

all such districts as do not already have them.

(d) Most of these programmes are already being implemented. Some, however, are proposed to be implemented from 1985-86. The allocation for youth programmes of the Department for the year 1985-86 is Rs. 18.00 crores approximately.

Rejuvenation of Forests

621. SHRI G.G. SWELL : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the percentage of acreage under forests in India is lowest in the world;

(b) if so, the reasons for not preventing denudation of forests which goes on unabated owing to collusion of contractors and officials and use as fuel by poor; and

(d) the steps being taken to stop these evils and rejuvenate the forests ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BIR SEN) : (a) and (b). The percentage of total land area under forests in India is not the lowest in the world. India has nearly 23% of its area under forests, whereas it is as low as 3% in some of the neighbouring countries. However, the *per capita* availability of forest is low (0.1 hectare) and the consequent pressure on forests to meet the basic requirements of the people is over the threshold limit of its bearing capacity. This has resulted in diminution of the forest cover for meeting the present demand of timber and fuel.

(c) The steps being taken to relieve pressures from forests are :

(i) A massive programme of afforestation and tree-planting within and outside forest areas is being taken up;

(ii) The end-uses of wood are being identified so that substitution by other materials can be encouraged;

(iii) Vulnerable areas are being identified, in order to implement an adequate protection mechanism; and

(iv) Efforts are being made to prevent denudation of forest land under the provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act-1980. The agency of contractors has been eliminated in most areas of the country.

Permanent Title Deed to Refugees in West Bengal

622. SHRI PRIYA RAJAN DAS MUNSHI : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) since Government confer equal citizenship right to every Indian including refugees who came and settled in India specially in West Bengal, whether it would provide them permanent title deed like other citizens in their homeland instead of a conditional lease deed documents;

(b) if so, steps Government propose to take; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI RAM DULARI SINHA) : (a) to (c). The land in Government sponsored and approved squatters colonies is being given to displaced persons free of cost. Instructions were issued to the State Government on 17-5-1974 to confer right and title on displaced persons over lands in Government sponsored and approved squatters, colonies. The land in rural areas was to be given on free-hold basis, whereas land in urban areas was to be given on lease-hold basis for a period of 99 years on a nominal ground-rent of Re. 1/- per one hundred square yards or a fraction thereof per annum. These conditions are in accordance with the general policy followed by the Government of India in other areas also. However, Paschim Banga Udbastu Sangati, a Society registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1965 have filed a writ petition in the High Court Calcutta against the conferment of right and title through lease deed on displaced persons in urban areas. The matter is now sub-judice.