

COMMITTEE ON SUBORDINATE
LEGISLATION

[English]

First Report

SHRI DHARAM PAL SINGH MALIK (Sonepat) : Sir, I beg to present the First Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Committee on Subordinate Legislation.

CALLING ATTENTION TO A
MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC
IMPORTANCE

[Translation]

Reported destruction of forests and
pollution of air, water and
atmosphere

SHRIMATI KRISHNA SAHI (Begusarai) : I call the attention of the Minister of Environment and Forest to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon :

“Reported destruction of forests and pollution of air, water and atmosphere and steps taken by Government thereon to protect and maintain the ecological balance in the country.”

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI VIR SEN) : Government are fully cognisant of the need to maintain ecological balance and control pollution. Recognising the growing importance of environmental issues, a nodal Department of Environment was set up at the Centre in November, 1980. More recently, the Ministry of Environment and Forests was formed. Many State Governments have also created or designated Departments for Environment.

Long-term conservation measures have been initiated on a wide front. The enactment of the Forest (Conservation) Act, in 1980 has considerably reduced the diversion of forests to non-forest uses. State/Union Territory Governments have been advised to impose a moratorium on tree felling in

sensitive areas and exercise greater vigilance for protection of forests. Guidelines have been issued for preparation of forest management plans with emphasis on conservation and maintenance of ecological stability. Social forestry programmes have been scaled up. A major recent initiative is the setting up of the National Wastelands Development Board with the objective of raising 5 million hectares of plantations every year for fuel wood and fodder.

13 sites of representative biogeographic areas have been identified for designation as biosphere for conservation of biological diversity. Eco-development programmes have been taken up to demonstrate technologies for improvement of degraded ecosystems with active public participation, especially of students, women and rural youth. Applied research for preservation of degraded ecosystems is being promoted in the universities and research institutes. The Himalayan Institute for Environment and Development and some Centres of Advance Studies in selected priority areas are being set up. Environmental Education and Training have been assigned a special role. A procedure has been evolved for incorporating environmental safeguards into major development projects.

Our rivers on the downstream of major settlements are polluted by municipal and industrial wastes in varying degrees. Air quality deterioration has taken place in pockets of some urban and industrial centres. The Central Pollution Control Board coordinates the activities of the State Boards (18 so far set up) which are responsible for controlling pollution in their respective States. Monitoring of water and air quality is being done through a net-work of stations. The Central Board has completed a use based zoning and classification of all the 14 major inter-State rivers. Basinwise inventories of polluting industries have been made for the rivers Yamuna and Ganga. Minimum National Standards specifying effluent standards have been prescribed for some major groups of industries. The Central and State Boards have been persuading industries to adopt pollution control measures and legal action is also being taken against polluting units wherever necessary. For selected polluting industries, procedures have been laid down for site clearance from environmental angle before converting letters of

intent into industrial licences. Steps are also being taken to control industrial emissions and vehicular exhausts for improving air quality.

Hon'ble Members are already aware of the recently launched Ganga Action Plan aimed at prevention of pollution in the Ganga.

I have outlined some of the steps taken by Government for maintaining ecological balance and controlling pollution. The following are some of the further initiatives we have in mind to protect the forests and environment :—

1. Forest legislation will be amended to make it more effective.
2. The forest protection forces will be strengthened and modernised.
3. Forest areas requiring to be legally notified for effective management and protection will be so notified.
4. Steps will be taken to enforce control on movement of forest produce.
5. Wood consumption will be minimized and wherever possible fiscal incentives provided to promote substitution of wood.
6. The mechanism for monitoring forest protection will be modernized and strengthened.
7. In the ultimate analysis, the survival of forests is dependent upon conservation and afforestation being made a people's movement. This will be done.
8. A wide network of water quality monitoring stations would be established to cover all the major river systems.
9. The number of air quality monitoring stations would be substantially increased.
10. All the existing large and medium industries would be persuaded or compelled to take pollution control measures.
11. A programme would be drawn up for municipal wastes treatment and more scientific solid wastes management in important urban settlements.
12. The environmental information system will be strengthened to provide data base for better environmental management and environmental protection.
13. The involvement and the initiatives of State Governments are crucial to the cause of ecological conservation and prevention of pollution. The States will be encouraged to build up their capabilities in this regard.
14. Enforcement of anti-pollution laws will be strengthened and necessary legislative changes will be initiated to make the laws more effective.
15. In order to give a frame work for sustainable development, steps will be taken to draw up a national conservation strategy.

I would like to assure the Hon'ble Members that the Government fully share their concern and will take all possible measures to protect and improve our environment.

[*Translation*]

SHRIMATI KRISHNA SAHI (Begusarai) : Mr. Speaker, Sir deep concern has been expressed in the House regarding the situation created due to pollution of the atmosphere. There are no two opinions about it that pollution has posed immense danger to the humanity as the atmosphere has become poisonous. It is why the people express their anxiety about the pollution of the atmosphere.

In his broadcast to the nation on 5th January, 1985, the Hon. Prime Minister had also said that steps would be taken to ensure availability of cleaner air and water in all parts of the country and that is why attention has been paid towards the important subject of cleaning Ganga water as also about setting up a Ganga Authority.

The rivers are life lines of any country and river Ganga is not only symbol of our culture and civilisation, but it is also a life line of our country. Therefore, Shrimati Indira Gandhi had laid stress on this matter long back and during a conference at Stockholm in 1973, Shrimati Indira Gandhi had said that the current environmental crisis before the world is likely to change the future of this planet. It appears that this is proving to be time today.

12.17 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

The Hon. Minister is aware that emphasis has been laid on the importance of conservation of forests in the constitution since 1950-51 and when Five Year Plans were formulated, at that time also emphasis was laid on man made forests and in the national plan also, development of forestry was given an important place. Despite these efforts, there is not even 25 per cent forest area to maintain ecological balance.

You would agree with me that in West Germany, 28.10 per cent of total area is forest area, in Japan 61.8 per cent of total area is forest area. For Finland, USA and USSR, this percentage is 70, 32.8, and 33.9 respectively. Even a small country like Thailand has 77.2 per cent of total land as forest area. In Australia, it is 40 per cent, but what is the percentage for our country? It is only 22.8 per cent, whereas according to the national Forest Policy, there should have been forest in 37 per cent of total area.

During the past 30 years, 40 per cent of forests in the areas near the banks of Ganga river has been denuded and all of us are aware of this fact. In addition, you may go through the report of a British Scientist, Norman Mayer, He has referred to it exhaustively. India has to suffer a loss of 100 crore of dollar per annum due to drought and floods. A large area of land is affected by soil erosion. I would, therefore like to draw your attention towards this problem as several lakh acres of land has become unsuitable for agriculture.

Due to burning of coal and mineral oils, there has been huge increase in the level of carbon di-oxide in the atmosphere. This

has posed danger for human life also. There is not only the problem of drought and floods, but there is a serious problem of land erosion and soil erosion. This problem is acquiring serious proportions. Therefore, there is an imbalance today between nature and human beings. It is, therefore, very necessary for you to pay your attention to strike a balance between them.

The scheme which you have referred are commandable, you have also said in your statement that the Central Government have asked the State Governments and the Union Territories to be more vigilant in this regard.

You have mentioned many such other things in your statement, but I would like to tell you that until the law is implemented strictly, forests will continue to be denuded. One is natural calamity and other is man made calamity. A situation is created by human beings, which poses danger to our lives you have to see to it. The destruction being caused by human beings is taking all of us towards destruction of humanity.

You are already aware that Prevention and Control of Air and Water Pollution Act was passed and amended in 1974 and 1981. A Bill to check pollution was brought forward in Parliament in 1980. I remember that Bhisma Babu was the Minister at that time and while speaking on the Bill he told that in 1974, the Act regarding Water Pollution was not adopted by seven States. You had passed the law and the orders were issued under the law, but at that time it was brought to notice that although conservation of Forests Act, 1980 was being passed and Conservation of Wild Life Act had already been passed in 1972, yet forests were being denuded indiscriminately. You have to see to it as to what action could be taken to present it.

If you go through the draft of your National Forests Policy, you will find that a statement has been given in it in which details about afforestation in various States are given. If one goes through this statement, area of denudation of forests in various States in 1980-81 and 1981-82 in given state-wise. In respect of Bihar, area of denuded forests in showe as 'nil' i.e., forests were not denuded at all there.

Sir you might recall that a massive agitation was launched in Singhbhum, Bihar. Ten thousand hectares out of a total 15,000 hectares of forest land was denuded there. Such a massive agitation was launched there, even then it has been mentioned there that forest land was not denuded there at all.

Sir, you are already aware of the scenic beauty of Chhota Nagpur. If you ask for the correct data of all such areas, you would find that a major part of forest area has been denuded. You have said that steps would be taken and the situation would be improved. These things are for the future, but whatever has been lost cannot be regained. You should take steps to check the loss of whatever we have at present.

You have formulated another rule under Poisonous Pesticides Act, which says that use and production of deadly chemicals would be banned. It has not come down, rather it has been increasing. The farmers are poor. When thousands of acres of crops is affected by pests and insects, the farmers are compelled to use pesticides. But there is no reference to all these things in your statement. All these things are very minor but they must be given due importance. You have made no mention as to how much pollution is taking place due to all these things and what measures should be taken to check it.

There is also an Act regarding keeping of the banks of rivers clean, but if you see the river banks, you would see as to how clean the river banks are. Do you punish those persons who violate the rule? You should provide more teeth to this Act and implement it strictly. If a farmer makes this allegation that this crop has been destroyed due to air pollution caused by the nearby factory, even then the functioning of the factory is not stopped, nor does he get compensation in time. He does not also get justice when he goes to the court. I would like to make a mention of my area. There is an Alcohol factory in Mokama. There is one McDowell factory on the banks of the Ganga river and this factory is creating so much pollution that people say that they do not take bath in water, but they take bath in wine. What is the law for them? The people filed a case against them. The central government as also the state government

did not take any action despite the law passed by the government itself. But when people filed a case, the case was hushed up and no action was taken, because whether it is a court or the executive, the factory owners pay illegal gratification from top to bottom and suppress the action being against them.

Similarly you can see how much pollution is taking place in Dhanbad and coal mines. Therefore, it is the need of the hour that the law is defined properly so as to check the pollution of atmosphere effectively. You might have read in the Newspapers that after coming into force of "Fresh Air Laws" in London, the people are getting more Sunlight during winters than whatever it was available in 1956. The people are making efforts to make the life of the people more comfortable and peaceful. Our government is, of course, very much concerned about it and are making efforts in this regard.

You know that rivers, lakes, springs, ponds, large oceans, green forests, vegetables, fresh air, fertile land and blue sky are all a gifts from the Nature to the humanity and we can say that these things are a gift of God to the man. But even then we are not able to protect them. What steps would you take about the settlements of the poor where there is filth and pollution, open drains and mosquitos? What steps would you take to deal with the diseases which are spread due to such unhealthy atmosphere. What is the number of such places where clean drinking water is not available. What would you do to deal with increasing diseases? What would you do to make arrangement, of latrines in the villages and the human settlements where the poor live? You have therefore, to see to it and consider the steps to check the pollution there. Government should, first, check the unhealthy condition and the pollution in the cities. A very large number of vehicles are on the roads today. I remember that earlier it was prohibited to blow horn in front of a hospital but today, no body observes this rule.

Therefore, the relevant Act should be implemented effectively. The people in this area are facing soil erosion and it extends to 10 Square kilometres along the banks of Ganga where the Barauni oil-refinery and fertilizer plant are located. The soil erosion

is proving disastrous to the place where all plants are located. I, therefore, request that the law should be made more stringent and it should be watched to what extent the State Government is implementing it. The Law should be practical in its approach. Besides an awareness and an awakening has to be brought in the society regarding forests.

As you have said earlier that the new education system is to be introduced very soon and, therefore, the curriculum should be so framed as to make the children aware of these things from the very childhood. Besides this through the Television, Films, Documentaries and other public media, the people should be told how to check the pollution in Ganga and also other types of pollutions particularly in rural areas.

The Hon. Prime Minister has done a lot in this regard and is intending to do so in future also. But this will not help much unless awakening in society is brought about. Therefore, with social balance, the political equilibrium will also have to be maintained, and only then the country could be saved from catastrophe.

In the end I will like to quote what Gautam Buddha said centuries ago with regard to forests :

“The forest is the symbol of kindness and benevolence and it does not demand any thing for its survival. It meets the needs for human sustenance generously and provides protection to the animals. It even protects the woodcutter, who destroys forests wealth”.

It is, therefore, imperative on the part of all of us to protect the forests.

SHRI VIR SEN : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Rules provide that a subject which is of urgent public importance and the disallowance of which may cause ineparable damage to the interests of the country, I feel, should be considered for admission as a calling Attention Notice. The Calling Attention notice that has been placed before the House today questions the entire gamut of Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Forests. I feel that it is, therefore, worth considering whether a Calling Attention motion can raise a question which has such a wide scope.

I have already replied to the questions extensively in the statement and I feel that— have not left any point. So far as the importance of forests and forests wealth is concerned, Government is active on that front and the steps have been taken keeping in view the above fact. We admit that the survival of mankind and the human race depends a lot on forests....(*Interruptions*)

You have spoken for about twenty minutes and raised many point, and perhaps you expect me to reply to all of them in one or two sentences. At the begining you said that our forest wealth has been reduced to 22.8 per cent as compared to other countries. I congratulate you for studying a lot on this subject. You seem to take keen interest in this matter. It is an admitted fact that the forests in our country have denuded very much and one of the reasons has been our apathy to it by following age-old policies. The first policy was formulated during the British period in 1892 but the forests were not given due importance keeping in view the revenue earnings from them. After independence and especially since 1952 the forest policy saw a dramatic change. Now we are thinking to bring forward some changes in the existing policy and I expect that we will shortly make an announcement to that effect.

12.37 hrs.

[SHRI ZAINUL BASHER *in the Chair*]

SHRIMATI KRISHNA SAHI : The pollution in Ganga in our area is being caused by factories.

SHRI VIR SEN : We are laying special emphasis on water pollution and air pollution but we have not done much with regard to noise pollution. So far as water pollution is concerned we have prepared a scheme worth Rs. 250 crores to check pollution in Ganga. The pollution in most of the rivers is due to cities which amount to 90 per cent pollution and the remaining 10 per cent is caused by industrial pollution. 7 per cent of the industrial pollution is caused by big industries like distilleries etc. We are paying full attention to all of them. We are using persuasion in this respect and we have also prosecuted many persons. I can give the number of prosecutions that have been filed and the success we have achieved in those

cases. There is no complacency on our part. We are also asking various industries to instal equipments which may help remove the pollution. I believe that there are two types of industries—those which already existed before this Act came into force, and the others which came after it and, therefore, we are trying to persuade these industries to instal equipments at the earliest which may remove pollution in those industries. There are 4,000 industries which are creating pollution and 1966 industries, i.e., almost half of them have installed the equipment which may help remove pollution and some of them are in the process of installing such equipments, installation of which would soon be completed.

So far as small units are concerned, we are formulating schemes to set up combined treatment plants for them. Certain States, like Gujarat have already formulated such a scheme and the same is being implemented properly. So far as these industries are concerned, I feel much progress has been made in this respect. We are having good progress in this direction. So far as air pollution is concerned; in my view air pollution is caused due to two factors; i.e., Chimneys and major vehicles. We are making a lot of efforts to prevent it. Petrol contains a good quantity of lead. Efforts are being made to reduce its quantity. The standard content is considered to be 0.56 milligrams per litre and it causes no harm. Still efforts are being made to reduce it further to 0.20 milligrams per litre so as to minimise pollution. So far as smoke from exhaust is concerned, we are asking the industries to manufacture such equipments as may be fitted in exhaust-pipe in order to control it. Similarly, so far as emission of smoke from chimneys is concerned, industries are being urged to instal electro-static precepitators in large number in order to minimise air pollution. An electrostatic precipitator can prevent almost 99.5 per cent pollution. So, you well see that we are paying adequate attention towards prevention of water and air pollution.

So far as the question of pollution of rivers and lakes is concerned, you know that due to financial constraints we cannot take up this work simultaneously. But our policies and plans are such as to prevent pollution wherever it exists. So far as pollution of rivers is concerned, we have already done and are further doing monitoring of pollution

in rivers. After monitoring we will tack up data analysis which will take 3 to 5 years. Accordingly, we will formulate schemes and take up those rivers first where pollution is more. A study has already been undertaken in this regard. So, there is no need to worry about it.

You have specifically drawn our attention towards forests. You are aware that forests have been denuded on a very large scale. The difficulty is that our Forest Act dates back to 1927. It has become absolute and needs to be amended. At present we are examining the amendments to be made in it. After examination of them, we will bring forward a Bill in this House to amend that Act. We are taking a number of steps to prevent deforestation effectively. I hope that the Hon. Minister well be satisfied with the steps being taken us by in this direction.

You have made a mention of many things such as drought, land erosion, un-cultivable land, carbon-di-oxide, enviromental imbalance and also about industries manufacturing poisonous substances. We have made a provision even for these industries that will be set up in future that they will have to obtain clearance from the Department of environment as also about the site of their installation and the licence or the letter of intent will not be sanctioned prior to that clearance. We are working on all fronts to check pollution. I am sure in view of the facts stated above, the Hon. Member would be satisfied.

[English]

SHRI D. N. REDDY (Cuddapah) : Mr. Chairman, just now the Hon. Minister passed two remarks, very strange and out of context. One was that the matter was not so urgent as to call for a calling attention notice. Another thing was that he was not directly connected with the subject; so many other Ministries were also concerned.

SHRI VIR SEN : I did not say that many Ministries were concerned.

SHRI D. N. REDDY : But didn't you say that it was not that urgent so as to call for a calling attention notice ?

It is the Speaker, who allows the calling attention notice. I think, it is the height of hypocrisy to pass such remarks against the

calling attention notice. Once it is admitted by the Hon. Speaker, you have to obey the Speaker, Minister or no Minister. Calling attention notice has been admitted by the Hon. Speaker and your business and your duty is to answer our points. You cannot pass remarks against the calling attention notice.

Forests are nature's gift to mankind. It is the green gold of the country. Man is dependent on tress for his very existence. Few sites are more beautiful than a full-grown tree laden with fruit and flower. Forest wealth is very important to economic development. Every modern industry depends upon the forest products to some extent or the other, either directly or indirectly. The forests provide food, fuel oil and products for paper and cloth industries, and most important of all is the life giving oxygen after absorbing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

According to specialists, 33 per cent of the existing land should be under cover of forests and only than the ecological balance will be maintained and the mankind benefited. Now, it is calculated that only about 23 per cent of the land is under forest, and it is fast decreasing because of the senseless deforestation and degradation of the forests. The country has lost about 4.3 million hectares of forest land in the last thirty years. Probably again to afforest that area, it may not only take thirty years, probably it will take three hundred years. I am very happy that the subject has been taken by the Prime Minister himself, and he has constituted a Wasteland Development Board, which has a target of about five million hectares of land for afforestation every year. I hope, the Hon. Prime Minister would see that this scheme is properly enforced and he would not be satisfied with simple statistics.

Forest all over are subjected to either deforestation or degradation. If this process continues, by the turn of the century, I am afraid, there will not be any undisturbed forest left worth the name.

Our specialists say that devastating floods, decrease of rainfall in various parts of the world and pollution of the atmosphere are very much due to indiscriminate deforestation.

The land's ability to serve mankind is sapped by man himself. That is our tragedy and it has been continuing for the last so many years. Naturally, the Government will have to come out with very strict laws to prevent cutting of trees. In this context, I may submit and I think, the Hon. Minister is already aware, that only the rich and the higher classes of society are the real culprits and the poor take only dry wood for fuel. The rich people and the contractors are the real menace and they are responsible for degradation and deforestation in the country. In my area in Rayalseema, there is a paper factory in Kurnool. There is only one forest worth the name, Nalamala. They have been systematically denuding the forest and smuggling that wood without licence. That is the only forest in that area and that too is being deforested.

Only two or three years back, there were very strong rumours—I am not going to mention the names—that in Simla, very highly placed persons were involved in the deforestation, but no action was taken against them. Instead of punishing them, they were rewarded. These are the people, who are responsible for sacrilege against nature.

I would like to mention another factor regarding development of new forests on a large scale. Let us begin at least now, so that the future generations may bless us and not curse us, because there will be no forests left, if the present situation continues.

Any amount of legislation, without people's cooperation is not likely to give results. For example I can quote two instances. Firstly, the *Chipko* Movement in a small remote village (I do not know where it is exactly situated) in Uttar Pradesh, where women took an initiative and stopped hts deforestation. I really congratulate them and actually it is worth emulation. In another villages, here also do not remember the name, the elders of the village gathered together and prohibited goats in the village just to protect trees. These are the people who will be able to conserve our forests wealth. Certainly Government has a responsibility to bring forward laws and they must be very strict also. But, whatever law you may be bringing, at the same time people also must be educated so that you can get their full cooperation.

There is another aspect of the matter, wherever there is a systematic deforestation, your staff has got a hand in it. It is the most corrupt department and without their knowledge nothing can happen, wood cannot be transported and forest wealth cannot be transported in a clandestine way. So, you have to gear up your staff first and then get the cooperation of the people.

Secondly, I have to mention the silent Valley Movement in Kerala. I must congratulate my friends because they have been successful, though against heavy odds, when the Centre came up with a Hydro-electric project in that area. The project may be set up, but it may be set up in some other place, so that the Silent Valley, which is so famous in Southern India, can be protected.

The Prime Minister has gone on record to say that measures will be taken to ensure cleaner air and water in all parts of the country. That is the first basic problem and first and primary duty of the Government. As I have already mentioned, I am very happy that the Prime Minister has taken this subject under his own wing and I am sure that he will take steps immediately, so that at least in stages this afforestation will grow and the ecological balance will be maintained.

Man pollutes shamelessly the pure Ganga whom we call Mother Ganga and then go and pollute it. Recently, a few months back, I, along with some of the other Hon. Members went to Rishikesh and Hardwar and after seeing what was happening there, I had to hang my head in shame. Anyway, the Government have come forward with a gigantic project and I hope things will improve.

Again, take Varanasi. I had, scrupulously avoided to go there because I have been warned that it is the dirtiest city in the whole of the world.

AN HON. MEMBER : The holiest too.

SHRI D.N. REDDY : Yes holy, but dirty too. I want to visit one of the holiest cities rather than the dirtiest city in the North. We have to take stringent steps so that people behave properly, and steps should be taken on very stringent lines to maintain the purity of our rivers. Man pollutes shamelessly the Holy Ganga, destroys the very useful forests which give oxygen, water

and prevent soil erosion. Soil erosion is a very important subject. Central and State Governments are spending millions of rupees to prevent soil erosion. At the same time, by cutting trees and by deforestation, we are increasing the area of soil erosion and again we spend crores of rupees to protect our soil. This is the sad state of affairs. It is hightime that Government wakes up to the realities and takes realistic steps. This is a matter of very great importance and we have to take steps immediately if we want to have any results. I am saying this because, it takes ages before we are able to get the results of intensive afforestation.

Sant Jambeswar, born 500 years ago, was the first ecologist, and he was against all these ills. He was wiser 500 years ago. We call ourselves civilised but we are still not wise to take his advice precisely and carry on his instructions on maintaining ecology in the atmosphere. Unless we wake up, our future generations will curse us for the very foul atmosphere we are creating, not only in our States but in other parts of the world also.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI VIR SEN) : Sir, firstly, I would like to take up the question which the Member has raised about the admissibility of the Calling Attention Motion. I have pointed out in the beginning that the rule provides for any subject. It does not mean the whole of the Ministry. It is not only one subject but every subject... ..

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : You are not supposed to discuss all these things. You can answer the question. You can't discuss it

(Interruptions)

SHRI VIR SEN : Has the question been admitted ?

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : If the Speaker has admitted it, you have to reply.

SHRI VIR SEN : Sir, I have performed

my duty and I have answered every question that is put to me....

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now he is answering the question ...

(Interruptions)

SHRI VIR SEN : Now, I would like to make one point. I think the Member has made some points about the rainfall, debility of the rain to sustainment and these are the questions where there can be no dispute. The Hon. Member agrees. I also agree that forests are important for survival of the human kind. So, there is no dispute about that. He has drawn attention to the rich people, particularly the contractors. The Government have already taken steps to eliminate the contractorship in the forest operations. In many of the States, already there is no contractorship. The felling of trees, the management of plantation are carried out by the corporations constituted in the States. So, I hope the Hon. Member who raised this question will be satisfied with this answer.

Now, the Hon. Members have said that we must begin now. Of course, we quite agree with the Hon. Members that we should begin; we have already begun. Under the Social Forestry Programme also, we have already taken steps in that direction. On the 5th of January, the Prime Minister made a declaration that we will be taking 5 million hectares of waste land every year for forestry, particularly for raising fuelwood and fodder. The Hon. Member will agree that we are going in that direction, and it is not now, but we are already taking steps in that direction.

Now, the Hon. Member spoke about Chipko. He was not talking of Chipko, but he was thinking that Chipko is a village. But may I remind that Chipko is not a village, it is a movement. This movement was started by Shri Sundarlal Bahuguna who is the supporter of the movement. In order to save the trees, he started this movement. If somebody comes and fell the trees, you should stick to the trees and save it. In other words, you embrace the trees. For this only he started the movement and has become Sunderlal Bahuguna

(Interruptions)

SHRI D.N. REDDY : Please put it in the trees. In fact they give such things....

(Interruptions)

SHRI VIR SEN : If you think that somewhere, the trees are being felled illegally, you may adopt that method of protection. That is very effective, I tell you.

I think the Hon. Member on the other side had also spoken about public cooperation, and involvement of the public. Of course, we are asking for public involvement. This Chipko movement is also one method by which public can be involved, and their cooperation obtained.

He talked about water pollution, ecological pollution, and particularly about Mother Ganges. I would like to tell the Hon. Member that for control of pollution at Hardwar, a specific provision is being made. A project costing something like Rs. 98 lakhs has already been sanctioned. Work is going on, on that project, and we hope that by January 1986, the project will be completed. We begin with Hardwar, and you will find that Hardwar will be almost clean by January 1986.

As far as Varanasi is concerned, he was talking of its being the dirtiest city. I may tell the Hon. Member that we are taking steps regarding Varanasi as well. The effluents which were falling into the river, arrangements are being made to divert effluents by a sewer which is being provided along the Ganges. Of course, this sewer line was already there; but because of financial constraints, it was not operating. Now we have provided financial support, with the result that pumping stations are beginning to work. Water—dirty or polluted water—is being diverted. It is not being allowed to fall into the river. In this manner, we are taking steps in this direction.

I think I have covered all the points which the Hon. Member had raised.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri G.M. Banatwalla is not there. Now Shri Srihari Rao.

[Translation]

*SHRI SHRIHARI RAO (Rajamundry) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Conservation of

*The speech was originally delivered in Telugu.

Forests Act came into being in 1980. Five years have already elapsed. Denudation of forests is still continuing. In fact it has become much faster now. The Government have failed to take action against the people who are destroying our forests.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Rao, you can continue after lunch. The House now stands adjourned, and will re-assemble at 2 p.m.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned for Lunch till Fourteen of the Clock.

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The Lok Sabha re-assembled after Lunch four minutes past Fourteen of the Clock.

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

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

—Contd.

Reported Destruction of Forests and Pollution of Air, Water and Atmosphere—Contd.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Now Shri Srihari Rao may continue.

[Translation]

*SHRI SRIHARI RAO (Rajamundry) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Central Government have appropriated all the rights of State Governments by enacting the Conservation of Forests Act. The State Governments have been relegated to a secondary position. The State Governments have no resources to implement the afforestation programmes. The Central Government are not providing money to the State Governments to grow more forests. There has not been any appreciable growth in our forests just because of these reasons.

Sir, social forestry programme is being implemented throughout the country in a casual manner by individuals. Certain individuals get the money from the Government for growing eucalyptus and other trees under this programme. But after 4 or 5

*The speech was originally delivered in Telugu.

years they cut all the trees they grew. As a result only these individuals are deriving the benefits. There is no improvement in the environment. This programme has not contributed at all for the growth of social forests in the country. It shows how defective the policy of the Government is.

Sir, it appears that the entire forest policy is defective. The Government declares a place as a reserve forest area where there is not even a shrub. No animal not even a dog is found in these areas. I will give you an example. An area of more than 2000 acres in the heart of Rajamundry is a reserve forest area. It was declared to be a reserved forest when Rajamundry was a small town with a population of 40,000. Not even a single tree can be seen now, in this reserved forest. Now the population of the town has swelled to 4 lakhs now. The town has become very congested. No effort has been made to develop this town. The town cannot develop, for, there is river Godavari on one side and this reserved forest on two sides. The boundaries of this town was fixed long ago. There is need to change the boundaries as the place available to accommodate 4 lakhs of population is not sufficient. This reserve forest which is no forest at all is obstructing the growth of the town. The Government has not done any thing to convert this area into a beautiful park so that at least it adds beauty to the town. This example is sufficient enough to show how defective the present policy is. Sir, waste lands should be developed into forests and not the useful lands in the heart of the cities. The policy needs to be amended that way. In fact, I ask for a thorough revision of the forest policy of the Government.

I want to give another example to show how defective the policy of the Government is. Telugu Ganga Project which will help in supplying drinking water to our Tamilian brothers in Madras and in irrigating millions of acres of land in Rayalaseema and other districts of Andhra Pradesh, has not yet been cleared by the Centre on the plea that the canal passes through reserved forest area. It is a silly argument. Though the area through which Telugu Ganga passes happens to be a reserved forest, hardly there are any trees. This canal does not destroy forest and on the other hand helps in the growth of forest around it. This project helps in providing drinking water to the people in