

**SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA:** We want to know what steps the Government is going to take regarding the strike.

[*Translation*]

**DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEYA** (Mandsaur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, property worth crores of rupees has been gutted in the fire in MTNL office in Kidwai Bhawan. Two employees have suffered severe burns. Though efforts are on to extinguish the fire but even then the special section of telephone has been badly damaged resulting in disruption of telephone services thereby adversely affecting the work of other organisations. I favour institution of an enquiry to investigate the cause of fire which engulfed the fourth and fifth floors and also disrupted all important work of entire telephone lines. Therefore this incidence needs to be immediately investigated and also the irregularities that come to light should also be investigated. Because the building had already been declared unsafe but even then negligence was shown. I would like the hon. Minister to make a statement on this incidence.

**DR. MAHADEEPAK SINGH SHAKYA** (Etah): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister of Agriculture to a matter of urgent public importance. Farmers are not selling wheat to the government agencies in Mandis due to which increase in prices of foodgrains has resulted in panic everywhere. Prices have started rising since the last week of April.

Last year in 1990-91 the target of procurement of foodgrains by the Government which was fixed at 7.5 million tonnes was revised to 9 million tonnes in the year 1991-92. On 1.5.92 just 2.2 million tonnes of foodgrains was left in Government stocks. In view of this shortfall the Government decided to import 10 lakh tonnes of wheat and not only decided but also sent the Foreign Secretary to visit a number of countries. The price of wheat to be imported or of the wheat if it had been imported would not have been less than Rs. 620 per quintal according to the Government statistics.

At present the procurement price of wheat has been fixed at Rs. 250 per quintal. The State Government has also announced a bonus of Rs. 25 and a grant of Rs. 5 on it. So, in all the farmers can get Rs. 280 per quintal for wheat.

Punjab, Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh are the major contributors to the government's foodgrains stock. It has been noticed that in the 'Mandis' in these states the farmers are not selling their produce to the government agencies but are selling wheat to the private traders at the rate of Rs. 325 to 350 per quintal. In view of its failure the Government has begun imposing a number of restrictions on movement such as movement by rail etc. Restrictions on movement have resulted in closure of flour mills. Due to disruption of supplies in Tamil Nadu alone these mills are operating at 35 per cent of their capacity. As a result of which 36,000 workers employed in these mills have been left with no means of livelihood.

Imposition of restrictions is no solution of the problem. On the one hand the Government boasts of its liberal policy and on the other hand a number of restrictions have been imposed. Therefore, I demand from the Government to reduce the open market price of wheat as also to bring down the cost of production borne by farmers and revise the present liberal policy so that farmers can get remunerative prices for their produce. On the other hand, on order to reduce the demand of wheat in the open market the Government should strengthen the Public Distribution System and also increase the per unit quota of wheat so that the common consumer may not go to open market to buy wheat. In this way with the decline in demand the price of wheat will go down automatically and the private wheat traders will not be able to purchase wheat at high prices. As a result the wheat will begin to come in the Government godowns.

If the Government does not take the prompt and timely action then I fear the wheat selling at present at Rs. 4.5 or Rs. 5 per kg will sell at Rs. 10 per kg in the off season. The rise in price will have an adverse

affect on the 40 per cent population living below the poverty line and the middle income group people, who will find subsistence quite difficult leading to allround anarchy.

\* SHRI KEWAL SINGH( Bhatinda): Mr. Speaker, Sir, the workers of F.C.I. were on strike for three months during the last year. In this regard, a written assurance was given by the hon. Minister that the Government has just assumed the office.

[English]

AN. HON. MEMBER: Translation is not coming

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: If you had told us in advance, we would have made the arrangements for its translation, all right, let him speak. He is speaking for the first time. It is being recorded in audio. It may be translated later on.

\* SHRI KEWAL SINGH: The hon. Minister of Food gave an assurance that the Governemnt had just taken over and the country was in a state of crisis. Therefore, the strike should be called off and the Government would solve all the problems of the workers through negotiations. The contract system has been abolished in F.C.I. throughout India except Punjab. Now it exists only in Punjab. Why is this injustice being done with Punjab? We are the victims of the gross in-justice. We have shown a lot of patience. Now if any kind of loss occurs further, the hon. Minister of Food will be sole responsible for it.

[English]

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Bolpur): What about Ayodhya report? That is a very important thing.

MR. SPEAKER: We are fixing a date.

13.10 hrs

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

**Annual Reports and Reviews on the Working of the Gandhi Samiti and Darshan samiti, New Delhi for 1989-90 and Rashtriya Sanskrit sansthan, New Delhi for 1988-89 and statements showing reasons for delay in laying these papers, etc.**

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD (SHRI TARUN GOGOI): On behalf of Shri Arjun Singh, I beg to lay on the Table-

(1)(i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Gandhi Smiti and Darshan Samiti, New Delhi, for the year 1989-90 along with Audited Accounts.

(ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government on the working of the Gandhi Smiti and Darshan Samiti, New Delhi, for the year 1989-90.

(2) A statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (1) above. [Placed in Library, See No. LT-1890/92]

(i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, New Delhi, for the year 1988-89.

(ii) A copy of the Annual Accounts (Hindi and English versions) of the Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, New Delhi, for the year 1988-89 together with Audit Report thereon.

(4) A statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at