

I lay a copy of the Discussion Paper, which I propose to issue for public opinion, on the Table of the House.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT-3074/86]

The Government hopes that the proposals contained in this Paper based on Trust in the taxpayer will be subjected to wide discussion and generate a healthy national debate not only in the House but also outside by the public and the experts. This debate will help the Government in rationalising the provisions and simplifying the procedures and to come up with proposals that will encourage voluntary compliance which is so essential for the fiscal system in a country like ours. After a careful consideration of the suggestions and comments received by 30th September, 1986, the Government proposes to come forward with comprehensive Amendment Bill in the next Budget Session of the Parliament and with a common Direct Taxes Code within the Financial Year 1987-88.

I may add that at page 8 of the paper in para 8.4, sub-para (c) should read as follows and not as already printed :

“4 (c) The onus of proving all the elements of the offence except culpable mental state will remain with the Income-tax Department. The onus of proving the absence of the existence of culpable mental state will now be with the assessee.”

12.17 hrs.

STATEMENT RE : SITUATION ARISING
OUT OF FLOODS IN VARIOUS
PARTS OF THE COUNTRY

[English]

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE
(DR. G. S. DHILLON) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, reports have been received from various State Governments about the situation arising out of floods during the current monsoon. *(Interruptions)*

SOME HON. MEMBERS : Sir, let him lay it on the Table of the House.

MR. SPEAKER : You may lay it on the Table.

(Interruptions)

PROF. P. J. KURIEN (Idukki) : We want to hear the statement. We want to know what action is taken by the Government. *(Interruptions)*

DR. G. S. DHILLON : Reports have been received from various State Governments about the situation arising out of floods during the current monsoon. Certain areas of the following States have been affected by floods in varying degrees :

(1) Andhra Pradesh, (2) Assam, (3) Bihar, (4) Haryana, (5) Himachal Pradesh, (6) Jammu and Kashmir, (7) Karnataka, (8) Kerala, (9) Madhya Pradesh, (10) Orissa, (11) Punjab, (12) Rajasthan, (13) Uttar Pradesh and (14) West Bengal.

As per reports received from the State Governments so far floods/heavy rains have affected 71 districts in these States. A total population of 46.95 lakhs in an area of 9.86 lakh hectares, including 3.61 lakh hectares of cropped area, has been affected. Over 37,000 houses are reported to have been damaged. It is unfortunate that 172 persons have lost their lives and 7 persons are missing.

The State Governments have taken relief and rehabilitation measures to alleviate the distress of the affected people. Even though the responsibility of carrying out the relief and rehabilitation activities is primarily that of the State Governments, Government of India is fully alive to the situation arising out of natural calamities, maintains a close liaison with the State Governments and renders all possible assistance with a view to mitigating the distress of the affected people.

As the members are aware, the financing of relief expenditure is based on the recommendations of the 8th Finance Commission and Government decisions thereon. The Margin Money available annually to the States

has been increased from Rs. 100.55 crores to Rs. 240.75 crores on the recommendations of the 8th Finance Commission from the year 1985-86. This will enable the States to take immediate action for providing relief to the flood affected people.

I share with the House my concern at the suffering caused by the floods. The State Governments have been taking all necessary relief measures. The Central Government will ensure that relief measures are not hampered by paucity of funds.

The State Government of Punjab have submitted a memorandum seeking Central assistance for flood relief. A Central Team will visit Punjab to assess the requirements of Central assistance shortly. No other State has submitted a memorandum, seeking Central assistance for flood relief.

PROF. P. J. KURIEN (Idukki) : Sir, when so many people died and so much damages have taken place, why don't you send a Central team to other States also? In Kerala 45 persons died. Please send a central team to Kerala also. Why do you wait for the State Government to send you a report?

[*Translation*]

SHRI SHANTI DHARIWAL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, Kota, Rajasthan, has also suffered heavy damage. Three thousand houses have collapsed there.....

(*Interruptions*)

12.21 hrs.

STATEMENT RE : PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO LONDON AND MEXICO

[*English*]

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI RAJIV GANDHI) : I attended the Commonwealth Heads of Government Review Meeting in London from 3rd to 5th August, the Summit Meeting of the Six Nation Five Continent Initiative at Ixtapa in Mexico from 6th to 7th August, I also paid an official visit to Mexico from 7th to 9th August.

2. The Commonwealth Heads of Government Review Meeting took place in the light of our decision at Nassau last October that concerted pressure must be brought to bear on the Pretoria regime to dismantle apartheid. Our aim is to facilitate a peaceful transition to majority rule in a united and non-fragmented South Africa on the basis of universal adult franchise.

3. We had decided at Nassau to form an Eminent Persons Group to facilitate a political dialogue on South Africa. The broad-based Group included Sardar Swaran Singh. As many of us had anticipated, the Group could not make the Pretoria regime see reason. But its work represents a significant step in the fight against apartheid. Its report is a moving and authoritative portrayal of the horrors of apartheid. It has stirred the conscience of all nations.

4. We were personally briefed in London on this report by the two Co-Chairmen of the Group-General Obasanjo, former President of Nigeria, and Mr. Malcolm Fraser, former Prime Minister of Australia. This briefing confirmed the clear and unanimous finding of the EPG Report, namely, that only concerted pressure by the international community can forestall a bloodbath in South Africa.

5. At Nassau, we had unanimously decided upon a common programme of action which included a number of economic measures against South Africa. We had agreed that if these measures and the efforts of the Eminent Persons Group failed to promote a dialogue within six months further measures, as envisaged in paragraphs 7 and 8 of the Accord, would be considered.

6. In London, all except Britain, decided to adopt the measures listed in paragraph 7 of the Nassau Accord and three additional measures. The British Government dissociated itself from the measures agreed to by the others. It was willing to implement only a few limited measures, one of which would be subject to a future EEC decision. Because of Britain's unfortunate stand, the rest of us decided to go ahead with sanctions rather than compromise on a diluted package which would destroy the credibility of the Commonwealth and go