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Title: Requests the Government to write-off the interest and principal amount of loan given by the Coffee Board to the coffee grower of Kerala.

SHRI P. SANKARAN (CALICUT): Sir, I would like to draw your kind attention to the plight of the coffee growers of Kerala. Kerala is the second largest coffee producer State in India, with almost 73,000 small time planters in the fields. Due to the Government's decision to sell the coffee to Coffee Board, the conditions of the small planters have become very worse. They are compelled to sell their products to Coffee Board at a low price.

As a result of that they are finding it difficult to maintain their estates. They availed various types of loans from the Coffee Board and now they are unable to repay the loan and interest to the Board. The Coffee Board started filing civil suits against the coffee planters. As a result of this, they are in a pitiable condition. So, I request the hon. Minister of Commerce to quash the interest as well as the principal amount.

There was a scheme in 1990 when Shri V.P. Singh was the premier of this country. At that time an Agricultural Rural Debt Scheme was introduced and debts were written-off but this was not made applicable to the coffee growers. As a result, the interest was accumulated and now they are not in a position to repay the interest as well as the capital amount. Unless this is written-off, they will be in such a pitiable condition.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: What do you want the Central Government to do in this regard?

SHRI P. SANKARAN : I want the Central Government to write-off the principal amount and the interest amount.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS (MUVATTUPUZHA): Sir, there was an assurance given by the former Minister of Commerce that interest would be waived.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: All right.