saturday is booked.

Shri M. L. Dwivedi: In future.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Nothing like that.

✓ Shri M. L. Dwivedi: There must be some provision regarding Private

Members' legislation. They take a lot of interest in these discussions. In these discussions they will focus the attention.....

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Hon. Members never get anything by merely springing up and saying something and inviting some decisions offhand by the Speaker. More often it goes against them.

Shri M. L. Dwivedi rose—

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: All this has been considered. Half a day on every Friday has been allotted for non-official work. Let this experiment be carried on for some time. Let us see.

FOOD SCARCITY IN RAJASTHAN

Shri G. D. Somani (Nagaur-Pali): Unfortunately, the scarcity conditions in Rajasthan now have become almost a regular feature and during the last few years since 1948, one or the other part of Rajasthan has been suffering from these scarcity conditions. In the year 1951 there was almost a total lack of rainfall and conditions of scarcity were widespread. Last year, i.e., in 1952, certain parts of Rajasthan were suffering from famine conditions and in order to give briefly some idea of the present conditions, I would like to invite the attention of the hon. Minister to certain reports which recently appeared in the Press. I would first quote a report that appeared in the *Times of India* of 21st instant which says:

"The entire Bikaner Division, excluding the canal area, is in the grip of a severe famine. Water scarcity is acute and people are dependent on khejra tree bark for their food."

Similarly, a local paper from Bikaner, *Ganarajya*, gives a report like this:

"बीकानेर ज़िले में अकाल धीरे-धीरे एक भयंकर रूप धारण कर रहा है। लोग तूबे जैसे विषैले फलों के बीज खा कर निर्वाह कर रहे हैं। 'गणराज्य' के सम्मानित प्रतिनिधि, जो अभी, यहां के कई सर्वमान्य नागरिकों के साथ, इन गांवों का दौरा कर के आये हैं, उनका कहना है कि बच्चों का स्वास्थ्य बिलकुल समाप्त हो गया है, स्त्रियों की आंखों में पानी है और पुरुष असहाय हो गये हैं।

राजस्थान और विशेषतया बीकानर जिले में अकाल के कारण परिस्थितियां शनः शनः इतनी बिगड़ती जा रही हैं कि यदि सरकार ने इस ओर अब शीघ्र ही ध्यान नहीं दिया तो शायद हजारों मनुष्यों के जीवन नष्ट हो जाने का दायित्व राजस्थान सरकार के सिर पर होगा।”

I would not like to take the time of the House in reading more extracts from other reports, especially in view of the limit of half-an-hour. I want to bring it to the notice of the hon. Minister in charge that these reports are not in any way exaggerated. They have been substantiated by eye witnesses who have sent their impartial versions of what they have seen. I also understand that this matter was brought to the notice of the hon. Dr. Katju, when he was in Rajasthan a few days ago and he has had an opportunity to see things for himself in some of the areas. I have no doubt that he must have also drawn the attention of the department concerned.

Here is a question where lakhs of people are on the verge of starvation and they are living on poisonous grass seeds or barks of trees. Look at the quantity of relief measures that have been taken by the Government of Rajasthan in this connection. I need hardly point out that the financial capacity and position of the Government of Rajasthan, in spite of their best intentions and in spite of whatever they have been trying to do, is simply so limited that with their limited resources, they are unable to cope with the situation with which they are faced. From what I have heard and from whatever information has been made available, the Centre has so far made an allocation of only Rs. 18 lakhs for these famine and scarcity areas of Rajasthan. Looking to the widespread nature of the scarcity and the tremendous resources which will be required to meet even the bare necessities of the people who have been affected, this sum of Rs. 18 lakhs is simply a drop in the ocean.

In reply to the short notice question that I put on the 4th of March last, I was assured that a team of officers from the Centre would visit Rajasthan shortly and make comprehensive enquiries for taking both short term and long term measures to meet the requirements of the situation. I am not, so far, aware whether any such team of officers has gone there or whether the Government are doing any-

thing to cope with the situation which is growing from bad to worse. I would submit with all the earnestness at my command that the leisurely way in which this matter is being handled by the Government at the Centre is really causing the utmost concern both to the Government of Rajasthan and to the various other organisations which are connected with the relief work in those areas which are so severely affected. The coming two or three months will be a very acute period. From the nature of the distress and the reports that have appeared in the Press and the reports which have also been sent by so many eye witnesses are so serious that unless some emergency measures are taken, unless something substantial is done, immediately, the conditions would simply go from bad to worse. There is really an acute fear that so many thousands of people, who are now living on the verge of starvation, being permanently affected. I would therefore appeal to the hon. Minister concerned to treat this whole problem on an emergency basis and to send the team of officers which he had promised in his reply on the 4th March, last. This again means that one and a half months have gone. So far as I am aware, no such officers have gone to the affected areas. This clearly shows that the whole matter is not being treated with the urgency that it requires in handling. Even at this late stage, I would therefore appeal that not a moment should be lost to make the necessary investigations and to make such resources available to the Government of Rajasthan as will enable them to meet the situation. Here is a problem in which there can be no controversy. People are suffering and this fact has been corroborated by all the reports and different sections of political opinion. Here is a fact the correctness of which cannot be disputed. What is wanted is some action urgently to make necessary enquiries and make such resources available to the Government of Rajasthan as would enable them to meet the gravity of the situation. I hope the hon. Minister concerned would be able to give a satisfactory reply which will meet the requirements of the situation.

Shri Bhandari (Jaipur): Sir,.....

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Has the hon. Member given notice already?

Shri Bhandari: No.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I will call those hon. Members who have given notice already one after another.

श्री पी० एल० बालपाल : (गंगानगर
झुनझनू—रक्षित—अनुसूचित जातियां :)
माननीय उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं यह

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: There is no question of any speech now. Hon. Members who have given notice can each put a question for purposes of elucidation. The hon. Minister will reply.

श्री पी० एल० बालपाल : माननीय उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, क्या माननीय मंत्री जी को यह मालूम है कि राजस्थान में बीकानेर और जैसलमेर डिवीजन के अन्दर वहाँ लोग घास फूस और तूबे के बीज खा कर अपना जीवन निर्वाह कर रहे हैं, और जो वहाँ अकाल कार्य चल रहा है क्या वह ठीक और व्यवस्थित ढंग से चल रहा है और वहाँ के लिए सरकार जो सहायता दे रही है क्या वह वहाँ पर जो अकाल की समस्या है उसकी ठीक ढंग से पूर्ति कर सकती है और वहाँ की समस्या उस से हल हो सकती है और क्या सरकार के पास कोई ऐसी सूचना भी आई है कि वहाँ पर किन्हीं गांवों में अन्न नमिलने की वजह से कोई मृत्यु हुई है ?

उपाध्यक्ष महोदय : काफी है ।

Three questions have been asked.

Shri Sarangadhar Das (Dhenkanal-West Cuttack): I wish to ask the following questions:

Are Government aware of the fact that in Napasar, Bikaner District, people, particularly Harijans, are living on bread made out of bark of Khejri tree, certain leaves, and harmful seeds, with a little grain, and getting sick? I wish to present to the Minister this bread I have here. Let him eat it.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: How can it be exhibited here?

Shri Sarangadhar Das: Are Government aware that the Commissioner, accompanied by some members of the public, namely, Sarbasri Chhaganlal Mohata, Srinivas Thirani, Iswarlal Bapna, Editor Lokjeewan, visited the area, and witnessed these conditions? Also, if Government are aware of

starvation deaths in Napasar area? The names of the people who have died are: Phoosh Raj, Jaglo, Hemalo, Lalkiya's mother, Anachi, wife of Imra, and wife of Nanu, in various villages.

Are Government aware that the Government of Rajasthan have failed to give sufficient relief to man and animal in this area, and will the Minister of Food go to the help of the Government of Rajasthan because their resources are not enough to do this? If not already done so, will Government rush foodgrains and fodder to this area?

Shri Nambiar (Mayuram): May I know, Sir, in addition to the facts supplied by other hon. Members here, whether it is also a fact that the mica industry has been collapsing in that area, especially in Bhilwara area of Rajasthan, that thousands of workers are unemployed and many factories have been closed; that even the payments due to them remain unpaid, and there is so much of unrest added to famine conditions? I want to know what relief has been sent to these men who are also affected. Also I would like to know, as Mr. Sarangadhar Das has explained, whether it is also a fact that this sort of bread is used there. I have got bread sent straight from Rajasthan. I will hand it over to the Minister outside the House. I would like to know whether Government would immediately rush foodstuffs instead of making an enquiry, as by the time the enquiry is over, thousands of people may die. May I also know whether the Minister will look to these facts, and rush immediate relief and save the people of Rajasthan from this calamity—all the people including the workers, peasants and others concerned?

1 P.M.

Shri Nand Lal Sharma (Sikar): Will the hon. Minister be pleased to let this House know what steps the Central Government or the State Government of Rajasthan have taken to help the starving people of Rajasthan in the famine-affected areas, whether the steps taken are adequate to alleviate the difficulties of the people, and whether, in view of the repeated famines in Rajasthan, the Government of India propose to set up a permanent committee, to avoid this permanent shortage of food and water in those areas?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The hon. Minister.

Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava (Gurgaon): Will you kindly allow other hon. Members also to put questions?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: No notice has been given by other hon. Members. The practice is that they must have given some intimation to me earlier.

Shri K. K. Basu (Diamond Harbour): The Chair has got the powers to waive it at its discretion.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: How many other hon. Members want to participate?

Hon. Members rose—

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Even if every Member speaks at the rate of one minute for each, there will be no time left for the hon. Minister to reply.

The Minister of Agriculture (Dr. P. S. Deshmukh): I have not got a very long reply. So, if anybody wants to speak, I do not mind. My reply is fairly short.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: All right, I shall give half a minute or a quarter of a minute to each.

पंडित ठाकुर दास भार्गव : मैं अभी इस इलाके से होकर आया हूँ। यह इलाका ज़िला हिसार से लगता हुआ है। मैं दो तीन महीने हुए इस क़हत को देखने के वास्ते गया था। वहाँ पर जो हालत देखी वह वाक़ई बहुत दर्दनाक और तक्रलीक़ देह थी। गांव के आदमियों की हालत तो तबाहक़ून थी ही, मवेशियों की हालत तो बहुत ही ख़राब थी। हजारों मवेशी वहाँ पर मर गये। मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि कितनी हड्डियों की गाड़ियां दूसरे इलाकों में भेजी गयीं? एक सवाल तो मेरा यह है। दूसरा सवाल मैं यह पूछना चाहता हूँ कि क्या उन्होंने इस बातका पता लगाया है कि उस इलाके में अभी तक कितने मवेशी मर चुके हैं? यह दो बातें मैं पूछना चाहता हूँ।

Shri Morarka (Ganganagar—Jhunjhunu): Firstly may I inquire of the hon. Minister the amount of help that the Rajasthan Government had asked for, and the amount of help that the Centre has actually given so far? Secondly, is the hon. Minister aware that it is not only the question of food scarcity, but unemployment and want of purchasing power, due to which the people are starving? In

order to tackle these, may I know what the Government are doing or are contemplating to do?

Shri Bhandari: What arrangement are the Government making for supplying drinking water to the people in these areas during this year? What is the amount spent by the State Government and the Central Government on the gratuitous relief work that has been undertaken? What is the contribution of the Central Government towards the same?

Shri Achuthan (Crangannur): May I know whether the Rajasthan Government has opened any relief fund, and if so, whether the rich people there, and the magnates including Mr. Somani have contributed anything towards that fund?

Shri G. D. Somani: May I inform the hon. Member that the Marwadi Relief Society of Calcutta is doing quite a substantial and valuable work in the famine-affected areas?

डा० जाटवधीर (भरतपुर-सवाई माधोपुर-रक्षित—अनुसूचित जातियाँ) : क्या मैं जान सकता हूँ कि बीकानेर, जंसेलमेर के जिस इलाके में अकाल पड़ रहा है और मृत्युएँ हो रही हैं और लोग इस तरह परेशान हो रहे हैं, क्या वहाँ ६० फी सदी लोग हरिजन हैं, और यदि ऐसा है तो मैं पूछना चाहता हूँ कि वहाँ की गवर्नमेंट और सोशल वेलफेयर मिनिस्टर इसको दूर करने के लिये क्या कर रहे हैं?

दूसरे क्या इस बात की और गवर्नमेंट का ध्यान गया है कि राजस्थान में आपसी फूट और पार्टीबन्दी के कारण वहाँ की स्टेट सरकार इस दुर्दशा को अच्छी तरह नहीं देख पाती और जो वह सहायता देती है, वह नाकाफी और अपर्याप्त है, और यदि वह सहायता अपर्याप्त रही तो मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि हमारे केन्द्रीय सरकार ने उस दिशा में सहायता देने के हेतु क्या कार्य किया है?

Shri B. S. Murthy (Eluru): Is it a fact, Sir, that the worst hit people are the Harijans

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: That is what was asked just now by the hon. Member who spoke.

Shri B. S. Murthy: Yes, Sir. I would also like to know whether the people who died as a result of scarcity are mainly Harijans.

श्री बलबत सिंह मेहता (उदयपुर) : क्या मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से यह जान सकता हूँ कि क्या इसी प्रकार का अकाल राजस्थान के दक्षिण भाग में भी पड़ रहा है? और अगर ऐसा है तो इस के लिये क्या प्रयत्न सरकार कर रही है?

श्री भीष्माबाई (बांसवाड़ा-डूंगरपुर—रक्षित-प्रनुसूचित आदि जातियाँ) : क्या मैं जान सकता हूँ कि दक्षिण पूर्वी राजस्थान के डूंगरपुर, बांसवाड़ा, प्रतापगढ़, और मेवाड़ के भोमट इलाकों में रहने वाले लोगों की स्थिति बहुत खराब है? क्या यह सत्य है कि उन को एक बार भी पूरा खाना खाने को नहीं मिलता है? क्या यह सत्य है खाद्यान्न एवं क्रय शक्ति के अभाव में प्रायः वे घास के आधार पर रहते आ रहे हैं? क्या यह सत्य है कि दुर्भिक्ष में वह गाय का मांस खाने लग जाते हैं और क्या यह भी सत्य है कि सरकार ने उन से इस वर्ष लगान भी वसूल किया है और क्या यह भी सत्य है कि सन् १९४८ से आज तक वह एरिया अकाल ग्रस्त रहा है और क्या इसके लिये कोई एन्क्वायरी नहीं हुई है जबकि पड़ोस में पंचमहल डि० गुजरात में फर्मीन एन्क्वायरी कमेटी मुकदर कर के जांच करवाई गई है और राजस्थान के मंत्री वहाँ बराबर जाते रहते हैं?

श्री पी० एल० बाबपल : क्या माननीय मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि इस बीमारी को मिटाने के लिये कोई ठोस कदम उठाये जा रहे हैं और राजस्थान में जहाँ प्रतिवर्ष अकाल पड़ रहे हैं वहाँ पर सरकार की तरफ से तालाब नहरें आदि बनवाने के लिये और खाद्य की व्यवस्था करने के लिये कोई ठोस कदम उठाये

जा रहे हैं? यह जो हर साल लाखों करोड़ों रुपया वहाँ पर खर्च हो रहा है उसे बचाने के लिये किसी भी कीमत पर वहाँ सिंचाई के लिये नहरें आदि बनाने की कोई योजना बन रही है? और मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से पूछना चाहता कि क्या वे जो लोग घास फूस खा कर जीवन निर्वाह कर रहे हैं उन को देखने का कष्ट करेंगे? मैं तारीख २४-३-५३ को बीकानेर गया था और अपनी आँखों बीकानेर डिबीजन की पांच तहसीलों को छोड़ कर बाकी पंद्रह तहसीलों को देखा है कि वहाँ क्या हाल है जो चीजें मुझे वहाँ देखने को मिली हैं वे मेरे पास हैं। क्या आप उन्हें विशेषज्ञों से जांच कराने की कोशिश करेंगे और देखेंगे कि घास फूस के खाने से मनुष्य के ऊपर क्या प्रभाव पड़ता है और उन का स्वास्थ्य कैसे अच्छा रह सकता है?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The hon. Minister.

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: Sir, I should have the rest of the time now. Sir.

Most of the time hon. Members instead of asking questions have really supplied information. I do not wish to contradict them. So far as starvation is concerned, of course, I have not had any reports; nor have we any details of the conditions in those parts, although it is known from the latest reports that reached us...

Shri Nandlal Sharma: Living on the leaves of trees is not starvation?

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: I am not defining 'starvation'. Latest reports indicate that in the Divisions of Bikaner, Jodhpur and Jaipur scarcity prevails and about 26 lakhs of persons have been affected. It is also known that the State Government have opened a number of relief works. The exact number is not known, but 13,70,000 people are being employed per day, according to the information. I may also say that whatever was asked for the beginning was given. We have given to the Rajasthan Government Rs. 12,90,000 by way of a loan and a grant of Rs. 3,92,000. I regret to have to say that not many details are available with us. In spite of our pressing the Rajasthan Government, not only now but since the month of June 1952,

to give us fortnightly reports, only a few have come in and hardly any reports have come to us from September, 1952. So far as we are concerned we have every sympathy for the suffering people and we are anxious to do what we can. Yet, I hope the House will realise the Central Government's position. It is all very well to sympathize and to read out some extracts from reports and from newspapers. After all, we cannot forget the fact that there is a constitutional government functioning in the State of Rajasthan and essentially looking after the scarcity conditions, which is the primary responsibility of that State.

An Hon. Member: Why not advise the President to intervene?

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: That should be realised and I am glad the hon. Members have given us all this information. We will certainly do our utmost and make the Rajasthan Government move more quickly in the matter if necessary; we will afford to them whatever relief they are entitled to and whatever relief is justified. I can assure the hon. Members that even before, we have been trying to press upon the Rajasthan Government and asking them for reports of exact conditions. The hon. Members also know that an hon. colleague of ours has recently visited the place and seen the conditions for himself. So, I can assure the House that so far as we are concerned, and so far as the responsibility rests on our shoulders, we shall spare no pains. And yet, I think, the House will realise the exact position in which we find ourselves.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Is it not a Part B State?

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: Yes, Sir, even there, it is the State Government that is primarily responsible. We cannot neglect the State Government and go on taking action.

Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava: Does it not follow that the Government of that State is not being carried on according to the Constitution and people and cattle are dying?

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: We are prone, sometimes, to exaggerate the situation. I do not think that the Rajasthan Government is either apathetic or does not want to give any relief...

Shri Nand Lal Sharma: The Rajasthan Government is shuffling and reshuffling again and again.

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: I do not want to enter into politics.

Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava: The Government wants reports and that Government is not sending the reports; the fortnightly reports are not coming to the Central Government. This is very serious.

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: In any case now that the House has drawn our attention to it. We will expedite matters and the House already knows what sort of relief we give. There are seven items under which relief is given. Whatever gratuitous relief is given to the people, we pay 50 per cent. of it. We also advance loans; we also support any schemes for providing drinking water and so far as food is concerned, we can assure, not only this House, but the Rajasthan Government also, that whatever requirements there might be for food, it will be made available to them. The House also knows how we give food at cheap rates. For instance, in the Bombay area, we have given wheat at the rate of Rs. 14 per maund. Similar concessions, and more concessions, if necessary, would be made available to the Rajasthan Government according to the situation.

I confess a good many Members from Rajasthan have been pressing me to go there. Unfortunately, I have had not sufficient time; but, I propose to go there as early as possible. In any case I assure the House that we will not allow the position to remain as it is and we will try and remedy the situation as quickly as possible, and to the satisfaction of all I can understand the anger of my friend, Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava. I think he is justified in saying that the Rajasthan Government should have sent reports. It is best that we should send some one there and obtain the reports, and take adequate steps.

Shri Gidwani (Thana): Kindly convey to that Government that this House is very much annoyed and angry at their callousness.

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: I am grateful to the hon. Members for all the facts and other information that they have brought to our notice. So far as sending a team of officers is concerned, we held out a hope like that. We are reviewing all the reports that have

[Dr. P. S. Deshmukh]

been submitted to us and we want to find out if it is really very useful doing that and whether it is not better that some other responsible persons' reports should be received. Hon. Members have to admit that these are chronically scarcity areas and therefore some sort of permanent remedy has to be found out. At the same time, the emergent position and condition will be taken into account and we will certainly do what all we can in the matter.

श्री पी० एन० राजभोज : बम्बई स्टेट
में भी माननीय मंत्री जा रहे हैं ?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: There should be no conflicts. The House stands adjourned to meet again at 8-15 A.M. tomorrow.

The House then adjourned till a Quarter Past Eight of the Clock on Saturday, the 25th April, 1953.