

the need to seek assistance from the countries which had helped us so generously in the past months would go down. However, in the situation in which we find ourselves, we have approached the U.S. Government for supplies under PL-480 and we have also requested your High Commissioner to approach the Canadian Government to assist us with 2 million tons of wheat.

I know that your Government will give its fullest consideration to our request and do whatever is possible to help us. I am addressing this letter to you personally because the month of January will be particularly difficult. The decision of the U.S. Government on our request for supply under PL-480 is likely to be delayed among other reasons because of the President's operation. It is imperative to avert an interruption in the programme of imports at a time when we need them most. In these circumstances, we should be most grateful if the Canadian Government could agree immediately to the supply of 500,000 tons of wheat, the shipment being so arranged that these supplies reach us by the second half of January at the latest. While it may well take some time to agree upon the terms on which the supply would be made, what is most important is to ensure that physical deliveries are not delayed on that account.

I am sorry to have to make this special plea for help for the second year in succession, but I feel sure that you will understand the compelling nature of the circumstances in which I have to do so.

With warm personal regards,

Yours sincerely,
Indira Gandhi.

Honourable senators, one of the corporal works of mercy that we all recognize is the feeding of the hungry, and hunger certainly does prevail in India. India is a country of great people. Many of us know the immense prestige that parliamentarians from India enjoy because of the Commonwealth associations that we have with them. We remember the distinguished delegation from India to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Meeting here in Ottawa last September under the leadership of Shri Hanumanthaiya, and those who were in New Zealand the year before will remember the similarly distinguished delegation under the leadership of

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Shri Desai. We remember too with warmth the visit that was made here, for the first time in the history of the two countries, by the Prime Minister of India, the late Mr. Shastri.

These gentle people of the East have great social and political problems. Not only does our heart go out to them but, being the great people they are, we want to do whatever we can to alleviate the terrible condition of distress which again has afflicted them. If for no other reason, as we approach the Christmas season the feeling of good will among all Canadians would support the proposal which is contained in this bill, to supply wheat and flour to India and to Pakistan to the value of \$22,500,000.

The catastrophe that has struck those people is no fault of their own. By taking on this responsibility, Canadians will be providing a massive form of aid to a whole people. At this time of the year, when we try to exercise the virtue of charity, particularly to India, to be able to do so in this form should give us all a sense of personal gratification.

Hon. A. J. Brooks: I am sure we all feel indebted to the Leader of the Government (Hon. Mr. Connolly, Ottawa West) for his explanation of this bill, and it is unnecessary for me to say that we on this side of the house are in full accord with its objects.

I think it is good that Canada should provide additional aid to India during that country's time of distress, not only because she is in distress, but because, as the leader has told us, she is one of our Commonwealth countries. I feel that it is good for one Commonwealth country to come to the assistance of another whenever possible.

India has become one of the most impoverished and overcrowded countries in the world. The Leader of the Government has just told us that 70 million people are practically on the verge of starvation. It is fortunate that we in Canada can provide two million tons of wheat to starving people. It is well to remember that wheat, the main staff of life, is what such people need most in their distress, and it is good that Canada, with all her broad acres in the West, is able to supply it.

May I ask the honourable leader how many bushels of wheat will be sent? My friend from Winnipeg (Hon. Mr. Thorvaldson) tells me it will be about 10 million bushels. Would that be correct?

Hon. Mr. Thorvaldson: I think it would be 66 million bushels.