

train infrastructure different from your regular infrastructure of the rails? If it is so, then what is the infrastructure?

The third part of my question is: have you completed all the requirements of the railways commuters in general throughout India? There are so many parts of the country where trains have not even been seen by the people. But you are not worrying about them. You are worrying only about the tourists, and for that you are inviting crores of rupees from outside. You are also asking the Tourism Department to spend. So, have you completed the basic requirements of the common railway passengers? He is not getting anything.

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: Sir, it is the constant effort of the Government to see that the basic requirements of the commuters are met all over the country. However, this scheme is mostly in relation to the tourists. As you know, Sir, when foreign tourists come, we earn foreign exchange also. An action plan by the Tourism Department has been made that at least by 1996-97, there will be five million tourists which will give us foreign exchange to the tune of Rs. 14,000 to Rs. 18,000 crore. It is not the objective of the Government that we will have things only for the tourists all over. The primary objective of the Government is to provide all necessary amenities and all possible facilities to the commuters within the country.

So far as the infrastructure is concerned, whatever is existing stations and the ground staff—all that will be provided to the operators.

[Translation]

Industrial Status to Agriculture

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*22. SHRI BRIJ BHUSHAN,
SHARAN SINGH:
SHRI ARVIND TRIVEDI:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to grant the status of an industry to agriculture;

(b) if so, the objective thereof;

(c) the manner in which it is likely to benefit the farmers;

(d) the details of steps taken in this regard and progress made so far; and

(e) if not, the time by which the final decision is likely to be taken?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) to (e). The draft Agriculture Policy Resolution prepared by the Government, seeks to create a positive trade and investment climate for agriculture at par with industry. The objective is to develop effective systems and bestow similar benefits on agriculture as exist in industry. This would help in creating favourable economic climate for increasing farmers' own investment and efforts for development of agriculture, thereby increasing their income levels. The Resolution was placed in Parliament on 14.5.1993.

[Translation]

SHRI BRIJBHUSHAN SHARAN SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know whether income tax would be imposed on the agricultural earnings after granting agriculture the status of the industry. If so, the rate thereof in comparison to the rates of income tax imposed on other industrial earnings? Will the rate of tax on agricultural earnings be equal to that of levied on industrial earnings. I would also like to know the quantum of increase in agricultural production and income therefrom as a result of granting the status of an industry to agriculture and the time by which agriculture is proposed to be granted the status of an industry?

SHRI ARVIND NETAM: Mr. Speaker, Sir, position in this regard has been made clear in the Agriculture Policy Resolution which has already been laid on the Table of the House. I would like to quote therefrom.

[English]

"However, care should be taken to ensure that agriculturists are not subjected to regulatory and tax collection machinery of the Government. Further, the farmers will be exempted from payment of capital gains tax on compulsory acquisition of agricultural land within the prescribed municipal limits."

[Translation]

This is stated in the Resolution and I would like that you allow a discussion on the matter by giving some time for it so that the apprehensions of the hon. Members could be removed.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: The simple question is whether you are going to impose agricultural income tax.

SHRI ARVIND NETAM: No, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER: That is all.

[Translation]

SHRI BRIJBHUSHAN SHARAN SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know the details of the facilities proposed to be provided to the agricultural sector and whether the Ministry propose to implement a special scheme to remove the difficulties faced by the farmers in seeking bank loans at the time of natural calamities like floods, drought etc.

SHRI ARVIND NETAM: Mr. Speaker, Sir, after the draft resolution is discussed here, an Action plan would be prepared so that the scheme is implemented effectively. So far as the question of natural calamities is concerned, it is covered under Agricultural Insurance Scheme.

SHRI ARVIND TRIVEDI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister the details of additional benefits to be accrued after agriculture is given the status of an industry as compared to the present benefits?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister may please state whether agriculture is being given the status of an industry and what additional facilities are proposed to be provided to this sector.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it has been a matter of dispute for the last several years whether

the status of an industry should be given to agriculture or not. It is also stated that agriculture should not be given the status of an industry but all facilities being given to industry should be extended to agriculture also. The hon. Member has asked about the additional benefits to agriculture. I would like to know whether the hon. Minister is giving a clear cut reply to this question.

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR): I always give a clear cut reply and not an ambiguous reply.

MR. SPEAKER: He is asking whether agriculture is proposed to be given the status of industry whereas the hon. Minister is saying that the facilities provided to industries would be extended to agricultural sector also. If it is given the status of industry, income tax would have to be imposed.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: This matter has been a topic of discussion for the last many years. The Advisory Committee was first constituted in February, 1990. The Committee submitted its report in June-July, 1990 and suggested the basis to do the needful. The agricultural policy has already been laid on the table of the House with the permission of hon. Speaker, who in turn referred it to the Standing Committee which finally returned the same to us. I request the Hon. Speaker to allow a discussion on it so that all problems relating to it could be solved. If you permit me, I may read out from the paper available with me about the facilities proposed to be provided. These are as follows:

[English]

- (i) Like Industrial sector, the agricultural sector should have specialised funding institutions;
- (ii) Flow of Credit to agriculture sector should be in just and in reasonable proportion to its contributions to national income;
- (iii) Funding and lending norms in agriculture should be liberal as are in case of industry;
- (iv) Modern equipment and devices in agriculture should be accepted as security by the financial institutions;
- (v) Norms for funding agriculture should be realistic;
- (vi) Marketing finance should be made available to the agriculture sector;
- (vii) The credit requirement of agriculture must be need-based and fully met;
- (viii) Exclusive agricultural financial institutions should be set up at Central and State levels;
- (ix) Farmers' credit needs should be speedily provided for through pass book or card system; and
- (x) Farm sector should be provided cheap credit.

[Translation]

There is a provision for this since the farmer does not possess much land. Banks should take this thing into account. In every State a ceiling has been fixed on

farmer's land. So, there is no problem of excess land with them. If the farmer is left at the mercy of the tax collector, how will he work in the fields? All the time he will have to run after the tax collector. Therefore, he has been totally exempted from the entire tax system. When the issue of capital gain was raised, it was decided that the Government should acquire the land. If the farmer does not sell the land on his own, then how will he gain. A solution has also been found that no capital gain tax should be imposed on the ancestral land that the farmers possess. Every effort has been made to solve all these problems.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: I think I will allow the Members to ask pointed questions.

[Translation]

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: Please let me know the extent to which you will allow questions. Besides, the agriculture policy, the Centre Government has also passed the industrial policy. Each State evolves its own industrial policy and gives assistance. They give loan, waive interest and exempt sales tax. The industry may suffer sometimes due to some trouble but the businessmen do not suffer the loss because they come under the B.I.F.R. We have taken all these aspects into account and tried to solve the problems.

SHRI RABI RAY: It is good that the hon. Minister has given an account of the benefits that are likely to accrue. He has made a mention of loans.

[English]

I am afraid that what is proposed by the Minister might be disposed of by the Finance Ministry.

[Translation]

My submission is that with the implementation of the Narasimham Committee Report, the lending in priority sector has been reduced to 10 per cent from 40 per cent. What does the hon. Minister want to say in this regard? Apart from it what benefits the marginal farmers and agricultural labourers who are not surplus in market are going to get, if status of industry is given to agriculture?

MR. SPEAKER: They would be extended the storage, marketing and Finance facilities. There are many such things.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: So far as the question of credit and small farmers are concerned a small agro business consortium has been constituted. They will be brought to together on that basis and efforts will be made to give them a new life. Our endeavour is to provide them all those things that are available to tiny sector.

[English]

They should improve upon. The by-product should be value added. This is what we are going to do.

[Translation]

Therefore, I wish all the benefits should be given to them so that not only they get the goods but money also. There was a reference to funds. In this connection I would like to say that in the past years we have granted Rs. 24 thousand crores.

SHRI RABI RAY: The Government has taken a decision that the farmers and the poor people falling under the priority

sector would be extended 10 per cent loan instead of 40 per cent. What does the Hon. Minister say in this regard?

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: The way the funds are distributed, we get 10 per cent while 36 per cent goes to industries. My submission is that we should get equal share, since we are 1/3.

[English]

SHRI JAGMEET SINGH BRAR: Sir, from the Hon. Minister's reply the objective seems to be that the benefits of industry will be given to agriculture also. I want to ask a specific question. In the State of Punjab, which has given so much to the nation as far as agriculture is concerned, there are four lakh tractors today and every farmer, who has to purchase a tractor, has to mortgage eight acres of land to the banks. So, will the hon. Minister give proper attention to this matter so that whenever a farmer has to purchase agricultural machinery, his land need not be mortgaged which is worth lakhs of rupees?

MR. SPEAKER: You have made your question very clear. Please take your seat.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: That is what we are trying to do.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI PRATIBHA DEVISINGH PATIL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, has any policy been evolved regarding the number of labourers to be employed under this agriculture policy? Besides, due to the new industrial policy a large number of labourers are being released. The natural surplus of labour increase should be adjusted in agriculture.

[English]

They are bringing new techniques.

[Translation]

It will reduce employment of labour in industry. This thing has come up before the Industrial Développement Committee that.

[English]

The industry expects that the surplus labour will be absorbed by agriculture. I want to know what is going to be the situation so far as absorbing labour by agriculture is concerned. Have they planned anything? Do they have perspective plan regarding that and to what extent they are going to absorb labour in the agriculture?

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: The boot is on the other leg.

MR. SPEAKER: The intensive agricultural operations will absorb more labour.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: Seventy per cent of the people still exist on agriculture. Land is not expanding any longer. It is we who are expanding. In the developed countries, only four per cent people, three per cent people are engaged in agriculture.

The land cannot bear this burden. We have to reduce the pressure on land. We have to revert to the industry. It is not the question that we have to absorb it. We have to restructure the industrial base for agriculture.

SHRI SOBHANADREESWARA RAO VADDE: I had an occasion to func-

tion as a member of the committee headed by Shri Bhanu Pratap Singh which was specifically entrusted the task of recommending whether agriculture should be given the status of industry or not. The committee has specifically recommended that the same facilities which are being given to industry should be given to agriculture. The committee did not insist on giving the status of industry.

I would like to know categorically the decision of Government over the recommendation made by the committee and the suggestions of the committee to be incorporated in the policy.

MR. SPEAKER: That question is already replied.

SHRI SOBHANADREESWARA RAO VADDE: The answer is vague. That is why, I have asked it. Have the suggestions of the committee been included in the national agriculture policy which was not yet framed at that point of time? The draft agriculture policy which the Government placed on 14-5-1993 does not incorporate all the suggestions of the committee.

I would like to know whether the hon. Minister will come forward with a categorical statement before this House? Has the Government examined all the suggestions and what are the implications? How much investment is the Government going to make?

MR. SPEAKER: I am not going to allow the question of this sort.

SHRI SOBHANADREESWARA RAO VADDE: For agriculture, in the Eighth Plan, Rs. 22,000 crores is allowed. For irrigation, it is Rs. 32,000 crores. Whereas for power, you have allowed Rs.

115,000 crores and for communication, telephones, you are allocating Rs. 60,000 crores. If this type of attitude continues, how can develop agriculture?

That is my question.

MR. SPEAKER: I am not allowing that.

SHRI SOBHANADREESWARA RAO VADDE: You must protect our interest.

MR. SPEAKER: I do not think it comes out of that. Please specify your question.

SHRI SOBHANADREESWARA RAO VADDE: The Government has allocated more money for power and communication, leaving the needs of agriculture and irrigation sector. If this is the case, how can the Government develop agriculture? Concrete action has to be taken.

MR. SPEAKER: If the Minister can reply, let him do it. I do not think, it is relevant. But if he is insisting, you can respond.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: Consistent with the high priority for agricultural sector, the outlay for agricultural and allied activities have been substantially raised in the Eighth Plan. The total outlay for agriculture and allied activities has been raised by 76 per cent during the Eighth Plan, to the level of Rs. 22,467 crores over the expenditure of Rs. 12,793 crores in the Seventh Plan. That is what I have said.

[Translation]

SHRI VIRENDRA SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Government said that

agriculture would be given the status of industry and farmers would be given facilities. The question does not merely relate to providing facilities to them. The question is whether the agricultural products would be evaluated on the same line the industrial products are evaluated? The other question is that cities for industries are selected keeping in view the facilities available to them at those particular places. In the same way whether the gangetic plain which is one of the most productive regions of the world.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Virendra Singh, please come to the specific question.

[Translation]

SHRI VIRENDRA SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, could there be industrial development of agriculture, if it is given the status of industry?

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: That is what we are doing. I am saying the same thing *(Interruptions)*.

SHRI UPENDRA NATH VERMA: Will the farmers have to maintain registers like that of industries when agriculture is given the status of industry.

MR. SPEAKER: He did not say so. He said that only facilities would be given and not the status.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: If they maintain registers, they will not be able to provide foodgrains.

SHRI UPENDRA NATH VERMA: If facilities are being given will there be facilities of irrigation, fertilisers and seeds also? *(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: I know who are related to agriculture.

SHRI SUDHIR GIRI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the draft Agriculture Policy envisages a policy of industry-status to agriculture. And if that is so, whether the foreign investment.

MR. SPEAKER: The Government has not said that they are going to give the industry status to agriculture. Now that question does not arise out of this.

(Interruptions)

DR. KARTIKESWAR PATRA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to know from the hon. Minister... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI SUDHIR GIRI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wish to put a very specific question.

MR. SPEAKER: I think many Members are interested in asking the questions. I think we shall have to find time for the discussion. We will do that.

[Translation]

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: I request you to please arrange a discussion on the Agriculture Policy Resolution.

MR. SPEAKER: When questions are figuring in answers, what is the use of allowing a discussion.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: If you arrange a discussion everything will be solved. *(Interruptions)*

[English]

DR. KARTIKESWAR PATRA: Sir, you have allowed me earlier.

MR. SPEAKER: O.K., let Mr. Sudhir Giri complete his question.

SHRI SUDHIR GIRI: The hon. Minister has said that the benefits given to the industry will be given to the agriculture. And if that is so, whether the foreign investment will be encouraged in the field of agriculture. If it is so, then my question is whether the land reform measures will be affected by this step.

MR. SPEAKER: Will the ceiling law be diluted? He wants to know whether the ceiling law or the tenancy law will be diluted.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: That does not get diluted.

DR. KARTIKESWAR PATRA: The draft Agriculture Policy Resolution has been introduced in this Parliament on 14th May, 1993, that is, one year before. The draft Agriculture Policy Resolution prepared by the Government seeks to create a positive trade and investment climate for agriculture at par with industry. I would like to know categorically from the hon. Minister whether any assessment has been made and if so, what assessment has been made by the Department of Agriculture.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: I will send the information.

Afforestation

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*23. SHRI HARIN PATHAK:
SHRI ARJUN SINGH
YADAV:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of targets fixed for afforestation and achievement made during each of the last three years, State-wise;

(b) the reasons for the shortfall, if any, in achieving the targets;

(c) the remedial steps being taken to achieve the targets; and

(d) the target fixed therefor during 1994-95, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) to (d). The details of targets fixed for afforestation and tree planting activities and the achievement made during each of the last three years, reasons for the shortfall if any, the remedial measures and the targets fixed for afforestation for 1994-95 are given in the *Statement* laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

(a) The details of the State-wise targets fixed for afforestation and the achievements during the last three years, viz., 1991-92, 1992-93 and 1993-94 are given at ANNEXURE I.

(b) and (c) Afforestation and tree planting are continuing activities and the State/Union Territory-wise targets are fixed keeping in view the availability of funds under various Central and State Plan Schemes. The targets are fixed in terms of area for afforestation on public lands, including forest land, and in terms of seedling distribution for plantation on private lands. The achievement of the targets in 1991-92 and 1992-93 at the