

Vidisha Parliamentary constituency have been adversely affected by pests, as a result of which the farmers of the area are very much concerned. I, therefore, request the Central as well as State Governments to declare the aforesaid areas as pest-infected immediately, to provide the farmers with pesticides at fair prices. And the Government should make arrangements for aerial spray of pesticides on war footing. I hope the Union Agriculture Ministry would take immediate steps in this regard.

[English]

(v) **Need for central assistance for construction of hill-highways in Idukki District of Kerala**

PROF P. J. KURIEN (Idukki) : Idukki in Kerala is one of the most undeveloped districts in the country. Perhaps this is one of the few districts where there is no industry worth the name.

Idukki is a hill district where much of the cash crops of Kerala namely cardamom, ginger, pepper, rubber etc. are grown. Thus this district contributes enormously to the foreign exchange earnings of the country. The idea behind formation of this district was to ensure the development of the hilly region of Kerala. But no significant development has taken place there.

One of the reasons for its backwardness is lack of roads. A major chunk of Idukki district such as Devikulam, Peerumedu, Udumbumchola etc. is in the high ranges of the Western ghats. In the absence of roads, effective communication is absolutely impossible and this has hampered trade and other activities. This area is inhabited by settlers and plantation labour, whose hard work has made it possible for the country to earn valuable foreign exchange. For the development of this district, construction of a hill highway is very essential. This hill-highway can connect all the important cash-crop growing areas in the district.

But the financial condition of the State is not such as would enable it to undertake such a costly project. Therefore, I would request the Centre to allot sufficient funds

so that this hill-highway could be constructed at the earliest.

12.24 hrs,

[Shri Sharad Dighe *in the Chair*]

(vi) **Need for changing rules so that loan can be given to various States including West Bengal for providing tubewells**

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE (Panskura) : It is well known that States in the Eastern region, including West Bengal, are not yet developed in irrigation facilities as are necessary. Apart from big irrigation projects they also have to depend on the underground water resources in a big way.

For extending the network of deep and shallow tubewells the West Bengal Government applied for a loan of Rs. 10 crores from the Life Insurance Corporation of India. The West Bengal Government also pointed out that the same tubewells can be very well used for pure drinking water as well.

Unfortunately the LIC refused on the ground that they can give loan only for drinking water projects.

I draw the notice of the Finance Minister to this matter. Since the L.I.C. has substantial resources at its command and this is a problem of national importance, I urge that if necessary the rules be changed so that loan can be given to various State Governments, including that of West Bengal, for such projects as would meet both irrigation and drinking water requirements which are of prime importance for developing agricultural production.

I urge the Finance Minister to examine this question and help the West Bengal Government to get this loan of Rs. 10 crores.

(vii) **Relief for cyclone-hit areas of Andhra Pradesh**

SHRI P. PENCHA- LAIAH (Nellore) :