

New South Western Railway Zone

800. SHRI C.P. MUDALA GIRIYAPPA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the South Western Railway Zone has been set up with its head Office at Bangalore;

(b) if so, the date from which this zone started functioning;

(c) the details thereof including the areas the fall under this zone;

(d) whether preference would be given to the local people while making recruitment for this zone; and

(e) if so, the precise policy to be followed in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MAL-LIKARJUN): (a) No, Sir. The matter has not been finalised so far.

(b) to (e). Do not arise.

Forest Area in Rajasthan

[*Translation*]

801. SHRIGIRDHARILAL BHARGAVA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the area of Rajasthan earmarked for forest and the area out of it having no forest on it;

(b) whether the area having no forest is desert area thereby causing adverse effect on the environment;

(c) if so, the steps proposed to be taken for afforestation of barren land earmarked as

forest area;

(d) whether there is any proposal to bring more area in Rajasthan under forest cover to check arid conditions;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefore?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) According to the State of Forest Report 1989, the total extent of recorded forest area of Rajasthan is 3.11 million hectares, and the area under actual forest cover is 1.29 million hectares.

(b) The areas having no forest are not entirely desert; also there is not data to establish conclusively that natural desert areas have an adverse effect on ecology, from a macro-environmental point of view.

(c) Massive afforestation and pasture development works have been launched in order to develop forests.

(d) to (f). The following steps are being taken to bring more and more areas under tree cover in Rajasthan.

(1) Afforestation works are being carried out on non-forest lands along railway lines, roads, canal embankments, revenue wasteland & Panchayat lands.

(2) Distribution of seedlings free of cost to all government organisations and at nominal prices to farmers and non-governmental organisations.

(3) Communication and extension network is strengthened to motivate masses for planting more and more trees on fallow lands.

(4) Green Rajasthan Programme has