

Title: Need to re-open tea estates in Perrimad Taluk in Kerela.

SHRI K. FRANCIS GEORGE (IDUKKI): Sir, I wish to draw the attention of the House to a very serious problem that is in existence in the tea plantation sector of our country.

In Peerimad Taluk of my constituency, Idukki, 18 tea estates have been closed for the past two years. More than 18,000 workers are without job for the past two years. They, alongwith their families, have been languishing. Nothing has been done by the State Government or the Central Government so far. We have had a very detailed discussion on this in the House during the last Session and the Ministry of Commerce had promised to constitute a special committee to go into this issue. The Committee was constituted, it made a very detailed study about the problems faced by individual estates and the Report has been submitted. But no action has been taken on it.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please conclude.

SHRI K. FRANCIS GEORGE (IDUKKI): Let me complete, Sir. This is a matter concerning 18,000 families. Please understand it. I have been waiting very patiently listening to you and obeying your orders.

The point is, something has to be done to solve this problem. Today, there is a *harthal* in Peerimad Taluk of Idukki district of Kerala. Tomorrow, the whole district of Idukki will be observing *harthal* to invite the attention of the State Government and the Central Government to this very vexing problem. The State Government could not do much so far other than giving free rations to the workers concerned. I would like to know from the Government as to what they are proposing to do on this very vexing humanitarian problem. The whole of Peerimad Taluk has come to a standstill. So, something has to be done urgently in this regard.

I request the Central Government to intervene in this matter and do whatever possible at the earliest.