

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has made many statements in the House but no hon. Minister thought it proper to make a statement in this regard. Today the entire country is affected by wide-spread drought, the hon. Minister should at least make a statement mentioning therein the steps being taken by Government in consultation with the State Governments to overcome the crisis.

Sir, Shri Sonkarji was just telling that the people are worried a lot and a starvation situation has arisen and there is fear that cattle would die if the steps were not taken immediately in this regard. Therefore, my submission is that the hon. Minister of Agriculture should at least make a statement in the House. *(Interruptions)*.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, a situation of severe drought has arisen in the entire Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and some parts of Haryana and almost all the North India. Flood situation is there in some parts of the country. In this way crisis is growing for farmers in two ways. The farmers are extremely worried. Therefore, I make a submission to the Leader of the House to ask the Minister of Agriculture to make a statement in the House about the measures being taken by the Government to overcome the drought and flood situation which are causing crisis for the farmers as well as farm labourers and take the House into confidence.

Shri Rajnath Sonkar Shastri : Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is a serious matter. Please urge upon the Government to make a statement and initiate action in this regard. *(Interruptions)*.

Mr. Speaker : I think that this is such an issue as everybody is worried over it. Therefore, I would ask the Government to collect the statistical data of rains from the Meteorological Department and consult State Governments to take action and make a

statement in the House conveniently within two-three days regarding the steps the Government is contemplating to take.

Shri Arjun Singh : All right.

Shri Chandra Jeet Yadav : Sir, you have said about the Meteorological Department but that department is also creating confusion. The department's director said on T.V. that rainfall is normal. It has created further confusion. *(Interruptions)*.

Mr. Speaker : Chandra Jeetji, it is not like that. It is not a political issue. It concerns the lives of the people. I know that the Meteorological Department has equipments by which it can forecast the amount of rainfall in the next 15-20 days. Weather maps are prepared on a Daily, Weekly and Monthly basis. This information helps the Government in formulating its policy. The Government can also take precautionary measures in the areas where low or no rainfall has been predicted on the basis of the above maps. The State as well as the Central Government should also chalk out their plan of action on that basis. The Government should give a comprehensive statement within the next 2-3 days keeping all these things in view. *(Interruptions)*.

Shri Surya Narayan Yadav : Sir, the whole of Bihar has been hit by drought for want of rainfall.

Mr. Speaker : I am talking of the entire country.

13.00 Hrs.

[English]

Shrimati Malini Bhattacharya (Jadavpur) : Through you, Sir, I want to bring to the notice of the concerned Ministry the failure of successive Governments to meet the just demands of the five lakh *Anganwadi* workers in the country. At the moment, *Anganwadi* work is regarded as a voluntary service with a very meagre

honorarium which in no way compensates for the time and labour that has to be given for it. The question is not just of the subsistence of the workers but also of human dignity. They have been agitating for a very long time. They have placed their demands before successive Ministries. In 1989 when the Indira Mahila Yojana was announced, it was said that the *Gram Sevikas* and *Anganwadis* would be given the status of Government employees. However, nothing has been done. Later on during the National Front regime, the then Minister of Labour and Welfare, hon. Paswanji had agreed that there should be a revision of the rates of honorarium. But he also had not said anything about the minimum wages status. Now, today, when we are hearing of the Indira Mahila Yojana all over again, I would like to urge upon the Government that they should fulfil the promise that had been made by their late leader to the *Anganwadi* workers and either to give them the status of Government employees or, at any rate, for the present, to bring their honorarium on a par with the importance of the work that is done by them. (*Interruptions*).

Shri Manoranjan Bhakta :
This is a very important problem. I support the hon. Member. The Government should take note of this. (*Interruptions*).

Shrimati Malini Bhattacharya :
Otherwise, they will have to come again to Delhi.

Shri Vijay Kumar Yadav (Nalanda) : Sir, through you, I would like to draw the Government's attention to the situation of drought and problem of power shortage in Bihar. As Bihar is a backward state there is an acute shortage of power. Due to no rainfall, farmers are experiencing great hardship because their crops have perished. The crops, they have sown have dried up.

Small and medium scale industries have been adversely affected. I would like to draw Government's attention to the economic crisis which has gripped Bihar. Central Government is responsible for aggravating these crises. I want that minimum basic power requirement of Bihar should be fulfilled from the Central Electricity Grid. Bihar and U.P. are the top-ranking States occupying first and second positions in the country. These are recurring problems every year. These problems are national problems. As such, these problems should be considered by taking into confidence all the hon. Members of Parliament from these two States. The Government should take steps to find a permanent solution to them.

[*English*]

Shri Anna Joshi (Pune) : Hon. Speaker, Sir, I would like to bring to your kind notice the proposed drastic step by Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited of metering local calls originating from electronic exchanges in Bombay and Delhi and I request you to invite the attention of our Minister for Telecommunication so that he can act promptly and put an end to this highly irrational and illogical proposal of MTNL.

I understand from the various sections of the press that MTNL is planning to meter the local calls on a three-minute basis and that too, only those calls originating from electronic exchanges in Bombay and Delhi. This proposal, it seems, is likely to be effective from 1st September, 1991. On the very face of it, this proposal is unreasonable, unjust and irrational and it openly discriminates the electronic exchange subscribers. Technically speaking, this step amounts to putting local calls on par with STD calls.

Sir, discipline apart, how can you have two sets of rules for the subscribers? One set of rules for the electronic exchange subscribers and another for non-electronic exchange subscribers? Sir, take the example of