

Seminar re: Threat to Taj from Environmental Pollution

1114. SHRI P. RAJAGOPAL NAIDU: Will the Minister of WORKS AND HOUSING AND SUPPLY AND REHABILITATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether environmental society organised a seminar this week at Agra regarding the threat to Taj Mahal due to pollution;

(b) whether that seminar expressed concern about Taj; and

(c) if so, the action to be taken by Government to save Taj from the pollution to be created by Mathura refineries?

THE MINISTER OF WORKS AND HOUSING AND SUPPLY AND REHABILITATION (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT): (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. The Indian Environmental Society, a voluntary organisation, organised a seminar at Agra on 23rd and 24th October, 1978, on the effects of pollution on the Taj Mahal, in which some speakers expressed their concern about the adverse effects of pollutants from the Mathura Refinery.

(c) In view of the apprehension raised in various quarters about the possible adverse environmental impact of Mathura Refinery, the Government of India appointed an Expert Committee in July, 1974 to advise the Project Authorities on the measures to be taken for keeping the pollution effects of the Refinery to the absolute minimum. The Committee was also to advise the Government on the pollution aspects of other ancillary and downstream industries. The report of this Committee was placed before both the Houses of Parliament on the 14th August, 1978.

Balanced Implementation of Land Reforms

1115. SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are satisfied with the pace of implementations of land reforms in the country;

(b) if not, which are the specific sectors of this policy where performance has not matched targets;

(c) whether in some States there have been major deviations from the National policy with the result that they have favoured the more powerful among the agricultural interests; and

(d) steps Government have taken or are contemplated to rectify these deviations and to speed up implementation of land reforms?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION (SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA): (a) to (d). As is well-known, State Governments are entrusted with the implementation of land reform measures. The Union Government reviews progress from time to time and endeavours to evolve common policy guidelines. Various State laws are broadly in harmony with the National Guidelines on land ceilings. In some States, tenancy laws do not correspond to national norms and the matter is being pursued with the State Governments concerned. The Union Government has repeatedly drawn the attention of State Governments to the need to improve performance, especially in the matter of acquisition and distribution of ceiling-surplus land. According to the latest information available with the Union Government, only about 15.76 lakh acres have been distributed although the area declared surplus is reported to be nearly 44.71 lakh acres. State Governments have been urged to endeavour to reduce the wide disparity between the area declared surplus and the area distributed.

Research in Improvement of Quality of Foodgrain and Cash Crops

1116. SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether any research has been conducted regarding the quality of