

place. But we have the degraded forest to the extent of about 30 million hectares. Degraded forest means, there is forest land but there is no forest cover on it. This 30 million hectares of degraded forest spread over the country, is an enormous task. Along with it, the current degradation of forest which is taking place, is supplemented by that. So we were to look at the entire picture. The amount of funds required is very large. These funds have been substantially increased in the last three years. And if I give an example, in 1990-91, the total funds allocated were Rs. 575 crores under the State and Central sector whereas in 1993-94, tentatively it is fixed at Rs. 901 crores. Fund is a constraint. On the other hand, the world's attention on forest specially as a carbon sink, the global environment facility which is to provide funds for preservation of biodiversity and under the climate change convention for forest to act as a carbon sink, it is expected that there shall be substantial funds flow. I would also like to state that in the last three years, there has been substantial increase in funds flow in the forestry sector. What we expect to do in these five years will be more than what we have done from First to Sixth Plan altogether.

SHRI BIJOY KRISHNA HAND-IQUE: What about the second part of the Supplementary?

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Regarding desertification, very recently, just about six weeks ago, there has been a treaty on

desertification which has finalised. This treaty of desertification will also find funds flow from the global environment facility. And it is expected that on the basis of priority within our country, these funds will be earmarked to those areas.

#### Coconut Price

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\*25. SHRIMATI SUSEELA  
GOPALAN:  
PROF. SAVITHRI  
LAKSHAMANAN:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the price and demand of coconut have fallen considerably;

(b) if so, the estimated loss to the coconut growers, particularly in Kerala, as a result thereof during the last one year;

(c) the quantity of copra procured after the declaration of the minimum support price of copra in 1994; and

(d) the remedial measures proposed to prevent the fall in price of coconut?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) to (d). A *Statement* is laid on the Table of the House.

#### STATEMENT

(a) The prices of copra during the current year have declined. It has been reported that there has been a shift in consumer demand away from coconut oil to other cheaper edible oils.

(b) Since the minimum support price operations are being undertaken by National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation (NAFED), the question of loss to the

growers does not arise. The minimum support prices for 1994 season have already been fixed at a level which provides adequate return to the growers.

(c) A total quantity of 47,753 tonnes was procured by NAFED upto 18.7.1994 under price support operations after announcement of the minimum support price of copra for 1994 season. The procurement is still in progress.

(d) In order to arrest the decline in prices, NAFED has been instructed to undertake price support operations more effectively. It has already purchased a sizeable quantity from various markets in Kerala. To minimise the imperfections in the marketing of copra, the Government has taken steps to get the markets regulated. In addition, the regulated markets are being well equipped with proper auction platforms as also the drying and warehousing facilities in all the major copra producing States and Union Territories.

SHRIMATI SUSEELA GOPALAN: It is claimed that the question of loss to the growers does not arise since the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation is procuring copra. What has happened is, even in this lean season, the price of coconut is only Rs. 2,500 for one thousand coconut. In the last season, at this time, it was Rs. 4000. It has come down sharply. And the prices of manure and other things have gone up so much that farmers are finding it very difficult. And it is very difficult to market these coconuts because there is no demand. Two to three crops are lying with the farmers. What is the remedy for it? Actually, procurement at that level is not coming up and also the price is very minimum. Unless the price is increased, the price of coconut will not go up. There should also be some diversification programme in this sector using the oil and other things. Has the Government done anything in this respect?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR): There is a scheme under which we fix the minimum support price and the Cost and Agricultural Prices Commission fixes it up with due deliberations. This time, we have increased the minimum support price by Rs. 200. For that purpose, we have

purchased about 50,000 tonnes so far through NAFED.

Secondly, I know that the minimum support price below that has come down. But we have brought it up from Rs. 2000. That is what I say.

Thirdly I have recommended to the the State, to the Commerce Minister to release it for export before it is spoiled. Now there is specific licencing. But I said that it should be exported as much as possible because there is no other by-product. Also the industry is declining its use. That is the cause for it and that is why we are procuring it.

SHRIMATI SUSEELA GOPALAN: There was a proposal from the State Government to consider it as a seasonal crop because in the main season the production is very much. If it is declared as a seasonal crop, then the benefits will be much better and the growers will get much more benefits. What is the decision of the Government with regard to that?

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: We have taken every consideration in fixing the price. Absolutely we have taken these into consideration. When we fix up the price, we take into consideration all things from

A to Z. As I have stated so many times in the House, every consideration is taken on each and every single item, whatever it may be, and then its price is fixed.

SHRIMATI SUSEELA GOPALAN:

But it has not substantially helped the growers.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: But this is what we have tried to help the growers.

PROF. SAVITHRI LAKSHMANAN: I am happy to notice the answer given to part (c) of my question which says that 'efforts have been started to minimise the imperfectness in the marketing of copra'. But the answer to part (b), as stated by Shrimati Suseela Gopalan, has disappointed me also. "The question of loss to the growers does not arise" is far away from the real situation. The Government of Kerala has declared this year as the Coconut Development Year and by depending upon the comprehensive coconut development programme we are planning for more than Rs. 200 crore of profit for the coming three years. Earlier, we were the monopoly producers of coconut. Now I am happy that Andhra, Tamil Nadu and Orissa have come on par and also joined in coconut cultivation. Even though coconut is included in the list of oil seeds, we are not getting the full benefit of it. The only reason as far as I know is that coconut is not considered as seed origin. Instead, it is considered as a tree origin. The first part of my question is, will you please consider coconut in the list of seed origin instead of tree origin.

And coming to the second part of my question, may I bring to your kind notice that Coconut Development Board is having no full time Chairman for the last five years and the Commissioner (Horticulture), Government of India is

looking after this Board? I would like to know whether you will be pleased to appoint one full time Chairman to the Coconut Development Board, so that he could very well convince the Government about the problem.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: They get the benefit both ways. I may tell the hon. Member that this year the Government showed special consideration. In the Cabinet we raised the prices by more than a hundred rupees more than what the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices had recommended because we knew that it needs something. I know it hurts when the prices fall below that level. But whatever is done, is done according to the data which we have. About what she has said, both ways you will get it. It does not get much more—either it is seed based or tree based. It does not matter much that way. But we are trying to get something else. That is, we must propagate some other means by which we can sell this copra. We must get the by-product from this. That we are trying to do. Secondly, we are spending more also. We are spending Rs. 20 crore in this year for the development of copra.

About the Chairman, we have already recommended a fine name. The file lies with the ACC. If it comes around within a short time, it will be done.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS: We were stressing about some other needs also which we must find out from the coconut. The sweet coconut water is very tasty and it can be processed properly and sold. It could be even better than.... "Coca Cola—or even Pepsi Cola.

MR. SPEAKER: That will not form part of the record.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS: The Coconut Development Board has got some scheme to give technical assistance for those who are coming forward to start some industries.

But, this Coconut Development Board, as has already been pointed out, is totally toothless; it is powerless; it can do nothing. That is the way in which it is functioning. There is no farmer in that Board; in that Board, there is no person who has invested in coconut. The Chairman, as she has already pointed out,

MR. SPEAKER: The time will be over and you will get no reply.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS: Would the hon. Minister throw some light on this and give some favourable answer?

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: The question is very well put and I fully side with him.

Assistance will be provided; that is what we are trying to do through Agricultural Consortium. That is what it is for.

MR. SPEAKER: Question Hour is over.

#### WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[Translation]

#### Supplies to Fair Price Shops

\*24. SHRI B.L. SHARMA PREM:  
Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether wheat and other eatable commodities do not reach the Fair

Price Shops in time from godowns of the Food Corporation of India in various States despite depositing money;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the number of complaints received by the Union Government in this regard in 1994 till date; and

(d) the action taken by the Government to avoid such harassment being faced by the public?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD (SHRI KALP NATH RAI): (a) to (d): FCI supplies wheat, rice and sugar to States/Union Territories and their nominees as per the monthly allocations made by the Central Government. There is no delay on the part of FCI in releasing of stocks from its depots to State Governments/Union Territories and their nominees after they have deposited the value of grains/sugar. The internal distribution of foodgrains upto the Fair Price Shops is the responsibility of the respective State Governments/Union Territory Governments.

Central Government have not received any complaints from the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations regarding delayed delivery/issue of Rice, Wheat and Sugar (where FCI is responsible for delivery of sugar to States). The operational responsibility for implementing the PDS, rests with the State Government/Union Territory Administration.

#### Natural Calamities

\*26. SHRI LALL BABU RAI:  
SHRI SHRAVAN KUMAR  
PATEL:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state: