

of acres of land have been rendered unfit for cultivation. I want to know who is responsible for this. This is not the fault of the farmer. There a canal passes by the farmer's field and this field is being ruined for ever. In the event of floods, you pay compensation to him; if there is a drought in a particular year, you provide him some relief, but is there any scheme for those farmers whose land is being ruined year after year and who are starving? Either the Government should take action against the personnel charged, with the work of construction of the canal, who destroy the fields by their faulty construction, or the Government should allocate at least Rs. 200 crores to Uttar Pradesh in the Seventh Five Year Plan exclusively for this purpose; only then, perhaps, this problem could be solved. Such in the magnitude of this problem in Uttar Pradesh. Therefore, I would like to draw the attention of the Hon. Minister of Agriculture, who is sitting here as also the Central Govt. to this problem and request that in the allocation for the Seventh Plan and in the State Budget which will be drawn up later, attention should be paid to the farmers who are on the verge of starvation.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI BASAVARAJESWARI): You may resume your statement because the Home Minister has to make a statement.

SHRI SURESH KURUP (Kottayam): Before he makes a statement, I want to ask one thing. News has already spread that one Soviet Diplomat has been killed. I want the Home Minister .. (Interruptions).

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let him make the statement. I have asked the Minister to make a statement. Let him make the statement first.

SHRI SURESH KURUP: On what?

AN HON. MEMBER: On the situation in Gujarat.

16.00 hrs.

STATEMENT RE COMMUNAL RIOTS IN AHMEDABAD

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI S. B. CHAVAN): The House is aware that since the middle of February, 1985, students in Gujarat started agitation against increase in reservation for other backward classes in medical and other technical courses. The agitation was in the form of boycott of classes and examination, holding processions, rallies, organising bandhs etc. The anti-reservation agitation which was by and large peaceful in the beginning later resulted in two violent incidents of burning of buses in Nadiad on 27th February and in Rajkot on 11th March in which three passengers and the conductor lost their lives. Immediately after formation of the new Ministry, on 16th March the Chief Minister reviewed the situation arising out of the anti-reservation agitation and taking into account the views expressed by prominent educationists and the stay order issued by the High Court against implementation of the decision the State Government announced that the proposed increase in reservation shall not be implemented in the ensuing academic year 1985-86. It was further indicated that efforts to secure a consensus would be made through consultations with all concerned. Despite this, Anti-reservation Action Committee gave a call for 'Gujarat bandh' on 18th March, 1985 which evoked only partial response in the State. However, in Ahmedabad and Surat, there were stay incidents of stone pelting, stoppage of buses and closure of shops on that day.

On the evening of the same day (18th March), there was an incident of stone throwing near Prem Darwaza within the walled city of Ahmedabad which

(Shri S. B. Chavan)

unfortunately took a communal turn. Anti-social elements indulged in arson and looting which suddenly spread to other parts of the walled city. The rapid spread of the riots also witnessed the use of kerosene, petrol and burning rags and incidents of arson. This continued during the day time of 19th March, 1985 as well.

On the break out of rioting on 18th March, the police took quick and effective action including resort to firing. Indefinite curfew was imposed throughout the walled city from 22.30 hrs. Considering the gravity of the situation, the State Government Called Army in aid of civil authorities. Instructions were also issued for effective use of force against attempt of arson and looting. The State Government strengthened the police re-inforcements in the city by assigning sensitive areas to senior officers from outside. Additional armed reserve police forces were called from Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. The State Government also deployed three CRPF Coys which were already available at their disposal in Ahmedabad. On 19th March, additional six companies of Central para-military forces were deployed.

The unfortunate incidents since 18th March, 1985 till this morning have resulted in 7 deaths out of which 6 were due to police firing. About 42 persons were injured due to police firing and stabbing. 122 cases of arson and 27 cases of looting and shop-breaking have been reported during this period. The extent of damage is being assessed.

As the House is aware, I visited Ahmedabad yesterday afternoon. I visited the affected area within the walled city in which rioting had taken place. I also visited hospitals and met injured persons. I met a number of members of opposition parties as also deputationists belonging to both the communities. After discussing the situation with the Chief

Minister, Home Minister and officials of the State Government I found that the State Government had acted with considerable promptness and dealt the situation with right degree of firmness. This State Government have taken all possible measures to restore normalcy.

The State Government are extending relief to the families which have been affected and these dishoused due to riots. Ex-gratia payment is being made to these killed and injured during the course of the rioting.

This forenoon we have been informed that the situation now is fully under control although some sporadia incidents have taken place in isolated places outside the curfew area. Unfortunately, three incidents of burning of buses have been reported elsewhere in Gujarat by anti-reservationists. I hope and trust that taking into account the present situation and the fact that the State Government have already announced their decision concerning the reservation, the student community of Gujarat would call off the agitation and contribute to the restoration of normalcy in Ahmedabad and also to ensure that there is no broach of peace elsewhere in the State. I am confident that all political parties will jain me in this appeal.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : No question will be allowed. Nothing will go on record. If you want any further action, you give notice.

16.06 hrs

STATEMENT RE PROCUREMENT PRICE FOR WHEAT AND SUPPORT PRICE FOR BARLEY 1985-86 MARKETING SEASON

[English]

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHIRBUTA SINGH) : Sir, I would like to