

transferred just for the reason that a strike notice has been given and that they are going on a strike. Even against some other Members of the Union also, very stringent notices have been issued. In the said notices, the charges that are levelled against them are misconduct and so on.

Sir I would urge upon the Minister to give a statement regarding this aspect also.

MR. SPEAKER: Please take your seat.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (Bankura): I support him on this.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD (SHRI TARUN GOGOI): Sir, I would like to take this opportunity of requesting the hon. Members to persuade the agitators to withdraw the agitation. We are keeping an open mind. We will surely look into the genuine grievances.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: You direct the Management that they should sit with them and solve the problem.

SHRI RAM NAIK (Bombay North): Sir, can I have the kind attention of the Railway Minister? It is because, I want to congratulate him. This is for the first time that I am congratulating the Railway Minister in the last two years.

In Mumbai, the locals are over-crowded. There has been a demand from lady commuters that they should have, at least, one train during peak hours. I am glad that Ladies' Special Commuter Train is starting from today. Perhaps, it is an akshayya Tritiya auspicious day. Because of that, it might be starting today. It would start from Church Gate to Borivili. My only demand is this. From Church Gate to Borivili is only half a sector, it would be better, if it is extended further upto Virar which is 20 kms. away so that the entire sub-urban Western Railway sector can be covered.

So, I demand that train should be extended from Borivile to Virar and that this facility should also be started on the Central

Railway which would help lady commuters.

I once again thank and request the hon. Minister to make a statement saying that this would be considered as early as possible.

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR (Mayiladuturai): Sir, the problem of the Food Corporation of India employees is not going to be sorted out by merely saying "Now, we will deal with the matter with an open mind". Their petition has been pending with the Ministry of Food since the month of March. We have been waiting very patiently for over two months for a solution. It is essential that instead of reiterating that they have an open mind, the Government should tell us where its open mind has now led it to.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: I have written several letters regarding this.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOUDHURY (Katwa): Sir, on the 1st of May, the employees of Food Corporation of India held a rally in Delhi. Thousands came from northern part of our country and they raised their demand.

MR. SPEAKER: Why don't you ask only one Member to articulate on this point and then allow other Members to raise other point. If on one point seven Members speak, then the other Members do not have an opportunity.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOUDHURY: But, the point is this, When we are told that they will be going on strike and the Minister sitting here does not come out concretely as to how he is going to deal with the employees' demand, then it becomes our concern. How can we deal with this kind of classic Government like this?

MR. SPEAKER: But the entire discussion cannot take place at this point of time.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOUDHURY: He knows everything. Thousands of employees came. They were not divided. This is not what is expected of our responsible Government.

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