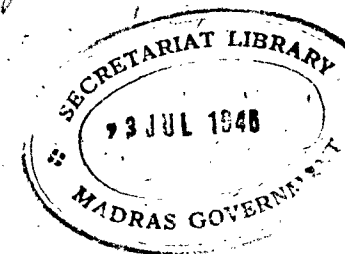


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**MADRAS LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
DEBATES**

OFFICIAL REPORT

SATURDAY, 1st JUNE 1946

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THE MADRAS LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Saturday, the 1st June 1946.

The House met in the Assembly Chamber, Fort St. George, at eleven of the clock, Mr. Speaker (THE HON. SRI J. SIVASUBRAMANIAM PILLAI) in the Chair.

I.—QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

STARRED QUESTIONS.

Spencer workers' dispute.

* 4 (39) Q.—SRI K. ANANDA NAMBIYAR: Will the Hon. the Minister for Industries, Labour, Electricity, Co-operation, Planning, Forests and Cinchona be pleased to state—

(a) what action has been taken to bring to an end the Spencer workers' dispute which was referred to conciliation; and
(b) whether the European management has refused to participate in the conciliation proceedings?

THE HON. SRI V. V. GIRI:—“(a) The Report of the Board of conciliation has recently been received and it is under the active consideration of Government.

“(b) The European management of Messrs. Spencer & Co. have not refused to participate in the conciliation proceedings.”

SRI S. NAGAPPA:—“May I know whether . . . ”

MR. SPEAKER:—“If the hon. Member wants to put a supplementary question, he should rise in his place and he might put his question on his name being called by the Speaker.”

SRI S. NAGAPPA:—“May I know, Sir, when the Board was composed; who is the President of the Board; on what days the Board sat and what is the business they have done so far?”

THE HON. SRI V. V. GIRI:—“The hon. Member is trying to make a speech.”

SRI S. NAGAPPA:—“I have put the question only to elicit information.”

SRI P. VENKATESWARULU:—“May I know, Sir, whether the assistance of the Police Inspector was used to put in black legs; whether women picketers were abused and foul language was used against them?”

THE HON. SRI V. V. GIRI:—“I am not aware of the facts.”

SRI P. VENKATESWARULU:—“Will the Hon. Minister enlighten the House whether the workers were prevented from taking out a procession during the course of the dispute?”

THE HON. SRI V. V. GIRI:—“No.”

SRI V. I. MUNISWAMI PILLAI:—“May I know, Sir, what the number of men involved in the strike is?”

THE HON. SRI V. V. GIRI:—“About a thousand workers.”

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SR. S. NAGAPPA:—"Will the Hon. the Minister tell the House as to who formed the Board?"

THE HON. SRI V. V. GIRI:—"There is only one who forms the Board and that is Mr. M. Venkataramiah."

SRI S. MUNISWAMI PILLAI:—"May I know whether the men involved in the strike are domestic workers or other workers?"

THE HON. SRI V. V. GIRI:—"They are workers working in the various departments of the company."

SRI P. VENKATESWARULU:—"May I know whether there has been any case of victimization of the workers?"

THE HON. SRI V. V. GIRI:—"It is only a question of discharge of workers."

SRI S. NAGAPPA:—"May I know who constituted the Board of Conciliation, whether it is the Adviser Government or the present Government?"

THE HON. SRI V. V. GIRI:—"The present Government."

SRI B. S. MURTHI:—"May I know, Sir, whether there were any cases of victimization?"

THE HON. SRI V. V. GIRI:—"I have already answered that question. It is only a question of discharge."

SRI V. I. MUNISWAMI PILLAI:—"May I ask for information if the arbitrator has been arbitrating in two or three other cases?"

THE HON. SRI V. V. GIRI:—"Many more."

SRI D. V. RAMASWAMI:—"May I know to what decision Government have come regarding the dispute?"

THE HON. SRI V. V. GIRI:—"So far as the report is concerned, the Government are giving their active consideration and they will express their views by means of a Government communiqué."

SRI B. VENKATACHALAM PILLAI:—"Is it a fact that the Conciliation Officer expressed his inability to undertake the work?"

THE HON. SRI V. V. GIRI:—"It is not so; the reverse is the position."

N. MUHAMMAD ANWAR SAHIB BAHADUR:—"May I know whether it is a fact whether a few workers were arrested during the course of the strike?"

THE HON. SRI V. V. GIRI:—"I am not aware of it."

SRI V. I. MUNISWAMI PILLAI:—"Has the Hon. Minister called for any report?"

THE HON. SRI V. V. GIRI:—"The report has been received and is under consideration."

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ABDUL SALAM SAHIB BAHADUR:—"Is the Hon. Minister aware of the strong feeling among the public of the partiality shown by the Police to the firm as it is a European firm?"

THE HON. SRI V. V. GIRI:—"Not at all."

II—GOVERNMENT MOTION *RE*: FOOD AND CLOTH SITUATION IN THE PROVINCE—*cont.*

[*Note.*—An asterisk (*) at the commencement of a speech indicates revision by the Member.]

B. POCKER SAHIB BAHADUR:—"Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the amendment standing in my name, viz.—

'Add the following at the end:—

"that and on further consideration, this House is of the opinion that rationing of cloth be introduced in the Province and that rations be fixed according to the requirements of the various classes of consumers in regard to quantity, quality and variety."

M. MUHAMMAD ISMAIL SAHIB BAHADUR:—"I second the amendment."

MR. SPEAKER:—"The main motion and the amendments are for the discussion of the House."

* MR. H. S. TOWN:—"Mr. Speaker, I have given considerable attention to the note of the Textile Commissioner and I listened closely to the remarks of the Hon. the Premier throwing further light on the proposed solution of the cloth problem. I suggest that in a matter such as this we ought all to forget our party affiliations and work together, as one team, without trying to make any political capital out of a difficult situation. It is time that people within and outside this House, Government, employer, workers and distributors, got together to win the battle against the shortage of cloth. This does not mean we should not criticize the proposals of Government and this is the time for criticism and I hope my criticisms will not be brushed aside without being considered, but when once this House has finished with its arguments and criticism, it is up to every one of us to do everything in our power to see that the scheme as laid down by the Government is made to work successfully, if it is humanly possible so to do."

"The Textile Commissioner has stated in paragraph 2 of his Note that the *per capita* allotment of our Province has been reduced by 10 per cent owing, among other things, to the reduction in the number of working hours per week to 48. I think this is incorrect and I would request that the Hon. Premier will kindly cause a check up to be made. So far as I am aware, the 10 per cent cut has nothing to do with the reduction in working hours, which does not come into force until the first of August, and as time goes on, there will be a further reduction of 11 per cent. It must not be forgotten that the 48-hours week will result in a reduced supply of yarn and thus affect the handloom weavers. Therefore,

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there will be a reduction in handloom cloth to the extent of one-ninth. The reduction in handloom cloth will increase pressure on mill cloth and people accustomed to hand-woven cloth will use mill cloth to the permanent damage of the handloom industry. I doubt if hon. Members of this House, or the public at large, are aware what this cut in the working hours will mean. It will mean that there will be a further shortage of 700 million yards of cloth per annum. The brunt of this will fall on the mill-made cloth, though people will find that there is also a shortage in handloom cloth, and the tendency will be for prices of that commodity to rise. Effective control of prices will become next to impossible in these circumstances. Reference is made in sub-paragraph (4) to the ineffective control in Bombay and Ahmedabad resulting in releases to our authorized buyers being slow and delayed. There is much in this and I suggest consideration be given to the possibility of short-circuiting the quota holder in Bombay and Ahmedabad, and that arrangements be made for deliveries direct from the mills, giving the quota holder his statutory maximum percentage. I think this was done in some three or four mills during the war and the scheme was a success. This procedure has, however, been given up now as the mills have returned to their normal control. Direct delivery will be more economical and efficient and will save delay in getting the cloth to Madras.

"The suggestions given in sub-paragraph 7 of the Memorandum should be read in conjunction with Sections II and III of the Provincial Textile Commissioner's Note. I speak, Sir, as you know, with some knowledge of my subject and I have had the advantage of talks with certain gentlemen who have been intimately connected with cloth distribution for many years. My considered opinion is that rationing of cloth is completely impracticable.

11-15 a.m. "I am glad to note the Premier has listened to criticisms of his rationing proposals. I gather he would still like some scheme of cloth rationing. From time to time I have had, on occasions, to change my ideas and drop schemes dear to me on the advice of my juniors and I suggest to the Premier to accept the view of his officers and drop all thought of a rationing scheme.

"I now come to an important point. I know this scheme is going to be pushed through in spite of our criticism. When the time for criticism is past, we have to try to make the scheme a success. Village committees are to be entrusted with the handling of cloth and yarn. I am afraid I must strongly oppose this proposal. The genuine trader has, on the whole, behaved very well under difficult circumstances. He is easily controlled; he knows his job and I can see no reason why he should have his business taken away from him and given to village committees who have no experience or knowledge of the trade. These village committees will have a most powerful weapon for extortion put into their hands and it would be most difficult to control them. It is my firm conviction that the scheme, if adopted so far as cloth and yarn are concerned, and I think it would be safe to add

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the other commodities as well, will be a failure from the start. We all know that in almost all villages factions prevail. We know of several cases of district boards and municipalities which had to be superseded because of inefficiency. (Sri Kala Venkata Rao: 'They are exceptions.') They may be exceptions, but there are a lot of them. Such being the case, how can you expect the village committees to function well? The Prime Minister yesterday said—I suppose he has been correctly reported in the *Hindu*—'We are placing the whole thing in your own hands. Run the show yourself. You will thereby be saved from the trouble of black markets, also from official compulsion.' If this report is correct, then these committees will be outside any control and may be expected to take advantage of it. The report goes on: 'Special instructions will be issued that no complaints arise.' If the report is right, I must mention one thing—there were no complaints in Nazi Germany; for everything was muzzled and nobody dared complain. I trust the same thing will not happen here.

"I am convinced, Sir, that huge sums of money will have to be supplied to finance these village committees, and I am confident that as a result of the huge army of petty officials that will spring up, the vast volume of records which will have to be kept, and the enormous mass of correspondence that will take place, the cost to Government will assume enormous and alarming proportions. Now we have a popular Government; it has come in by election as a result of their propaganda; I suggest that Government use the agency of propaganda to put down blackmarketing. Everyone in this House is fully aware that blackmarketing has assumed alarming proportions. We all know that huge fortunes are being made, but I have never been able to get into direct touch with an operator in that market. Government have sufficient powers now to deal with it and should use those powers. Government's greatest trouble is the complete lack of a civic conscience in the people of India and it is their duty to instil it into their lives. I would show no mercy to a blackmarketeer, be he the highest and wealthiest in the land; I would root him out and cast him in the dust. He is the target for Government officials who to-day spend their time harrying little men on some technical but unimportant point.

"I fully realize the importance of gaining the co-operation of the masses in this matter; and now that we have a Government elected by the people, they should be able to show that they can, by propaganda, gain this. I would suggest that village and district committees should have their duties confined to forwarding information as to what cloth the district really needs and on what dates throughout the coming year the demand is likely to be large. I have been on the Provincial Food Council since its inception. I do not think we did much work. We did a lot of talking; but the chairman did the work. With regard to food, it is essential we should have a regular supply. With cloth it is not so. People could afford to wait for a little before they

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purchase cloth. On the information furnished by the village and district committees, the Provincial Textile Commissioner could allocate certain cloths to districts to be sold at certain stated times. Shops in that district would then be well stocked at a time when people particularly want to buy a new piece of cloth.

“Let me explain my suggestion more fully. With food, it is essential to have a regular daily supply; with cloth this is not so. There are few among the meanest of the people that cannot go a few days, a few weeks, or even in many cases a few months, if necessary, before purchasing cloth. I feel that the Provincial Textile Commissioner's suggestion that mill cloth should be bought by the consumer as uniformly as possible throughout the year is a wrong one. It means that there will never be anywhere in the Presidency substantial stocks and it aggravates the situation before every important festival. Why then should we not attempt to build up stocks to meet the demand at our important festivals by creating an artificial temporary shortage for a short while and then, just before a festival let us see that all the retail shops are well stocked so as to meet the demand they will then receive? It could be made an offence punishable with heavy penalties for cloth dealers to sell cloth during a ‘cloth holiday.’ This is easily enforceable and will result in every one being able to get cloth just before a festival. The system could be applied if you like, to mill cloth only, but there is no reason why handloom cloth should not be included. This system could be applied districtwise according to the different customs and the different festivals. By such an application we can ensure that increased supplies are available just where they are wanted and when they are wanted. Successfully enforced abstinence in cloth purchasing on the lines I have indicated will, I am sure, be more effective than any ordinary system of coupon rationing or registration.

“Turning now to sub-paragraph (8) which deals with the handloom industry, I am in entire agreement that some effort must be made to control the prices of handloom cloth, but the first stage must be the strict enforcement of the control of prices of yarn. There is a flourishing black market in nearly all of the medium and fine counts. As a matter of interest, I am informed that it is now a recognized practice in the black market for the price of a bundle of 40s to be the day's rate for a sovereign, now about Rs. 57, against the controlled price of Rs. 22-3-6 for yarn spun from imported cotton. If the Provincial Textile administration are unable to control this, how can they hope to introduce an effective system of rationing or registration? It would be employed to the far better purpose of rigorously enforcing yarn control and introducing control of handloom cloth. The prices of mill cloth, both in the wholesale and retail trades, are strictly controlled and generally speaking are fair and reasonable to both seller and buyer. In the case of handloom cloth, however, there is at present no price control and very high prices are charged. I think the consumer in Madras has a very genuine complaint

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on this score. Handloom weavers buy their yarn, or should be able to buy it, at controlled and very reasonable prices and I fail to find any valid reason why the prices of the cloth they produce should not be controlled. Anyway, I can find no reason why those prices should be allowed to soar to levels bearing no relation to the controlled prices of the basic yarns. I believe, with many others who have studied this subject, that the control of handloom cloth prices by Government is perfectly feasible and that such action would be supported by the purchasing public.

“Sub-paragraph (9) presents a sorry picture: only 200 bales of bandspun yarn. This is not sufficient and anything that Government can do to increase hand-spinning at this critical juncture should be done and should be supported by everyone.

“All the power of the All-India Spinners' Association has been used and this is the result.

“There is a pencil note I have made on my copy of the memorandum which reads ‘Draw a veil over this.’ I will say no more: the sub-paragraph itself is enough.

“I now refer to paragraph 11 which deals with cotton yarn. Madras is a large surplus area and has to send to other zones a certain proportion of its production. What remains is insufficient to keep all our active looms fully employed and I see, in sub-paragraph (17) that some 75,000 new looms have come into existence, but no increase in yarn is available for these looms. I am fully aware that we have to look upon this from an all-India point of view and against the picture of the needs of the whole country. Just as Madras is permitted to import mill cloth from Bombay and Ahmedabad, which those two centres would dearly like to consume or send elsewhere, so we in Madras have to send some of our yarn to other centres. I do, however, suggest that an examination be made to see whether Madras cannot make out a case for the retention of a greater proportion of its yarn.

“It has been suggested that we might keep all our yarn and weave it here. This suggestion comes from a complete misunderstanding of the position: If we refuse to part with yarn to other provinces, why should they part with anything we need but have not got. We need more cloth than we can weave even with all our yarn, but we might not get it. We need coal and if we refuse to export our surpluses of yarn or other commodity, we can hardly claim a share of coal that could be consumed elsewhere.

“If we refuse to treat this as an all-India matter, we might be isolated and find ourselves running short of everything we do not produce in this province. I would, however, suggest that the Textile Commissioner does what he can to get a little bit more of our yarn. The figure was fixed on the finding of what I now prefer to call the Non-Fact Finding Committee. It was not a very brilliant committee and its findings are now generally considered unreliable.

“In the statement it is stated that the position has been further aggravated by the mills consuming a larger quantity of

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a.m.

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yarn as a result of the introduction of the Utility Cloth Scheme, which has had the effect of reducing the quantity of yarn available for handlooms in India by about 10,000 bales per mensem. Sir, it is very difficult for me to question an official statement. But that part of the scheme of utility cloth production which caused yarn to be consumed at such a terrible rate was given up in January 1946. I do not think it has any effect on the present position.

"I want to go back now to sub-paragraph (3), for very little is said in this report about exports of cloth from this Presidency. The export of cloth is very necessary. It has an important place in the economy of this province and this is not always understood. It is all too easy for a person in need of cloth to be annoyed when he hears that cloth has gone out of the Presidency. But there are vital reasons why we in Madras must not neglect the export trade of cloth. So long as the Government of India, on grounds of general policy, permit exports of cloth from India, then this province will lose nothing by doing everything possible to regain its old export markets, both internal and external, and to create new ones. In saying this, I am ignoring the temporary suspension of overseas exports. As I have said, a certain amount of cloth is going to be exported anyway, and if it does not go from Madras, it will go from some other province. Any province which sends out cloth in place of Madras will have less cloth available to send to Madras; so we shall gain no more cloth, but we will have lost a valuable future trade, much of it in handloom cloth.

"In conclusion, Sir, I feel safe in saying that despite criticism, the general position in Madras, viewed against the all-India background, is not unsatisfactory. Cloth dealers, and to a lesser extent yarn dealers, on the whole have behaved well and have realized that they have too much at stake to flout the control orders. There certainly have been some black sheep but the regulations are fairly well observed and what mill-made cloth there is, is sold for the most part at controlled prices. The complaints of high prices for handloom cloth are genuine and well-founded. If the Government of Madras can devise ways and means of ensuring handloom cloth reaching the consumer at reasonable prices, the most serious complaint of all will be removed.

"I do not believe that rationing will be successful. I am against any attempt to encourage purchase of cloth in small quantities throughout the year. I believe that the proposals made will cause a great deal of work and will in the end attain very little improvement in the position. The imminent introduction of the 48-hour week is a very serious matter; for, apart from creating an additional shortage in mill cloth, it will throw thousands of handloom weavers out of work. I think that this side of the question should receive the immediate and serious consideration of the ministers concerned.

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"I am not against the 48-hour week. I am in favour of it and strongly in favour of it. But it is a pity that the enthusiasm of one gentleman should cause this to come in at a critical time when it should have been withheld. So important is this loss of one hour's work a day that I will again give the stupendous loss in production figure for the benefit of the House, viz., seven hundred million yards of cloth a year.

"Now, Sir, certain amendments have been put in. I am afraid my small voice will go up against every one of them. I am against any attempt by this House to get into the habit of asking for committees to investigate the working of any schemes they do not like. It is the duty of the Government to carry out the schemes. Let them do it. Mr. Wilson says that to protect the handloom weaver the Government should fix the minimum wage. I suggest, Sir, that at the present moment the handloom weaver must be helped in other ways. He is probably now getting more than any minimum that dare be fixed. He also suggested the taking over by the Government of the Textile mills. He does not expect me to stand up and support him. I do not think that Government can run a textile mill as it is a highly technical question. (Voice: Question.) In spite of the interruption, I still believe, after 30 years' experience, that running a textile mill is a technical job. He has also said that in order to ensure equitable distribution of yarn, Government should ration the handloom cloth also. I am against any rationing.

"I now come to the amendment of the Leader of the Independent Opposition. I question his suggestion about more cloth being wanted in a hot climate than in a cold one. Few of the poor people in the north use any appreciable amount of woollen cloth. They use a very heavy cotton cloth which has considerable warmth.

"I have no comment on 3.

"In regard to 2, he says that the quota of yarn allocated to this province under the all-India Yarn Scheme is grossly inadequate. My remark on that is: an enquiry may lead to a demand for more yarn from this province as we do not know how inaccurate the figures of the Fact Finding Committee were. I agree with sub-section (2), but I cannot agree with just a little part. I have, therefore, to oppose everything.

"It is seldom, Sir, that one in opposition to Government feels compelled to give praise to any Department of Government, but having been in close touch with cloth distribution throughout its somewhat chequered career, I would be lacking in my duty if I did not mention that to my certain knowledge the administration of the cloth and yarn control in this Presidency has been considered by the central controlling body to be a pattern for the rest of India. That efficiency has of course, caused a number of people to be annoyed especially where control has not suited them, but the control has gone on, right through, and with a certain

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amount of success. I consider, Sir, that we in Madras have managed well and have been very fortunate in the handling of the cloth and yarn control in this province."

"MR. SPEAKER:—"Yesterday I have not allowed those who have given notice of their amendments^a to speak. To-day I propose to call them one by one."

^aM. S. ABDUL MAJEED SAHIB BAHADUR:—"Add the following at the end:—

- 'and on such consideration, the House is of opinion that the draft proposals presented by the Government to the House with regard to the cloth administration are impracticable and unworkable and ineffective to tackle the impending crisis in cloth; and*
- 'giving effect to the said proposals is fraught with dangerous results; and*
- 'such defects as are existing in the present system are remediable without the necessity of substituting the present system by a completely new system as adumbrated by the draft proposals; and*
- 'the present crisis in the cloth situation requires immediate and special attention. It is necessary that a Board consisting of not more than 15 members and not less than 11 be constituted for the province consisting of representatives of the major political parties of the Provincial Legislature with plenary powers to deal with all questions relating to cloth in the province, that the Board shall elect its chairman and that the Board shall constitute advisory committees in the Districts and in Taluks consisting of the representatives of major political parties.'"*

KUMARARAJA SIR MUTHIAH CHETTIYAR OF CHETTINAD:—"Add the following at the end:—

- 'and on such consideration this House is of opinion—*
- I. that the scheme of differential cloth quotas now enforced by the Government of India is not based on any just and equitable principle and that an uniform per capita allotment for all areas in India should be introduced with immediate effect for the following reasons:—*
 - (1) in a hot climate like that of Madras more cotton cloth is required than in Northern India by reason of more rapid wear;*
 - (2) in the areas in Northern India, a large proportion of the clothing of the people has necessarily to be in wool and such supplies of woollen clothing are available to them;*
 - (3) the proportion of mill cloth to the total cloth quota of the area is now the lowest in Madras among the Provinces and States in India and it is but reasonable that there should be, as far as possible, equality of treatment in this respect as between all areas in India.*
- II. (1) that the quota of yarn allocated to this Province under the All-India Yarn Scheme is grossly inadequate and has been causing serious hardship to the handloom industry as it gives the handloom weavers numbering nearly half a million, work for only ten days in the month and this is the main reason for the serious disparity in prices between handloom cloth and corresponding mill cloth, resulting in prohibitive prices for handloom cloth, for beyond the means of the ordinary consumer.*
- (2) that this allocation based upon estimates given by the Fact Finding Committee which have been proved to be very bad underestimates should be revised on an equitable basis forthwith.'"*

SRI P. VENKATESWARLU:—"Add the following at the end:—

- 'and on such consideration, the House is of opinion—*
- (1) that the draft proposals are inadequate and ineffective to meet the situation;*
- (2) that to ensure proper distribution of cloth, handloom cloth be also brought under rationing scheme;*

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* M. S. ABDUL MAJEED SAHIB BAHADUR:—"Mr. Speaker, Sir, the amendment of my party is already before this honourable House for consideration. Before speaking on the two amendments moved by my party, I would join my leader, the Leader of the Opposition, in giving our assurance of wholehearted co-operation and support in all measures that the Government may formulate with a view to resolve the present food and cloth calamity in our province. When I am on this, I would like to say that some of the hon. Members of the party in power have said that the Muslim League Party in the Assembly is adopting a negative attitude. Mr. Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Members whether it is a negative attitude that we are adopting when we as a party, as honourable men, come forward to give our assurance of support and co-operation? Is it a negative attitude when we, with a view to save the common man from nakedness and possible death, point out the flaws in the schemes adumbrated in the draft proposals of the Government? Is it, Sir, a negative attitude when we place before this honourable House our own proposals to resolve the deadlock? I have got to say this, Sir, that we are not adopting a negative attitude. On the other hand, ours is a positive attitude. We are out to help, whatever the party affiliations of the Government in power, we are here to assist, we are here to co-operate to the fullest extent.

"Mr. Speaker, the Hon. the Premier has placed for the consideration of the House not only the draft proposals, but also statements with regard to food and cloth in this province. Taking the question of cloth, I would like you to follow the ideas that are contained in the statement which he has issued with regard to yarn and cloth in this province. Firstly, in the opening remarks of the statement, the Hon. the Premier has referred to the All-India Yarn Distribution Scheme. All-India Yarn Distribution Scheme, Sir, is based upon the figures found in the Fact

- (3) that a thorough investigation be conducted into the working of the Madras Provincial Textile Department by a committee of eleven consisting of members of this House as well as that of outside public opinion.'"*

Mr. T. J. M. WILSON:—"Add the following at the end:—

- 'and on such consideration the House is of opinion—*
- (1) that the draft proposals are inadequate and ineffective to meet the situation;*
- (2) that in order to protect the handloom industry and to safeguard the interests of the handloom weaver the Government should fix the minimum living wage of the handloom weaver;*
- (3) that since the Handloom Weavers' Co-operative Societies at present are being discouraged the Government should by all possible means encourage the formation of a large number of co-operative societies of genuine handloom weavers;*
- (4) that for the purposes of ensuring a regular and continuous supply of more yarn at controlled prices and eliminating widespread blackmarketing in yarn the Government should take over the management of all textile mills during the present crisis allowing not more than a minimum profit to the mill owners, take steps to step up production and distribute yarn through yarn ration retail depots, thereby eliminating the chain of middlemen unnecessarily created between production and distribution ends; and*
- (5) that in order to ensure equitable distribution of adequate yardage of cloth per head among the public the Government should ration handloom cloth also.'"*

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Finding Committee's report of Dr. Thomas' Committee of 1941. At the outset, I would like to bring to the notice of the hon. Members that the figures contained in the Fact Finding Committee's Report are entirely wrong. There is a common saying that there are three kinds of lies: one is a lie, the other is a white lie, and the third is statistics. This is true of all the statistics contained in the All-India Fact Finding Committee's Report. Take for instance the City of Madras. If you turn over the pages of the Committee's Report, you will find that they have said that there are only 1,700 looms in the City of Madras. When recently the Provincial Textile Commissioner took in an informal manner census of the looms in the City, it was brought to his notice that there were nearly 3,000 looms working in the City. This holds good not only with regard to the looms in the City of Madras. It is true of all the places in this province. Therefore, working a scheme on the basis of inaccurate statistics will only result in a scheme which will not be helpful not only to the handloom weavers of this province, but also to the consumers of yarn or cloth. Therefore, the Government must insist that the scheme should be modified with reference to the correct figures that are now available. If this is done in the first instance, we can get not only increased supply of yarn to our weavers, but also increased supply of cloth.

"I come to the question of production of yarn in this province or the production of yarn in this country. It is the practice of Government at present to work out the availability of yarn on the basis of statements submitted by the mills. There is no enquiry as to whether the statements submitted by the mills are correct. Therefore on this occasion, I would urge upon the Hon. the Premier to empower the textile authorities to go into the correct figures of production, to undertake verification of the production statements of all the mills. At present, this will be a tremendous task. Therefore, Sir, I would urge upon the Hon. the Premier to take one or two mills in the first instance with proper experts. It is no use sending people who have no knowledge of the mechanism of the mill industry. Experts must be sent to investigate into the actual yarn production of the mills. Before the yarn gets out of the gates of the mills, I must say that it goes, at least a good portion of it goes underground, and this is being distributed through underground channels.

"Secondly, Sir, not only the past Government of this province, but also the Government of India have not exactly found out the correct margin of profit that exists between the cost of production of yarn and ex-mill rates that are put on the bundles of yarn. That is almost a mystery. The mill owners are not prepared to show to the authorities concerned the exact margin of profit that these great Moguls are earning in the production of yarn. Therefore, in order that you may give cheaper yarn to the handloom weavers of this province, in order that you may bring cheap yarn to the doors of the starving millions, I would urge upon the Government immediately to make an investigation as

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to the exact margin of profit which the millowners are earning at present. Therefore I have got grave doubts as to the statement made with regard to the availability of yarn in this noon. province.

"Thirdly, Sir, the quality of yarn produced by these mills is very low. Go to any handloom weaver and he will say that the yarn that is supplied to him at present is not of the quality that he used to get during the pre-war days. On a bundle of yarn, it may be indicated as 40 counts, or 60 counts or 80 counts, but when you actually test the yarn, it may not be exactly of the same count. Therefore, assistance to the Textile department must be given with a view to test the correctness of the counts indicated, because this is a loophole by which the millowners are earning great profits. This is one of the loopholes which I wish to bring to the notice of the Government.

"Fourthly, Sir, at present the available yarn is taken through the normal channels of trade to the handloom weaver through what is called the Weavers' Associations. These are non-official bodies manned by the weavers of the locality. I would say in this connexion that these non-official associations or committees have been doing very useful work and therefore I would request the Government to continue these non-official committees with certain added powers. At present although the non-officials man these organizations, sufficient powers are not given to the office-bearers of these associations to help the weavers in times of need. For instance, suppose a weaver falls sick, or that he has got to be out of the City of Madras for some work, or that he goes to his native place, then the coupons in the name of the weaver who takes the yarn must be changed. For this, the permission should come from the Textile Control officers. After all, these non-officials who are controlling these weavers' organizations are responsible people and therefore the Textile authorities should entrust these non-officials with powers so that they can help the weavers in their hour of need.

"Then, Sir, with regard to the distribution of yarn and informal rationing, I would go to the extent of introducing statutory rationing. That, I think, to a great extent I would solve the problem of proper distribution of yarn to the handloom weavers of this province.

"Again, Sir, the Government must consider the communities that are involved in the handloom industry. In this province, the weaver communities are called the Devangas in the Andhra districts, Salias in the Tamil Nad and Pandarams, Sengunthars, etc., in certain other parts. These communities are hereditary weavers and have been in the profession from time immemorial. They are the people who have the experience and a heritage of weaving. In their community, they have certain grades called the weavers and master-weavers. Unfortunately to-day there is also the coolie or the labour problem among the weavers. But hon. Members should remember that the problem of labour in the handloom industry is entirely different from the problem of labour

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in other industries. The captains of industry or the entrepreneur of the industry like the mill-owners of Bombay are entirely different from those that put their shoulders to the wheels of that industry. A Parsi or a Marwari capitalist is the master of a mill in Bombay, but the labourers in their mills belong to an entirely different community. My object in bringing this before the House is this. There is no community of interest between the captains of industry and those who are actually engaged in the industry. Therefore, when you take the question of the weaving industry, and when you call one as a master-weaver and another as an ordinary weaver, you should not be carried away by mere slogans. For, a weaver of to-day may become a master-weaver to-morrow and *vice versa*. There is this cycle going in the weaving community. Therefore, if you apply all those principles which are being applied to bring a haven of happiness to those engaged in other industries, I say that you will be doing a grave injustice to the handloom industry. Recently there was an agitation in the province that yarn coupons given to master-weavers must be taken away from their hands and should be given to independent weavers. I for my part would suggest that the system of master-weavers should be continued, because the latter do a very great service to the industry. It is they who preserved the industry and it is they who renovated it from its lethargic state and brought it to its present condition. It is they who have invested capital in the industry and established a reputation for the handloom cloth. Recently there was an agitation against the master-weavers, that they were blood-sucking parasites, that they should be removed and that the coupons should be handed to independent weavers. The Textile department is now looking into the matter.

“Now a new kind of organization is coming into existence. They put on Gandhi caps and cry Congress slogans and go on in their new adventures to exploit the weaving community and attempt to take away their coupons. Is it because the Congress Government has come into power that these new adventurers should set out in this manner? Let not the Government be carried away by their agitation. If to-day the coupons are taken away from the hands of the independent weavers or master-weavers, as they are technically called, it will be doing the greatest injury to the handloom industry. These coolie weavers do not in very many cases belong to the weaving communities which I have enumerated and they are a sort of nomadic race. To-day they will be in Pondicherry, to-morrow in Madras and the next day in Guntur and will be going on from place to place changing masters at every place. If we hand over the yarn coupons to them, they will actually sell it in the black market, and the yarn that is badly needed by the handloom industry will be denied to the weavers of this province. The Government must therefore deeply consider the question of coolie weavers. Before toe-toting in the line of these new adventurers, they must consider the problem in all its aspects. Let them constitute a small committee of enquiry or let them ask the Textile authorities to constitute a committee consisting of the representatives of coolie weavers, the

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representatives of the independent weavers and other interests involved. Let them evolve a plan by which they can equitably distribute the yarn available in this province. These are the points that I have got to bring to the consideration of the Government.

“Now let me come to the question of cloth. In the first place, the quantity of cloth allotted to this province is very meagre. The Hon. the Premier in his statement has said that we are getting somewhere near 10.8 yards per head per year, while Bombay is getting double the quantity. Sir, this sort of disparity between the quantity allotted to Madras and that allotted to Bombay or any other province in Northern India is a question which we have got to consider deeply. There is a lurking suspicion in the minds of Northern Indians that Madras is a province of ‘Half-naked Fakirs’ and that the people might be given half the quantity of cloth that is given to other provinces. That is a very bad impression about the people of this province and the popular Government that is now in power should take immediate steps to see that this idea is rooted out of the minds of North Indians. I remember a small story that I heard when I was in Northern India. Somebody said ‘If you see a South Indian and a snake, kill the South Indian first.’ That is the attitude of the Northern Indians towards us. (A voice: ‘North Indian leaders of all party affiliations are having the same opinion of South Indian leaders.’) Therefore, Sir, the Government in power must wage a regular war and see that the cloth quota is increased for this province. If we get 20 yards per head, that will go a long way towards solving our cloth problem.

“Sir, the credit given to the handloom cloth in this cloth quota should be reduced. I do not know why the Central Government should have increased the assignment of handloom cloth within this quota. Out of the 10 yards assigned to us, we would be getting six yards of handloom cloth and four yards of mill cloth.

“Another reason for the scarcity of cloth in this province is the difficulty of transport, or ‘transport hurdles’ as mentioned in the statement. I will just mention a small matter for the information of the House. There are two mills in Bombay that should supply to this province about 500 bales of yarn. The railway authorities in Bombay refuse to transport these bales by goods train to Madras and so they are sent by steamer to Cochin and from Cochin they have got to come to Madras by rail. The delay, the inconvenience and hardships that are caused by this process to the cloth dealers and the consumers are enormous. Now when monsoons are setting down, what will happen to these transports, we cannot foresee. As I said, there will be delay and inconvenience. Perhaps the bales may get damaged. Therefore the Government should take immediate steps to see that all the bales that come from Bombay or Ahmedabad are transported only by rail and as speedily as possible. Otherwise, we cannot get even the 10 yards allotted to us due to these transport hurdles.

“Again, Sir, with a view to solve the cloth scarcity in this province, rationing is proposed. Personally I have no belief in

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it. Hon. Members of my party, however, feel differently and hence I waive my opposition to cloth rationing. My hon. Friend Mr. Town told us this morning that he is not for cloth rationing, but, for the sake of his party which holds a different view, he has given up his cherished ideal. I am also in the same position. But I want to tell the Hon. the Premier that cloth rationing should not be effected on the lines of rice rationing. Cloth rationing should be done on rational lines. Because, as has been pointed out in the statement, if you are going to ration cloth, it means in effect that every one, man, woman and child, whether they have been using mill cloth or not, will be asked to wear mill cloth only. That habit will create a new taste among the consumers. Though they have been using handloom cloth all these years, they will have to give up their taste for it and take to mill cloth. That means it will ultimately undermine the handloom industry of this province.

"Then, Sir, reference has been made to the Utility Cloth scheme. I have no faith in it or in the standard cloth scheme. Hon. Members are aware how, under instructions from the Government of India, the Provincial Governments took delivery of large quantities of standard cloth and what was done ultimately with that cloth in the different places. Even the handloom industry was made to produce that cloth. Stocks accumulated, as people were unwilling to buy them. In the end the Government of India had to come to the rescue of the handloom industry by giving export permits to liquidate the accumulated stocks of standard cloth. Let us not therefore agree to this Utility Cloth scheme. Let those provinces that want it, have it. We should ask the Government of India to allot to us our quota of yarn that may go into scheme so that we may hand over that yarn to our handloom weavers.

"Next, I wish to offer a few remarks about price control. I am one of those who have been insisting on price control from the beginning. As a member of the All-India Handloom Board, I have told the representatives from the other provinces that price control of handloom cloth must be established. Unfortunately they did not agree as also the Hon. the Commerce Member of the Government of India. He told me this was the only time when the handloom weavers could make some money and that they might be allowed to do so. But did this *laissez faire* policy benefit the handloom weavers? No. It has helped nobody. Therefore I brought to the notice of the All-India Handloom Board and the officers of the Government of India that handloom cloth price control must be introduced. When the Government of India refused to agree and when the Ceylon Government introduced price control on handloom cloth imported from India, particularly from the Province of Madras, we brought to the notice of the Government of India that they must request the Ceylon Government to give up price control, because it is derogatory to the self-respect and dignity of this country that a foreign Government should control the price of a commodity produced in this country. If to-day we are going to introduce

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price control on cars or other goods produced in foreign countries, will not those countries make vehement protests? Unfortunately the Government of India do not think on those lines and that is why they rejected my advice to write to the Ceylon Government to cancel their order imposing price control on handloom cloth imported from India. Unfortunately price control was imposed by this Government but it had a very bad effect on our exports to Ceylon. Out of the 40 million yards of cloth produced in this province every month, how are we going to give about 2 million yards to Ceylon to be sold at controlled prices? You can readily imagine what will happen to the exporters of handloom cloth to Ceylon. There was a huge demand for handloom cloth from Bombay, the Punjab and Bengal and exporters came into the market offering higher prices. Though there was the Provincial Textile Commissioner's price list, actually cloth was selling at prices higher than those given in the price schedule. Therefore the exporters of handloom cloth to Ceylon have not been able to export the cloth indicated in their licences for nearly one year or more. In that situation, I suggested to the Provincial Textile Commissioner that there was no use having price control of goods exported to Ceylon alone. The control must be on all goods produced in this province, whether or not the Government of India, or the All-India Handloom Board or the Textile Control Board agrees with us. We have got to introduce price control, on handloom products in this province so that we may not only carry on export trade, but give the consumers of this province handloom cloth at reasonable prices.

"The Hon. the Premier has defined how the profit margin should be distributed. He says: 'Producers of handloom cloth will be allowed a handsome margin of 15 per cent over the actual cost of production, while the margins for the dealers will be limited to 4 per cent for the wholesaler and 10 per cent to the retailer on the producer's price.' The idea contained in this definition is very vague. I hope the Hon. the Premier will clarify it. Six per cent will be a meagre allowance to the retailer. As regards the profit margin, all I would say is that the Government should not arbitrarily fix it. There are trade organizations in this province attending to the needs of the traders all these years. They have got experience and ability and they know the difficulties and hardships of the traders and dealers. Therefore, before assigning the profit margin arbitrarily, the Government would do well to consult the trade organizations.

"Another thing I notice in the statement of the Hon. the Premier is that one wholesaler must sell only to a retailer. This condition will, I am sure, create much hardship and almost paralyse the wheels of trade in this country. For instance, take two wholesalers, one in Vetapalayam and one in the City of Madras. The former has been all these years selling handloom goods to the wholesaler at Madras. If to-day this condition is enforced, the Madras man would have to go. That will introduce very great friction in the free trade machinery. Therefore, if you

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are having the margin of profit for each individual, you can safely leave the rest to the merchants themselves. The trade will adapt itself to the prevailing conditions. Your interest is to give to the consumer handloom cloth at a reasonable price. If this is so, why should you intervene and lay down a condition as to which wholesaler should sell to which retailer and so on? This will create considerable hardship.

“ I shall now say a few words about the usefulness of the co-operative societies in this connexion. The co-operative societies are the pet children of the Government and they are giving any amount of encouragement to the co-operative movement to develop. Attempts have been made in the past, in the years prior to 1935, to revive the handloom industry. Co-operative societies were started. They did not survive and, when the handloom industry was seen to suffer, agitation was started asking the Government of Madras and the Government of India to do something. They came to the rescue of the industry in the year 1935 with what is called the Subvention scheme. Under this scheme subsidies were given to the weavers. At present these subsidies are given only to weavers' co-operative societies. Somehow or other that idea has been tried for the last ten years. And what is the percentage of handloom weavers that are within the fold of this co-operative movement? It is only 4 per cent. Why are weavers' co-operative societies not popular among the weavers? Why should not Government institute an enquiry into the reasons for the unpopularity of the co-operative movement in their midst and by remedying the defects, make the societies popular among the weavers?

“ While on this question, I wish to refer to what was said in the Legislative Council by an hon. Member yesterday. It appears he said that the export of handloom cloth must be immediately stopped. Sir, what is the position of our handloom industry? If you take the handloom industry of this province into consideration, you will find that here in this province it has prospered while in other provinces it has languished. The reason for this is traceable to the fact that we have been exporting our handloom products to Burma, Federated Malay States, East Indies and other far-eastern countries. If to-day this is stopped, the hardship of the weavers will be very great. When Japan occupied those countries, those markets were lost to our weavers and exporters and our weavers starved. The Government had at that time to grant them famine allowances. Are the Government going to bring about such a state of affairs again by stopping the export of handloom cloth? I hope not. The export must not be stopped. It should, on the other hand, be encouraged and increased.

12-30 p.m. “ It would be the height of political unwisdom on the part of the Government to allow distribution of cloth in the hands of village committees. I must say that it would be in the interests of the province to allow the existing system to continue with certain modifications in order to help the handloom industry and consumers instead of adopting Utopian methods. Therefore.

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Sir, in the interests of the thousands of handloom weavers of this province and in the interests of the trade in general, I appeal to the Government not to undertake these experiments. It is not guinea pigs on whom you are experimenting, but human beings.”

KUMARARAJA SIR MUTHIAH CHETTIAR OF CHETTINAD:—
“ Mr. Speaker, Sir, this House and indeed the whole public are grateful to the Government for giving us an opportunity to discuss not only the food problem but also the cloth problem. We also appreciate very much the nice arrangements made to separate the discussion on the two questions; for otherwise, it would not have been possible in a joint discussion to give that amount of importance that is necessary to the cloth situation. If the situation in regard to cloth is not as desperate as the food situation, it is, at any rate, equally important. The discussions so far have justified the decision to separate the question into two parts.

“ First of all, the Provincial Textile Commissioner has given a very clear statement of the cloth position in this province. The present Government have had very little time to tackle it but they are fortunate in this : that as in the case of food, they have already an elaborate organization functioning with regard to cloth also, so that it will be easy for them to build upon the work that has already been done during the last three years by the officials, the non-officials and those engaged in the trade particularly. I understand from Hon. the Prime Minister's statement that the Government are suggesting certain changes in the existing arrangement. I suggest at this stage that it would be in the fitness of things if we give our general support to the Government proposal. It would be difficult to envisage clearly the effect of these proposals, and we can only hope that they will be effective and if there are any defects in actual working, I hope that the officials of the department concerned would suggest the necessary changes and the Hon. the Prime Minister would give effect to them; if necessary, legislation can be undertaken.

“ The cloth industry is not a new industry. We have all, particularly prominent non-officials, deplored the fact that the village industries have gone down, that the urban population is growing and the villages have been neglected, for one reason or other. To clothe the people in the urban areas, spinning and weaving mills must necessarily exist. The cloth problem will always be with us. Legislators and administrators will have to solve the problem from time to time.

“ The cloth industry, like other industries, will have to be specialized in particular areas. They cannot be completely left to the villages. I am not merely referring to the mills. Even handlooms have been concentrated in certain areas and among certain communities. This matter of production and distribution should be the concern of the Government and not be left to the villagers. As I see things, the problem with regard to the cloth

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situation is the same as that with regard to the food situation, namely, shortage of raw material from which you have to make the cloth. In the last few months it has been stated in several Assemblies in the world that there should be equality of sacrifice with regard to food and cloth. It is always easy to say that. It remains to be seen how far our own brethren in other parts of India will rise to the occasion when they talk of equality of sacrifice. It is very well known that the south deficit zone has been treated in a step-motherly fashion. Let us only hope that in the near future when a powerful Central Government comes into being, it would be possible to tell the more ambitious provinces that the words 'equality of sacrifice' must really go round the whole of India and must not be merely words.

"I do not want to go into the methods by which our cloth requirements have been calculated. It is very dangerous to enter very much into statistical calculations; for, even the statistics collected by the Fact-Finding Committee have been questioned by departments of Government, but it is clear that what we are now getting by way of cloth and yarn is not sufficient and once this problem is tackled we can rely upon the officials of the Government headed by a popular Ministry to see that distribution is properly made.

"With regard to per capita requirements of cloth, when a person in Bombay is said to require 18 yards we cannot say that a person in Madras should be content with 10 to 12 yards. I am very glad that I am now speaking after my hon. Friend Mr. Town who, more than any other hon. Member of this House, is an authority on the textile industry. We are fortunate in having his opinion on this important question. He has rightly brought to our notice the imminent danger of further curtailment of production in this country by the adoption of the 48-hour week. However well-intentioned the proposal may be—we all want to help the workers as much as possible—I must say, Sir, that the time chosen for the introduction of this 48-hour week is very inopportune. The workers in this Province and elsewhere have made very great efforts, worked very hard and sacrificed many things in a complete spirit of co-operation during the six long years of war. We are grateful to them for all this. Now, after the war there is famine. Therefore, will it be too much if this House should appeal to the working classes to continue their co-operation and wait for some time more for the introduction of this change? The employers cannot properly ask the Government to postpone the introduction of the 48-hour week. But it will be graceful on the part of the workers and their trade unions to come forward and say that they will not take advantage of the 48-hour week but work 56 hours a week for the good of India and to save the country from famine in cloth. It will be appreciated throughout the country. (Sri B. Gopala Reddi: 'What about increase of wages?') I do not think the employers would want to get extra eight hours work for nothing. Anyhow I am not an expert in this business and I do not know whether there

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will be any reduction of wages when the hours are reduced to 48 hours a week. But, Sir, this will mean not only a shortage of cloth for persons like us but it will be something more also; it will mean shortage of work for the handloom weavers. (An hon. Member: 'What about the shift system?') If more than 24 hours can be found in the day more shifts can be arranged. Anyway, it is very good that this question has come up when popular Governments are functioning in all the Provinces and when there is a possibility of a national Government coming into existence at the Centre within a few weeks. We may expect them to take a bold step and make an appeal to the working classes not to insist on the 48-hour week for some time more. I agree with the principle of the 48-hour week, but this is not the time to introduce it in view of the national emergency. The fight for more cloth for this Province is not a new one. The Textile Department of this Province have been fighting for it for the last three years and I am only sorry that the fruits that they got about October 1945, they are losing so soon. At first it was 12 yards, then it became 10.8 yards and according to Mr. Town, it will be 11 per cent less after two months. Let us not think about what the situation then will be, but let us hope that the situation will be remedied before that day comes. We find from the Textile Commissioner's report that even the quota allotted to us has not been supplied in full. I do hope that the lapses of the last few months will also be made up in addition to the regular monthly supplies in future. The lapses should not be cancelled.

"The hon. Member Mr. Majeed referred to the handloom industry which is providing livelihood to half a million workers and their families. (An hon. Member: 'There are half a million looms.') I know, Sir, that in some families there are two or three looms and in some others, seven or eight people work on one or two looms. Whatever it is, it does not matter. Half a million workers and their families are a sufficiently large number and if this House is not going to concern itself with their welfare, I do not know what it is going to do. We should take serious notice of the fact that they have now got work for only ten days in a month. I am now speaking more on behalf of the consumers than on behalf of the weavers. If the weavers have only work for ten days and they should be given thirty days' wages, the cost of the handloom cloth will increase. It is a very clear thing. Therefore, if it is the intention of the House to reduce the price of the handloom cloth to a level at which the ordinary consumer can buy it easily, it is absolutely necessary to provide more days' work for the weavers so that the rates of wages may become less. This will be possible only when we get more yarn. Our demand for allocation of more yarn for this Province is irrespective of the demand for cloth. The basis for the allocation of yarn should be the number of looms at present working in this Province. We should not worry about statistics regarding the number of looms working four years ago. The Government of the day is

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concerned with the workers at present engaged in handloom weaving. They cannot say that they will give work only to those who were engaged in handloom weaving four years ago and not to others. At present the Government have to provide work for half a million handloom weavers. A strong demand must go forth from this House for allocation of more yarn to this Province. If more yarn is allocated and also if more cloth is received, the price problem will be automatically solved. Otherwise, whatever price control you introduce will not be successful. I have, therefore, confined my attention to this point in the amendment.

"I will only join in the fervent appeal made by the Hon. Premier to hon. Members to co-operate fully with the Government in all measures they have taken to relieve the cloth situation, and as representatives of the public to take steps to get the whole-hearted co-operation of the people with the Government. It may be that there will be no such famine in cloth as there is in food, but the question of cloth famine has to be viewed not only from the point of view of shortage of cloth but also from the point of view of high prices. If there will be no such shortage, I have no doubt that with the departmental officials who have had considerable experience of this work for the last three years working under a popular Government it will be possible to have yarn and cloth distributed on an equitable basis and the prices brought down, to help the consumer.

"A reference was also made to exports. At a time when we are short of cloth, no doubt we should not export. That is a simple proposition to look at, but that is not really so simple as it appears. If that principle is accepted it would mean great distress to many families. If we are asking for export of more bales than we are allowed to export now, it is not out of our allotment; it is from any addition to our allotment. If we can make out a case for more exports to the near-Eastern and Eastern countries which are now open and where we are entitled to regain our markets, we will certainly be able to give more employment to the handloom weavers and this will bring down the rates of wages paid to the handloom weaver and consequently the prices of the handloom products which we are wearing. We should not only keep up our present export level but we should try to get back to the old export level in a graduated manner. We should demand from the Central Government an allocation of cloth yardage and yarn sufficient for our own demand and also for our old exportable quantity. This will be the best method of solving the problem. I do not want to enter into further details, Sir, for it is the sincere hope of everybody that the debate will be over today."

MR. SPEAKER:—"Not possible."

KUMARARAJA SIR MUTHIAH CHETTIAR OF CHETTINAD:—

"All the same I have not got much to say, particularly after the speeches of Mr. Town and Mr. Majeed, the one an expert on mills and the other on handlooms and shall conclude by saying that this House should give unqualified support to

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the Government in the proposals they have adumbrated. The Government are now trying to improve upon the elaborate administration that is already functioning. If in actual working anything more is necessary they will be the first to take it on hand. I may say once more, Sir, that the Cloth Department of this Province which has done so well during the last three years deserves a word of encouragement from this august Assembly. If they feel that they have the confidence of the representatives of the people in this Assembly headed by a popular Ministry with an eminent gentleman who has got the good of the people of the Province in his heart as Premier, it will go a great way to make them do better work in the future."

* SRI P. VENKATESWARLU:—"Mr. Speaker, we have discussed the position of cloth in our Province in the light of the statement made by the Hon. the Prime Minister. I am sorry to note that the Hon. the Prime Minister's statement in no way helps to solve the problem of cloth. He did not go into the details of the scheme, but he merely enunciated what the Textile Commissioner has proposed and it is evident from the statement of the Hon. the Prime Minister that he is carrying out the same policy that was adopted by the previous Government. The previous Government relied more upon the mill-owners, wholesale dealers and the big merchants. I have been searching in vain in the statement for anything ahead of the policy pursued by the previous Government. Unfortunately there is nothing that can be commended in it. The committees proposed by him will not be sufficient to solve the problem. In the other House, the hon. Member Mr. Theobald suggested that the normal trade channels should be maintained. The Muslim League Members also made the same kind of proposals. Even in the Hon. Prime Minister's proposals, particularly with regard to cloth, the wholesalers, the retailers, their profits and all these things are there. I do not find much difference between the arrangements made by the previous Government and the proposals of the Hon. the Prime Minister. Yesterday most of the speakers from the Congress benches as well as Mr. Ananda Nambiar of my party have clearly pointed out that these normal trade channels have become so dark, that they must be condemned and abolished immediately. Otherwise there is no possibility of solving the cloth problem.

"In this connexion I want to bring to the notice of the House one particular case of how these dark normal trade channels function. Most of the Members of the House may have known, one Mr. Sadasivan, well-known as the manager of the musical concert of Mrs. Subbalakshmi . . ."

MR. SPEAKER:—"Why does the hon. Member bring in names here?"

* SRI P. VENKATESWARLU:—"Just to enlighten the House, Mr. Speaker.

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" This gentleman was given a permit to export 14,000 yards of cloth to Ceylon. Is he in the normal trade channel? Has he done any textile business before? Why should the permit be given to him? What is the motive in giving it? I want a clear statement of all the facts. This is not a normal trade channel; this is going ahead of the normal trade channel. This is helping blackmarket directly. Is this gentleman going to do business from now onwards? Most of the members know that he does not do this business nor will he himself send cloth to Ceylon. He will simply earn a profit of 4 annas per yard—see what a huge profit he makes on 14,000 yards a month—and some of the merchant blackmarketeers will carry on the business for him. I do not propose to give any more examples. I request the Hon. the Prime Minister to definitely enquire into the working of the whole Textile Department, which has become inefficient and corrupt from top to bottom. There is now an alliance, an unholy alliance I call it. The Textile officers in most of the towns not only allow the merchants to do the blackmarketing but the merchants also take the help of the police to see that their blackmarketing is carried on.

" In Narasaraopeta during the month of May when peaceful people assembled to get cloth not only were they not helped to get the cloth but the police went there and lathi-charged the people. It is under the Congress regime, when our Prime Minister is there, that these lathi charges are made on peaceful crowds who go to their shops to take their quota of cloth.

1 p.m. " Lathi charges are being made on peaceful crowds who want to take their quota of cloth. Narasaraopet is not the only town that suffered in this way. . . "

* SRI KALA VENKATA RAO:—" May I know if representations were made to the Government? "

* SRI P. VENKATESWARLU:—" Telegrams were sent to the effect that scuffles were taking place. In Nandyal, the village munsif and Congress workers were arrested. I am bringing this to the notice of this House, so that the Hon. the Prime Minister may take proper action and see that a repetition of these things does not occur under his regime.

" As regards blackmarketing in yarn, members of the Muslim League Party wanted that the interests of the master weavers should be safeguarded. There is difference between master weavers and ordinary weavers; the former do not actually weave; they take the quota of yarn; a master weaver is something like a small merchant; he is an exploiter. The weaver must have his ration card and not the master weaver. I do not know why the master weaver should have the ration cards in his hands and go away to whatever places he likes and take whatever profit he can. The yarn that is given to the weaver is taken away by the master weaver. Without yarn, what can the ordinary weaver do? The members of the Muslim League should understand this point before they come to a final conclusion.

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" Our Province was supplied with about 21,000 bales of yarn. How much of it was distributed to the weavers? In the statement it is stated that the Textile Commissioner supplied yarn sufficient for ten days; in the Andhra districts it was sufficient for only seven days. There is no proper distribution. For lack of time I am not going into all the details. What has become of the remaining yarn? It is being sold in the blackmarket. The remaining 14,000 bales were sold in the blackmarket. I suggest that the normal trade channels should be done away with, if you want to stop cloth from our province going to the blackmarket.

" Another point I wish to bring to the notice of this House is the production of mill-cloth. It is stated clearly by the Textile Commissioner that, as the fabrics produced under the Utility Cloth Scheme are of loose texture and are not popular with the public the Madras Government have suggested to the Government of India that the scheme may be abandoned in order that more yarn may be made available to the handloom industry. The utility and standard cloths are the only cloths that can be purchased by the poor. Because both these varieties are stopped, the poor could get no cloth at all. So many people are going naked in the streets. What I propose is that the production of those cloths should be revived. I would go further and say that cloth of higher counts should not be manufactured; cloth that can be used both by the poor and rich should be produced. Preference must be given in the interest of the poor to the production of cloth that can be used by the poor, middle and upper classes also, instead of the finer varieties that can be purchased only by the rich. It does not matter if the rich people are not able normally to get cloth; they will be able to get it in the blackmarket. What about the poor? Even to-day—since the beginning of the war—there are poor people who did not get even a single yard of cloth. Are we to leave people to their fate and encourage blackmarkets even under the Congress regime?

" Another most important matter I wish to mention is the rationing of handloom cloth. Nothing has been mentioned about it. Unless the rationing of handloom cloth also is introduced, the rationing of mill-made cloth will not be a success, because everybody will do his best to get five yards of mill-made cloth when the quotas are received. Unless handloom cloth is controlled and rationed, there will be scarcity of cloth in this Province. People are not able to get mill-cloth; the poor cannot buy handloom cloth, because it is too costly. I do not know what fate will overtake them. The Textile Commissioner says: 'As the bulk of the cloth allotment to this Province consists of handloom cloth, no substantial relief is possible in the absence of control of the prices of such cloth.' There can be successful rationing provided handloom cloth is also brought under rationing.

" The Provincial Textile Commissioner says that producers of handloom cloth will be allowed a handsome margin of 15 per cent

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over the actual cost of production. It is not correct. The whole-sale dealers are able to make more profit. What I propose is this; handloom cloth of 20 to 40 counts should be made available to the poor; the production of cloth of 80 counts should be stopped. At best cloth of 60 counts will be sufficient; cloth of 20 counts should be produced and distributed to the poor, so that cloth may be available both to the poor and the rich."

available both to the poor and the rich. (A voice): 'Is there no time-limit for speeches, Sir?'

* SRI P. VENKATESWARLU:—"Everybody agrees that co-operative societies carry on business in a democratic fashion and all our transactions should be through co-operative societies. Not a single word has been said about this in the statement of the Provincial Textile Commissioner. Co-operative societies are not given yarn. People were discouraged from forming co-operative societies as there was lack of yarn. Co-operative societies can help a good deal in the matter of distribution of cloth and yarn. The Government must encourage the formation and development of co-operative societies, to the largest extent possible.

"To-day there is no guarantee that the weaver will get yarn at a particular rate. The advisory committees are there only in name. Some people are appointed by Textile officers. There are no meetings for chalking out programmes. To-day the position is this; neither the Provincial Textile Commissioner nor the District Textile Officer knows how much yarn is sent to the districts. They cannot have any idea about the distribution of yarn also. They are distributing yarn according to their discretion. Even the yarn that has to be supplied for seven days has to be bought in the black-market. Weavers have to live mainly on the supply of yarn to them for 10 days. The total earning of the weaver has to depend on the quantity of yarn he gets for 10 days. If yarn is supplied to the weaver for all the 30 days in the month, he will not be so selfish as to charge higher rates. If yarn is properly supplied, we need not think that the weaver will not be patriotic. I can guarantee for his patriotism; he will co-operate with the Government or with the committees which the Minister proposes to have. But it must be made clear that the weaver's wages would be fair. The weaver's charges should be fixed and the price of yarn should be fixed; then only weavers will come forward and help the Government to solve the crisis in regard to cloth. If the Provincial Textile Officer or the District Textile Officer is going to appoint members to the local committees, the committees will not be able to solve the problem. The villages themselves must be given power to deal with the yarn and cloth problem. As some hon. Member suggested yesterday, the yarn produced in the mills must be taken control of by the Government and the Government themselves must send it direct to District Committees. The District Committee must fix up the agency to receive the yarn; it must distribute it in proper proportions to the weavers. With

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the yarn distributed, cloth will be produced and then the ration scheme will be successful. The weaver will get the entire profit if wholesalers and black-marketers are eliminated.

"Lastly, yesterday the Hon. the Prime Minister made a charge against us that we are here to take advantage of the difficult situation and to bring about strikes. Not at all. We are the last persons to do that. The Communist Party will wholeheartedly co-operate with the Government in solving the problem of food and cloth. We will never try to fish in troubled waters.

"I can guarantee that the Communist Party will not take advantage of the present difficult situation. Strikes do come whenever the workers' wages or conditions are bad. Nobody can prevent them. The Hon. the Labour Minister, Sri V. V. Giri may be aware of this fact. Strikes do come only due to the operation of the economic condition of the workers. If the Hon. Prime Minister took courage and solved the question of wages, there will be no strikes at all. If living wages are ensured, there will be no strikes and the situation can be easily solved."

* B. POCKER SAHIB BAHADUR:—"Mr. Speaker, Sir, though 1-15 p.m. we are now on the question of cloth, you will please allow me first of all to thank the Hon. the Premier for the justice he has done to the people of Malabar in treating them on the same footing as people of other parts of the Presidency. Though it is bare justice, I am glad that he has recognized that the people of Malabar require as much food as the people of other parts of this Presidency. It is on that account, Sir, I am thanking the Premier. I purposely refer to this question to begin with, just with a view to prove that the Hon. the Premier has a fair sense of justice. I refer to this fact in order to appeal to him that he may do the same justice with reference to other things also.

"Now, Sir, it is very regrettable to find that the Government have not realized the seriousness of the present situation. I say this because, even though in the course of the discussion on the food situation, very many facts were brought to the notice of the Government and they were told that the measures they were proposing were not fair and just, nothing seems to have been taken into account, as is apparent from the reply that we have received. Sir, when people are faced with a very serious situation in the country both in regard to food and cloth, what is the attitude that the Government have adopted? They are not so much concerned with averting the starvation or covering the nudity of the people, as with strengthening their party organization, and carrying out their ideologies or fads—by whatever name they may be called—instead of dealing with a critical situation like this. They are trying to do everything to further strengthen their already strong party by bringing into existence new committees and organizations and buttressing them with concrete. Sir, the Hon. the Premier says 'no.' What are the draft proposals which he has placed before this House? I want him to consider what he has done: has he suggested any kind of practical solution in regard to either food

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or cloth? As however the question of food has been disposed of, I do not think I need refer to it; but as regards the question of cloth, what is it we have before us? The other day, we were given some printed statement by the Textile Commissioner. Later on, we were also given some extract from the same. And afterwards we were surprised to receive another statement which we thought would at least contain some concrete proposals. I however found nothing in it except the formation of the committees and other bodies to strengthen the Ministerial party organization and their own power. There is nothing else in it. Is there any constructive proposal in it, I ask? The Textile Commissioner's statement gives so many suggestions in which the Commissioner himself does not believe. Has the Hon. the Premier or has any of his colleagues bestowed any serious thought on the subject? Was it not up to them to have thought out a scheme, made some constructive proposals and placed them before this House, instead of simply stating some more questions of fact and making some doubtful suggestions. What does yesterday's statement come to, except the formation of some committees? What is the nature of those committees? They are nothing but branches of Congress committees; nothing more. It might be said, Sir, that the village committee, the original and the basic committee, is a committee nominated by the Tahsildar; but at the same time, the Hon. the Premier in his first speech and in his reply indicated, or rather has warned the Government officials, to realise that they are no more servants of the bureaucracy but that they are the servants of the present Congress Government. And what is the effect of the warning?"

THE HON. SRI T. PRAKASAM:—"I said 'servants of the people'."

* B. POCKER SAHIB BAHADUR:—"Certainly; whether they are the servants of the people or the servants of one section of the people is a question of fact which you have to realise. If you represent the whole of the people in the country, I have nothing to say; but you have to admit that you do not represent all sections of the people; you represent only one section of the people. And if you set up this machinery, which you are proposing, will you please realise that you will be using this engine of tyranny to cow down people who do not agree with you? (Interruptions.) Well, that will be the result. I am asking you whether it is right, whether it is just, whether it is proper on your part, you who have taken up the reins of Government which concerns all the people, just to create a machinery which certainly will be interested in seeing that only people of your party and people of your political persuasion are benefited. . . . (Voices:—"No, no")."

MR. SPEAKER:—"The Committees will contain all people. Why do you anticipate it?"

* B. POCKER SAHIB BAHADUR:—"Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have already mentioned how the committees are likely to be formed. It is true the Premier has stated that in nominating persons to this

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committee, political considerations will not be taken into account. I wish the Government had been more honest and more straightforward and said that the committees would consist of all political parties, instead of merely saying there will not be any political colour and at the same time giving a warning to the Government officials that they must consider themselves to be the servants of the Congress Government and not of the previous bureaucracy. Anyway, what is the effect of a combination of all these things, I ask? Am I wrong in making an inference that there is every change? (Hon. Members:—"You are wrong.") (The Hon. Sri T. Prakasam:—"You are wrong.") Both of us are lawyers, we stick to our guns once we take up an attitude. Only in that spirit you can now say 'no'.

"Now, Sir, let not the Hon. Premier think I have come to fight him. I have come to appeal to his sense of justice. Why I am saying this is this: in the first instance, I knew full well he has a sense of justice; as one who know him for decades as a colleague in the Bar, I know he is a fair-minded gentleman and his desire is to do justice. That is why I began by referring to what he has done for Malabar. It is not on account of parochial patriotism that I referred to this point, but only with a view to appealing to his sense of justice and in order to make him realise that the proposals he has put forward before this House are not fair and just. I am not pleading, Sir, for any particular method of election; the method of election may have its own implications, but I am not referring to them. I want to know from him whether he considers the committee that he proposes to form will not be a political party."

THE HON. SRI T. PRAKASAM:—"No, it will not be a political party."

* B. POCKER SAHIB BAHADUR:—"He has said 'no'; all-right, Sir. But what will be the mentality of the Tahsildar whom he has already warned to the effect that he must realise and that all his subordinates must realise that they are the servants of this Government, i.e., the Congress Government? Will any subordinate official dare to nominate persons to the committee who are not of the Congress persuasion? That is so far as this matter is concerned. Mr. Speaker; I shall leave it at that. I have already told the Premier that I wanted to appeal to his sense of justice; and I shall leave it at that.

"My contention is that the existing channels of trade should be utilized, but at the same time every step may be taken to prevent black-marketing. The hon. Member Mr. Town said, Sir, that there is no sufficient sense of citizenship among Indians. I must say, Sir, that sense of citizenship may be lacking in many people; but I must tell my hon. Friend that this black-marketing has not been the monopoly of Indians; it has also been practised by other communities including the race to which Mr. Town himself belongs, but probably in a more scientific manner. (An hon. Member: "Well said.") There is not a single party or

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member in this House or outside it, Sir, any responsible person, who will support black-marketing. But the question is: have you made any effective suggestion for rooting out this evil of black-marketing? I am unable to find one word in the whole of the statement, one constructive suggestion, except the formation of these committees. Have you bestowed any thought on this question since you took up the reins of office? Many of the Hon. Ministers are running about the country, remaining in one place for one hour and going to another place for another hour and so on; but have they bestowed any thought on this subject? Why should they not suggest some constructive method to root out black-marketing? (Interruptions.) I know what I say is distasteful to members of this House. But that cannot prevent me from stating facts. There is no good preventing me from giving expression to my ideas, and they will miserably fail, Sir, if they interrupt me. (An hon. Member: 'What is your suggestion?') I have already said that the existing channels, the trade channels should be employed as far as possible. In extraordinary circumstances, no doubt, the freedom of trade may be interfered with and the freedom of individuals may be interfered with; but at the same time, if there is black-marketing going on, if there is an abuse of the privileges, that has to be prevented at all costs; whether the black-marketeer is a Hindu or a Muslim or a Congressman or a Leaguer or a European—it has to be put down with a very severe hand. But I say it must be prevented through the proper means. While I maintain that the whole thing should be left to the existing trade channels, I know full well that whatever I or my party may say, will be a cry in the wilderness. You will be having your way in any case. But I would submit, if you are going to form committees for this purpose, please exercise the sense of justice which I have credited you with throughout all these decades, so that these committees may include persons of all creeds and views."

MR. SPEAKER:—"You may continue your speech after lunch."

The Assembly at this stage adjourned for lunch.

(After lunch 2-30 p.m.)

MR. SPEAKER:—"I wish to inform the House that since many members wanted to take part in the debate, I thought I could have the meeting on Monday also, but many hon. Members have also expressed their desire to go back to their places. So, I would suggest that we sit till 8 o'clock to-night and finish the subject."

* B. POCKER SAHIB BAHADUR:—"Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do not wish to take up much of the time of the House. Though I am not for the constitution of these committees, as I have already mentioned, if these committees are to be constituted, they should be constituted on the basis of representation of the major political parties. There is no good ignoring this fact and if you go

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about trying to get such men for those committees it may be satisfactory to some extent. Therefore what I would suggest is, you should honestly approach the subject and ask your Tahsildars—I am sure you are going to consult your Tahsildars for carrying on with this work—to pick up men from all political parties. I say 'political parties' advisedly, because there is no use adopting communal representation in these matters, but these committees should consist of members of political parties. Therefore, I would ask the Government that if they are going to push through this scheme—according to me this fantastic scheme—and want to give effect to it, let them attack the problem in the right royal fashion . . ."

THE HON. SRI T. PRAKASAM:—"You need not labour the point any further; it has already been discussed at length."

* B. POCKER SAHIB BAHADUR:—"Sir, the Hon. the Premier tells me that I need not labour the point further and therefore I do not wish to take up any more time of the House on this point."

"Now, Sir, I wish to refer to another aspect of the question and that is the amendment of which I have given notice, viz., the necessity of introducing rationing as far as cloth is concerned. The note of the Commissioner does not favour rationing and my hon. Friend Mr. Town has also expressed the idea that it is impracticable. I am really at a loss to know whether the Hon. the Premier has committed himself to it. Even though he has referred to a certain kind of rationing in paragraph 5 of his proposals, I do not think he has committed himself to it. He should think about it very seriously and come to some definite conclusion, but I believe he has not bestowed any thought over the matter. My party, Sir, discussed this matter and, after considering all aspects of the question, have come to the conclusion that it is advisable and necessary that rationing should be introduced as regards cloth. It is not after all impracticable. I am myself fully aware that there are ever so many difficulties in the way, but I wish to point out that there is nothing that is impossible under the sun. Therefore, Sir, I do say such of the difficulties as are existing to-day must be got over by giving sufficient thought to the subject. It is not necessary for me to enter into further details and it is not also practicable for me to dwell upon these details, just at present but the only thing I would impress upon the House is the necessity of paying attention to certain aspects of the matter, namely, that the rationing of cloth cannot be on the same scale as the rationing of rice, because the customs and manners of communities and classes differ from place to place and class to class. It may perhaps be asked whether it is possible to find out the necessities of various individuals of the various classes in regard to their requirements of cloth for purposes of rationing. I do not think it is such a difficult task. What have the Government done in the matter of rationing fuel? Fuel is rationed according to the standard of living

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of the families concerned. So, Sir, Government have themselves introduced fuel rationing according to the requirements of the families. So far as we people in Malabar are concerned, I refer to the Moplahs in particular, they need only a particular kind of cloth for their use and as a matter of fact a member of the Moplah community cannot ask for any kind of cloth which he does not use. Therefore when issuing cards, this may be borne in mind and people concerned must be asked to say what kind of cloth is required for their use. Whether it is the officials or committees, they know what is actually wanted, the difficulty is not as regards their wants, but as regards the quantity that may be available. I say, Sir, to the extent to which cloth is available let the Government do the best that is practicable. I remember, Sir, when Malabar was suffering for want of rice, I along with other Malabar friends waited in deputation on the then Commissioner of Civil Supplies, Mr. Brown, and when we suggested to him that rationing of rice should be introduced, he said 'Oh, it is an impossible thing, my head will be cut off if I introduce rationing.' I asked, 'why?' He replied, 'there must be enough stock to support rationing and, how am I to get it.' Thereafter sufficient stock was made available and rationing was introduced in Malabar and it was a success. After it was found to be successful there, rationing of rice was introduced in all other parts of the Presidency. So, Sir, in regard to this matter of cloth also, if only the Hon. the Premier approaches the problem with a determination to solve it, he is sure to succeed.

"Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wish to refer to only one or two small points more before I sit down. I do not want to stand in the way of many other hon. Members wishing to speak on the subject. As regards the kind of cloth required by the Moplahs, I may say, Sir, they require only mill cloth and not handloom cloth, excepting perhaps for the headwear of Moplah ladies and they also require some kind of mill cloth (long cloth) dyed in particular colours called 'kachies.' Licensing is required for that dyeing also. They may require some quantity of mill cloth (mull) for jackets. I do not say that mill cloth can be made available everywhere. What I say is, it should be distributed equitably to people in places wherever it is actually required. There are, of course, many places in which mill cloth is not required and people there want only handloom cloth and you may give handloom cloth to them. After all half a yard or one yard of mill cloth (mull) is sufficient for a jacket for a Moplah woman and this may last for about 6 months. Therefore, I say, Sir, to the extent to which mill cloth is available, it will be of immense use to the people concerned if the same is guaranteed as a result of rationing. As a matter of fact, there are certain areas in which people do not wear mill cloth, but only handloom cloth and you can easily ration handloom cloth there without any difficulty. I only wish to point out that if only Government apply their mind to it in a proper manner I am sure Government can achieve the purpose.

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"Sir, another matter I would like to make special reference is in regard to the particular kind of cloth used, as shrouds for covering the dead bodies of Muslims before burial. You know there is a custom with the Muslims that they should use only a particular kind of cloth while burying the dead. They find it extremely difficult to get this when required. You know, Sir, that people usually die without any previous notice. Of course, it is not possible to give previous notice about the death of persons so that this particular kind of cloth can be obtained for the purpose beforehand. Therefore, what I would request the Hon. Prime Minister is to see that this mill cloth for shrouds is made available at all places, since everyone has to die.

"There is one other matter to which I wish to make a reference in this connexion. There is one variety of mill cloth, viz., (long cloth), MS. 55 and there is also another variety MS. 58. Particularly MS. 58 is required by the people in Malabar. As I represent Malabar, I know what their requirements are and it is my duty to mention it and that is the reason why I am referring to that here. When I enquired at the shops in Madras for MS. 58, I was told that MS. 58 long cloth is sent wholly to Malabar. But not one strip of this variety is available in Malabar. As a matter of fact when I went to Malabar I went to many of the shops there and not one yard was available anywhere. I am, therefore, asking you, Sir, where these things are going and request the Government that in this matter also they should apply their minds to find out where such articles go and if they succeed in their efforts they should trace the offenders and bring them to book. The main thing is that they should set their heart on it. We have already offered our full co-operation and I assure the Hon. the Prime Minister that we extend our co-operation in these matters.

"Now, Sir, I do not want to take any more time of the House but I wish only to request the Hon. the Prime Minister to take into consideration particularly the last portion of our first amendment, namely, to introduce advisory committees in the districts and taluks so as to include people of all political persuasions."

MUHAMMAD ABDUL SALAM SAHIB BAHADUR:—"On a point of order, Sir, I see only the Hon. the Prime Minister and no other Minister. Is there any quorum among the Ministers also?"

MR. SPEAKER:—"It is not necessary.

"I wish to suggest to the House that as previous speakers have discussed threadbare the question of blackmarketing, rationing, transport difficulties and scarcity of yarn, hon. Members who are desirous of participating in the debate now will not touch on those points. The Chair cannot allow repetition."

* SRI A. KAMESWARA RAO:—"Jai Hind. Mr. Speaker, Sir, my hon. Friend Mr. Salam is doubtful if this Ministry will stand or fall. I would like to answer him and emphatically say

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that this Congress Ministry will stand and assure him that the Leader of the House will continue as the Premier for he has got the tact and the energy and heart to deal with this urgent problem of food and cloth. Not only that, he is loved and respected by the people and he is the people's leader and by that right is the Leader of this House.

“Reference has been made to strikes. I say that it is the so-called Communists that try to bring about strikes in order to coerce the Government to do things that they want.”

MR. SPEAKER:—“The subject of the activities of Communists has nothing to do with the question under discussion.”

* SRI A. KAMESWARA RAO:—“I was referring to this, Mr. Speaker, as the Communists have been trying to foment strikes and these strikes may affect, as the Hon. the Leader of the House stated, the cloth situation. Regarding the 48-hour week for the labourers, there seems to be some objection from the European group.”

MR. H. S. TOWN:—“Mr. Speaker, we did not object; on the contrary, we want it.”

* SRI A. KAMESWARA RAO:—“The introduction of the 48-hour week is a healthy measure as otherwise labourers will have to work the whole day and night and shed their blood for the sake of mill-owners. If you want to increase production, by all means do it. Have three shifts and step up production.

“I know as a matter of fact that handloom cloth and even mill cloth are being sent out of India. People purchase sarees here for Rs. 5 each and sell them in Singapore for Rs. 35 or Rs. 30. Not only that, such sarees are also being taken to Calcutta and sold there for Rs. 25.

“Licences in the past were given liberally, and very liberally at that, to relatives and friends of Textile Officers. I hear yarn of 40 counts costing Rs. 15-6-0 when it simply changes hands—the licensee is not a weaver and it is in a particular man's name—it gets into the blackmarket at Rs. 54. I believe the Hon. the Premier will take note of such things and devise measures to see that such things do not recur.

“The scheme of hand-spinning and weaving has been objected to as being a ‘bullock-cart scheme.’ I wish hon. Members had known how in Russia, China and other countries, they have been experimenting in hand-spinning and cottage industries and adapting them to their needs. All the mechanical appliances in the country were being used for the front; petrol was being used for war; oil was being put to a like use. Therefore, in the nook and corner of every village, they have been improving their industry and it is only because they were improving their economy on the basis of co-operative societies and village industries that they have been able to fight the war and win it. Regarding khadi, we have got the charka in the village and the weaver is there to weave the yarn into

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cloth and the cotton is there. All these factors being present, I believe our villages can become self-sufficient in the matter of cloth. I am also of the opinion and my experience of travel in three continents in my life tells me that the crises can be got over only by adopting drastic measures. If I were to be the Premier (Laughter) (An hon. Member: ‘God forbid the calamity’) corrupt and irresponsible officials—my hon. Friend Mr. Salam mentioned the case of such an officer—will be directly dealt with by me by handing them over to the Penitentiary for being locked up. Being guilty of sabotage, they deserve that treatment and I will justify it because a single act of theirs affects millions of poor and hungry people. I know the Hon. the Premier is kind-hearted and I hope they will not try hereafter to take advantage of his kindness. When the U.P. Scheme was published I read it and when the scheme of the present Government came into our hands, I compared them and I find our scheme to be better. I know that of all the Provinces in India we are having the ablest Government and it is our Premier alone that has given a better programme. I know, he is going to push through the scheme and I know the people are behind him and are going to help him because he feels for the poor and down-trodden people. I wish him all success and assure him that we youngsters of this Assembly will do all that we can to see that his scheme is put into force, so that no one will go without food or cloth in this Province.”

* MR. P. K. MOIDEEN KUTTY:—“Mr. Speaker, the anxiety of the Government for associating the people with the problem of cloth is, I am sorry to say, not visible at the top here also. It would have been better had there been a committee representing all parties in the Legislature at the top also to direct and control the department of cloth. That is a very serious gap in the scheme brought forward by the Government.

“Of all the Departments of Government in this Province, I am sorry to say that the Textile Department is the worst managed as far as the distribution side is concerned. I do not want to apportion the blame as between any set of officials; but this much I can say and that is, however well-intentioned the people at the top may be, I do not know much about them, those at the bottom are very bad. I here again wish to request the Hon. the Prime Minister, that these subordinate officials should not be allowed to have any more of the days that they had under the unforgettable regime of the Adviser bureaucracy. I wish to ask him to see if he cannot take immediate steps to replace some of those officers who had been responsible in the past for directing the policy of the Textile Department.

“So far as we the people of Malabar are concerned, we entirely depend for our supply of mill cloth on Cochin State. Personally I do not want mill cloth; but all the same our family needs have been met—I am ashamed to confess—by smuggling from Cochin State. I thought that was much better than currying favour with the officials and trying to influence them to get some cloth. After

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all a little of smuggling—not for one's own—is forgivable and 'necessity knows no law.' I request, therefore, that some strong measures be taken to ensure a fair distribution of the cloth whatever may be the quantity available. Whatever the Textile Commissioner may say with regard to the feasibility of rationing, I feel that we have sufficient stock of cloth to meet the needs of the people who want it. I invite the Hon. the Leader of the House or even the Textile Commissioner to come along with me in the evening and see if there is no cloth in the City of Madras. I will take him to shop after shop and show him that there is a large amount of cloth inside and underground. If only he has eyes to see and the will to do and act, he can book these people and set an example to the others against their unsocial conduct. Another feature of the blackmarketing which I found since I came to the City is . . ."

Mr. SPEAKER:—"I have already requested hon. Members not to touch on blackmarketing as it has been discussed in full earlier."

* Mr. P. K. MOIDEEN KUTTY:—"As I said, Sir, it is a new kind of blackmarketing which none of the previous speakers have referred to and I came to know of it only since coming to the City."

3 p.m. "If you go to buy some quantity of mill cloth from some shop where you know they are having mill cloth, the shop-keeper insists upon your buying some 8 yards of some unwanted rotton handloom cloth for a very high price. That is the peculiar sort of blackmarketing that is going on and if the Textile Commissioner wants to see things for himself he can take an evening round and see. I would request him to do it."

"With regard to shrouds, as far as Muslims are concerned, I would request him to place the quota in the hands of the authorities of the mosque so that they may distribute them whenever the need arises. The method I suggest can easily be adopted."

"In the matter of corruption, Mr. Town referred to the lack of civic consciousness among the people. I am sorry to say, if there is any community that has been responsible for this degradation, it is the community which has been ruling us for the last two hundred years. They are more responsible for our deplorable condition, and there is no use blaming us for the lack of civic sense."

"Another matter to which I want to refer is the supply of cloth to Muslim womenfolk; and in doing so I should not be misunderstood as speaking with a communal bias. As far as Malabar is concerned it is a well-known fact that for Muslim women no mill cloth is available. In this matter, their requirements are not very large. Even three-fourths of a yard or half a yard is sufficient for the particular type of jacket or blouse they wear. And as far as their cloth is concerned it is a peculiar variety to which they have been accustomed all along, and I would very strongly urge upon the Premier to see that that

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particular variety of cloth is sent to Malabar. In this connexion I want to tell him that we are not in need of those costly sarees which, I am told, are worn by the Muslim women in Andhradesa, so that he can send those sarees to Andhradesa and mill cloth to Malabar."

"Another thing to which I want to draw his attention is yarn. Here again, distribution of yarn is thoroughly hopeless and corrupt. The plight of a very large number of poor family of weavers who depend upon weaving for their living is simply deplorable. Several such instances can be quoted from Palghat taluk."

"Another thing I want to draw attention to is with regard to the appointment of additional staff for Textile department. When I complained of corruption in the department I was told the staff was completely inadequate to cope with the situation. In fact to some extent it is true. I will request the Premier to strengthen the staff in the district. Not only is the strength of the staff meagre, but its quality is rotten. Sub-Magistrates, who are none but glorified clerks, are put in charge of the district. Young boys with no experience are picked up from the streets, as it were, and appointed as clerks; and it is such people who run the whole show, so much so, we in Malabar get no mill cloth at all. With these remarks I resume my seat."

* Sri B. GOPALA REDDI:—"Mr. Speaker, Sir, as I read the Textile Commissioner's report on cloth I felt he was drawing a more gloomy picture than that on food. I thought the food situation would be worse from September to December next. But I see we begin the new year under happier auspices. I am afraid the cloth scarcity is going to be a prolonged one. It may continue to be the same in 1947, 1948 and even 1949. When the war was nearing its end we were given a rosy picture of the post-war period. Great expectations were aroused in people's mind; and great promises were made; and we were all looking forward for a glorious post-war period. War is over; Hitlers and Tojos were beaten; and to-day in this Presidency we are faced with a very bad situation both with regard to food and cloth. Perhaps if we do not take prompt measures, thousands of our people may die of hunger, and thousands may not get even a piece of cloth to cover their shame. Somehow post-war promises have failed and to-day we are given 10 ounces of rice per head and 10.8 yards of cloth per head. Thus we are confronted with a serious situation."

"As I read the report of the Textile Commissioner, I saw him repeatedly complaining of the bad treatment meted out to Madras by the Government of India and the Government of Bombay. In three places, he says, the Bombay Government have not co-operated with this Government. We were promised twelve thousand bales of mill cloth a month. But what happened. None of the consignments were up to the quota promised. The Textile Commissioner does not say how the Bombay Government ought to be made to feel to help the sister province suffering from cloth famine. Mr. Town complained about the Fact Finding Committee; and he

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said it was not a Fact Finding Committee, but a non-Fact Finding Committee. Somehow by a curious process the Fact Finding Committee says there are only three lakhs of looms in our Province; whereas actually there are half a million active looms. It is a serious mistake and it must be rectified. In Madras the quota of cloth per head is only 10.8 yards; while in Bombay it is 15 or more than that. All these things show the need for a central authority to direct the movement of goods from province to province. I feel, Sir, the lack of a National Government at the centre is responsible for this state. That alone can make provinces help one another. I want a fully representative national government to be in charge of the affairs of India at the present movement. (Hear, hear.) Previously the attainment of a national government was a political aspiration. To-day it has become an economic need, as Government alone are now supplying people with food, sugar, matches, salt, petrol, etc. Therefore, Sir, a national government at the centre and a truly representative government in the provinces are necessary. (Hear, hear.)

“Sir, I do not want to say anything about blackmarketing except one point. I do not know why Government should not come forward to fight blackmarketing. In Sind and the Punjab, I see, Government have appointed a senior civilian officer as anti-blackmarketing officer aided by a special branch of police. Why not do it here also? A senior Deputy Superintendent of Police with a large number of police people may be posted to see that there is no hoarding, blackmarketing and corruption. (Sri R. Raghava Menon: ‘Thousands of officers are needed.’) If that is so, Government should do it.

“Again, Sir, I want Government to take full advantage of the present situation and give a fillip to co-operative societies. I am sure the Government are already doing it. I want them to make a greater drive. Our Muslim friends dub the village scheme now put forward as communal. Let our Muslim friends have no misgivings about them. In the distribution of cloth, co-operative societies should play a great part. At present there are a chain of intermediaries between the time the cloth or yarn leaves the mill and reaches the consumer or the handloom weaver as the case may be. There are so many intermediaries that some of their names I can’t remember. I do not know how the mechanism is operated. I doubt whether so many intermediaries are necessary. Even if they are necessary, they should be replaced by co-operative societies.

3-15 p.m. “Sir, I am told that for prosecuting a person who disobeys the control order, the previous sanction of the Textile Commissioner is needed. I think I am right. When a man is defying a control order, he must be dealt with by the local District Superintendent of Police or the local Inspector of Police instead of referring the matter to the Textile Commissioner. I think it is a very curious process. The police also must be invested with all those powers that they are having in respect of other crimes. I am

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sure the Textile Commissioner will have all these powers delegated to the District Superintendents of Police.

“With regard to dyeing, Sir, I have a very serious complaint to make. I think Mr. Town also spoke about it. In my own district of Nellore, there are three centres—Sulurpet, Nayudupeta and Venkatagiri. When cloth is being sent to our district, it is debited to our district. A lot of it goes to the dyers. They dye it and, of course, they sell it at an exorbitant rate, and they send it on to the neighbouring districts of Cuddapah and Chittoor and even to distant places like Bezwada. A lot of dyed cloth is being sent from Nellore to other districts, and we do not get any benefit out of it. To that extent, Nellore quota must be increased. They may have an estimate of this prepared so that the quota may be replenished to the Nellore district.

“With regard to price also—I do not know who is responsible for it—I have to make a complaint. For a bale of cloth of 1,500 yards, they are allowed a ceiling price of Rs. 400, while really it costs not more than Rs. 80. I do not know whether the Madras Textile Officer is responsible for it or the Government of India. It is a very serious thing, Sir, that while it costs Rs. 80, you allow Rs. 400 and there is a clear margin of Rs. 320. So much of margin must not be allowed to these people whose profession is dyeing and I suppose it will be stopped.”

III.—RESOLUTION OF CONDOLENCE ON THE DEATH OF SRI T. N. RAMAKRISHNA REDDI.

MR. SPEAKER:—“I have to impart to the House a very sad news. Mr. T. N. Ramakrishna Reddi, a member of this Assembly who represented the Madanapalle, General (Rural) Constituency, died to-day at 1-30 p.m. The Hon. the Premier will now move the condolence resolution.”

THE HON. SRI T. PRAKASAM:—“Mr. Speaker, Sir, I move—

‘This House places on record its deep sense of sorrow at the demise of Sri T. N. Ramakrishna Reddi and conveys its sense of sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.’

“Sir, this news is sudden and stunning. The late Mr. Ramakrishna Reddi had been attending the session from the beginning. A few days back, I saw him as he was walking along the corridor of the Council Chamber. Then I felt he looked very weak. I accosted him, but I did not know that his end was so near. He had been taken to the nursing home, where I expected that he was progressing, and that he was out of danger. To-day, all of a sudden this news has come. He was one of those who had been working for the country with all the devotion. He was a man of great experience and learning and devotion to the country’s cause without any regard for the other considerations that ordinariness prevailed among the people of the country. He was a very energetic man. When he was in jail six years back, he was so bad, and we all felt that he ought not to have courted imprisonment. Well, he continued in the same condition having

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complaints. I am afraid there was some trouble for him even in those days. He was a very careful man, and had been taking particular care of his health in every respect. He was doing enormous work which he was not physically fit to undertake. He was a great patriot and a great member of our own House. That he should have passed away at this juncture is a matter of great regret. We here owe a duty to pay our homage to the departed soul and pray for the peace of his soul. Body is bound to pass away in the case of every one of us. But the soul is a permanent thing according to all laws of humanity, according to all creeds. Therefore we may pray for the rest of his soul, and send our condolences, through you, Sir, to the members of the bereaved family."

* B. POCKER SAHIB BAHADUR:—"With profound sorrow, I, on behalf of my party, associate myself with what has been said by the Hon. the Premier. Though I did not come in close contact with him while he was alive, yet from what I have heard of him, I know that he devoted his life to the public cause. Myself and my party express our deep sorrow on his death, and beg to convey our condolences to the members of the bereaved family."

* MR. H. S. TOWN:—"Sir, on behalf of the European group, I wish to associate myself with this resolution of condolence at the death of a member of this House and with the remarks made by the Hon. the Premier."

* SRI V. I. MUNISWAMI PILLAI:—"Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is a matter of great regret to know just now the demise of Sri Ramakrishna Reddi. On behalf of the Harijan members of this House, I would like to associate myself with the feelings expressed by the Hon. the Prime Minister. Sir, as a member of the old Assembly, I know his various activities especially in the field of agriculture and veterinary development. Several conferences he had organized and had made the departments I have mentioned more active and lively. It so happened that I was for more than seven months in jail along with Mr. Ramakrishna Reddi. I have found him, Sir, to be a man of sterling character. He had a lot of experience in the matter of local administration, and I heard from very prominent friends that the Board of which he happened to be the President, was one that was ideal. It is a matter of great regret that a man of this type should be cut off in his early age. I pray, Sir, that the Almighty may allow his soul to rest in peace."

* SRI P. NATESAN:—"I wish to associate myself with the sentiments expressed by the Hon. the Premier and other colleagues in this House. I have known Mr. Ramakrishna Reddi for some years. He was a member of the Justice Party until he joined the Congress. Ever since he joined the Congress, he used to take very active interest in Congress politics. It is only a few days ago I met him here and had a long chat with him. It is really unfortunate and surprising that he should have been snatched away from us so soon. I and my group associate ourselves with the sentiments expressed by the Hon. the Prime Minister and I

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request you to convey our sorrow to the members of the bereaved family."

* SRI KALA VENKATA RAO:—"Sir, Almighty God seems to be harsh towards the members of the Legislative Assembly from the Chittoor district. Only recently we lost one of the best workers of the district in the death of Sri T. K. T. Tatachariar. Again comes the sad news that our good friend Mr. Ramakrishna Reddi of the same district died to-day in a nursing home in this City of Madras. He has died in harness. He came here for this meeting, and even before we could adjourn, he is no more. Mr. Ramakrishna Reddi, though he belonged to the Justice Party, was an Independent. As an Independent, he represented the Rayalaseema in the Central Assembly for a term. Later on he joined the Congress, and I had very good personal contact with him. He worked very well for the Andhra Province. He had been quite genial in temperament, very sincere in his opinions, and steadfast in his loyal support to the Congress. He was recently elected as the Vice-President of the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee, and that shows the amount of confidence that the workers of Andhra have got in him. It is hardly 48 hours since we last saw him, and to-day we do not see him any more. I hope, Sir, that his soul will rest in peace, and that the cause that he espoused will prosper, as that alone will satisfy him."

* SRI R. RAGHAVA MENON:—"It only day before yesterday that I saw Mr. Ramakrishna Reddi in the nursing home, and he promised he would be attending this Assembly yesterday itself. But to-day news has come that he is no more. But we cannot help it. It is God's will. The loss that his untimely demise has caused is very great. He was a pillar of the party, and he had been a very good patriot not only for his district, but for the whole Province. He was an influential man using his influence for the benefit of the people, and a true leader of men. His demise is certainly a loss not only for the party but also for the whole Presidency. With these few words, I associate myself with the remarks made by the members here. I hope we will try to be as good and patriotic as he had been. Let his soul rest in eternal peace."

SRI R. VENKATA REDDI:—"Mr. Speaker, Sir, the sorrowful news conveyed to the House has come to me as a shock, and it is all the more so when he is personally known to me. Especially so soon after the death of another friend of mine, to lose the most useful, the most energetic and the most patriotic among the lot is a great loss. His loss is not only to the district, but also to the Province. It was but a few days ago that he took ill while attending the sessions of this House, and it was only recently that he entered a nursing home in Royapettah. The next day, I was told that it was only a reaction due to an injection that was administered and that he was recovering from it. I had really no idea that the end was so near, and I could only think that it was the mysterious hand of God that was laid on one of my respected and revered friends. I knew Sri T. N. Ramakrishna Reddi from

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my earliest political life. He had been a senior in the Bar and he was a very promising and rising one at that. But very early in life, he gave up his practice and he was taking great interest in public life. In the first instance, he was elected to the Central Legislative Assembly, where, as a member of the Congress Party, he did very useful work. Ever since he joined the Congress Party, he was the moving spirit in the party in our district and in the whole Province he has earned a very good name as being a patriot and a very good worker in the Congress Party. I am unable to find words to express my sorrow, having moved so closely with him in the party as elsewhere and coming from the same division. I have nothing more to say, and I associate myself with the sentiments expressed by the Leader and other members in this House."

* N. MUHAMMAD ANWAR SAHIB BAHADUR:—"Mr. Speaker, Sir, death has laid its icy hand on a man of considerable influence and affluence. I have known him in many capacities, as a member of the Central Legislative Assembly, and as the President of the District Board of Chittoor. He was a *paterfamilias* for his kith and kin and I am now overpowered by a reminiscent mood: last time when I was enjoying his hospitality—that was six months ago—hospitality which was overflowing with milk and honey, literally, it was an irony that put in my mouth certain words of Shakespeare, and unfortunately I never knew it would come so soon. In the course of that intellectual entertainment, I was reminded of the classic words of Shakespeare:—

'Of all the wonders that I yet have seen,
It seems to me most strange that men should fear death;
Seeing that death is a necessary end,
Will come when it will come.'

"To which he replied, with instantaneity, in the language of Shakespeare:

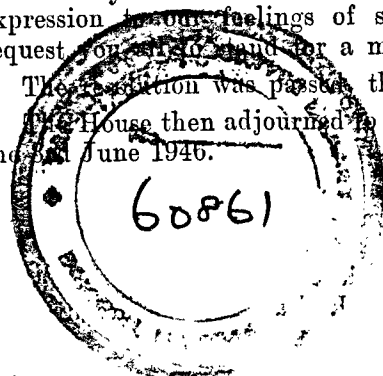
'Cowards die many times before their death,
The valiant never tastes of death but once.'

"Thus he has responded to the last call of valour! (Pause)—
A gentleman *par excellence*."

MR. SPEAKER:—"I wish to associate myself with the sentiments expressed by the members. I know the late Sri T. N. Ramakrishna Reddi very well. He was my well-wisher. Only last week he had taken the oath of allegiance here. He was suddenly taken away from us. The news of his death came upon us so suddenly that we are all shocked and we are unable to give expression to our feelings of sorrow. Without more words, I request you to stand for a minute."

The resolution was passed, the whole House standing.

The House then adjourned to meet again at 11 a.m. on Monday, the 3rd June 1946.



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