

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA): (a) to (d) The Forest Policy is under revision. It Provides to safeguard the interests of the tribals so as to ameliorate their economic conditions and to protect them from social injustice and exploitation.

Some aspects of forest administration needing special attention in this connection are: Elimination of middle-men from the midst of tribals and promotion of cooperative endeavours for passing on the benefits directly.

Felling of Forest Trees in Kerala

1197. SHRI NEELALOHITHA-DASAN NADAR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the felling of forest trees on a large scale in Kerala has affected adversely the ecology of Kerala and even the rain fall; and

(b) if so, steps taken by Government to prevent this felling of forest trees on a large scale?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA): (a) The diversion of about 189000 ha. of forest area for various purposes has adversely influenced the ecology of Kerala. However, there is no conclusive evidence to prove that it is responsible for low rain fall in Kerala.

(b) Under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 no State Government or other authority shall make, except with prior approval of the Central Government, any order directing that any reserved forest shall cease to be reserved, or that any forest land may be used for any non-forest purpose.

The Government of Kerala have also issued an Ordinance entitled 'The Kerala Preservation of Trees and Regulation of Cultivation in Hill Areas Ordinance, 1983' to provide for regulation of the cutting and destruction of trees in the State of Kerala and for the regulation of cultivation of land in the hill areas in the State.

Drought in Kerala

1198. SHRI A. K. BALAN:
SHRI SKARIAH THOMAS:
PROF. P. J. KURIEN:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be Pleased to state:

(a) the estimated amount of loss incurred by Kerala due to the unprecedented drought;

(b) how much amount Kerala has demanded as drought assistance;

(c) how much amount has been allotted to Kerala;

(d) whether this is to be deducted from next year plan allotment; and

(e) whether any provision is made for financial compensation for the drought hit farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN): (a) According to the supplementary memorandum submitted by the Government of Kerala, the estimated amount of loss on account of drought is placed at Rs. 98.44 crores.

(b) The Government of Kerala had requested for an assistance of Rs. 229.60 crores.

(c) The State has been sanctioned a ceiling of assistance of Rs. 36.77 crores.