

अध्यक्ष महोदय श्री लोग समझदार हैं तो कोई सरकार नहीं लड़ा सकती। (इंटरप्लस) .. मैं प्रकेले थाप सब मे कसे निपट सकता हूँ ?

SHRI M. KALYANASUNDARAM: I rise on a point of order. I want to know whether this is the way in which the majority party wants to conduct the House. They are holding the House to ransom.

MR. SPEAKER: They have taken the cue from you all right.

SHRI M. KALYANASUNDARAM: The Chair must protect us.

MR. SPEAKER: Protection for what?

SHRI M. KALYANASUNDARAM: I have received a telephone message from Mr. Indrajit Gupta who had gone to Calcutta. This morning he had a talk with me on the phone. He said that even peaceful assembly in Calcutta and other areas is disturbed by rowdies and CRP is an idle spectator.

MR. SPEAKER: It has very often been stated in the House that the CRP acts under the direction of the State Government. So, why does the hon. Member raise it every time?

SHRI KALYANASUNDARAM: He has asked me to raise it on the floor of the House and to demand a statement from the Home Minister. I would, therefore, request you to request the Home Minister to make a statement before the House adjourns today, that there will be no disturbance or bloodshed in Bengal.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: Are you going to call the Home Minister to make a statement or not?

MR. SPEAKER: It is up to the Home Minister. I am not giving any directions. I do not issue directions on

matters which are State subjects. It is up to the hon. Minister. If he likes, he can come forward and make a statement.

SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE (Howrah): Under the Constitution, it is a fundamental right to strike....

MR. SPEAKER: He may have fundamental right to strike as he likes, but the action is taken by the State Government concerned. Let him not raise the issue of fundamental rights on anything and everything.

SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE: If this is the attitude, then we walk out in protest...

MR. SPEAKER: It is becoming a daily phenomenon.

SHRI M. KALYANASUNDARAM: In view of the failure of the Home Minister to make a statement, I walk out in protest.

MR. SPEAKER: Now, Prof. Madhu Dandavate.

*(Interruptions)***

(Shri Samar Mukherjee, Shri Jyotirmoy Bosu, Shri M. Kalyanasundaram and some other Members then left the House.)

MR. SPEAKER: When I allowed the hon. Member, his observation was recorded, but when I have not allowed him, it has not been recorded. I have already called Prof. Madhu Dandavate. I am not allowing any other Members. They are just disturbing the House.

12.49 hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

REPORTED MOVE BY INDIA TO BUY 4.5 MILLION TONNES OF WHEAT FROM USA AT EXORBITANT RATES

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE (Rajapur): Under rule 193, I call the

attention of the Minister of Agriculture to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon:--

"The reported move by India to buy 4.5 million tonnes of wheat from the USA at exorbitant price of 115 dollars per tonne."

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI F. A. AHMED): Having regard to the need to replenish the stocks of foodgrains available with the public agencies, in addition to intensifying the procurement within the country, Government have decided to import foodgrains from abroad to meet the essential requirement of the public distribution system in the coming months. It would be recalled that a decision was taken toward the end of 1972 to import 2 million tonnes of foodgrains. The entire quantity has been contracted for and a major part of the stocks have also arrived. These purchases were made at the prevailing market prices mostly in the USA, Canada and Argentina.

In the context of the present need to maintain the supply of foodgrains through the public distribution system at a reasonable level, it has been decided to purchase an additional quantity of foodgrains from abroad on commercial basis. The purchases have been authorised to be made from countries where foodgrains are available for export, and deliveries and shipments could be arranged consistent with the requirement of the country. These purchases are being made in accordance with the established procedure. All possible steps have been taken to ensure that the purchase and deliveries are organised to the best advantage of the country.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Before I seek clarifications from the hon. Minister, I want to bring to your notice a certain violation of democratic conventions and procedure; and the rights of our House. I had tabled the call attention notice yesterday. Already it was announced

here on the Notice Board. This morning I find that there is a leakage of the news item which is supposed to be a news given out by the Cabinet's Economic Affairs Committee. On the same subject matter of the call attention notice, many details have been given, not officially, but probably there is some sort of leakage of news from the Committee of the Cabinet. I strongly object to this procedure. In the past also, on some occasions, it has happened and it was ruled that when the House was going to discuss this issue and a member was going to seek clarifications from the hon. Minister, nobody should allow this news to come out and details should not be given outside the House. Once you had given your ruling on a labour matter. When the Labour Minister made a certain statement outside the House when the matter was the subject of a discussion inside the House, you had warned the Minister concerned that it was an undemocratic practice and should be avoided in the future. I hope the hon. Minister will take note of this and see that in future such wrong practices are not followed.

Yesterday we had a call attention notice on newsprint. Today we are having one on import of foodgrains from the USA. You will find there is a remarkable resemblance between the two motions. There is also similarity between the issues involved. Both issues indicate the classic instance of our Government whipping wrong policies which are delayed policies, as a result of which the economy of the country suffers.

I am surprised that in the written statement read out by the Minister, the very subject matter of the call attention motion has been completely avoided. I wish to draw his attention to the fact that in the motion there is reference to two specific figures, purchase of 4.5 million tonnes of wheat from the USA at the exorbi-

[Shri Madhu Dandavate]

tant price of \$ 115 per tonne. Throughout his long statement, there is no reference to the exorbitant price of \$ 115 per tonne, nor is there any mention in it of the figure mentioned in the report, to which I made a reference in the motion, whether 4.5 million tonnes of wheat are going to be purchased by India from the USA.

I would like to seek these clarifications. Is it not a fact that over the last few months the prices of wheat in the USA have been going up due to a variety of factors? For instance, Soviet Russia and China have made massive purchases of wheat from the USA. With all my differences on some of the policies of Soviet Russia, I may say that Soviet Russia has at least shown farsightedness in purchasing their stocks in time. A news had already appeared sometime back that they purchased not only for current consumption but also for building up a buffer stock in their country. They have already made purchases worth \$ 1200 million.

As a result of these massive purchases of foodgrains from the USA by China as well as Soviet Russia, prices of wheat have gone up. Reports have already appeared which indicate that last year the price of wheat was \$ 50 a tonne. A few months back, it was \$ 80—85 a tonne and the current price of wheat in the USA is \$ 115 a tonne.

Sir, at this stage, the decision is taken that we will import 4.5 million tonnes. I wish to point out to you that the Prime Minister of the country, the Food Minister of the country and the Minister of State for Food and Agriculture had made brave statements sometime back that we will never import any material from the United States of America. One would very much love our country to become self-sufficient, but if we are not to have self-sufficiency, we do not want our people to starve. If at

all you are going to import foodgrains, they must be imported at such a point of time that on the one side you will avoid starvation of the people and at the other end, you must be able to prevent extra burden on the coffers of our Government.

Unfortunately, in December last, when the picture of the country was very clear, the picture of agriculture was very clear, when the kharif crop had completely failed, the Government should have been conscious of the inefficient procurement machinery; not only the inefficient procurement machinery but even the faulty policies of procurement, and should have realised that without a price incentive, procurement can never succeed. In addition to that, so many loopholes were actually placed in the agricultural policy, as a result of which the small peasants suffered and the rich koloks on the one side and the traders on the other had an unholy alliance and they were trying to fleece the consumer on the one side and the small peasant on the other. With all these loopholes in the policy of the Government, their procurement policy was deemed to failure and it has failed.

It is true that Punjab has given a spectacular success, just as in times of the aggression on our country it was Punjab that came to the defence of the country. I congratulate the people of Punjab for having come to the defence of the starving millions in the country, but unfortunately in the rest of the country the procurement has not succeeded. As a result of that, we find that large imports were to be made. Again, these imports were not made in time. I say that Soviet Russia had the foresight, a farsighted policy of purchasing the wheat in time. As a result of that, we find that we are placed in difficulties, and because we are placed in difficulties, there will be a heavy pressure on the foreign exchange position in our country.

As for wheat, we were to pay that much—as appeared in the press, 115 dollar per tonne, if we purchase 4.5 million tonnes. Even if we negotiate the price, and instead of 115 dollars even if we negotiate the price at 100 dollar per tonne, even then, for one million tonnes purchased you will have to pay more than Rs. 100 crores, and therefore, there will be a heavy expenditure.

I would like to know from the Minister, did they not expect and anticipate these fluctuations in prices. A report had already appeared that our Mission in Washington is going to negotiate the price with private brokers and if they succeed, in that case, it is going to be a heavy pressure on our exchequer and the foreign exchange machinery is also going to be under pressure.

I would like to know from the Government that as far as newsprint is concerned, as far as wheat is concerned and because there is a power crisis in the country there will have to be an import of oil from foreign countries, and as a cumulative effect of these imports if the foreign exchange position is going to be difficult, what is the machinery that the Government is going to build up in order to see that the foreign exchange crisis in our country is completely eliminated.

I know that the Minister of Agriculture will not be able to give the replies to these problems, and as I said in the past, when Calling Attention Notices are there in which a number of ministries are involved, not only the Minister of Agriculture but the Minister of Finance also should be present in the House because there are certain problems connected with the Finance Ministry in these matters, and only they will be able to give the necessary answer.

In this connection, I would like to know whether they will take concrete steps in order to see that certain leakages of foreign exchange are

completely plugged. Concrete instances have been brought to the notice of this House time and again where we have demonstrated as to what is the quantum and the extent of foreign exchange leakage in this country. If all that is done, then only it will be possible for us to purchase this wheat.

In the end, I would like to ask a categorical question. Since we have been forced by circumstances to import and purchase wheat from the United States of America at such a high price, at some stage, shall we not reorient our agricultural economy? We depend upon rains vargaries because we laid less emphasis on irrigation. As a result of that we are required to look to imports when there is shortfall due to absence of rains. Will you take a new orientation and have a new look at our economy, so that we may not have to depend upon such large imports which ultimately create a great burden on our foreign exchange reserves, lead to more deficit financing and inflationary pressures and rising prices in addition to starvation by people.

13 hrs.

There is one more question. As a result of the huge imports, will the issue price of grains in our country also be increased? I would like to know.

SHRI F. A. AHMED: The hon. Member started by saying that some news had been leaked out to the Press. May I inform him that so far as I am concerned, so far as the members of the Government are concerned, they have not released any news at all. I do not know how this news was published in the newspaper....

AN HON. MEMBER: Even the All India Radio gave the news.

SHRI F. A. AHMED: The hon. Member's grievance was that when this matter was pending for reply before the House, such a news ought not to have been given by the members of the Government; no member of the Cabinet has given out this news. There is no justification for that grievance.

The hon. Member instead of confining himself to matters relevant to the call attention motion, made several observations. We are making strenuous efforts to increase production in our country, particularly agricultural production. It is true that the less we depend upon the vagaries of the weather, the better for us.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Which points are irrelevant?

SHRI F. A. AHMED: Even the most advanced countries with all science and technology at their disposal have to a great extent depend upon the vagaries of weather and climatic conditions. The hon. Member himself pointed out that the Soviet Union had to import last year a very big quantity of foodgrains from outside. While we have to depend upon weather to some extent, certainly we have to take action so that our agricultural production increases from year to year. We have taken steps this year too in order to increase the irrigation facilities. We have done so, so far as minor irrigation is concerned. We hope that with a good monsoon we are likely to achieve the target which we have fixed for the kharif season and also the target for the rabi season.

So far as increase in price is concerned, the hon. Member is referring to what happened last year. In July and August last year, our position was not so bad. We had a stock of over 9 million tonnes and we did not anticipate that the weather during the kharif period will be so bad that there will be a

huge reduction in the kharif production. So, in July or August, we could not anticipate this and go in for purchase of foodgrains for our requirements. It is about that time that the Soviet Union and China came in a big way for purchasing foodgrains from USA. As a result of it, prices shot up and when we took the decision after knowing the condition of the kharif crop, it was too late. We had to make purchases in December, January and so on. We decided to import about 2 million tonnes. We were able to purchase till the end of May about 1.7 million tonnes not only from USA but also from Argentine and that included wheat and milo.

Regarding the observations made by the Prime Minister, myself and my colleague that we shall not purchase foodgrains from outside, there is a certain misconception. What we said at that time was, now our position is such that we are not going to take any foodgrain on concessional basis from any foreign country. We did not rule out our making commercial purchases from outside whenever it became necessary to meet our obligation for feeding our people.

My hon. friend is not correct in saying that we have purchased the entire quantity of 45 million tonnes. Some purchases have been made. I have not till now received the statement showing the prices at which they have been purchased.

But I know that the correct procedure has been resorted to. When we get the statement, we shall be able to find out the prices. If the hon. Member is interested in knowing the price in a particular month, I can certainly tell him the prevailing prices in USA and other countries. For instance, in June, the prevailing price of wheat in the USA was from 108.96 to 115 dollars or something like that. In July, it is 102 to 123 dollars. In Canada, it is 90 to 113 dollars. We have decided to purchase

not only from the USA but from Canada, Argentina and Australia. So far as Canada is concerned, they are just about to harvest their wheat and it will be available from next month or September.

So far as Australia is concerned, it will be some time in the beginning of next year. They generally harvest in the end of December or beginning of January. So far as Argentina is concerned, I am told their crop is very bad this year. So, there cannot be any possibility of getting foodgrains from there. It has to be remembered that the world shortage of foodgrains, particularly of wheat, is in the vicinity of about 8 million tonnes. In the context of these things, we have to make arrangements to get our necessary requirements for distribution through our public distribution system so that it may be possible for us to provide to our people food in the coming months.

PROF. MADHU DANAVATE: Will these imports make any impact on the issue price? Secondly, the North American ports are very busy shipping the purchases made by the Soviet Union. In view of that, will it be possible for our imports to be completed by the end of this financial year?

SHRI F. A. AHMED: So far as the last question is concerned, the purchases which we have made recently have been booked for July or is likely to be booked for August. They will reach us within about five or six weeks from the time of their shipping from the United States. So far as the issue price is concerned, no decision has been taken in the matter.

13.12 hrs.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

STATEMENT CORRECTING REPLY GIVEN DURING DISCUSSION ON APPRENTICES (AMENDMENT) BILL

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND RE-

HABILITATION (SHRI G. VENKAT-ASWAMY): On behalf of Shri Raghunatha Reddy, I beg to lay on the Table a statement (Hindi and English versions) correcting the reply given by him on the 15th May, 1973 to a question by Shri Indrajit Gupta during the discussion on the Apprentices (Amendment) Bill, 1972. [Placed in Library. See No. LT-5188/73].

NOTIFICATION UNDER PASSPORTS ACT, 1967

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SURENDRA PAL SINGH): I beg to lay on the Table a copy each of the following Notifications (Hindi and English versions) under sub-section (3) of section 24 of the Passports Act, 1967:—

- (i) G.S.R. 287 (E), published in Gazette of India dated the 31st May, 1973 making certain amendments to Notification No. G.S.R. 398(E), dated the 30th August, 1972.
- (ii) The Passports (Amendment) Rules, 1973 published in Notification No. G.S.R. 310(E), in Gazette of India dated the 12th June, 1973. [Placed in Library. See No. LT-5189/73].

REVIEW AND ANNUAL OF NATIONAL COAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LTD. FOR 1971-72

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI SUBODH HANSDA): I beg to lay on the Table a copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) under sub-section (1) of section 169A of the Companies Act, 1956—

- (1) Review by the Government on the working of the National Coal Development Corporation Limited, Ranchi, for the year 1971-72;