CHAPTER III
PARTITION AND THEREAFTER

The year 1947 witnessed a new epoch in the food history of India. The country became independent and was split up into two on August 15, 1947. Pakistan was carved out of the then existing provinces of North West Frontier, Sind, Western part of Punjab, Sylhet District of Assam, and a part of Bengal. As a result of partition, the economy of the country, which was a homogeneous unit, was disrupted. We shall examine in this Chapter the food position as a result of partition in the period that followed, till the beginning of 1968.

AREA AND PRODUCTION

Table XII gives details of the economic position of India and Pakistan in the field of agriculture. Figures from items 1 to 3 are not available for Pakistan States, but that does not make much of a difference for our comparative study, since practically all the prince states came over to India. The comparison, however, becomes a little difficult when we consider the fact that most of the non-reporting areas lay in these states and the Indian figures were as a result underestimated.

The total area of undivided India was 672.8 million acres. India got 562.6 million acres or nearly 83.6 per cent of the total leaving only 16.4 per cent for Pakistan. At the time of partition, the total population of India and Pakistan was estimated at 417 millions. After


also see C.N. Vakil, Economic Consequences of Divided India, 1950, p. 69. This leaves for Pakistan a population of 80 millions which is obviously wrong, as Pakistan's population according to the 1951 Census was only 66 millions. Some discrepancy may be due to the movement of refugees after 1947. We have, however, during all this discussion accepted the population ratio between Indian Union and Pakistan as 80.2 and 19.8.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-Pakistan Total(a)</th>
<th>Percentage of India.</th>
<th>(1)</th>
<th>(2)</th>
<th>(3)</th>
<th>(4)</th>
<th>(5)</th>
<th>(6)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indian Provinces</td>
<td>States</td>
<td>Indian Provinces</td>
<td>of Union.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>672.8</td>
<td>402.3</td>
<td>134.4</td>
<td>562.6</td>
<td>110.8</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87.3</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>82.10</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>94</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>122.6</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>93.0</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>76</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68.6</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>55.04</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>86</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79.6</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>60.8</td>
<td>241.9</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>84.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66.9</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>71</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>76.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>219.0*</td>
<td>131.5</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>177.9</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>61</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Wheat</td>
<td>(b) Rice</td>
<td>(c) Cotton</td>
<td>(d) Jute</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.8*</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80.7*</td>
<td>58.7</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.7*</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>77.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3*</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"Includes Pakistan States.

(a) Totals for the Indian Union under column 4 are not comparable. They are from Abstract of Agricultural Statistics—1950, while remaining data are from Estimates of Area and Yield of Principal Crops in Undivided India—1936–37 to 1945–46, June 1946. Column 1 is the total of 4 and 5.

Partition it was 337 million for India or nearly 80.2 per cent of the total. The area between the two countries was thus divided practically in the same ratio as were their respective populations. But, for a correct appraisal of the agricultural position of the country, it is necessary to consider also the factors like the irrigated area, the area actually under cultivation and such lands which can be brought under cultivation.
NET AREA SOWN AND AREA UNDER FOOD - Out of a total net sown area of 286.6 million acres, the share of Pakistan was hardly 13.6 per cent which may be increased by another 2 or 3 per cent to account for the Pakistan States. The total was accordingly not more than 18 per cent and even in the matter of total area under food crops, Pakistan did not get more than 19 per cent. The position of Pakistan would thus seem to be in no way better than that of India in so far as area statistics are concerned.

IRRIGATED AREAS - Pakistan's immediate gain, however, was that she acquired 21.4 per cent of the double cropped area and 28 per cent of the irrigated area. This is the only factor which is said to be responsible for dislocating the food economy of India. But potential resources of India are more than sufficient to make up the loss, while most of them have already been fully tapped in Pakistan. The three proposed projects in that country - the Walsak Multipurpose, the Thal, and the Lower Sind Barrage - are capable of adding only 3 million acres to the existing 17 million acres of canal irrigated areas. The projects in India, on the other hand, when fully developed, are likely to raise the irrigated area to more than 100 million acres against 47.4 million acres at the time of partition.

CULTIVABLE AREAS - The area of cultivable land in Pakistan is not much. Though we cannot lay our hands on any reliable data in this regard, available facts and figures are sufficient to prove our contention that the possibilities of extensive cultivation there, are very meagre. In the case of India, on the other hand, as worked out by us in Chapter VI dealing with Extensive Cultivation, we have as much as another 70 million acres that can be added to the existing cropped area.

FOOD PRODUCTION - An analysis of the total production of cereals will practically give us the same picture as depicted above. The Advisory Board of the Indian (then Imperial) Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) estimated the average production of cereals in undivided India at 60 million tons. The share of the two dominions according to the Council, was in the ratio of 60 and 40 on the basis of average production figures. This ratio again tallies with that of the division of population and area between the two countries.

The consumption of cereals is also appreciably higher in Pakistan. More than 90 per cent of the population there being rural, the areas which went over to Pakistan were those which consumed the maximum quantity of rice and wheat in the United India. This is confirmed if we take the net availability of these commodities as equal to the actual consumption levels in the areas concerned.

INTEGRATION OF STATES

The study of agricultural economy in India before and after partition would be incomplete without a proper appreciation of the position in the princely States. At the time of partition, two powerful forces were at play, pulling in opposite directions. One was the disruptive force of communal exclusiveness which led to the secession from India of certain territories and their constitution into an independent State. The other was the revitalizing and uniting force of enlightened mutual interests in a free and resurgent India which swept away the barriers that separated the Indian States which were separated the Indian States and Provinces.

1. Quoted by S. Thirumalai, Post War Agricultural Problems and Policies in India, p. 55.
India was, as we have seen, a loser in the matter of irrigated and double cropped areas in so far as the provinces were concerned. We have now to see how far this loss was made good by the integration of "Princely India". The position with regard to area and population of States before and after partition is given in Table XIII.

Table XIII

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>United India</th>
<th>Indian Union</th>
<th>Pakistan</th>
<th>Total States</th>
<th>Indian States</th>
<th>Pakistan States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area</td>
<td>(thousand square miles)</td>
<td>1381.4</td>
<td>1221.1</td>
<td>360.3</td>
<td>715.9</td>
<td>507.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>(in millions)</td>
<td>1941</td>
<td>369.0</td>
<td>316.9</td>
<td>70.1</td>
<td>93.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Before partition, the total area of States was 45 per cent of undivided India with only 24 per cent population. A major portion of these States came over to India so that after partition, they constituted as much as 48 per cent of the area of the Indian Union while their share of the population was only 28 per cent. The contribution of these States to the net area seen was, however, only 25 per cent of the total (60.8 million acres in a total of 241.9 million - Table XII).

It is true that much of the area in the States was underdeveloped, but it is difficult to believe that the percentage of uncultivated area was so high. A study of the reporting and non-reporting areas in the country, as given in Table XIV, justifies these doubts.
### TABLE XIV

**STATISTICS OF ACREAGE IN INDIA (In million acres)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reporting</th>
<th>Estimation Based on complete</th>
<th>Non-Reporting</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Temporarily Surveyed</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settled Provinces Un-surveyed</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanently Surveyed</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settled Provinces Un-surveyed</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian States Surveyed</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Un-surveyed</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>135(a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Obtained by substraction from the total area.
(b) As given in Census of India, Paper No 2.

The table shows that out of a total of 761 million acres, returns from not more than 50 per cent (377 million acres) of the area were based on complete enumeration. The remaining 50 per cent had as much as 324 million acres or 26 per cent of the Union and 60 per cent of the States areas as non-reporting. This in other words means that land utilization returns were available from only 40 per cent of the area of Indian States. Unclassified area in the Indian Union in 1949-50 was estimated at 196.2 million acres. Out of this 182.5 million acres (92.7 per cent) was in the States.

As against this, the only two States of any consequence which went over to Pakistan were Bahawalpur and Khairpur, a major portion of which was reporting. In the light of these facts the view that the integration of States added to the responsibility of the Indian Union in the matter of food supply sounds utterly erroneous. Here such discrepancies are now coming to light with the availability of improved data and the elimination of factors which were responsible.

1. Agricultural Situation in India, Vol V, No 1, April 1950, p. 32.
for under-estimation. Rajasthan, for example, has shown an increase of 15.3 million acres in the net area sown from 1948-49 to 1950-51. There was again a gap of the order of 53 million acres in the total area of the State according to the Surveyor General and the Village papers. This gap in the year 1950-51 was reduced to a mere 7 million acres. Area under food alone increased by 7.2 million acres in 1953-54 over that of 1949-50. The Planning Commission in their Progress Report have accepted that this is mainly due to improved statistical coverage since 1949-50. This is only one instance. The same is true in respect of other States which came over to India.

This was not all; even the yield per acre was under-estimated to a great extent in these areas. Table XV gives the estimated average yields per acre of cereals (reporting areas only), separately in the Provinces and States for the years 1936-37 to 1947-48.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Provinces</th>
<th>States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yield in lb per acre</td>
<td>Percentage Decrease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936-39</td>
<td>651</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939-42</td>
<td>629</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942-45</td>
<td>640</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945-48</td>
<td>594</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the areas in the States were practically interwoven with those of the Provinces, it seems rather incredible that the yield per acre fell by 41 per cent in the States as against 9 per cent in the Provinces during the course of a decade. There is nothing to show


2. Adapted from Estimates of Area and Yield of Principal Crops in India 1936-40, April 1948, and Agricultural Situations in India for 1948-49.
that the soil in the States is much inferior to that of the Provinces. But even if this hypothesis is accepted, this alone cannot explain such a heavy fall in the average yield in the States.

Underestimation of the area sown in the States and the yield therefrom gave a wrong notion of the food position in the country. Otherwise it does not stand to reason that 43 per cent of the land area could not feed even 28 per cent of the population.

This analysis helps us to understand two important points. Firstly, in the absence of reliable data from the State areas, it is not correct to assume that India suffered on the food front as a result of partition. Secondly, it would seem quite fallacious to think that the States were a liability on India in the matter of food.

DISTURBANCES AND FOOD

From the above discussion we can safely conclude that as a result of partition, there was no worsening of the food situation in the country in relation to its population. But communal disturbances, resulting in the movement of as many as 18 million people on both sides of the border, disrupted the economy of the country as a whole. There was a dislocation in occupations. Many of the agriculturist refugees from Lyallpur and Montgomery Districts of the Punjab, who had well irrigated lands in West Pakistan, felt disgruntled when suitable lands could not be made available to them immediately. There was, therefore, a tendency on the part of many to settle in urban areas.

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1. Foodgrains Investigation Committee report, 1950, pointed out that the States used to export considerable quantities of rice before Partition, but no exports were made in 1948 and 1949 due to the failure of procurement.

2. According to the estimate of A. Nevett (Too Many of Us?, 1952, p. 147) the figure is 16 million.
Most of the land, previously cultivated by Muslims, thus remained uncultivated. There was, in fact, a noticeable increase in the area of fallow land since the pre-war period. This may be attributed to factors like restrictions on the cultivation of commercial crops, dislocation in normal production caused by large scale movement of refugees after partition, unsettled conditions of tenure following the several reforms, shortage of credit and supplies and adverse seasonal conditions. Table XVI gives the area under all cereals during the three years 1946–47 to 1948–49 and under wheat as well as other kharif and rabi cereals separately.

**TABLE XVI**

**AREA UNDER CEREALS 1946–1949.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>All cereals</th>
<th>Wheat</th>
<th>Kharif cereals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1946–47</td>
<td>167.4</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947–48</td>
<td>169.0</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948–49</td>
<td>167.7</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Small Milletsonly.

The area under cereals fell from 167.4 million acres in 1946–47 to 169.0 million acres in 1947–48. While the total area under cereals fell by 16.4 million acres in the post-partition year, the small millets also suffered a reduction of nearly 5.5 million acres. The fact that the wheat acreage for 1948–49 had not fully recovered shows that the conditions had not returned to normal throughout the year 1948. The food shortage thus felt was purely temporary and was the result of dislocation and adverse seasons.

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2. Table XVI is from Indian Agricultural Statistics, 1947–48 and 1948–49, Vol. II, p. 17. The data for the year 1947–48 and onwards have now been revised by the Directorate of Economics in their recent publication “Abstract of Agricultural Statistics, India, 1952”. We have used the old data to compare with the year 1946–47.

3. As there was an increase in the area under some other foodgrains, total decrease was less than undergone by kharif grains and wheat.
INCREDIBLE RATIONING COMMITMENTS

The situation was complicated in so far as government commitments increased tremendously in 1947. Table XVII gives details about the population under rationing in India.

TABLE XVII
POPULATION UNDER RATIONING 1943-47

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Rationed Population</th>
<th>Non-Rationed Population</th>
<th>Controlled Distribution</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statutory</td>
<td>Non-Statutory</td>
<td>In Thousands</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 Mar 43</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 Mar 44</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>24,559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 Mar 45</td>
<td>36,702</td>
<td>10,367</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>47,068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 Mar 46</td>
<td>42,022</td>
<td>7,537</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>49,559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Mar 47</td>
<td>82,939</td>
<td>77,287</td>
<td>13,465</td>
<td>146,711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Dec 47</td>
<td>84,176</td>
<td>70,913</td>
<td>22,783</td>
<td>177,872</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Population under rationing swelled up from 1.6 million in 1943 to 148.7 million in Mar 1947. After Independence, population under statutory rationing went up by about 1.3 million though there was an overall decrease in the rationed population because of a fall in the non-statutory area. But the government commitments were enhanced by an increase in the area under statutory rationing, as an assured supply of foodgrains was required to be issued to every ration card holder, in such areas.

The situation could only be tackled by the Government either by stepping up the food procurements or by importing it from abroad. World food situation in 1947 was not very bright. The balance of payment 1.


2. World wheat crop (excluding U.S.R) in 1947 was 127.5 million tons as compared to 139.0 million in 1946 and 142.7 million in 1948. Similar was the position of rice. Its production in 1947 for the same territory stood at 142.9 million tons as against 151.6 million in 1946. Its production even in 1946 was only 138.1 million tons (Food Situation in India 1939-43, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, 1954, pp. 168-69).
position was also adverse. There was an acute shortage of dollars, with the result that food imports fell to 2.6 million tons in 1947-48 from 3.1 million tons in 1946-47.

The procurement position was not better either. Figures for the three years 1946 to 1948 were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Procurement (thousand tons)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>3.091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>2.650</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With a fall in procurements, a difficult import situation and an increase in the commitments, the Government was in a very tight corner.

Closing stocks for the year 1947 - 645 thousand tons were the least held in the entire period of rationing.

DECONTROL

Against the serious situation which faced the Government, popular opinion in the country, was hostile to the imposition and continuance of controls. The campaign against them had, in fact, been launched much earlier by Mahatma Gandhi. Early in 1947 while unfolding his eight-point programme to check the impending food crisis, he pointed out that:

"Just as panic is the surest way to defeat so also will be the case when there is widespread distress and prompt action is not taken. Above all, blackmarketing and dishonesty should disappear altogether and willing co-operation between all parties should be the order of the day in so far as this crisis is concerned."

Again, during the course of his prayer meeting in November 1947, he declared,

"This food control is one of the vicious legacies of the last world war ... Today, thank God, the monsoons have not failed us. There is, therefore, no real scarcity of food. There are, enough cereals, pulses and oil seeds in the villages of India."

It was decided on December 10, 1947, to embark on a policy of partial decontrol as recommended by the Foodgrains Policy Committee, 1946, which was set up for the purpose on September 27, 1947. The result was that the population under rationing came down from 147.9 million, just before the introduction of decontrol policy in December, 1947, to as low as figure as 71.5 million by the end of September, 1948. An interesting point to note in this connection is that these controls were done away with in a defeatist attitude. When a country is under a controlled economy for a number of years, the success of such an experiment depends upon the ability of the Government to make available sufficient supplies to the non-producers. The stocks with the Government at that time were the least in the rationing history of the country. The necessary concomitants were thus conspicuous by their absence. Controls, had as they were, could not be relaxed in such an unceremonial fashion.

The country was suffering from a shortage psychology and controls had become a vital factor in her economy. Political and communal disturbances, administrative chaos and allied factors added fuel to the fire. As a result of an overburdened and ill-adjusted transport system, hoarding and black marketing, the prices rose sharply. These disruptive forces gained strength, because of the inability of the Government to meet the requirements of even those areas which normally depended upon the "marketable surplus". The vicious circle thus started gained momentum and the Government had soon to retrace its

1. There are opinions like that of K. V. Sovani (Post-War Inflation in India - A Survey, 1948, p. 42) according to whom decontrol was launched in most favourable circumstances.

2. Cf., Sovani, Ibid., p. 54.
The immediate result of decontrol was increased prices. The wholesale price index in the case of food articles shot up from 296.3 in September 1947 to 396.6 in September 1948. This rise of 34 per cent in the case of food prices threw the Government into panic and the situation demanded immediate remedy. Controls were, therefore, reimposed in September 1948.

**Intensification of Controls** - The Government remained wedded to the policy of controls though the food situation in the country had become practically normal in 1949-50. Instead of bringing about any orderly reduction in their rationing commitments, the Central Government assumed the supreme responsibility of feeding the deficit areas as well as a majority of non-producers. Rationed population went up from 30.4 million at the end of 1948 to 118.6 million in 1949 and 124.8 million in 1950.

A Bonus Scheme was introduced on January 1, 1948, in order to encourage production and procurement. The scheme, which was originally restricted to the former provinces and centrally administered areas was extended to the whole of India with effect from October 1, 1948.

1. Even those who supported the then decontrol policy observed, "It has been decided upon, on sound grounds or its own intrinsic merits than an account of the fact that previous controls have not only failed to solve the deepening production and inflation crises but also came perilously near the brink." (A.N. Chatterji, *Shakti*, p. 59).


The policy of the Government was also made clear in the letter of the Chairman, Foodgrains Procurement Committee, while forwarding the report to the Minister for Food and Agriculture.

3. Reviewing the food situation in 1950, the Food Minister said in the Parliament that "the year 1950 opened with an optimistic outlook for the food position in the country. The Kharif harvest that had begun arriving in the market since November 1949 was reported to be good and the prospects of Rabi crops were believed to be satisfactory." The findings were supported by the yields in that year (The Ministry of Food and Agriculture (Food) Report for the year 1950-51, p. 1).
The bonus allowed under the scheme was Rs. 4/- per maund for all foodgrains procured in a state and another 8 annas per maund on exports made to other states. The utility of the scheme was, however, questioned by the Foodgrains Investigation Committee in whose view it was "just easy money" for the state, and practically one more addition to their revenues. It was revised from January 1, 1951, and finally abolished on January 1, 1952.

The years 1949 and 1950 also saw the setting up of three Committees to find out the possibility of increasing procurements, improving rationing system and adding to the existing food supplies by utilizing non-cereals. Nothing tangible could, however, be achieved, and no reduction in imports of food was recorded.

PROCUREMENT UNRELATED TO PRODUCTION

The problem facing the Government was to establish a relation between the amount of foodgrains procured and their production at home. In fact, any increase in the production as a result of the Grow More Food Campaign or the favourable weather was rarely reflected in increased procurements.

The production of foodgrains in 1950, for instance, touched the peak figure of 46.02 million tons as against 43.5 million tons during the previous year. The procurement of foodgrains, on the other hand, -


2. The total amounts paid under the scheme for the financial years 1948-49, 1949-50, 1950-51 and 1951-52 were Rs. 4,71, 5,65, 12,0 and 3,6 crores respectively. (Annual Reports of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture for the years 1950-51 and 1951-52, pp. 11 and 14 respectively).

3. Foodgrains Procurement Committee - set up on February 9, 1950; Foodgrains Investigation Committee - set up on August 27, 1949; and Subsidiary Foodgrains Committee.
increased only by 2 lakh tons. Appendix IV gives an interesting study of the food position in the country during 1949-50 on the basis of production and consumption levels. There was an unprocured surplus which equalled approximately total food imports. Imports thus remained independent of increase or decrease in the production of foodgrains at home. This is explicit from a study of Table XVIII as well as the 1949 Policy Statement of the Government which reads,

"These latter commitments (for rationing) are met to a very large extent from imported grains. The quantity of imports is, therefore, not related to the total production of the country or any all-India production and consumption figures but it is based on the specific demands of deficit provinces and states for meeting their rationing commitments for a specific number of persons."

TABLE XVIII
INTERRELATION OF PRODUCTION, RATIONING, COMMITMENTS, PROCUREMENT AND IMPORTS

| Year | Population under rationing (Millions) | Production | Procurement | Percentage of Imports | Total offtake | Procurement & Import | Total
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>144.7</td>
<td>42,844</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>6.41</td>
<td>7.667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>80.6</td>
<td>49,741</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>5.49</td>
<td>8.130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>119.6</td>
<td>63,814</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>6.09</td>
<td>7.602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>124.5</td>
<td>66,016</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>6.75</td>
<td>7.584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>123.0</td>
<td>61,744</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>4.73</td>
<td>6.50</td>
<td>7.283</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figures relate to the population under rationing on December 31 of each year, except for 1947, in which case the date is December 1, 1947.

Mr. K. N. Mindai, as Food Minister, went to the extent of saying that even self-sufficiency did not mean cessation of imports. This

3. "There is some confusion in the public mind about self-sufficiency. From the point of view of the campaign self-sufficiency implies growing 4.8 million tons of additional foodgrains by March 1951. The politicians and the public no doubt meant by it cessation of imports. Two different things were intended to mean the same thing." (Our Food Objectives, Illustrated Weekly, August 12, 1951).
shows how, by perverted reasoning, the production in the country was not allowed to play any part in the controlled economy of the country.

MARKETABLE SURPLUS

That procurement was not keeping pace with production can also be proved from another angle. We have already referred to the remarks made by Dr. Rajender Prasad in Chapter II about "marketable surplus". This in the normal pre-war days used to be of the order of 40 per cent in the case of rice and 55 per cent in the case of wheat. It would on the other hand be seen from Table XVIII (column 5) that procurement never exceeded the minimum of even 10 per cent while the population under rationing remained in the neighbourhood of 20 per cent.

It is at times argued that during these years, the consumption of foodgrains among the rural people increased as a result of the relative prosperity enjoyed by them. But as discussed in Chapter XIV, there are very little chances of our cultivator increasing his cereal consumption. The results of Diet surveys conducted by the Indian Council of Medical Research for the period 1935-46 also confirm that the consumption of cereals in the rural areas remained practically the same before and after 1944.

1. Mr. Subramaniam had himself said a year earlier (Freedom from Foreign Bread, p. 6) that "we shall make India self-sufficient in the end of 1961 so that we may be independent of foreign imports."

2. Reports on the Marketing of Rice (p. 7) and Wheat (p. 16), op. cit.; according to Dr. J. C. Desai (The Standard of Living in India and Pakistan - 1921-32 to 1940-41, 1953, p. 140) gross village retention had been 55.6 per cent in the case of rice and 49.3 per cent for wheat.


4. A case is made out by some writers on the basis of the results of these surveys that there was an increase in the food consumption in the rural areas of Punjab, West Bengal and Hyderabad. This is, however, an erroneous view in the sense that the surveys in the different areas were conducted among different categories of people at different places even though in the same state. Such an analysis cannot depict a correct picture of the changes in the consumption levels.
As man, as 146 surveys were carried out before 1944 and 68 after 1944. An analysis of the data revealed that the daily consumption per person was 17.48 ounces before 1944 and 17.58 ounces after 1944 in the rural areas. Against this there was a fall of more than 3 ounces per person per day in the case of urban areas. These percentages may not be representative of the country as a whole, nevertheless they can be taken as a sufficient guide.

Reverting to our point, it is possible that the rural population, owing to increased prosperity, switched over to the consumption of fine grains. But factors like urbanization and the recruitment of villagers in the army also released some of the foodgrains from the villages. Taking all these factors into account, it is reasonable to suppose that something like 40 per cent of the total production of rice and wheat should have come up for the consumption of non-producers. Even if 10 per cent out of this was retained for the rural non-producers, the balance could have been sufficient to meet the rationing commitments.

Procurement of foodgrains could not, however, reach the required levels. Firstly, because the pricing policy followed by the Government was faulty, while agricultural prices and subsidy schemes in other countries were so arranged as to pay higher prices on local production, the position in India was just the reverse. Higher prices were being paid for the imported food and the home producer was asked to part with his produce at a much lower price. The Foodgrains Investigation Committee also refers to the widespread dissatisfaction and discontentment among the producers of those rural areas which were under statutory rationing. The produce of each cultivator was assessed in such areas and all grain beyond his requirement was taken away by the State.

1. Quoted by the National Sample Survey - General Report No 1, p. 74.
The grain supplied to the partial producer was not, however, the one
ported by his neighbour (the surplus producer) but much of an inferior
good quality as better quality grain was reserved for the urban areas. The
issue prices along with this were higher than the procurement ones by a
rupee or two per maund.

Secondly, the cultivator was subjected to many other unnecessary
embarrassments. The Allahabad High Court held that the UP Foodgrains
Procurement Order, 1948, went beyond the powers conferred by the
Central Government. The result of all this was that the position
deteriorated further and imports instead of showing a fall went up.

The solution thus lay either in stepping up procurement or in
reducing commitments. The government failed to pursue either course.
They were unable to procure more food or abolish rationing. Such an
action required boldness and imagination which the government unfor-
tunately lacked at the time.

THE PLANNING COMMISSION AND FOOD POLICY

The Planning Commission also could not find out the real cause
of increasing food imports during the war and post-war period. It
recommended that food controls should be continued for the duration of
the plan period and that imports should continue even if the target of
7.6 million tons of additional production was achieved. The Commission
could never think in terms of self-sufficiency for India. Although it

1. The judgement delivered by Aggarwal and Chaturvedi, the Hindustan
Times, February 13, 1953.

2. This was conceded even by Mr. C.D. Deshmukh, Finance Minister during
the course of a press statement on November 30, 1951, when he said
"It was not so much the question of increasing the supply of food-
gains but it was getting hold of the required quantity of grains to
meet the rationing commitments through procurement. A large number
of people, many times more than they actually needed." Similarly
Dr. Madan Mohan Singh, the then Deputy Economic and Statistical Adviser
said, "The extent to which India would be able to do away with imports
of foodgrains from abroad, would depend largely, on an increase in
the procurable surplus."
stressed importance to the assessment of trends in production and consumption, these two factors were totally ignored in its final policy. It was stated that,

"From a practical point of view, it is of no great significance whether food production is or is not higher than is shown by the official data. What matters for practical purposes is that over the last six or seven years the country had imported on an average about three million tons of foodgrains."

It was thus calculated that the country would have an annual deficit of 3 million tons of foodgrains. This conclusion has already been belied by now, proving thereby that throughout its history, the food situation was never assessed correctly.

PRODUCTION DEPRESSED

Besides the inadequacy of procurements to meet the internal demand and a consequent increase in imports, controlled economy also had the effect of depressing home production in two ways.

In the first place, procurement prices were not fixed on the basis of any scientific principle. They did not bear any relation to the cost of production nor had they any parity with the prices of industrial goods and raw materials like cloth, iron and cement which the cultivator had to purchase for his own requirements. Agriculture

1. The Commission while discussing the food problem pointed out, "For it is purpose it is necessary to assess the trends in production and to see how they compare with requirements. We have given careful consideration to this question, but we find that on the basis of available data, it is not possible to reach any definite conclusion on this point." (The First Five Year Plan, pp. 174-195).

2. The First Five Year Plan, p. 176.

3. The surmise of the Foodgrains Investigation Committee (p.9) was that "whichever Minister is able to plead his case with greater vigour gets away with the prices he wants." cf. My unpublished MA thesis, Feeding the Nation, pp. 65-66, for further reference.

4. Cost of Production has, in fact, never figured in determining the food prices. This point, however, became important when procurement prices were deliberately put at a lower level.
can never a paying industry, and the cultivator was not able to feel
that even when he had the chance of getting some remunerative prices,
he was being deprived of his legitimate ones. In this was a depressin-
effect on the production of oilseeds. The cultivator was inclined
to grow more cash crops, as he got in better prices.

Coming, owing to high prices of food grains in the foreign
markets, importers were obliged to purchase imported grains. Large
men of trade, were sent to provide cheap food in the deficit areas.
This created the impression among the farmers of "marriage" areas that
the grain is being imported and neglected. Their corn surplus produc-
tion was being priced at cheaper rates. In the deficit areas of a
bargain and on the one hand, the being spent in the deficit
areas on food subsidies. Therefore led a feeling that the section of
3 keeping this very well at the cost of the other. Disincentives
in some of the areas were due, the hunger and they lost whatever little incentive
they had to produce.

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2. Right back, similar grain area in India, p. 96 to 100.
3. Prior to note 3, p. 97 section prices are production in

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2. The control measures were introduced with effect from Jan 1, 1940,
revoked from January 2, 1941, and finally abolished from January
1951. Net total imports paid by any 6 months from Jan to June
was

\[
\text{Imported Grains} = \text{9,300.000 tons}
\]

3. Effect of the prices on the scale of India, is it possible to
take. It may be argued that the cultivator being illiterate,
could hardly appreciate such problems. There are no such
called statistics, in the country, always ready to stir up the
feelings of the masses. The general trend would be remarks
being made in an official meeting in the Rajas.
The food problem was in its stalemate in the closing days of 1951 and early in 1952. The self-sufficiency pledge had not been fulfilled. The stress on food imports seemed to be more pronounced. The import target originally fixed for the year 1952 was in the neighbourhood of 7 million tons. It was subsequently reduced to about 5 million tons. Even then this figure was higher than the previous year's record imports. No solution seemed to be in sight. This was, perhaps, the worst phase in the food history of India. The climax was reached and a new chapter in the food debacle was in the offing.

1. Import requirements for the year 1952 were estimated by the Reserve Bank at 5 million tons. (Reserve Bank of India Bulletin, Bombay, January 31, 1952).

2. Mr. K. B. Narsimha in his article, 'Neo-Haithuinsans' - Population Subsistence - Family Planning, The Hindustan Times, March 13, 1955, bewails how he was convinced that early in 1952 India had a food deficit of 7 million tons and within four weeks of his relinquishing charge everybody said that the country needed no more food imports.