

twenty lakh tonnes of which have been recently sealed in Gujarat.

If the ergot-affected wheat is consumed, it can cause paralysis and dysentery. If it is used as seed, it can cause the disease in an epidemic form also.

This wheat was tested in the Plant Protection Quarantine Laboratory at Bhavnagar in Saurashtra, where it was found polluted, and it was decided that such wheat should not be off-loaded from the ships, but due to some unknown reasons it was off-loaded.

I would, therefore, request that the Government should conduct a high-level enquiry, preferably a CBI enquiry, into the matter.

**(viii) Need to provide essential commodities and financial assistance to the cyclonic affected people of Andaman and Nicobar Islands**

SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA (Andaman & Nicobar Islands): The Andaman and Nicobar Islands have been badly affected by cyclone and torrential rains, causing huge damage to agricultural crops, plantations, damage to jetties, backwaters, roads, buildings etc. The rough estimates of damage would go to more than Rs. 10 crores. On the 16th November, the cyclonic weather and the rain did not allow the aircraft to land at Port Blair. Only on the 17th November a flight could land at Port Blair. And even thereafter, the torrential rains and the cyclonic weather continued, and more or less the Island was cut off from the mainland. On the 24th night, the cyclone intensified and caused massive damage, and the cyclone continued till 29th November. Damage was caused from Great Nicobar in the South to Diglipur in the north.

Although no human life was lost during this period, the fishermen lost their boats, fishing nets etc., and some houses. On the 7th and 8th December, another cyclone

along with torrential rains started in the Northern and Middle Andamans, which took 15 lives, with 21 missing. Huge loss of cattle and poultry birds has also occurred. Paddy crops, plantation crops, rabi crops like vegetables, oilseeds and pulses have been completely lost. A few hundred families have been rendered homeless. Immediate relief measures are necessary for rehabilitating the families who lost their homes, and for supply of cattle, fishermen's boats, nets etc., to enable them to start activities for their livelihood. Immediate provision for work has to be made, without which people will face starvation. There is acute shortage of essential commodities in the Island. Immediate arrangements should be made to despatch essential commodities to the Island, on a war-footing basis.

I would like to appeal to the Government to take immediate, sympathetic action for providing liberal assistance to the Union Territory Administration.

**(ix) need to direct NALCO, BALCO and SECL to provide jobs to one person from each family displaced by the execution of their projects in Orissa**

SHRI SOMNATH RATH (Aska): A large number of people have been displaced following the execution of projects by National Aluminium Company and South-Eastern Coalfields Ltd. in Orissa. NALCO and South-Eastern Coalfields Ltd. had promised to provide jobs to one member from each displaced family. But it is unfortunate that neither NALCO nor SE Coalfields Ltd. is strictly observing the rules with regard to providing jobs to the persons whose lands were acquired. Bharat Aluminium Company has also not been able to arrive at an agreement with the local people regarding their suitable rehabilitation. All the affected persons are poor, marginal farmers, and most of them are tribals.

As such, I demand that NALCO, BALCO and SECL which are in the public sector, should be directed by the Govern-

[Sh. Somnath Rath]

ment of India to provide suitable employment to the displaced persons in Orissa.

11.25 hrs.

FOREST (CONSERVATION) AMENDMENT BILL — *Contd.*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Now we take up further consideration of the following motion moved by Shri Z.R. Ansari, on the 7th December, 1988, namely:—

"That the Bill to amend the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, as passed by Rajya Sabha, be taken into consideration."

Shri Shantaram Naik.

SHRISHANTARAM NAIK (Panaji): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I stand here to support very strongly the Forest (Conservation) Amendment Bill, 1988. In fact, the object of the Bill, although it is very limited, yet in a way it seeks to cure some of the omissions which were contained in the main Act, namely, the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. In fact, I would have been happy, as I had suggested earlier in this House, if the Forest Act 1927 and the Forest Act 1980 were amalgamated and merged into one forest legislation, because, absolutely there is no need for two piecemeal legislations.

1 .25 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Even when the Forest Act, 1980 was enacted, it ought to have been enacted as an amendment to the Forest Act, 1927. If you see the Forest Act, it will be found that it is an

age-old Act, and requires a thorough amendment. No doubt, the lacunae which that Act contains have been cured by the 1980 Act, it is true and somehow we are trying to conserve and protect our forests by the 1980 Act. But if an overall review of the 1927 Act was taken and one consolidated place of legislation on forests was enacted, I think from the point of view of procedure it would have been very ideal.

I will take you to one clause here in the present Bill. For, two non-forest purposes are sought to be added here. It says, "that any forest land or any portion thereof may be assigned by way of lease or otherwise to any private person or to any authority." Now, by way of lease if you have assigned, it will be covered under non-forest purposes. What will happen in case you give by way of licence. You may say that licence may come under the word "otherwise", "lease or otherwise". If a person assigns by way of licence, because you have said here by way of lease or otherwise, so, it may mean that licence is covered under the word "otherwise". But it is not so, because under licence you do not assign. Property is not assigned to a person. Therefore, licence goes scot-free and is not covered under this clause. Kindly examine this aspect. Because "any forest land or any portion thereof may be assigned by way of lease or otherwise." first thing is that you have to assign and in the licence provided for here, you do not assign any property. Therefore, this aspect, I would like to be got checked so that the lacuna does not remain.

Secondly, our ideal is for having 33 per cent of forests. Today some say it is 19 per cent of land is under forest area, whereas some say that it is below 10 per cent. What is the figure, in fact, as of today according to the Government of India, may also be revealed and the House may be taken into confidence. What is the forest coverage which exists today? Is it 19 per cent or below 10 per cent And if it is below 10 per cent, what are we going to do, to achieve the objective of 33 per cent.