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Title: Regarding coconut root-wilt disease affecting coconut farmers in Tamil Nadu - Laid

SHRI H. VASANTHAKUMAR (KANYAKUMARI): I would like to draw the attention of the Government towards the coconut root-wilt disease which has sounded an alarm in the state and elsewhere. Kanyakumari, which literally means the land of coconuts, may well have to change its name by the year 2019, due to severe root-wilt disease afflicting coconut trees in the palm-fringed state today, there may well be no coconut trees left.

But what is more startling of all is the effect that the continuance of the disease will have on State's economy. The state accounts for sizeable coconut production in the country which ranks third in the world production of coconut. More than half of the total coconut produce is utilised at the local consumer level.

The remainder is processed into copra, coconut oil, copra cake, charcoal and coir for further use in a wide range of manufactured products for human consumption and industrial use, generating a significant amount of foreign exchange. The production of coconut to State's economy is of great significance.

Coconut accounts for more than a third of the agricultural income and a sixth of the total income of the state. Added to that, a large chunk of State's working population is engaged in processing industries in copra and oil, the coir industry and a large number of other coconut-based industries throughout the state. No other crop has more significance to the economy of State than the coconut.

Small wonder then that the coconut root-wilt disease has sounded an alarm in the state and elsewhere. I urge upon the Union Government to take remedial measures on a war footing and direct the concerned officials and scientists to combat the disease, and compensation be given to the affected farmers immediately.

Helicopter fertilizer spraying is required to save large level root wilt disease.