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Title: Reported eviction of small farmers in Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu.

SHRI R. PRABHU (NILGIRIS): Mr. Speaker, Sir, nearly 20,000 families in my Constituency, in Gudalur and Pandalur Taluks, are being evicted. There is a danger of them losing their livelihood. This problem came about because the Janmam Abolition Act of 1969 was passed in Tamil Nadu and nearly 80,000 acres of land were taken over by the Revenue Department in that area. Those people who have had leases for these lands in the *Janmam* time were given *pattas* when they produced lease documents and paid the land value. But people who could not pay the land value were allowed to stay in these lands and cultivate those lands. They have been paying land tax, electricity tax and water tax. They have been living there for 40 years. Now, these types of lands were classified as Section 17

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\* Not Recorded.

lands. Also, an assessment was done of ordinary village grazing grounds of wastelands and reclassified as "forest land" under Section 53 of the Janmam Act and Section 4 of the Forests Act.

I would like to request the Central Government to intervene immediately and see that the applications under Section 17 - it was directed by the Supreme Court in 2002 - are assessed and *pattas* are granted to the people who have applied. Sir, 65,000 applications are pending, and eviction is taking place in wrongly classified land under Section 53 of the Forests Act.

I would like to reiterate here that a high level committee should be sent by the Environment & Forests Minister from Delhi to have assessment of this land and see that proper evaluation is done. These people are small people, having 10 cents, 20 cents and one acre of land. They have been living there for 40 years. They have been paying all revenues but suddenly bulldozers and tractors came and they are thrown out of their lands. When you go round this place, you will find one acre of forest land in between 20 acres of *patta* land. This is unheard of. I would request the Central Government to have reassessment of these lands and see that this eviction is stopped immediately.