

- (ii) whether the district is self-sufficient in timber and fuelwood ; and
- (iii) the effect of the proposal on, —
- (a) Fuelwood supply to rural population
- (b) economy and livelihood of the tribals and backward communities.
- (iv) specific recommendations of the Chief Conservator of forests/Head of the Forest Department for acceptance or otherwise of the proposal with reasons thereof.

Certified that all other alternatives for the purpose have been explored and the demand for the required area is the minimum demand for forest land.

Signature of the authorised officers of the State Govt./Authority,

N. B. While furnishing details of flora and fauna, the species should be described by their scientific names.

SHRI A.K. ROY : Mr. Speaker, Sir, even after providing a voluminous statement, what has been said is an under-statement. Trees cannot speak and wild life cannot collect at the Boat Club and demonstrate or break Sec 144. That is why the Irrigation Department have decided to construct the irrigation projects only in the dense forests. Till this day, 43 lakh hectares of forest land has been destroyed and out of that five lakh hectares are claimed to have been destroyed by the Irrigation Department. Forests are the lungs through which the nature respire. I would like to know, firstly whether the hon. Minister is sure about the figures he has provided ?

Out of the 31 State and Union Territories, your figures show that for as many as 15 States and Union Territories you do not have any information and the Forest Survey of India could conduct the survey of only one-tenth of the forests of the country. So, my first question is whether you are sure that there has been no deforestation by the Irrigation Department in the fifteen States and Union Territories in respect of which you could not produce the information? The second point is whether even after the enactment of your Forest Conservation Act, any land has been used or misused by the Irrigation Department for any non-forest purpose? These two questions I am putting first.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : Sir, the Forest Conservation Act, 1980 was enacted with the intention that the indiscriminate felling of the trees can be prevented. Every case, whether it is for irrigation or for construction or for any other purpose, has to be referred to the Government of India and only after due examination, the Government of India gives permission. We are very strict in giving the permission. The case is first screened by the Department of Environment then there is a Committee which also screens and then finally we look into it. If it is for a very-very essential purpose, then only we are giving the permission after assessing it.

The other question which the hon. Member wanted to know is about the violation of the Act. Yes, there are certain States which have violated the Act and which have cleared the forests for certain projects before obtaining the permission of the Government of India.

SHRI A.K. ROY : In our part of Bihar, in Ranchi District the Forest Department has filed a criminal case against the Irrigation Department and the whole case has now gone to the Patna High Court. So, this type of things are taking place. I would like

to draw the attention of the hon. Minister to the two articles. One of these has been published in the *Economic and Political Weekly* of first June under the caption 'Development or Destruction'. This article is regarding the Narmada Valley Project which is one of the very big projects you are going to have. There is another article in *The Times of India* of January by the Director of Social Forestry, UP Government. According to the information provided in these articles, in the Narmada Valley Project alone 3.5 lakh hectares of forest land would be submerged. In the Koel Karo project in Ranchi district of Bihar, 1,200 acres of forest land will be submerged, in addition to the destruction of wild life and rare flora and fauna. I want a categorical assurance from the Minister that the Department will take steps so that these forest lands and the wild life are not affected, disturbing the ecological balance. If it is not possible, will some alternative arrangement be made to restore those areas? Secondly, you have stated that 5 lakh hectares of forest land has been destroyed. Have you got any time-bound programme to compensate that forest area?

**SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA :** We have a programme of afforestation and there is a massive programme of social forestry, which is taken up by the Government of India, through the State Governments, all over the country. There is World Bank assistance to it. The afforestation programme is going on in almost all the States. We have identified 157 districts, which are deficit of fuel. A massive programme is taken up in those areas for the plantation of firewood trees. What was the other question?

**SHRI A K ROY :** I high-lighted two major projects.

**SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA :** So far as major irrigation projects are concerned, we take care, and we will take care, that the minimum of trees are felled and, wherever it is possible,

we request the State Governments to put the project in alternative sites or to compensate for the forests by planting the number of trees which are felled by them for that project.

**SHRI MADHAVRAC SCINDIA :** The Forest Conservation Act was a very important Act, keeping in mind the very rapid elimination of forest cover in our country, which is going to pose a very serious hazard in future. But actually the problem is not really from the erosion caused to the forest cover by development projects, but it is really by the Departments in the State Governments, which come under the Conservator of Forests. It is a total misnomer; he should be called the Destroyer of Forests, not the Conservator of Forests, because the forest cover is being destroyed mainly because of the indiscriminate exploitation by the State Governments, through the so-called Conservator of Forests. I feel there should be a stricter control over all these things. However, this question. There are hundreds of acres, rather thousands of acres, where not a single tree stands and there is no hope of replantation. Yet it comes under the label of forest land. If a re-appraisal is made and another survey is done of all the forest areas in the country and such areas are eliminated from the label forest lands, they will not come in the way of developmental projects. Therefore, is the Central Government thinking of ordering another survey, a new survey, of the forest areas?

Secondly, I would request the Minister to ensure expeditious disposal of applications for permission to establish development projects. There is a dam in my constituency, of which the foundation was laid in 1980. The Agriculture Ministry told us to go ahead and that permission would follow. Now this is 1984; the dam is complete, the canals systems are complete. So, the final permission was sought. After the entire dam is complete and only permission is required to release the water into the canal, we have received