

Situation in the Country

You take news-print. The cost of news-print in our country is double than the imported one. Why should it be? Even Bangla Desh produces at half the cost at which we produce here. That means we are depriving millions of our country men to get news-papers because we are pricing it out of their reach. A small boy when he purchased books or he purchases a khata to write down his note has to pay more than the price in America, German, England. Why should it be? That is my point. What I am trying to impress upon the Finance Minister is that concrete and strong steps should be taken by which we can curb the prices in our country.

Yesterday I was seeing T.V. The manufacturer of Tamilnadu Newsprint was saying that they are producing at the same level, the same standard as elsewhere in the world. But it is not at the same price, that is the main point. So, in every matter we are going out of the world market. I would request the Finance Minister to find out how to curb the prices.

Last but not the least my point is that for the agriculture Sector he can grant some loan to tap the agricultural resources, which will be only spent in agricultural development and rural development. I think that will be a very good way of getting money for the agriculturists from the rural areas, as also doing something for the agricultural people.

Sir, In any case I do not want to take more of your time. I am very grateful that you have given me the time I am fully with our Finance Minister in his drive for improving the revenue, for stopping corruption everywhere and for improving the economic environment in the country. I am sure that if we can remove the difficulties that are there, India can really become a great country not only in size, but also in stature.

MR. CHAIRMAN : This discussion will continue tomorrow. Now we go to the next item, the Motion.

15.06 hrs

MOTION RE : ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT

[English]

SHRI DIGVIJAY SINH (Surendra Nagar) : Sir, I move :

"That this House is of the opinion that the environmental movement in the country is losing momentum and recommends to the Government to take steps for reviving the momentum at the grass-root level."

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I deem it a great privilege to initiate discussion on the environment under a Motion almost after six years.

15.06 hours

[**SHRIMATI BASAVARAJESWARI** *in the Chair*].

Before I say what I want to say, let me recapitulate the historic event on the floor of this House in August 1980; when the House discussed for the first time an item entitled 'The rape of Mother Earth'. And I also definitely remember the Prime Minister at that time participating and making a commitment on the floor of the House that 'the Air Pollution Bill which was lying on the anvil for the last two-and-a-half years shall be implemented within a specified time' and it was implemented.

It was another historic event, Madam Chairman, that today is also a day, a very ghastly day that you have to remember. It is two years ago from today that the world suffered one of the worst pollution catastrophes in the history of the world at Bhopal. It is a coincidence that we are having a discussion on environment today, two years later. When I talk about environment, I do like to mention very clearly that it is an issue which is certainly not easy or no plain sailing, nor can it be understood, nor

Shri Digvijay Singh]

acceptable to any society, let alone the developing world. And I do not only envy the Department, the Minister concerned for tackling and trying to solve environmental issues because by and large all environmental solutions require public contributions and public sacrifices. It is certainly not easy. I have written a book on this called *'The eco vote'*, which speaks of the problems and how it is difficult to translate environmental actions and expect the people to contribute to them. But I do want to say that we are lucky in this country to have this environmental movement because, as you will see, this motion is focussing attention on the movement, which has a great advantage over any other developing country in the world. It is because we had a very towering personality in Indiraji who led the movement not only in the developing countries but in the world as a whole. I am one of those very fortunate persons to be present in the Stockholm Conference in June, 1972 when the world met for the first time to discuss environment under the aegis of the United Nations on the Conference called United Nations Conference on Human Environment. We were 113 countries there and the only country which was led by Prime Minister was ours. I can never forget her statement there which became almost the alma mater for the environmental movement around the world. We have a head start over any other developing country, as far as promotion of the other environmental courses are concerned and we have done well. I do not doubt it. All I want to focus attention is that, there are stages within the environmental movement which we must appreciate, as after all, we represent a million people each of this land.

The first stage is what I call the stage of creating consciousness. In that stage, it is a question of creating awareness through the media, through seminars, through formal education, textbooks and all avenues. We have gone through that stage. By and large, we have done well. The second stage is finding solutions. Now, in that stage, it is a question of creating the administrative infrastructure, strengthening your laws, i.e. legislative action

and it also means creating that kind of wherewithal whereby your action programme can be implemented.

The third stage is the stage of implementation. And in that stage, it is the involvement not only of the machineries and the arms of the Government but also the involvement of the people at large. Let me talk of the final stage, Madam. And that is the stage of reducing every environmental project and programme into rupees, annas and paise. It is because no environmental programme, whatsoever can be successful unless you know how much it will cost and exactly how much it will mean by way of sacrifices from the people. Without doing this exercise, we can only end up in debates, in a House like this—very august House, the apex body of the nation—or you may have seminars at the international, national, district, whatever levels, you may have inputs from the savants, so to say, from the technicians, technocrats, scientists who will give you all the inputs and you may end up with a beautiful classic presentation of what the seminar was and illustrated, and lovely well-sounding words framed resolutions. That is where it will end. It is because, without working out as to what precisely is expected from the society to contribute or sacrifice, your environmental programmes only remain conceptual. This is my personal experience, Madam. Therefore, I want to highlight and I highlight this issue because I have experienced it, having been through the mill for two and a quarter years. You have a federal system of governance in this land where each State is responsible for the natural resources of the land whether it is water or forests or wild life or the implementation of your policy; all these are basically to be implemented by the State Governments and if a Union Ministry like the Ministry of Environment, only sits in surveillance to see how the forest laws and rules are implemented and if you just think that you are like a Post Office or like a supervisory or coordinating agency, to see that the various rules are implemented and it is on paper saying that we have given directions. We have said that the State Government should do this. Then it does not work.

The main purpose of the existence of the Union Ministry of Environment is to be dynamic, is to be a catalyst, is to give not only directions on paper but to give the leadership and the funds. If this is not done, your plans will be nowhere.

Therefore, I very fervently like to recommend that all environmental implementations have to be done with constant daily personal contact with the States. Perhaps half the time daily of your officers or the Minister in office may have to be spent in the States, farther than the States, even at the district level.

I am very fortunate to visit 150 districts in two years. I did constant hammering, constant path-showing at the State-level. More often than not, all the States have financial constraints and a way has to be found out, how to overcome these financial constraints.

You will bear with me when I say that environmental programmes at the grassroot level certainly are more difficult to implement because at the planning level, you are farther away from action but at the grassroot level, where the villager has to make sacrifices or contributions for either protecting or for getting natural resources, the implementation of the plan has to be done. Therefore, a greater impact has to be put from the Centre to the States. This is what I call 'initiatives from above' and these are imperative on all environmental issues. Let us hope that from now onwards we do not give answers in the Lok Sabha—

[Translation]

We have asked the State Government or we have ordered—but that order is never obeyed.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : When you were a Minister at that time also we used to get the same reply that the State Government had been directed.

SHRI HARISH RAWAT : It is the habit of the Ministers.

[English]

SHRI DIGVIJAY SINH : I am very happy to tell you that I have been lucky to set up a forum of over 100 MPs and I answered my MPs then and there on the floor of the House saying that 'what are you doing in your Constituency ?

Let me draw a few points which are redeeming features. The new 20 Point Programme's strategy focusses the attention on forest conservation and tree plantation.

MR. CHAIRMAN : How much time will you require ? There are a number of speakers to speak. Please be brief.

SHRI DIGVIJAY SINH : I will take only 10 minutes. The new Education Policy also focuses attention on this problem and the new act, the Environment Protection Act of 1986 which we have passed. My only observation about the Environment Protection Act is that the whole gamut is to create that kind of awareness where the people themselves take the law into their own hands and work towards putting the Government in the dock by saying that they have not performed their duty to that extent. There are certain apprehensions which I would like to point out. One of them is about Section 19 and 20 which say :

Section 19 (b) : "any person who has given notice of not less than sixty days, in the manner prescribed, of the alleged offence and of his intention to make a complaint to the Central Government or the authorities or officer authorised as aforesaid".

Section 20 : "The Central Government may in relation to its functions under this act, from time to time, require any person, officer, State Government or other authority

[Shri Digvijay Singh]

to furnish to it or any prescribed authority or officer any reports, returns, statistics, accounts and other information and such person, officer State Govt. or authority shall be bound to do so."

This should be automatic, if it is a public interest litigation concept that we are trying to ingrain into this Act. There should be no 60 days. There should also be no permission from the Government whether we can prosecute or not. Otherwise, certainly there is going to be a lot of obstacles to the new Act.

I would also like to say that I compliment the Ministry for wanting to launch an environment month starting from the Late Prime Minister's birthday on the 19th November. This is the first year. Probably, they have not been able to do it. But, in the years to come, they will be successful. I can assure you, on behalf of every Member of Parliament, no matter to which political party we belong to, we will be supportive to this not only as Members of Parliament but also as people who can act as catalysts of motivating our people within our own constituency. (*Interruptions*) Let me try to give a few statistics as to the problem. Fire-wood requirements in the country is 133 million tonnes whereas the production is 49 million tonnes. Coming to fodder, the demand is 700 million tonnes in relation to our vast population of cattle whereas the production is 340 million tonnes. The demand for industrial and commercial wood is 28 million cubic metres and the production is only 13 million cubic metres. There is a great shortfall. So, with this kind of limitation of our forest wealth, how do we counteract—not only to protect our little forests which have now been reduced to twelve-and-a-half per cent. How do we regenerate both the fuel and fodder in our waste lands? We have a National Wasteland Development Board. But it is not going that good. I would like to highlight one thing. The Remote Sensing Agencies told us that only a year back that we have only 13 per cent of our

forest land under tree cover; whereas the statistics told us about 22 per cent....I would like to ask; can't we question the Forest Department as to how is it that they overlooked this fact. There is a big gap between what there is and what there is supposed to be. Such a vast and glaring gap of missing resources! Was the Forest Department unaware of it or were they deliberately concealing it? That is something which really baffles me. They say that something like 1.3 million hectares of forest cover are lost every year. If this goes on, they also say, it will be an utter ecological catastrophe for this country. To counteract that, I have made suggestions here on the floor of this House. What are we doing to effectively protect these resources? The National Forest Policy has been on the anvil, I believe, since 1952 and every year it is being postponed because there are all kinds of pressures to say, "No; this is too harsh". But, without being harsh, how are we going to protect our forests? I have made time and again suggestions here and in various fora that it is imperative that we need to give incentives to those who are protecting our forests—he may be a small beat-guard, a small forester. You should give him some incentives. His pay is so meagre that he is bound to be corrupt. It is very unfortunate for me to say so. There are two ways of protecting our forest wealth. One is the method of hearing complaints which existed before independence. You can bear me out when I say this—there was fear. There has to be some sort of incentive. I do not think there is a national policy or even a national consensus evolved whereby the various State Forest Departments have worked out as to what kind of incentives they can give to their forest staff upon apprehension of a forest offence and upon conviction of a forest offence. Some say it is five per cent, some others say it is ten per cent. Up to certain limit, it should be done.

You can do the same thing as in the case of grassland. I know the old system how grassland was protected. Every grassland had a cattle-pound. The forest guard used to impound the illegally grazing cattle inside the cattle-pound and half of the money realised from impounding of cattle

went to the forest guard. Illegal grazing was stopped. Why can't we think on these lines? Why can't we establish a better coordination with the Ministry of Petroleum as to how we can give priority in gas connection to places where there are forests so that the pressure will not be on forests or on grassland. Here are a few things. I think, we should think very seriously about these....

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please try to conclude.

SHRI DIGVIJAY SINH : Let me try to say a few things about pollution control. There are so many points I wanted to make. For pollution control, I know it for certain that a concession was given to industry in 1983 that, if they shifted out of a highly congested area, then the land that they sold—because of shifting out—and the buildings they sold would not attract capital gains tax provided the money realised was put in industry within three years. As far as I know, not even one industry has taken advantage of this because there was no kind of leadership given or the States have not really been very serious about it.

I would also like to talk about water pollution because environment covers very much water and air pollution problems. Time and again recommendations were made here that a special agency should be set up to fund the municipalities on the same lines as HUDCO for laying down sewerage. There has been no progress made in that.

As far as air pollution is concerned, one can talk a lot. I do have an answer just given a few days back saying about the air pollution. There is no threat of acid rain. I believe the first experience has been in Hyderabad of acid rain. I am on the particular point of air pollution from thermal power plants. The reply that I have got from the Minister of State of Power is that :

in the country, only 71 units have got electro-static precipitators and the rest are without electro-static precipitators”.

Forget about the hydro-carbon emissions which creates the acid rains. For the rest of the units, only an allocation of about Rs 320 crores have been made in the Plan. Why have they not worked out as to how much more it will cost in the way of electricity charges? If you want a clean environment, you have to pay for it, there is no other way out. The only way you can make people pay is to make them conscious and involved in the whole movement and that means a constant dialogue with the people at the grass-root level.

I won't take much more time. Many of our friends here are members of the Parliamentary Environment Forum. They try to make it as active as possible. I would also like to tell the members of the opposition that at least in the Congress Party we have an active cell on science and technology and environment. The opposition parties, even if they are smaller, can also certainly reciprocate. As far as this issue is concerned, there is no party politics. Let us work towards, this is the main thrust of this debate, creating that kind of consciousness amongst people that environmental solutions are not only to be expected from the Government.

Let us be quite frank and put our hands on our hearts. We, who are here because of our voters shall have to be bold enough and tell our voters that we shall have to pay for kerosene instead of cutting wood. We shall have to pay for afforestation programmes. We shall have to pay for higher cost on wood based consumer products. We shall have to pay for grassland development. We shall have to pay for soil conservation measures. We shall have to pay for non-conventional alternative energy installations—whether it is from Solar or whatever it is. We shall have to pay for mine operations where the top soil is taken off and the rubble is taken out and put back after the mining is over. We shall have to pay for more expensive biodegradable pesticides.

“Out of 250 units of coal fed thermal and super Power stations

[Shri Digvijay Singh]

I have the questions and answers here saying that the Union Government does not have the information about.....

MR. CHAIRMAN : You are going to the next point. I have been requesting you to conclude but you are going to the next point again.

SHRI DIGVIJAY SINH : With these few words I hope that we shall have a very meaningful debate. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Motion moved :

"That this House is of the opinion that the environmental movement in the country is losing momentum and recommends to the Government to take steps for reviving the momentum at the grass-root level".

SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH (U'uberia) : Madam Chairman, I thank Mr. Singh who has moved this motion for creating awareness about environment. It is not just to plant some trees or keep them properly but it is a question of our own existence. Some mad people like Mr Reagan are trying to destroy the world under the SDI plan. In our day to day life we have to create massive awareness among the people to protect the environment with an eye on the future generation. We should not exploit the natural resources rampantly otherwise that will lead us to our own destruction. So it is a challenge to us and especially in the developing countries like ours this is not a luxury. It is a matter relating to our own existence. So it is our duty to create more awareness among our people, among the Government and voluntary agencies and altogether we have to look into the problem and try to develop the situation.

Sir, the Centre for Science and Environment has supplied some information which is very horrible. They are saying that about 100-150 million hectares of India's land is rapidly turning into desert and 2.5 million hectares is turning into wasteland every year. Already there are 170 million hectares of waste-land. So it is increasing.

Another problem is that every year every hectare of land loses 20 tonnes of top soil because when rains are there it is going down. We have no measure to preserve it. So it is causing us double loss. The rain water is spoiled and at the same time the soil is destroyed.

Then there is a question of ravines. They have mentioned that 4 million hectares of land have already been swallowed by ravines. Several million hectares of good crop and forest land have been destroyed by mining operations and open-cast mining. The vested interests in collusion with the Government officials get the permission for open-cast mining. They are destroying the land and the greenery. That is another problem.

Sir, we talk so much of green revolution. That is also a challenge before our environment. One example they have given is that in Ludhiana district where there is the highest yield of many crops there is highest deficiency of plant micro-nutrients in the soil. That is another problem.

Another problem they have mentioned is that 70 per cent of our available water is polluted. That is damaging the environment and causing harm to the animal and human life. That is also a challenge before us.

Then they have said about the soil salinity and water logging. That is also causing problem. There are hundreds of acres of land which are being damaged by this.

Then, floods. During the last ten years, the floods prone area has doubled from 20 million to 40 million hectares, and that is damaging our natural resources also.

The other problem that has been mentioned is that the levels of sulphur dioxide and particular matter in several Indian cities already exceed permissible limits. Almost all the cities are suffering from pollution. The city of Delhi where we are sitting now has the highest rate of pollution

among the twelve major cities of India and I am told that it is the third city in the world in terms of pollution. This is the situation that we are facing in the big cities of India.

We have to understand how serious the situation is and how big challenge we are facing. If we do not fully realise the seriousness of the problem and do not take care of it and change the direction, in the coming years our own existence will be challenged. That is the situation.

We have our laws for protection of environment. Recently also we passed one such law after a long debate. However, the laws have their own lacunae. There is no provision to protect the nature. On these questions our comprehensive ideas are still lacking and we need to pay more attention towards the situation.

There is a large scale destruction of jungles, natural parks and sanctuaries. The poaching is rampant in these areas. Every day we read in the newspapers about some programmes of the Government for afforestation etc. There are problems particularly in tribal belts. The tribals are opposing that because we are replacing the traditional trees by some trees which are causing damage to their livelihood and they are opposing it. We have to make some adjustments and we cannot make them hostile. There are lots of arguments and counter-arguments on the question of development and environment as if these are opposed to each other. But it is not so. Development and environment are not contrary, but supplementary and complementary to each other. We should have a comprehensive plan in order to strike a balance between the development and environment. We should not only serve the interests of the industrialists, multi-nationals, and vested interests. We have to keep in mind the future generations and thus protect the environment. We will have to strike a balance.

Sometimes the Government actions are mindless, and they go ahead with some projects without any appreciation and

understanding of the environment and the situation. Government sometimes set up some power projects, nuclear power projects, dams etc. unmindful of the ecology around and they seriously damage it. They do not pay any attention to the demands and aspirations of the people. There are some prominent example of that. There is one, the establishment of test range in Baliapal. We discussed it yesterday. It is going to destroy the entire place, that place is the greenest place in Orissa. However, the Government is not going to consider any alternative site. That is the attitude. On the other hand, in Dehradun, we are rampantly closing the limestone industry without going into the details as to how much we can keep and how much we can replace. This type of contradictory behaviour is there in the Government's attitude. So, you should take proper care of all these aspects.

Regarding industrial pollution also, we have to take more care. 70 per cent of our water is polluted and we have to take more and more measures to purify it. We have to keep an eye on the multi-national's behaviour. They are dumping pesticides, fertilizers and a lot of things in the third world countries. They are coming here and opening such industries here which are prohibited in their own countries because the laws in those countries are more stringent. They cannot kill their people. But they come over here and kill people in the third world countries. We still remember the Bhopal gas tragedy. I would like to suggest that while giving industrial licences, Government should not surrender to the multi-nationals and to the greedy capitalists and other vested interests.

We should also see to it that our natural resources are not over-exploited, whether they be land resources, water resources or marine resources. Fishing with the help of big trawlers is resulting in completely destroying the seeds of those fish and in many coastal areas our fish resources are getting scarce. We must take care of all these things. And we should strike a balance in this sphere also. If we plan properly in a comprehensive way, we can fight all these menaces and we can protect our future generations.

[Shri Hannan Mollah]

I would also like to mention about our afforestation programme. Every year, it is said that 1.5 million hectares of land will be covered with trees. You say that you have reached the target of planting so many seedlings. The Government think that they can check deforestation completely with these measures. But I do not really know, as to how many seedlings are planted; and out of them how many survived and how many are growing. There is no scheme for actual verification. I suggest that we have to monitor all these things. We should stress the importance of these programmes more and more, if we want to eliminate industrial pollution due to pesticides, fertilizers which are causing damage to our environment, to our natural resources, to our greenery and to our water. We must have a proper water management programme. If we can preserve rain water and stop it from flowing down into the sea, we can stop soil erosion.

Lastly I would like to refer to the recommendations of the Indian Science Congress made in their 73rd Session, for checking degradation and pollution of environment.

The physics section has suggested the use of optical methods of monitoring environmental and pollutants using lasers.

The Chemistry Section called for providing greater opportunities for appreciation and awareness programmes on environmental chemistry.

The Section on Geography suggested for safeguards against environmental hazards created by mining and mineral industries.

The geology section also called for levying a compulsory cess on the mining industry for protection of environment and setting up an authority to utilise the funds for environmental protection.

The botany section suggested identification of suitable plant species for fuel

and fodder in different agro-climatic zones to provide for basic human needs without disturbing the natural environment.

The anthropology and archaeology group wanted steps to be taken for the preservation of ancient relics like monuments and architectural tombs and the sites where fossils had been excavated.

The agricultural sciences section called for avoiding over exploitation of soil and for strengthening research, high dose fertilizers and irrigation water necessary for high production.

All these suggestions they have made. I think the Government is also a party to it. How they are implementing all the suggestions? How they are taking initiatives? It should not be stopped. It should be a continuous movement. It should be a part of the day-to-day life and the awareness should be a part of day-to-day life so that we ourselves—common people—can take care of this environment protection. If any attempt is made by the industrialists or by other vested interests or even by the Government and if we find anything wrong there, people can resist. So you have to create this awareness so that people can themselves take care of the environment.

With these words, I conclude.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO (Dhenkanal): Thankyou Madam, Chairman. At the outset, I would like to congratulate the hon. Member Shri Digvijay Sinhji, who has raised this very-very important and crucial subject.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Each Member will be given only 10 minutes.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO: I will try to confine myself within the time allotted to me.

Man and environment are complementary and most crucial to one's survival. This is something which we in India have not realised today, but it finds itself in our scriptures, in Ashoka's rock edicts,

in our national emblem, in our national flag itself—the Ashoka lion. There have been legislations before independence and after independence for the preservation and protection of the environment, because of its crucial nature in the survival of our people themselves. Even the Tiger was chosen as the National Animal replacing the Lion because it was the top of the ecological biosphere and the entire ecosystem in this country. Peacock was chosen as the National Bird. The hon. Member Shri Digvijay Sinhji has raised this matter at a very crucial juncture, when there is a debate between the economists and environmentalists on the role of environment. Government, in the last six years have taken up very-very strong and effective steps in the right from the time, when our late Revered Prime Minister attended, as Head of the Indian Delegation at the Environmental Conference at Stockholm. She was the only Head of the Government who launched the world conservation strategy in 1981 here in Delhi itself. She even took the lead when the CITES Conference took place, that is, Conference on International Trade on Endangered Species and she took the effort and carried through the entire nation and all the State Governments in passing the Wildlife Protection Act and also getting the Conservation of Forest Act, which today is a hallmark, in the sense, that there is impact analysis, of environment and every developmental project. I agree with Shri Digvijay Sinh Ji that the momentum must not only be maintained, but the momentum of environment and ecology must be effectively strengthened and increased. It is there not only in governmental action or through legislation, but it is also in the implementation of it, and carrying with us Government departments who are at the moment the worse culprits.

I can cite innumerable examples where public sector undertakings and Government departments have been criminal in their role in polluting air, water as well as the land in which they are situated. I come from a State which is endowed with a lot of natural resources—forests, water and minerals. I have a large number of public sector undertakings in my State.

We have fertilizer plants which have polluted the whole of the Brahmani river. We have thermal plants which not only polluted the Brahmani river, but have also been responsible for adding to the fly ash hazards, as serious as the Bhopal tragedy.

Only recently this year, a near-tragedy was averted in the Talcher and Araul areas.

So, the first step is that we must create not only awareness, but we must also implement what we preach here in Parliament and in the State legislatures. I am glad that the Environmental Forum in Parliament has more than 100 as its members. But in spite of the fact that the hon. Shri Digvijay Sinh when he was a Deputy Minister of Environment had taken a lot of interest in creating awareness in the States, going to various States, helping them to form Pollution Boards, visiting sanctuaries and national parks, and trying to convince State Governments also about the role of the contractors felling trees, and about the role of forests and forestry, the idea of changing from the productive aspects of forestry, i.e. from the British legacy, to the protective aspect of forestry has still to take firm roots in this country.

We are still bothered about the profit aspect of the Forest Corporation, whose contribution to the degradation, and deforestation, of forest is as much as that of the forest contractor and illicit timber-fellers.

As our late Prime Minister said, "The rich out of greed, and the poor out of need" have also been adding to the degradation of the environment. But it is heartening that we have now a full-fledged Ministry of Environment with a Minister in charge, and a Minister of State. It was looked after by our young and dynamic Prime Minister. That shows the importance which was given to the subject of ecology and environment. The latest legislation on environment includes environment as land, water and air.

Apart from the Government and the public sector undertakings, it is necessary

[Shri K.P. Singh Dev]

to see that our educational institutions, our Defence forces and our para-military forces also are made partners in the effort to conserve and protect the environment. The Armed Forces in their cantonments, the para-military forces in their establishments, as well as schools which have people at the most impressionable age and stage of their careers, can be made into dedicated and confirmed conservationists. Mrs Gandhi during her time, when she was heading the Defence portfolio, took the initiative to form the first ecological task force in the whole world comprising of cent per cent ex-service men. They had done yeomen service in Shahjehan Pur block in Dehra Dun and Mussoorie lime stone quarry to which my friend the hon. member Shri Hannan Mollah mentioned, which was at one time known as the queen of hill stations, but today it is an eye sore. These ecological task forces must be extended and more ecological task forces must be set up. We also have them in Rajasthan in the Rajasthan canal areas. There have been demands from Darjeeling areas; there have been demands from Goa, from various States, from Jammu & Kashmir, from Himachal Pradesh, but the Ministry of Environment must come in, because it is the Ministry of Environment which puts the Bill for the setting up of these task forces.

Before I conclude, I would like to mention here and I would like to take the advantage of the fact that the hon. Minister for Environment is present that in this debate between the environmentalists and the economists on the impact analysis on industrial projects and economic development projects, where a country having large deposits of coal and other

1602 hrs.

[SHRI VAKKOM PURUSHOTHAMAN *in the Chair*]

precious ores like bauxite iron, manganese, these areas, because of the Environment Act which we have passed, are taking

unduly long time. Only last month the entire Consultative Committee of the Energy Department had gone to visit Singrouli area where about 30,000 MW power station has been planned which will be feeding UP, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi, Haryana and Punjab, but there the entire tie up has also been done with the various financing agencies, with the various countries like USSR, FRG and the United Kingdom, but because of the environment clearance being delayed, the coal mine cannot be exploited and the power station cannot be done in time, which means that we will not be deriving cost benefit and the cost effectiveness of these projects in which the delay will result in cost escalation, in time and money.

If I may come to my own home State, we have the proposal of the Talcher Super Thermal Station, Ib Valley Super Thermal Station for which not only the Government of Orissa but all the Members of Parliament here for the last six years have been crying horse; the clearance of the Planning Commission, the Technical Advisory Committee Department of Energy, the Ministry of Energy, the Ministry of Coal, Coal Linkage, everything is complete, but it is only being held up due to environment reasons and at a time when the Orissa is passing through power famine which is also adding to the national grid; and power being the main infrastructure for development and at a time when we are on the take off stage to the 21st century, we would want the Environment Ministry to clear such projects in which the economic development factor keeping the environment factor and the conditions stipulated by them are involved. But it is the delay in clearing these projects which is affecting them both from the national point of view as well as State point of view. Same is the question of irrigation projects. I can give you hundreds of projects, but I would only name those in which I have intimate knowledge.

On the 31st of January, the Government of Orissa had written to the Environment Ministry for environment clearance on Sapua and Barajote which is

an integrated medium irrigation project which will cover more than 4000 hectares in the entire Hindal sub-division which is in a rain shadow area for the last 40 years.

If it takes one year to clear when everything including the Planning Commission, Irrigation Department, Central Water Commission, the Ministry of Water Resources has cleared it, then, I am afraid we shall always be debating here about costs run off and the costs benefit will not accrue to the people in spite of the natural resources which we have.

The same is the question with the Defence projects and like the Tista and Kalimpong water system—I am only illustrating—that in future we may have to strike a health balance between environment and economic development keeping in view the time factor.

I support Mr. Digvijay Singh's Motion and his contention that the environmental movement at the grassroot level must be strengthened. There must be moral involvement of voluntary organisations, schools, educational institutions and other institutions and organised bodies to make environmental protection and environmental movement a success in this country for which we are committed from ancient days.

SHRI AJITSINH DABHI (Katra) : Mr. Chairman, it would not be an understatement if I say that environmental movement and awareness movement is a movement to save the mankind which is heading towards self-destruction in its flight to overcome Nature.

Nature is beautifully balanced. Every little thing has its place, the beauty and special utility. For example, for keeping unpolluted the air we breathe, the trees, the birds, the beasts and even the reptiles play an important role. They eat up the insects which destroy our food, and our foodcrops.

As we know, the air we breathe contains carbon dioxide and this dangerous gas

can make the human beings, the animals, birds, suffocate and even cause their death. The trees absorb this dangerous gas from the atmosphere. Cutting down of forest trees would prevent the mopping up of this dangerous gas from the atmosphere and also can make the earth heat up.

Scientists have envisaged that by 2001 AD because of the increase of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere the planet earth would be heated up by five to six degrees centigrade. Because of this there would be melting of solar ice, raising the sea level high enough to submerge Florida in America, the Netherlands, and probably the low lying rice yielding areas in Asia including India. The heating up of the earth causes the destruction of vital food, which is a main requirement for the human beings.

It is a fact that most of the forests on the earth lie in the belt between the Tropic of Capricorn and the Tropic of Cancer. In this belt the undeveloped and developing countries play, including India, a big role in the destruction of forest trees. It is estimated that 600 million hectares of tropical forests have been destroyed. If we begin from Thailand the Himalayas, the vast areas of the Central Eastern and North Africa and the Amazon area of South America which were once fine and lusty green forests have now turned into arid spaces of land.

The forests which covered once 40 per cent of the earth's surface now cover only 30 per cent of the land surface. In India the rate at which the Nepalese are felling the trees, the Nepalese trees are going to disappear within 15 years. The story is not different in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Bihar, the North-Eastern States and the other States in India. It is estimated that 152 million tonnes of wood is being cut away every year from the forests in India. And the evil effects of this deforestation are to be seen in flash floods. Because of the felling of trees on the river side, river banks get eroded, land slides occur, rocks silt, wood logs and all forest wastes are carried down to the tributaries causing sudden pressure on the confluence and there are flash floods,

[Shri Ajitsinh Dabhi]

In 1970 in UP massive flash floods had occurred in the Alakananda in the Himalayas sweeping away several villages entirely as also two lakhs of acres of crops standing in the fields, roads, innumerable bridges, herds of cattle and buses load of passengers. The rock silt got deposited in the canal system so enormously that lakhs of acres of crop in the western UP was destroyed.

The floods have now become the chronic phenomenon of our environment. Every year we hear the reports of floods from northern States, northeastern States and some of the southern States taking toll of human beings, destroying our property, cattle wealth and forest wealth and crops worth crores of rupees. The total estimate of all this damage, I think, has not been estimated. But I think, it must be billion of rupees with which we can plan and implement three five year plans.

Deforestation in Sunderbans in West Bengal, Himalayas, Orissa and Bihar is very dangerous. The massive Himalayas are being denuded of their flora and fauna. Some very rare species and plants from Western Ghats and Himalayas have become extinct and many more are on the verge of extinction. The deforestation takes away the shelter of rare Indian birds like Bustard and many other beautiful birds which make the life worth living. Deforestation also takes away the natural habitat of rare species of animals like white tiger, Indian lion, one-horned rhinoceros and many other beautiful beasts. Deforestation is not only a danger to flora and fauna but also to the mankind because of the resultant soil erosion and succeeded by droughts and floods of unprecedented magnitude. History bears witness to the fact that ancient empires of Persia, Babylon, Syria and Carthage were destroyed because of advance of floods and droughts caused by excessive felling of forests. Ancient civilisation of China, Egypt, Greece and Rome which had once straddled land fertile and replete with beautiful lakes, rivers and streams, with forests gone, they lie in ruins. The soil depleted is unable to start life.

Socrates was the great wise man of glory and he warned the people of

the Greece against the excessive felling of forests. He said and I quote :

“We have destroyed them for too much, let us stop.”

In India we have destroyed the forests far too much. It is time that we conserve.

This movement for environment in India is not a day soon. The estimates of annual loss of forests in India vary between five million hectares and 20 million hectares depending upon the definition of deforestation. In India we have 175 million hectares of wasteland and 3.4 million hectares of wastelands which are becoming every year barren and infertile.

So far as India is concerned, under the great leadership of Shrimati Indira Gandhi and now under the leadership of our young Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi, the drive for environment awareness is getting momentum. Our Prime Minister advocated some time back that we should teach our children, the younger generation, the facts about our freedom struggle. In the same way, if this drive is to be made meaningful and result-oriented, then we must start it at the primary education level by introducing purposeful lessons in the text books. At the college and university level, environmental slant must be given to the curricula and the examinations. But this movement cannot succeed only by the Governmental efforts. The people must also participate and the voluntary agencies must also come out.

Gujarat, as it has always done in the matter of good things, has taken the lead here also. At Ahmedabad, the Centre for Environment Education has taken up this challenge to educate teachers and thereby the students, about the environmental imperatives and perils of destroying ecological balance.

Lastly, I would suggest that because the women are most affected by the shortage of firewood and fodder, therefore, if we can involve the women in this movement, then I am sure that this environment movement will certainly succeed. With these words, I support the Motion.

[*Translation*]

SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA
(Andman & Nicobar Islands): Mr. Chairman, Sir, first of all, I want to thank the hon. Members who have provided an opportunity to the House to discuss the subject of environment.

The Resolution before the House can be divided into two parts. The first part relates to preservation of the environment about which it has been stated that efforts in this direction are weakening. Secondly, this should be developed as a mass movement so that the environment of the whole country can be maintained properly. Regarding the second part, I totally agree with it that it should take the shape of a mass movement in the whole country.

In connection with the first part, I would like to submit to the House why the National Forest Policy of 1950 was not implemented properly. Although a lot regarding conservation was said in it, yet it was not implemented because the Forest Departments were under the State Government and the Central Government could give only its advice and could do nothing else. No State Government took initiative in this regard. They neither go this policy approved by the legislatures nor educated the general public in this regard. I can say it for sure that after 1980, Shrimati Gandhi was the person who apart from being the nation's Prime Minister loved flowers, fruits, gardens, wild animals and forests of this country. She made every effort in this direction. Due to this, the Forest Conservation Act came into existence in 1980, which gave the Central Government a big responsibility. There cannot be two opinions that the people have become aware and conscious of ecology and environment only during the past few years. This does not show that any slackness has come in the movement. I want to submit to those hon. Members who want to accelerate development that environment is there to protect mankind and not to destroy it. It is true that the enormous felling of trees in the Adivasi districts and the mining work undertaken there have caused damage to the Adivasis

but the point is that it is of no use to cry over spilt milk. It will be useful if we concentrate on the new schemes or new projects which we are going to undertake there. What we have to think and do is that the Adivasis should survive, the forests and its fauna must be protected. We should also pay attention to the aspect as to how forests should be utilised so that more employment opportunities are created.

I am fully convinced that under the leadership of an experienced Minister like Shri Bhajan Lal who has been entrusted with the responsibility of this department, the environment of this country is going to be protected. Even now the Central Government is spending Rs. 600 crores for improving the environment. If it wants to spend even Rs. 2000 crores, how it be done? It has to depend on the State Governments in this regard. When the Punjab issue was being discussed in the House, it was questioned how the Central Government would solve this problem? Wherever the jurisdiction is of the State, the Centre can provide help by providing funds and consultancy service and so on. If the State Government is not prepared to cooperate, or to shoulder the responsibility then what is the remedy? Therefore, nothing can come out by merely discussing matters in the Parliament. Every State Assembly must also take up the issue equally strongly and the same sort of feeling has to be created among the people of the States. Then alone we would reap its benefits.

I want to submit that 6 committees had been constituted. I am also a member of one of the Regional Forest Advisory Committees. I have been attached to the group comprising West Bengal, Orissa, Bihar and the Andaman islands. I observed that the first meeting was called six months after this committee was formed. We discussed a lot of things in the said meeting. I received a circular for another meeting some two or three days ago. I had chaired the first meeting, yet nobody came to me for approval of the proceedings of that meeting. If the Department is going to function in this manner, then I think whatever work you may do or whatever committees you may form, it will not yield the

[Shri Manoranjan Bhakta]

desired results. It has not yet been decided where the headquarter of the committee would be established or who are going to be appointed as the officers or how is the work going to be carried out. The post of Inspector General of Forests has been lying vacant for the past one year... (Interruptions). ...If the Department is to function in this manner and with this speed then it will further hamper the work in this direction. There is need to accelerate this work.

Now I would like to draw your attention towards my constituency of Andaman and Nicobar islands where 86 percent of the area is covered with forests and 14 percent of it is occupied by people. Those people are deeply attached to the forests and want that these forests should be protected. However, as Shri K P. Singh Deo has said, it is true that the environment is there for the benefit of the people but it must be ensured that this does not hinder the development. If it happens then the people would think environment to be a demon which is impeding the development of the Adivasis; it is a demon which is obstructing the drinking water supply schemes and other development schemes like construction of roads etc. People should not be given a chance to think in this way, you will not be able to make it a people's movement. To build up a people's movement, it is essential to get the support of the masses. Works which are undertaken for the benefit of the public should be done properly and completed at the earliest. Only then people would feel that environmental protection is for their benefit and that they should engage themselves in this work and should feel that it is their duty to protect the forests.

I want to make a submission in connection with the planting of trees. This programme is for the benefit of all of us and the Government has taken a decision which is praiseworthy. I would not contradict the hon. Minister's reply to a question asked here but I would only say that for planting one sapling, 25 to 50 trees are felled for preparing fences for it. In our language it is called 'balli'. If you have to cut 25 to 50 trees for planting a

sapling, then what is the use of growing a new sapling? If the new sapling is to be protected by a fence then it is better if barbed-wire or similar material is used for fencing purposes. I hope that proper attention will be paid in this direction and arrangements will be made accordingly.

With these words, I would thank the mover of this Resolution Shri Digvijaya Singh and I would request him to make efforts to bring about a balance between man and the environment. If the environment takes the shape of a demon then we shall not be able to get cooperation from the people.

SHRI G. BHOOPATHY (Peddapalli): Mr. Chairmain, Sir, first of all, I would like to thank the Minister of Environment and Forests and congratulate him that ever since he took charge of this Ministry, he has given new ideas and new shapes to things. Today, a very important discussion is taking place in the House and I would request you to accept this Motion and take necessary steps in this regard because it is definitely for our benefit and will greatly help our people.

It is the policy of the Government to conserve forests and to ensure that 1/3rd of the total area of this country is covered by forests but it is not being fully implemented. Though we have been celebrating 'Vana Mahotsava' since 1952, yet afforestation work was started only in 1962. After that the work has speeded up. But I would urge that instead of covering 1/3rd of the total area with forests, 1/3rd of every village should be covered with forests. A law should be enacted to the effect that 1/3rd area of every village shall be covered with forests. It will certainly benefit the people. The late Shri Sanjay Gandhi had given a very apt slogan, "produce less children and grow maximum trees."

It was a very good idea but the opposite happened—the number of children multiplied and the trees lessened. The late Shri Sanjay Gandhi had initiated a very good programme and got trees

planted all over the country with the help of volunteers. But as there was no one to look after those trees, the animals grazed them and in this way we could not derive any benefit from the programme.

Sir, the tribal people live in the forest areas. The State Governments want to provide roads, electricity and other facilities to them and want to undertake development works but they are not allowed to fell even a single tree. The State Governments should be allowed to fell trees for providing roads, electricity, telephones etc. in the tribal areas. The proposals which the State Governments send to you remain pending with you and are not cleared for months and years together. Therefore, I would demand that in case the State Governments want to take certain steps for the development of the tribal areas, they should be allowed to fell certain number of trees so that the tribal areas are developed.

Sir, the tribal people who live in the forests collect dry twigs for using them as fuel for cooking purposes but the sentries and the forest officers apprehend them and put them behind the bars after levying 10 to 20 times of the normal rate of fine on them. This should not happen. In politics this never happens. A gentleman denuded entire forest but he was appointed the Governor of our State and he dismissed our Government. If a Governor or a Chief Minister belonging to your Party denudes the entire forest, he does not pay any penalty but if a poor tribal fetches wood from the forest for cooking his food, he has to pay a heavy fine and is also put behind the bars. I would, therefore, demand that you should think over this matter.

In Andhra Pradesh, efforts are being made to construct the Telugu-Ganga project for quite a long time. Our leaders, Shri N.T. Rama Rao has himself written to the Centre a number of times that forests which are cut will be replaced by planting an equal number of trees, yet you are not giving your permission for that project. Therefore, I would request you not to view this issue from a political

angle. If you separate it from politics, you will find that the Telugu-Ganga Project is a very good project and is for the benefit of the people. Therefore, get it constructed. We shall plant as many trees as you want. Sir, now I would like to submit some points regarding pollution. The traffic in the towns creates the maximum pollution. Some new technology should be adopted so that less smoke is emitted from the vehicles. We have so many new scientists and technologists in our country. They should think about it and the Government should also do something to control it.

Again, many, big industries are established in the heart of the towns and cities. Such industries should, as far as possible, be located away from the cities for it would help in reducing the pollution.

In my constituency, there is a place called Ramgundam, where a number of industries are located. Several units belonging to N.T.P.C., Fertilizer Corporation of India and other Central Government agencies are located there. A lot of water is discharged from those industries which spreads in the shape of a canal in the locality and enters the tenements of the poor. The people use that water for drinking purposes. I have submitted a memorandum also in this regard. I think a common canal should be constructed and polluted water should be drained away from there so that the poor people do not suffer from ill-health.

Several proposals regarding checking of pollution have come up in the Parliament but the Government has not been able to control pollution. The Government does not seem to consider it at all. If the Centre is not prepared to control it, then let the matter be left to us.

SHRI Z.R. ANSARI : We have already left it to you.

SHRI G. BHOOPATHY : The people would close all the industries which would end pollution completely. Either you decide it or otherwise leave it to us to decide.

[English]

PROF K.V. THOMAS (Ernakulam): I congratulate the hon. Member Shri Digvijay Singh who moved this motion today when the nation is paying homage to the victims of Bhopal tragedy.

Man is an integral part of nature. Any change in nature will have its effect on man. It is said that even moon has got some effect on the behaviour of man. It is in this context we have to think about environment. Mother Earth is blessed by rivers, forests and green belts. The industrial growth has helped mankind towards progress and prosperity but, at the same time, it has also encroached on the virginity of Mother Earth. Rivers are polluted. Forests are denuded and fresh air has become a luxury. In India, 70% of the available water is polluted. Every year, 1.5 million hectares of forest land turned barren. One million hectares of crop land and grazing land are badly affected. Every hectare of land loses about 30 tonnes of top soil every year. Pollution of air has gone out of control. In Delhi alone, 80% of the vehicles plying around produce noxious gas. Will our cities are covered with smoke which is full of poisonous gas.

In my childhood, it was a pleasure to see the Sun rise. Now, for the city dwellers, sun-rise also has become a very rare occasion. I am coming from the city of Cochin, which is the industrial capital of Kerala where in the early morning if we look up, we cannot see anything except smoke. This is the condition of all the major cities in our country.

Our country, which is one of the richest in the world in terms of soil, sunlight and water is slowly deprived of these blessings of the nature. I would like to point out some measure that have to be taken for effective control of our environment. There should be an effective National Environment Policy. This policy should bring about environmental laws. Now, we have got laws to protect the

forests, to protect the wild-life, to control the pollution of rivers. But all these different laws should be brought in as a comprehensive law. There should be Special Courts to deal with the cases involving the environment. The judges should be properly taught. The lawyers, who deal with the environmental cases, should have a clear picture about environment. So, the Special Courts are to be brought so that these courts will deal with cases involving the environment. The Employment Guarantee Scheme and the Food-for-Work Schemes have to be linked with environmental protection. We can make use of these schemes—say for the afforestation programme.

Another item which has been plenty in our country is water at a time when we have always thought that water is very cheap. Now a change has come that pure and drinking water is a very costly affair. There should be a proper Water Management System to haul the rain water and for its effective use. We have started the Ganga cleaning programme. This is a programme which has caught the attention of everybody in this country and outside also. I would like to suggest that every State should be asked to take up the cleaning of one river so that within a span of 10 years, all the rivers in our country are out of pollution.

Another thing we have to remember is when industries are set up, it should be in a separate zone. It should be away from the population. One of the dangers of the present Industrial Policy is that the major chemical industries are coming up in cities which cause more pollution, which cause more destruction of environment. So, when new industries are coming up, it should be in a particular zone and all steps are to be taken so that the air pollution, water pollution are controlled.

One more suggestion which I would like to give is regarding implementation of the Forest Protection Rules. When Environment Protection Rules are implemented, there are harijans, adivasis who encroach the forests for their

daily life. There are richmen who encroach forests as greedy people. These two types of encroachments have to be dealt with separately.

Similarly there are development programmes coming up in our State. In my State of Kerala, hydro-electric projects are not given licence because of some encroachment of forest land. What I suggest is, when development programmes are coming up, if some acres of forest are to be destroyed in the process, then in that development programme itself a plan has to be made so that if a certain area of forest is removed, the same area has to be planted. These development projects which are coming up should be given priority.

[*Translation*]

SHRI ARVIND NETAM (Kanker) :
Mr. Chairman, Sir, I support the Resolution presented before the House by hon. Shri Digvijay Singh. Besides expressing my support, I want to say in this connection that the enthusiasm in this movement is not dwindling among the people but the State Governments are certainly losing interest in it. Had the people been less enthusiastic, Silent Valley in Kerala would not have survived. While talking of the State Governments, I would submit that the first and foremost requirement is to educate the State Governments about environment. Many environmental problems can be solved if the Central Government properly educates the State Governments.

Many people say that someone should and has to sacrifice for development. It is correct but only these tribal areas and the tribal population have sacrificed the maximum in the name of development. I want to quote from today's the 'Navbharat Times' to show as to how the social environment in tribal areas has been vitiated. The heading reads—'Wages and Compulsions of the Tribal Labourers'. The first paragraph reads as follows :

"Santhal Pargana is predominantly a tribal area. The continuous exploitation

during the last two centuries has completely shattered the conventional life style of the tribals of this area. Factories, non-tribal landlords and money lenders have taken possession of their ancestral land. The contractors have usurped the forests. The men, women, boys and girls have been converted into bonded labourers by the traders and industrialisation has eaten away the very base of their social life."

Whatever has been written in this article is absolutely correct. The article mentions that all the minerals in this country are found in the tribal areas of Bihar, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh and industrialisation in tribal areas has vitiated the common life and social conditions there.

Fortunately, the Forest Secretary is going to study a very controversial project, namely, Bodhghat Hydroelectricity Project of Bastar at the end of this week. I want to tell about other projects of Bastar also so that the Forest Secretary may keep them in mind as well. The Beladila Iron Ore Project was established in 1960. That project polluted the waters of Shankhini and Dakini rivers and we have not been able to clean them to date. Talking of drinking water, it is not good even for irrigation. Five years back a plan was formulated to plant pine forests in Bastar. Had Shrimati Indira Gandhi not been there, the natural 'sal' forests of Bastar perhaps would have vanished. We are grateful to her for protecting our 'sal' forests at that time and thus forests of pine were saved. In the same way the M.M.T.C. authorities tried to exploit dolomite in the forests of Kanger Valley in Bastar but with the intervention of the Government of India, the efforts were fortunately abandoned. Nowhere else such marvellous forests like the one in Kanger Valley can be found near a township. In the same way there are many other irrigation projects like Ichampalli of Andhra Pradesh which also is affecting Bastar. I mean to say that all the departments come forward with their respective projects and state that their projects are the best and ask for their clearance and implementation.

[Shri Arvind Netam]

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I want to say one thing that there is no department or committee which may understand the feelings of the people of that area. Similarly, you are thinking of establishing a wild-life sanctuary in Bastar which will affect 30 to 40 villages and Ichampalli Project also would affect 65 villages. For the Bhopalpatnam Irrigation Project some villages will be acquired. In this way if all the projects are considered together then I can say that no place will be left for human beings to live, particularly in South Bastar.

Through you I want to raise some more points and urge the hon. Minister to take note of them. One thing is that these things should be mentioned in the report to be presented by the Secretary and it must be studied. The people say that in Bastar land is available in abundance. But excluding forests area, non-forest land is almost negligible in Bastar. And no land is available for rehabilitating the refugees in the villages. The land there has either been illegally occupied for the past 15 to 20 years or it is not fit for agriculture. Two weeks back Shri Shankaranand told in relation to the Upper Indiravati Project that people there want money and not land in compensation. We protested against this because we came to know that the land which was offered was not fit for cultivation. They were told that they should either do farming on mountainous land or they will be given no land at all. And no land is available in the villages in which the State Government has promised to arrange for rehabilitation. If at all there is some land it is either unfit for cultivation or has been illegally occupied which you cannot get vacated.

Secondly, it has become an issue of great controversy as to how many trees would be felled due to Bodhghat Project. Some people estimate the figure at 30 lakhs while others calculate it to be 50 lakhs. The Shimla Forest Institute conducted a survey there and their estimate shows the figure to be something about 1 crore. With your permission I want to read out a line from the 'India Today' of November 15 :

[English]

"At only Rs. 15,000 the two million or so sal trees in Bodhghat are worth Rs. 3000 crore—more than three times the estimated cost of the project."

[Translation]

Such a large number of trees have to be felled. Therefore, we shall have to think whether we should allow this project which involves such a large scale deforestation. I would like that many of the projects, specially the Bodhghat Project should be reconsidered seriously. I make a request also to the hon. Minister that he may kindly ask the team which will go to Bodhghat to study how far the civilisation of the tribals is lagging behind, as the Central Government or the State Government has no department for this type of study. Will this team try to understand the feelings of those people? I make only one request to the hon. Minister that whichever team may go there it should first try to understand the feelings of the tribals there and submit its report only after that. We do not oppose the Project but in this situation I think the Bodhghat Project should not be taken up.

I conclude with these words supporting the Resolution presented by the hon. Member.

[English]

PROF. P.J. KURIEN (Idukki) : Sir, first of all I would like to congratulate Mr. Digvijay Singh for initiating this discussion which is of prime importance in the present situation. The need of protecting the environment cannot be over-emphasised because it relates to the very existence of not only the mankind but the whole species of life.

No doubt, it is very important that there should be world peace and there is no war because if third world war breaks out it is possible that the whole life on this globe may be annihilated within a couple of hours or couple of days. Likewise if

environment is not properly protected and we do not take into account the various environmental pollution problems and take remedial steps the human-kind and the whole species can be eliminated in a long span of time. Therefore, this subject relates to the very existence of mankind and all species on this earth.

Sir, the importance of the subject has to be understood by all. I feel inspite of all our efforts in that direction even now our people or even we parliamentarians—inspite of the speeches we make—are not conscious to the extent required for the need of preserving the environment and protecting the environment. I feel that there should be an effort to making the people more conscious about the environment.

Mr. Chairman, it was Madam Indira Gandhi who led this environment protection campaign in this country. This campaign has got thrust and prestige because of that. Inspite of that I feel this is a situation when many of the environmental protection problems can be easily solved if we get an increased cooperation from the people. I can quote an example.

Let us take the question of forests. The importance of preserving forests cannot be over-emphasised. If forests are destroyed it will affect the entire climate. There will not be rains. There will be more deserts and there will be whole lot of implications and repercussions. We are all aware of it but who can protect the forests. The forests cannot be protected merely by Forest Conservation Act. Even if this Act is vigorously implemented the forests cannot be protected. The forests can be protected provided those who live in the forests and in the vicinity of forests become conscious of the need to protect the forests. They should feel that protection of forests is related to their own existence. But is it so now! Now the position is that those who live in the forests, that is, tribals, those who live in the vicinity of forests, the small farmers and agriculturists do they feel the need of protecting the forests as we feel here in the urban areas?

17.00 hrs.

Actually it is not so, Sir. I say this from my personal experience. I am coming from a constituency where there are a lot of forests and thousands of tribals living in the forests. I may tell you an example. Last year, our Prime Minister visited my constituency in Kerala. Before that visit of the Prime Minister, some of the tribals came to me and gave me a representation. In that representation, they were asking :

“We are living in the forest. For all these years we were protecting the forests and we are not allowed to take the firewood from the forests. If we are not allowed to take the firewood from the forests and if the forest protection officers deprive us of our firewood, of our very existence, how can we protect the forests?”

I thought it very pertinent. They gave that representation to the Prime Minister also. So, this is my question that by a token implementation of the Forest Conservation Act, we cannot conserve the forests. What is more needed is in order to protect the forests, these tribals should firstly be made more conscious of the need of protection of forests. Secondly these people should be provided with alternate energy sources like cheap cooking gas so that they don't go to the forests. My point is that by the very implementation of the Forest Conservation Act, the tribals become against the protection of forests. That is a psychological development. Something is at the vicinity of the forest farming. I asked one of the farmers; Who are cutting the forests? Madam Indira Gandhi in her speech, which was also quoted by Shri K.P. Singh Deo, said that the rich cut out of greed and the poor out of need. Sir, the cutting of the trees in the forests is managed by the rich. They want to exploit the forests out of their greed. I asked one of the small farmers and tribals : “Why don't you stand in the way? Why don't you report to the officers? Why don't you cooperate with the officers?” Then the answer was again like this : “Sir, why should we cooperate when they are not sympathetic to our

[Prof. P.J. Kurien]
genuine need?"

Therefore, the sum and substance of my point is that there should be a special effort to make the tribals and small farmers of the forest areas to become more conscious of the need to protect the forests. They should feel that their very life and existence is by the protection of the forests. This can be achieved only if they are provided with alternate source of energy and alternate source of livelihood. Therefore, special fund should be allotted for that region.

Now, I am coming to the soil erosion. All our rivers are getting silted due to soil erosion. There are dams and reservoirs. These reservoirs are getting silted. I have read in some article that when these reservoirs are full with silt, their desilting will require more than 28 times of the expenditure required for constructing them. Therefore, all the reservoirs are getting silted. Rivers are getting silted and, therefore, floods increase. But what can be done about it? Every year for flood relief work, we are spending crores of rupees. This year, our Finance Minister has even allotted Rs. 500 crores for natural calamities. So, my suggestion is that in these areas which are prone to soil-erosion, special funds should be allotted and measures should be taken to prevent soil erosion. Our agriculturists and other people will take it up but there is no assistance provided. So special funds should be given to stop soil erosion.

I now come to air pollution. There are different types of air pollution but I do not want to dwell at length on each of them. One form of air pollution is radiation. Why I raise this point is that there is a feeling that radiation is increasing in the atmosphere due to our nuclear power plants. Therefore, some people are advocating that there should not be any more nuclear power plants. I consider this as a very dangerous proposal. Environment should be looked in its proper perspective. Environmental protection should not stand in the way of development. In fact, development and environmental protection go

side by side. Environmental protection is to eliminate the evil effects of development. And development is a must. I would like to quote Madam Indira Gandhi who observed :

"In the rich countries, industrial pollution causes environmental hazards. In poor countries it is poverty which causes environmental hazards. Therefore, the argument that environmental protection measures should stall development is absurd and it is not in our interest".

I am saying all this because of the position of the nuclear power. In Kerala, as you know, Government have decided to set up a nuclear power plant. But due to the agitation of some people, that proposal has to be dropped. Why is it so? It is because of the over-consciousness of rather I would call it 'over-reaction' of some people towards issues concerned with environmental protection, these projects are being stalled. This cannot be. My main point is that environmental protection should go along with development and if environmental protection is used to stall development, that that will be counter-productive and that will not serve any purpose.

With these remarks I conclude, though I have to make a number of other points.

17.07 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *In the Chair*]

SHRI THAMPAN THOMAS (Mavelikara): The slogan today, the emphatic slogan today is "Protect environment to protect the future of mankind".

Sir, recently the United Nations constituted a Sub-Committee under the leadership of Willy Brandt. They made a study of the environmental problem and made recommendations. In the North-South Dialogue, it is observed that if we proceed with the present way of approach in the matter of protecting our environment, at this rate, there will be a day when human

beings will die without getting oxygen. If things are going at this tangent, there will be a situation, wherein people will have to suffer from all sorts of diseases due to drinking of polluted water and inhaling polluted air. There will be a number of diseases due to environmental pollution, which will not be cured.

Shri Digvijay Singh was a party to that conference in 1972 and of course from that time onwards, there has been an awakening among humanity that the need to protect environment is true. Thinking on these lines has started and recommendations have been made and in India too, there is at present an awakening about the protection of the environment in our country.

There are people who exploit environment to make personal profit. What I feel is that there is an opportunity for some people to exploit the under-developed nature of various nations for their personal purposes and thereby create a dangerous or hazardous situation. In that context, we can see that even yesterday, in reply to the first question, the answer given in this House by the hon. Minister was that from 1970 to 1975 and from 1980 to 1985, 9 million hectares of forest was destroyed in this country, i.e. at an average of 1.3 million hectares per year. If this awareness is created, the people will start objecting these things. So there can be no way except to create an awareness among the people themselves. Of course legislation is there. Government machinery can do only a little in this matter. The first and foremost thing is to create an awareness and see that all these things are stopped in our country. I am not going into the details of pollution problem which has come here. Even the minor thing which one of my friends has pointed out is regarding black smoke coming out from the vehicles in the cities. I am told, if that is regulated, one-third of import of petrol can be avoided because it consumes more diesel and petrol and other petroleum products. It also spoils the atmosphere.

Then comes the noise pollution. Even for praying God, they use mikes in the Mosques, Temples and Churches. Even during elections, the political parties are

making noise pollutions by using mikes. Even in the marriages also they use four or five mikesets for playing records. This is the psychology which has been created. But what effect the noise pollution is creating nobody investigates and nobody even bothers to educate the society. The society which is not doing that is considered as better society because they could not educate the people in that light. Therefore, there have to be an all-out effort to see that the environment is protected by all means from exploitation. Of course, there is a lesson which we learnt from Bhopal Tragedy.....

SHRI VAKKOM PURUSHOTHAMAN : What you say about the noise pollution during Zero Hour !

SHRI THAMPAN THOMAS : We are all contributing to that. If you go to Bombay, a place near Chembur, if you sleep there for one night and get up in the morning, you cannot have fresh air to breathe. The industries have brought pollution in that area. If somebody makes a study of that area, then he will know how many types of diseases are existing in that area. Not only in Chembur, but also wherever the industries are coming. So some way or other, that takes into pollution. And the industrialists exploit the situation for their personal benefit. Is it necessary? That is my question. It can be avoided easily. My impression is that, if there are proper regulations and proper guidelines and if it is checked at an early stage, this will not happen. So, far this, we should have a machinery which can go into the problems, so that this may not happen in future. Even in my area, a Government owned company—Indian Rare earth Mover—is a major problem. Its radiation is feared by the people. Finally, the High Court itself have to interfere in this matter. So, you have to devise a method for the disposal of the rare earth, which is the net balance from the factory, without affecting the locality. The whole area is polluted, as has been rightly pointed out by my friend. If you go to Cochin city—a beautiful city—it was told that the Queen of Arabian Sea is now polluted with dust and smoke. You cannot have good air in the whole area. It

[Shri Thampan Thomas]

can be avoided. If an advance study is made on these things or a proper checking is made; I think it can be easily avoided.

Then, we see on the river banks, industries are coming up. They are using the river for the purpose of disposing of the wastes or whatever it is. This kills the fish. Mostly, near the rivers, cement factories are located. So there are every likelihood of cement parties going into the water. When somebody takes bath in that water, who is no way connected with it, there are chances of getting some sort of disease, from the polluted water and every one, every common man is the victim of the exploitation by this. But, somehow or other, therefore a feeling has crept in that is development vs. environment protection. There is a contradiction, as my previous speaker submitted. I submit it is not, in fact, a contradiction but a correlation. Unless there is a development connected with preventing pollution and the consequences thereof, there cannot be a development. How can you have a development on the dead bodies of the poor people like what had happened in Bhopal where 10,000 people died and one industry has grown up, but that industry too is in doldrums. Can we have a development like this? So, it is a very basic question when you think in terms of development. Development is surely correlated with the protection of the environment; this has to be synchronised in a proper manner. For that, an effective law has to be there, a forum should be there.

Mostly when we ask questions in the House, what we get from this Government of India in this House is that it is a State subject, by and large, a State subject. I would submit shamefully that in my State I have experience. There is a political party which is a party in the government which is associated in the government, which says in their manifesto that their aim, their slogan is to assign forest land for cultivation. This is the slogan of that particular political party in the election manifesto.

The party is called Kerala Congress; it is a partner in the Coalition Government in

Kerala. Their election manifesto says that forests will be assigned which are encroached by people for a particular purpose. This is the method of shortsighted approach of the political parties or government or people who are in power to give forest to the poor people at their mercy. Very bad. I submit that you never leave it as a State subject; it is a national subject; it is not only a national subject but an international subject. That is what Willy Brandt and their Commission made a recommendation that there should be an international forum to regulate this and therefore with its seriousness very necessary laws will have to be made, necessary forum will have to be built up to implement the law and to see that this is not happened.

[*Translation*]

SHRI BHARAT SINGH (Outer Delhi) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank you for granting me time to speak on environment. I support the Resolution presented in the House by Shri Digvijay Singh. We all know that more the population, the more the felling of trees. This is also polluting the environment. Twenty five per cent of the total tree saplings planted do not survive. We want that the maximum care should be taken after planting the trees. I thank Shri Bhajan Lal for paying attention to Delhi also. My area has a population of 20 lakhs. I would like to raise four points and hope that you will pay attention to them. The first point is about planting of trees. You know that a large number of trees can be planted on both sides of roads maintained by the P.W.D. or the Corporation. There are some drains like the Nazafgarh Drain where by planting trees on their banks erosion can be prevented. It is well known that trees inhale polluted air, smoke and dirty water and exhale pure air. The second thing I want to say is that there are many factories in Delhi. No doubt these are outside the city. The Badarpur Thermal Power Station emits such polluted smoke that ash settles down on roofs, in kitchens and mixes with the fodder for cattle with the result that air and smoke affect cattle also. We want that proper measures should be taken so that the people of that area are protected from ash contents in the air and their harmful

effects. The smoke from the thermal station rises above but the ash content is scattered in the neighbourhood all around in the wells, cattle fodder kitchens and even person sleeping in the open is covered with ash in the morning. There is a factory opposite the Wazirpur Depot. Although there are some colonies like Maurya Enclave and Pitam Pura near it but so much stench is emitted out of that glue factory that people cannot pass that area without a kerchief on their nose for two furlongs. I urge that such stench emitting factories be shifted to places outside Delhi on Haryana border where there is no population so that the people do not face any problem. All such factories be shifted outside Delhi. They cause indescribable pollution to the surrounding atmosphere. Some people burn rubber by roadside, some factories manufacture rubber products; this also produces terrible stench and bitter smoke which makes the whole atmosphere highly poisonous. You should take some measures for controlling it also. The chimneys of all rubber using factories should be made more high so that smoke may rise high and no bad effects is cast on the human beings.

You must have noticed that dirty and polluted water is also affecting us adversely. There is no doubt that very clean water comes from Haryana to our Nazafgarh Drain but in Delhi it is polluted due to discharge of dirty water from factories which subsequently mingle with the waters of Yamuna.

With that the entire Yamuna water has been polluted. We are drinking the same water. I would request you to make such arrangements that polluted water is stored separately for watering crops and fields so that this water does not affect our health and crops may yield more produce and our environment may also become pollution free. Besides, I have also seen dirty water collected at various places below which water pipes are laid and at some places small quantity of this water gets mixed up with the water in the pipes. For example, the same situation prevails in the Lawrence Road area. This is harmful for our health. I would request that this dirty water may be collected separately somewhere else and

the water coming from Hyderpur Water Works, should be used for drinking purposes.

The environment in the New Delhi area is very good but if you happen to be in Old Delhi area you will find that there is always a traffic jam at the crossings. Some old trucks, buses, three-wheelers emit so much of smoke that it becomes difficult for the passengers sitting in other vehicles to breathe. Heavily polluted smoke is emitted. You will have to make certain arrangements, frame certain rules to see that such vehicles may operate with electricity or some such other arrangement because due to this smoke, the air of the surrounding areas gets polluted.

At many places, dirty water gets accumulated which serves as breeding ground for the mosquitoes and the whole capital is troubled by this menace. When the labourers return home to sleep after a hard days work, these mosquitoes do not let them sleep peacefully. Therefore, I would request that wherever there are drains in Delhi, arrangements should be made to cover those drains, so that neither mosquitoes are bred, nor there is any stench. Sewerage system should be provided so that the dirty water is collected separately and is supplied to the fields. Therefore, I want to draw your attention towards four things in Delhi which if controlled, would enable us to breathe clean air and people would be healthy as the environment would be pollution free. Due to Badarpur Thermal Power plant, the cattle in the nearby areas are falling sick; as such you must do something about it. Of course, we know that as compared to other cities, Delhi is far better but its population is increasing day by day and has already increased much. The D.D.A. has constructed several parks but we should make arrangements for planting of trees in these parks so that against the trees which were felled for building new colonies adequate number of new trees are planted. With these words I would like to thank you for allowing me to speak on some problems of Delhi. I hope the hon. Minister will pay attention to these problems.

[English]

SHRI SHANTARAM POTDUKHE (Chandrapur) : I congratulate Shri Digvijay Singh for bringing forward this Resolution. He wants that conservation should be people's movement. He is a committed conservationist and he did lot many things when he was in the Cabinet. Mr. Digvijay Singh was witness to the deliberations of the United Nations Conference on Environment in June, 1972. There the world conservation policy had been spelt out. The WHO says that every fourth person is deprived of clean drinking water. This morning we had a meeting of the farmers parliamentary forum which was addressed by the Prime Minister. He said that our farmers and farm products are suffering due to floods and drought since we have not given enough attention to environment and ecological balance. Our beloved late Prime Minister, Srimati Indira Gandhi, had rightly said :

"Man is part of nature and with the possibility of destruction so starkly real that we must concentrate on the art of preservation".

There is a gap between man and nature and rich and poor. The environmental conditions cannot be improved in the conditions of poverty. Higher standards of living must be achieved without alienating people from their heritage and without spoiling nature of its beauty, freshness and purity so essential to our life. Like that Lot many things have been said about forest conservation.

There are Forest Development Corporations in various States. I do not understand why these Corporations are cutting forests. Why should they not go in for planting of forests in wastelands and the land which is available with so many agencies? I would like the Department of Environment to direct the State Forest Development Corporations to use the wastelands.

There are industries which depend on forests. There is the Ballarpur Paper Industry. They demanded from the

Government land for afforestation of bamboos, but the Government has not given them land. There is already a pressure on our forests. If they want land for afforestation, I think, Government should consider their request.

Mr. Arvind Netam has made a very valid point and asked whether there is a clash between conservation and asked whether there is a clash between conservation and development. There is a constant clash going on between developmental projects and ecological conservationists. We find in various States this clash is there. I congratulate Kerala conservationists who made a mark of their struggle on the Silent Valley project. This was the struggle between the conservationists and these who wanted hydel projects and power projects.

I draw the attention of the House to the two projects about which Mr. Arvind Netam made a mention. One is Bhopalpatnam hydel project and another one is Inchempalli project. Both these projects are between the States of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh.

I would like to quote world wildlife sources which state that 40 dams have collapsed during the last century in India; out of 433 built till 1974. By 1986 end, India would have 1554 large dams which have been planned irrespective of problems of land erosion, man-made water-logging, salinity, frequent incidences of earthquakes, rehabilitation of displaced persons, large-scale deforestation and shrinking of wildlife habitat. This problem is very alarming because there are some thermal power stations, there is big environmental pollution by industries. Coal consumption by industries in India is about 84 million tonnes. It is going to be 180 million tonnes by 2000. Thermal power stations consume around 100 million tonnes of coal. They would be consuming around 195 million tonnes by 2000. Such pollution would endanger human existence. So, the Government has to take some measures about it.

The last point I would like to make is about the nuclear power plants that we are

having. The other day the Prime Minister had assured in this House that our power plants are very good but if something goes wrong, we do not have the capability to check the after effects of pollution by such nuclear plants. So, the Government should come out with the strategy to check this pollution. Thank you.

[Translation]

SHRI P. NAMGYAL (Laddakh) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Resolution moved by Shri Digvijay Singh for starting an environmental movement and for accelerating the movement is laudable and I would like to congratulate him for this. I support the motion and want to submit certain points.

In our country, we are faced with the twin problems of floods and drought. Lakhs of acres of land are affected by floods and drought every year with the result that the agricultural labourers, farmers and other people have to incur heavy losses. In addition to the loss of life and property, live stock is also not spared which ultimately results in losses amounting to crores of rupees.

Not only in our country but in several parts of the world as well, whether it is the famine in Africa or the Gas tragedy in Bhopal or the harmful effects of the radiation due to the leakage in the Atomic Reactor in Harrisberg islands in the United States or the Cheronbyl disaster in U.S.S.R., I think all the disasters are man-made. Some are natural disasters also.

Environmental pollution or pollution in rivers or lakes are all created by man himself.

We are faced with devastating floods even today. That is why the Government has to spend millions of rupees as relief to the farmers and labourers. And all this is the result of our wrong policies. We are today robbing nature of all its wealth. As an example, we can take up the forests. Yesterday only in a reply to a question, you had said that 1.3 million hectares of

forests in the Himalayan region are denuded every year. The top soil is washed away and is deposited in our rivers and canals and as a consequence, there are floods.

We are engaged in deforestation in several ways. Firstly, in the name of timber extraction trees are felled indiscriminately. Secondly, we fell trees for collecting fuel wood. Then, trees are also cut for the purpose of extracting resin. Similarly, cattle grazing also destroys our forests. All these result in destruction of forests which ultimately cause floods. We are making deserts out of our forests. Though the Centre formulates several plans, and allocates funds and issues directions to spend money on environmental improvements yet there are complaints against several States that the funds allotted for the protection of environment are used for other purposes. In this way the Centre's good plans are not getting implemented.

Siberia in U.S.S.R., which was a desert area earlier, has developed into a forest area. China has planted so many trees in Tibet that the whole area has become green. Similarly, the Gobi desert area in Mungolia is also developing into forest. Have you observed all this? Cannot we emulate it? Our Government must also think seriously in this regard. Attention should also be paid to the development of desert areas in Rajasthan.

Today, we are speaking about terrorism in Punjab. We strongly condemn it because human beings are massacred. When we cut forest, we are also indulging in terrorism. You will see one day that the forests have disappeared silently.

Now I would like to give certain suggestions. My suggestions are drastic and I do not know in what way the hon. Minister is going to implement them. But if this process continued then perhaps they may have to be implemented some day. My first suggestion is that the forest should be exploited in a scientific manner. If one tree is cut, then at least ten trees should be planted in its place and the concerned contractor should be made responsible for this job.

[Shri P Namgyal]

In order to cover the virgin soil, seedlings of a quick-growing variety of grass should be planted so that the surface is prevented.

The conservation of Forests Act should be made very stringent and it should be enforced in all the States. It has not yet been enforced in all the States. For example, in Jammu and Kashmir, this law has not been enforced due to which the forests are exploited indiscriminately in that state :

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Mr. Namgyal, all the stringent laws only go to affect the Government programmes. If you want to start an industry or construct a lake or construct a dam, the Act will come in the way. But other people, the private people are cutting the whole forests. That is happening. Otherwise forests are not cut because of Government programmes. It is only because of the private people that forests are cut.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI P. NAMGYAL : Another drastic suggestion that I am giving is that all the forests should be converted into national assets. Unless they are made national assets, cutting of forests cannot be stopped.

Thirdly, as I have mentioned earlier also, all the rivers should also be converted into national assets. This will not only settle water disputes between the States, as at present there is one between Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan, but will also bring greenery to the desert areas like Rajasthan. Apart from this, it will be possible to generate electricity and to distribute it equally to every State.

I also agree to the points and suggestions submitted by my colleagues about smoke and air pollution,

The pollution caused by buses and other vehicles cannot be understood by the people moving in cars. I can feel it because I drive a scooter. If you are driving a scooter behind a D.T.C. bus then your clothes will become so much dirty that you will feel as if you have not changed them for at least 10 days. In cities, smoke is causing much pollution. You should also bring forward some law in this regard. With this I support this Resolution.

[English]

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ (Baramulla) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I congratulate Mr. Digvijay Singh for having brought this motion before this august House. But I would suggest an amendment. He says, there has been a movement, now it is a losing movement. I differ with him. A movement has yet to start because only for a couple of years we have been hearing about environment. It is very unfortunate that things which are having very great relevance for our future do not have short-term relevance to us, we relegate them to the background, we do not take any interest. So, that modification would be necessary. I wish this could be adopted with this modification. You want a campaign in the country and I congratulate you for that.

Having said, that Sir, I would say that he has brought a motion which covers the entire country, I support that. But many of my colleagues have talked about their respective States. Because there is constraint of time, I would not bring in, under the discussion, the entire country. But there is paucity of time. Therefore, I must confine myself to the Jammu and Kashmir State, particularly. Our State has been the worst sufferer due to vast felling of trees on large scale. There is terrible corruption. Mr. Digvijay Singh has been visiting Kashmir valley for a long time and he had been the Environment Minister. He takes interest in nature. I remind him the lush green valley of Lolab is totally barren today. That could not be topped for the unfortunate fact that there is no co-ordination. Water is running wastefully to Pakistan; we cannot harness

water. I have been saying in this House that water in the whole State particularly in Kashmir province, is running wastefully to Pakistan. We should harness the water not only for my State but for the entire country. Now, you have to produce energy; then only forest can be retained. Only for firewood, very good trees are cut. Mr. Namgyal was saying that the forest contractor must plant 10 trees for one tree which he cuts down. That is not sufficient. And the kind of forest, Mr. Singh knows, the kind of trees that grow there, they do not have the type of value as we have for our forest. We are having Coniferous, a tree which grows in 50 years. You cut it in a moment and you are planting other trees. Those trees are not of that much value to us. So, we must preserve the forests which have remained in Jammu & Kashmir State. We do not have the kind of pollution that is produced by industry. We do not have industries in Kashmir. But I have made a strong plea for electronic industry because it is capital light and pollution free. But the kind of pollution you find in Sriagar is worse. You can compare it to that of Calcutta. There is a saying, anyone who drives in Srinagar can drive anywhere in the world. It is all pollution, lot of rush of cars, buses etc. because roads are narrower and the traffic has increased. It is a very small valley. So, it has to be saved because we attract international tourists. And the pollution of noise, pollution of smoke by the buses, trucks etc., should be stopped.

There is pollution all around in Kashmir valley because we have lost forest and we have changed the entire ecology. We do not get snow. In my childhood, we had snow and if we could heap it, it would become ice. We would walk over there, on the whole mass of snow and we could see from a height down below something being prepared—what you say Handi in Urdu—house-wife cook in something down below. That was the thickness of snow, six feet and that would give enough water and we would produce electricity. We have no electricity because we have no snow due to deforestation of forest.

Here, I would plead with Mr. Bhajan Lal who is here. I never had an encounter with him. They must take notice of the suggestions that we are making. There is no coordination between the Agriculture Ministry, Forest Ministry, Rural Development Ministry and the Energy Ministry. There should be coordination and through subordination only, you can solve the problem. So, will he rise and say that he will take steps for the effective coordination. Unless there is coordination, he would not do anything. My problem is that of energy. If we have sufficient energy, 600 mega watts for Jammu and Kashmir, I can assure you that the forest will be saved. We have the capacity for generation of 20,000 mega watts. That is the point. Will he organise a kind of coordination between various Departments?

Then, I suggest that we should have a National Forest Commission. I have in my hand and I invite the attention of the hon. Minister to this bald Act, sketchy Act and you call it the Forest Conservation Act.

It is a shameful Act and we have passed it. But I do not know whether you have framed the rules and whether the rules contained in Clause 4 p. 2 are implemented or not. Under this Act, you wanted to have a Committee. Would you constitute a Committee consisting of such number of persons as it may deem fit to advise the Government with regard to grant of approval under Section 2? Has that Committee been instituted? This Act has not brought any result while you want to preserve forests. It does not talk of pollution, of ecology. Therefore, there should be National Forest Commission. It is a State subject but there should be a National Forest Commission to oversee things as to what is happening in States. I am a votary for preserving this forest development as a State subject but national Government is responsible for everything ultimately. Therefore, this Act must be amended to bring in the question of pollution and then there shall be a National Forest Commission.

[*Translation*]

SHRI JUHAR SINGH (Jhalawar) :
Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I know that I have very little time at my disposal. Therefore, instead of going into details I want to submit only important points before the House.

Today's topic of discussion in the House is an important one. To my mind the agencies, the people, Government officials and the Forest Department all are responsible for the disturbances in the environment. It needs everybody's cooperation to improve the situation created by all of us. A single agency cannot do anything. I would also request the hon. Minister that there is a need to improve the policies being followed by the State Governments at present. At present the practice is that any trespass of forest land and revenue land is regularised by you after five to ten years. That is why people have developed a habit of trespassing and cutting the trees and then getting that act regularised. This has become a bad practice which needs to be curbed. Without curbing it your schemes will not be successful.

Secondly, importance of environment is being felt by everybody for the last few years. Even the villagers are feeling that our monsoon cycle has somewhat been disturbed. Sometimes it rains heavily, resulting in floods which caused great loss. But then the next monsoons may fail and, it may not rain again. This way first they suffer on account of heavy rains and then they have to face famine in the absence of timely rains. This is the situation every year in Rajasthan, the State to which I belong. People now understand this disturbance in the ecological balance. The farmers do not fully understand the reasons for this disturbance in the ecological balance and irregularity in the cycle. Therefore, there is need to make them understand these things. A good publicity drive should be undertaken to make them aware of the ill effects of cutting the forests on environment. You should make it clear to them otherwise none of your schemes will be successful.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have some data about the money spent on these calamities during the last plans. The expenses against floods and other natural calamities are on the increase. In the Fourth Plan, Rs 240 crores were spent every year for this purpose and in the Sixth Plan, Rs. 557 crores were spent which were about 2½ times the amount spent earlier. This year, about Rs. 1035 crores are going to be spent on floods, famine, drought and other natural calamities. That is why it is a serious problem in itself. We make plans like the Fourth Plan, Fifth Plan, Sixth Plan, etc. Now the Seventh Plan has also started. Previously, we were spending Rs. 250 crores against natural calamities which has risen to Rs. 1000 crores at present. It means that volume of destruction and natural calamities is increasing. We are not satisfied with the efforts made in this direction in the past. Had we taken some practical permanent measures in this regard we would not have spent this much money.

I would also like to state that our land use policy is wrong. There has been large scale erosion in the hill areas and destruction of forests. Rajasthan has many rivers. In my own constituency, you will find a river every 3 to 4 miles.

[*English*]

Every four or five miles, there is a river or flow.

[*Translation*]

Efforts should be made to preserve the marginal land, the forest along side the river and more trees should be planted there but our land use policy is wrong. The land entered in the revenue records as barren land is allotted which causes erosion and pollution, thereby spoiling the environment. Rajasthan is a desert State. I have figures with me.

[*English*]

998 and odd lakhs of acres are under soil erosion. Out of that nearly 200 lakh acres are in Rajasthan.

[*Translation*]

So there is a great need to follow a systematic land use policy in a State where erosion is taking place on such a large scale. Due to negligence this problem is becoming more acute. It should be shown due consideration.

I shall conclude after giving a small example. Recently, I visited my constituency. There is a tribal area which has rich forests. Hundreds of people from other areas are migrating to this area and are felling thousands trees. This should be in the knowledge of the Forest Department. When I told the forest officer that the people had been cutting trees in his area for the last one year, to my surprise, the senior officers did not know that the trees were being felled on such a large scale for such a long period. The negligence, connivance and indifference of the officers are the reasons for these fellings. Alongwith this the lack of sense of responsibility among the people has also resulted in the imbalance in the environment. Therefore, the subject brought here is very important and I thank Shri Digvijay Singh for presenting this Resolution. This is an important subject which he has brought before the House and has given us a chance to discuss it.

With this I conclude.

[*English*]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Smt. Sheila Dikshit.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SMT. SHEILA DIKSHIT) : Sir, there are a lot of members who want to speak on this. I would suggest that we can extend today's sitting upto Seven of the clock.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : I hope that the House will accept...

SOME HON. MEMBERS : Yes.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Yes, it is agreed that today's sitting of the House be extended upto Seven of the Clock.

[*Translation*]

SHRI AZIZ QURESHI (Satna) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, yesterday the Bhopal tragedy completed two years and today this Resolution has been presented before us, for which I congratulate my colleague Shri Digvijay Singh. But Mr. Chairman, Sir, I do not agree with the wordings of the Resolution :

[*English*]

"the movement in the country is losing momentum"—

[*Translation*]

—because the question of losing the momentum comes only when the Government has gained the full momentum. So far, the movement of environment has not reached even the 'take off' stage. For the last two years our new Prime Minister has been giving his attention and before that late Shrimati Indira Gandhi had given attention towards it, but so far this movement has not reached the take off stage.

16.00 hrs.

[SHRI SOMNATH RATH *in the Chair*]

You should intensify this movement. This movement should reach everybody.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I beg pardon of Shri Digvijay Singh that it cannot be done by the Government because the feeling of the general public is that this movement of environment and ecological balance is an elite movement and some of them by manoeuvring to rise high, hold seminars in the auditorium to discuss such things. Their names are published in the brochures. Excepting this, it does not have any other importance. This is not my view. It is the opinion of the common man of the country.

[Shri Aziz Qureshi]

The common man of the country opens his eyes in his Kuchcha house under the thatched roof, where he is exposed to sunlight, the moonlight and the rains. For him this is the ecological balance. Today we have to create awareness in him.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I do not have much time at my disposal. I want to present some personal experiences before you. You talk of controlling environment movement and ecological balance but I would like to tell you that Satna, in Madhya Pradesh is the most unfortunate and backward area. There are three cement factories and one asbestos factory there. Maximum injustice is being meted out to the people there. You should visit the area to see for yourself.

[English]

If I go to the people and tell them that we have passed this Resolution for environmental development or improvement and ecological balance, they will say, "what you talk is non-sense; it is nothing but an empty dream of a poet or vain thought of a politician; it is nothing; we are getting nothing."

[Translation]

Mr. Chairman, Sir, you go and see here that dust and smoke from cement factories pollutes air in a radius of about 10 miles and this plays havoc with life, crops and cattle. The Central Government or the State Government have initiated no action in this relation upto now. No one cares to take action against such business concerns.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, all these Motions and enactments will remain useless if you do not take steps against these capitalists who, through their factories, pollute the atmosphere so much. The Government must check this environment pollution. You have a look at the life of people there, their health, their houses and fields. We shall have the right to pass such a Resolution only when such maladies are justified.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, there is the Bokaro Steel Plant of the Government of India. Lime-stone mines are also there. Thousands of trees have been felled there. The forests have been totally destroyed. There cannot be more grievous and pitiable condition of the labourers than the one prevailing here. Therefore, I tell you that passing of these elaborate Motions and enactment will yield nothing. First, you should clean the environment in factories like the Bokaro. The Bokaro Plant is a Government of India undertaking and first it should improve environment in its own industries, then only we shall have the right to pass this Motion.

[English]

SHRI I. RAMA RAI (Kasaragod) : Sir, I am really thankful that this matter has been taken up for discussion through a Motion.

The hazards posed by industries were brought to the notice of the general public by the gas tragedy of Bhopal. Sometimes one feels that industrialisation is posing a danger no less in effect than of the Atom Bomb, and we have to do something about it. The dangers in the shape of side-effects posed by some of the medicines manufactured by the multi-nationals, the insecticides and fertilisers used in agriculture and the preservatives, the pollution emitted by the automobiles, the waste and effluent discharged by some of the industries, have already been discussed by many of the Members here. Therefore, I do not want to go into the details of these.

The prevailing ecological imbalance can be removed only after putting 33 per cent of the available land of our country under forest cover. But unfortunately we have at present 22.75% of the total geographical area under forest.

Coming to my State and the neighbouring State of Karnataka, —I think some ex-ministers of Forests are here sitting—the illegal and unscientific felling of trees is causing a slow death of evergreen forests in the Western Ghats. The effect is felt

on the climatic conditions with inadequate rainfall and some time floods due to over-silting of river-beds, which is due to deforestation. It is also discussed here in detail.

I don't want to point out about the Forest Department, the less we talk the better it is. About the Forest Department, there is a saying in Malayalam by one examiner: "Devarode Aane, Kadilode Maram, Waliodu Wali" That means Temple's elephant is brought and made to drag the logs of trees from the forest. This goes on unabated.

We know that the forest contractors are very powerful men. They take under auction some hectares of land. They cut one load of wood and timber from the specified land. For this we the politicians are also partly responsible. Everybody knows about this and I don't want to say much. We are protecting the forests and at the same time we are protecting the tree-cutters also. That is the regular practice we are doing.

Now I feel that our able Minister is facing a challenge. There is a saying that better late than never. We are late already, of course we have lost enough wealth of this country. So, it is high time that we took up the challenge. I think under your stewardship the matter will be taken up on a war-footing. You have already given a reply yesterday that 1.3 hectares every year is being cut from 1975 to 1982. For the last five or six years 34,000 hectares of forest land was diverted for non-forest purposes, which works out to 5500 hectares annually.

Another problem we are facing in Kerala is that the forest land is cut and the timber is burnt so that the land can be used for agricultural purposes. That is the usual practice. I don't know about other States of the country. We have to face this problem in a proper way, in a dynamic way. I hope that you will take up this challenge on a war-footing to make this country richer by not only environmental richness, but also by making the country capable of exporting timber. Yesterday

we asked a question that just like New Zealand, why can't this country also export timber.

[Translation]

SHRI K.D. SULTANPURI (Simla): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to congratulate Shri Digvijay Singh for presenting here such a good Motion.

So far as forests in the country are concerned, I think that the large scale felling of trees in the mountainous region from Nagaland to Kashmir which includes Himachal Pradesh, Garhwal and Gangtok etc has caused havoc with the foothills. These regions have been granted huge funds for tree plantation and have been asked to plant trees to meet certain targets. In this way targets and area to be covered by trees are fixed for the State Government but if real progress is assessed then I can say that the pace of progress is very slow. Most of the trees planted have either withered away or have not been properly looked after. The farmers in villages have always protected forests in plains or hill areas. Most of the pollution these days caused by smoke or motor vehicles. In villages the poor people do not have motor vehicles. 90 percent of the population residing in the villages out of which only 10 per cent people can afford a tonga or motor-car. Usually, the villagers have sacrificed for the development of cities. The I.A.S. officers have never prepared any guidelines and that is why improvement has not taken place. No attention has been paid since independence. Late Shri Indira Gandhi showed the way as how these forests can be protected. For example, I want to tell you that when passing through Manali, we see that the trees have been felled in Rohtang pass indiscriminately. In the same way, trees as old as hundred years, have been felled in the hill areas in order to plant orchards. No attention has been paid to the activities as well. If the Government of India grants Rs. 700 crore as subsidy to the Himachal Government then only they can get rid of wooden boxes because apples can be marketed only when these are packed

[Shri K.D. Sultanpuri]

in boxes. The wooden boxes are also used for burning purposes as there are neither any gas agencies nor wood cutting facilities in the hill areas. Life without wood is not possible there. No tribal or a native of hill areas is a contractor. Most of the contractors are from Delhi or Jagadhari in Haryana. They have amassed properties worth crores of rupees by exploiting the forests. The hon. Minister is a very experienced man and he has initiated large scale plantation in Haryana. You told us about Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan yesterday also. I want to say that if the Government wants to expand plantation programme then I suggest that all the barren land be allotted to villagers and village panchayats and they should be asked to plant orchards on that land. The forests will not flourish if these remain under the supervision of the State Governments. If you entrust it to the villagers then I think the saplings can be protected. A fair of goddess Renuka is held near Paonta Sahib. The lake there has been getting silted due to soil erosion. I would request the State Government to submit to you a scheme for this lake and you may extend grant for this lake of Himachal Pradesh which you will provide for other lakes. More than one lakh tonnes of wood is being cut these days for making apple packing boxes. Trees of Himachal Pradesh and Kashmir are felled for this purpose. I would like that you should make some arrangements and grant subsidy for a period of four to five years. You should pay attention to it so that apple growers may get this facility. Our economy and expenditures depend on apple production. I think if the Government of India pays attention then the losses worth crores of rupees being incurred by Delhi and U.P. due to floods from our dams can be prevented. Therefore, you should ask the Governments of Jammu & Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh to plant maximum number of trees. Your Forest Department will not do this job as it is the one that indulges in felling of trees. You can see for yourself that huge quantity of timber is decaying in the Corporation. If you collect figures from the State Governments then you will come to know how many trees have been felled, how many have been

utilised and how many saplings have been planted. You will also come to know to what extent the State Governments are following the directive regarding planting of maximum trees and avoid felling of trees.

Thus, keeping this point in view you should ask that trees be planted in place of the trees felled for laying the pipe-line and construction of school buildings and roads in the hill areas. The villagers should not be harassed because all the losses in tribal areas are caused by outside contractors. You should rather help the villagers. The Government should think good of the poor so that there is more afforestation and proper protection of the forests.

[English]

SHRI KAMAL CHOUDHARY (Hoshiarpur): Mr. Chairman, Sir, thank you for agreeing to my request and giving me this opportunity to speak for the first time in this winter session.

I congratulate Shri Digvijay Singh for having brought this motion before the House for discussion and also our hon. Prime Minister, who spearheaded this movement by creating a separate Ministry of Environment and Forests. Now that he has inducted Bhajan Lalji, I am sure, with his (ch. Bhajan Lal) dynamism and with the help of Ansariji, he (ch. Bhajan Lal) is going to ensure ecological balance in our country.

May I give a few suggestions to revive the environmental movement or boost up this movement which is losing its momentum.

Firstly, as mentioned by Prof. Soz, this movement has not even been started and he has hardly heard of this movement. I suggest that we introduce this as a subject starting from the pre-school so that this pitiable situation in our country does not exist any more. We can start it from the KG stage by calling the subject as hygiene, sanitation and environment, where a child is taught how to brush his teeth, how to

live clear, how to sleep in a well ventilated room, the importance of a flower pot in the house etc. That is how he will slowly realise the importance of a tree in front of his house and he will not ask for abolition of Section (4) of the relevant Act which prohibits him from cutting and chopping of trees.

Secondly, my suggestion is about the utilization of agricultural universities. We are spending lakhs of rupees on these Universities. They should be asked to devise ways and means to tell us which species of trees should be planted in a particular area, be it a desert area, or a water-lagged area, or an area which is clad with snow for half of the year. They can with the help of the district forest officers tell the various agencies whether they should go in for black *sheesham* or *sal* or *deodar* trees which a common man will never plant in his land since they take years to come up to fully bloom.

Then, the private schools in this country have thousands of acres of land. These schools and colleges should be guided by the Forest Department and the agricultural universities as to what all species to be planted in their land. The plants should be provided to them free of cost by the Forest Department.

Then, quite a few of the Town Improvement Trusts that I know of, do not bother about the greenness of their cities. I would like to suggest that the Forest Department should be associated with these Town Improvement Trusts, where at least one member from the Forest Department should be representative, so that he will be in a position to tell them as to how much percentage of the area which is under the development scheme should be kept free, earmarked as green area.

Next point that I would like to mention is about aerial seeding programme. This has been started by our Prime Minister. I suggest that a few more funds should be allotted to them to have a better fleet of aircraft to do this aerial seeding.

Our Territorial Army has two battalions called 'Ecological Battalions'. And they are doing a very good job. I suggest that a few more such battalions be formed and they may be given similar task. Our Defence Forces are already doing wonders to keep the ecological balance. I have a suggestion that they be given funds specifically towards this end.

Shri K.P. Singh Deo has rightly stated that the rich cut trees for their greed and poor for their need. I suggest that we should make our legislations stricter and tougher so that we can come down with a heavy hand on those people who are felling trees illegally.

We should also give some incentives and motivation to the people so that they stop cutting trees indiscriminately and on the other hand they should help the nation by planting more and more trees. I have known of quite a few Defense Establishments and cities where incentives are given for maintaining a good lawn or a garden. Just as there are prizes given for dog shows and flower shows, we should also reward those people who maintain good lawns. They should be motivated by giving them prizes and by televising their efforts. This, in turn, will motivate and encourage others to maintain good lawns and thus increase the greenness of the city.

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAMASHRAY PRASAD SINGH (Jahanabad): Mr. Chairman, Sir, first of all I thank the mover of this Motion Shri Digvijay Singh for raising this long awaited issue. Man is a part of Nature and environment is also related to him. Conservation of environment is a must for the survival of living beings. Man has not been stressing this point for the first time; he has been reiterating it since the origin of society that conservation of environment is necessary. Necessities of man keep on increasing with his advancement. People do try at their level to protect environment but the administration has also a responsibility to protect it. But today it is being stressed that it is the responsibility of the State Governments to protect the environment. I

[Shri Ramashray Prasad Singh]

would like to ask whether there is no connection between the State Governments and the Central Government. If some State commits a mistake and people die of drinking polluted water, will not the Central Government be blamed for it? The Central Government will certainly be blamed for it and this responsibility should not be shirked on the plea that it is the duty of the State Government.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, we all know about it. Members here have said that our late Prime Minister, Shrimati Indira Gandhi had taken the initiative. I reiterate, that one who is in the administration, even if he is a Prime Minister, has a responsibility to enact such laws as may protect the living beings. There is no reason to give credit to a particular person. When you hold the reins of the country in your hands, who else will look after it? You will have to perform this job.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I want to point out that the forests are being felled in Bihar on a large scale. Some of the hon. Members have said that the natives of this country whom we call Adivasis are felling the forests. It is absolutely incorrect. Our Adivasis are not felling the forests. When these adivasis used to live in forests, they used to collect dry wood for their own use and for selling in the market to earn their livelihood. You have deprived them of this facility. You should have educated those tribals living in forests about the protection of forests but you employed highly educated people to protect the forests. I want to say these tribals be trained to protect forests. But I would like to point it out to you that cutting of forests did not start only yesterday. It has been going on for a very long time. I may tell that forests near Rajori in Bihar have been rapidly felled and many people have amassed properties by selling valuable wood. There the 'kher' trees are being felled which are used for preparing a valuable item 'katha' and a class of nouveau riche has emerged by selling this wood. Who are these persons? Top ranking officers and police personnel are involved in it. When the State Government has a

law, why then such things are not prevented? Why do you not take action against any one? It is so because these forests and trees are felled by your own men. These very people are amassing wealth worth crores of rupees by destroying the forests. When you say that there is a law to protect forests then why do you not arrest such persons? You only arrest innocent tribals who collect few dry twigs to burn fire in their hearths. Only they are harassed and entangled in litigation. We very well know all this. So when your own men are doing all the wrong things and destroying the forest how can you catch them? You cannot do it. Therefore, I say that if you want to protect environment from pollution in the real sense then the first thing to do is to conserve forests and to save air from pollution. You will have to take measures to provide pure drinking water to the people. What is happening in our area. On the one hand huge funds are being spent for cleansing the Ganga and on the other hand in Patna all the sewage water, human excreta etc is being discharged into the Ganga. You will have to think about this problem also. Whereas you are spending lakhs of rupees to remove the pollution of the Ganga water, you will have to ensure that no dirty water from drains and sewage is discharged into it. You will have to prevent all this. With these words I want to say that it is a very important issue in the interest of the humanity and for the protection of human beings. This will also help in checking the fast extinction of birds and animals. You should take some immediate and effective steps in this direction.

[English]

SHRI M. Y. GHORPADE (Raichur): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I think, it is appropriate that I am making my maiden speech in the Parliament on the subject like Nature and Conservation which is very dear to my heart and which at the same time is vital to the country. We all know that from the environmental point of view, we are today at a very critical period in the history of this country and what we do now is going to shape the environment and the future of India.

As an Economist, I would like to make this point. At the outset, all Economists today agree that the environmental dimension is absolutely vital to economic development. No economic development can be measured correctly in human terms and in terms of quality of life without taking into effect, the effect it has on environment.

Sir, we all know that the forest cover in this country has gone down from 30 per cent to an official 11 per cent and according to some, it may have gone even below 9 per cent. Now this is a very alarming state of affairs and it is very important that we arrest this deterioration at once. We talk of birds and animals, not only for the sake of birds and animals, but because birds and animals are the symptoms of the environmental health of the country. We all know that if birds and animals disappear, then man also will find it difficult to exist on this planet.

I must congratulate Digvijay Singh Ji for having stressed so many things in his speech. As far as I understand it, his main burden was to impress upon this House that what is vital is not just the policy, but the implementation, and what happens in the field, at the grassroots level; and his conclusion was that depended on people's participation. Unless this becomes a people's movement, it will not serve the crisis situation in which we are placed. I think there can be no two opinions on that.

In his motion, there is a word 'momentum', which he has chosen to use twice. I would like to submit for his consideration that momentum really means the direction of change, and the speed at which you are changing. I would like to say that this should be judged from a historical perspective, not in terms of a few years, but in terms of what has happened over a large number of years. We all know that before Independence, forest was considered to be the enemy of man in this country. The culture in this country was to remove forest, and the animals in that forest, in order to extend the frontiers of civilization. From that culture, we have suddenly to

orient this country to a different realization that the destruction of forests is the destruction of this country. This, I would like to say, has happened in a remarkable measure, thanks to the enlightened leadership that this country had.

It was Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who for the first time spoke for the forests with sensitivity. He spoke how culturally birds, animals and trees were important for the quality of life. But it is during the days of Indira Gandhi that the seriousness of this problem hit this nation, and she realized that unless we stopped the deterioration, something very dark and evil was going to happen to this country. It is under her leadership that the Tiger Project was started, and the whole country came to accept that the protection of animals, birds and forests was not an elitist fad, but it is a protection of the vital interests of this country.

This, I am sure Shri Digvijay Singh admits, is a movement, is a change for the better. It is a gaining of momentum. Today we are under the leadership of Rajiv Gandhi. He has tried to concretize these things. To quote just one example, he has placed a very bold programme before the country, of afforesting wasteland to the extent of 5 million hectares per annum. This is certainly a very ambitious, a very laudable programme. It deserves the support of everybody in this country, irrespective of political affiliations.

I would also try to support what Mr. Digvijay Singh said. If this programme is to succeed, we must go into its details. I would request the hon. Minister to spell out, now or later, the detailed mechanics, of implementing a programme of this order: how many seeds are going to be planted, who is going to grow those seeds, how are these seeds going to be planted, what about the finances for it, and what about public participation—because such a programme can succeed only if people in every village identify that programme with their own self-interest. Unless they feel that this is something which is going to ensure their future, and unless in the meantime we strengthen the short-term condition, we will find this programme very

[Shri M.Y. Ghorpade]

difficult. Therefore, it would be extremely welcome if the Minister, now or later, comes out with a detailed action programme as to the implementation of this 5 million hectare programme, which is one of the most important things that the Prime Minister has announced in recent times.

Now, connected with this is the other problem of alternative fuels. I would request the hon. Minister to spell out things, and to set up a high-power body to initiate steps—and even to subsidize fuel, which is going to save the cutting of forests, because we all know the cutting of forests is mainly because of fuel. People will not get fuel for cooking after about 10 years. The same thing will continue. Therefore, everything we do to give them alternative fuel is going to be less expensive to this country than the cost of destroying the forests. To just give a small example of smokeless *chulas*. Supposing some of us have said that we should instal at least one smokeless *chulas* per annum; five crores *chulas* in five years. Even if it is fully subsidised that is Rs. 60 a *chula*, it is a fraction of what will be saved for the country as a result of fuel saving. Therefore, this is another direction in which policy initiative we do expect from the hon. Minister.

Finally on forest policy, we have been talking on forest policy and a forest policy has not yet emerged. I hope at least in the next session it will be possible for the hon. Minister to come out with a clear cut national forest policy. I understand that the process of consultation at the State level is already far progressed and it will be possible for the Minister to make such an announcement.

Having said that, finally I would like to make a request to my dear friend Shri Digvijay Sinha to consider kindly some very minor alterations to his motion. My suggestion is that only two words in his motion should be changed—losing momentum. The word 'losing' should be replaced by gaining for the simple reason: I have just now stated that we have

gained a momentum and we hope to gain much faster; and the other words 'take steps to reviving the momentum' Instead of reviving, I would suggest he should accept the word 'strengthening'. With these two changes I feel confident that this House would have no difficulty in accepting his motion.

SHRI DIGVIJAY SINH : I have an amendment to be proposed. My friend took the words from my mouth when I was going to say the same thing for myself.

MR. CHAIRMAN : You can speak but for moving an amendment, must give a notice in writing previously.

SHRI DIGVIJAY SINH : I will give it in writing.

MR. CHAIRMAN : The hon. member who wants to move his amendment should have given it in writing previously.

SHRI DIGVIJAY SINH : I will give it in writing.

MR. CHAIRMAN : No, no, you have not given it writing earlier. The mover of the amendment should have given his amendment in writing earlier.

SHRI DIGVIJAY SINH : I myself am moving an amendment. *(Interruptions)* He has requested me and I am moving an amendment; I am giving it in writing.

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ : That can be done.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Minister, you start replying. You give your amendment in writing. The Minister will intervene and reply to your amendment. Then we will put it to the vote of the House later. Yes, Mr. Minister now you can start replying. You please give your amendment in writing. You want to amend it.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : That is why I have called the Minister. He will intervene later.

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BHAJAN LAL) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, a discussion has been held today on a very important subject. All the hon. Members who have taken part in this discussion have given some very good suggestions. I am grateful and thank them for it.

You know how much awakened the people have become today. No one had made any efforts in this direction 4 or 5 years ago. First of all it was our late Prime Ministers Indira Gandhi, who drew the attention of the people towards it. This problem is not confined to India alone but is a matter of concern for the entire world. Today, the foreign countries also feel that a heavy price will have to be paid for the development that has been made. To fight against nature is suicidal and you all know and the foreign countries are also saying that if there had been lesser development and the environment had remained unaffected that might have been better. The health standard of the people is declining these days. This would not have happened otherwise. It is essential that every individual in every country should enjoy good health. However, the level of environmental pollution is somewhat lesser here than in other countries.

There are three major problems facing our country today. The first is that of floods, the second is of drought and the third is of pollution. You may be aware that deforestation is the main reason underlying the problems of floods and drought. If the mountains are denuded of forests there is no obstruction to the flow of water downwards very fast eroding soil along with it. In this manner, the rivers get flooded. In our country, about four crore hectares of land is flooded. On an average, one crore hectares of land is flooded every year. In case of very heavy floods, four crore hectares of land may be flooded. However, on an average one crore hectares of land is affected by floods every year.

The main reason underlying drought is the lack of greenery. You will notice

that Gujrat, Rajasthan and several other States are often hit by drought. The main reason is that these areas are denuded of forests. Trees are felled. A law has been enacted in this regard but there are some shortcomings in it. The hon. Members have rightly pointed out that stringent punishment can be awarded under this law. We would be considering this law soon and would make necessary amendments in it so that this law becomes as effective as the pollution laws. I would state certain things later on. We want that similar stringent law should be framed about felling of trees also.

Along with this, I think that unless people's cooperation is there and until it takes the form of a people's movement, it will not yield the desirable results. I respect the opinions of the hon. Members and feel that their feelings are very good and they have offered some very good suggestions.

I would cite an example of the olden times to emphasise the importance, recognition and respect that our ancient sages gave to the forests. An hon. Member from Rajasthan was speaking here. I will tell you a story from Rajasthan which is two hundred and fifty years old. According to this old story, the Maharaja of Jodhpur had once ordered the felling of trees for constructing a place. In those days, lime was used for the construction of buildings but it was to be seasoned before it could be used and wood was required for that purpose. When the king ordered the felling of trees, the servants replied that it would be difficult to find trees because there had been continuous famine for the past 4 to 5 years. However, there are trees in the villages where the Vishnoi community is living but they do not fell trees. It is against their religion because trees as well as human beings both have life in them and as such there is no difference between the two. As soon as you cut a tree and squeeze it a little, a fluid comes out. This fluid is similar to human blood. Therefore, it is a religious belief that felling a green tree is as sinful as killing any other form of life. But the king ordered the trees to be cut and said that it would

[Shri Bhajan Lal]

mattered that they were Vishnois. The servants reached there. As soon as they started cutting a tree a woman came out and asked as to why they were felling the trees. The servants pleaded that they were only obeying the orders of the king. The woman made great efforts to stop that and said that cutting of trees was against her religion. Finally, to cut the long story short, the woman was put to death. When her three daughters came forward to offer resistance they also met the same fate. Later thousands of people assembled there. This happened in the village Khajredi in Jodhpur district which is at a distance of 20 miles from Jodhpur. Thousands of people gathered there and decided that though they could not fight the royal forces, yet wherever one tree was felled, one human being would lay down his life. And it happened accordingly. Men as well as women assembled in thousands and offered to sacrifice their lives for this cause. In this way 111 women and 252 men laid down their lives. When 363 distinguished persons were beheaded, then the servants rushed back to the King saying that they had cut 363 trees but in order to do it, they had to kill 363 people as well. The King said that they had committed a grave injustice and they ought to have informed him earlier so that some arrangements could be made. So the King himself went there and apologised. The colour of the earth of that area is red even today and 'Martyrdom Fair' is held there every year which attracts lakhs of people. So even in those times, the sages and guru Jammeshwara Maharaj had emphasised the importance of trees and of the 29 commandments of the Vishnoi religion, one of the commandments says that felling a green tree is a deadly sin. You will not find a similar example anywhere in the world. People have become martyrs but this type of martyrdom is unseen and unheard of anywhere in the world. This Village is located only 20 miles away from Jodhpur. If you find an opportunity to visit it then do not miss it. People would tell you about this legend and emphasise the importance of protecting the trees. What I am emphasising is that only when we convert the protection of our trees into a people's movement we shall be able to stop this

destruction. Only when we get the cooperation of all the M.Ps, M.L.As and the public at large, we shall be able to create an awareness among the common people. However stringent laws we may make the feelings of the people are attached to it, things will not work. We shall make the laws more stringent and I shall later enumerate the steps that we are trying to take to seek the cooperation of the people. We have formulated a 35-point programme for this purpose.

Again, floods and drought will not occur if there are trees. In the Seventh Five Year Plan, Rs. 2000 crores have been earmarked to control floods and drought. I think, if there were trees, this large sum of money could have been utilised for other purposes. So we are making full efforts and I would elaborate the steps that are being taken. We have formulated a 35-point programme for this purpose.

Similarly, so far as the question of pollution is concerned, I have pointed out earlier also that it is not the problem of this country alone but is a matter of concern for the other countries as well. Today pollution has become a very big problem and the major reason is, as you are aware, setting up of big industries. And an even greater reason is our vehicles. You may have noticed that in the large cities like Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay, Kanpur and Allahabad, there is so much vehicular pollution that you would feel as if the atmosphere has become foggy soon after the sun sets. In the daylight, you would not be able to feel this but it would become apparent as soon as the sun sets. This vehicular smoke is very unhealthy and gives rise to several diseases.

Not only this, the effluents from the factories are discharged into the rivers from where the people get their supply of drinking water. The Ganga and Yamuna are two of our most sacred rivers. Brahmaputra and other rivers are also sacred. Wherein the people bathe and get rid of their sins and in which the ashes of the dead are immersed I want to inform that our hon. Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi has taken a very good decision. And that decision is to clean these rivers.

First of all, the Ganga is to be cleaned. A project costing Rs. 290 crores has been taken in hand for this purpose. Rs. 240 crores will be spent during the course of the Seventh Five Year Plan for this purpose and steps are being taken to accelerate the project. You may be aware that the river Ganga is 2000 kms. long and stretches upto Calcutta. The cleaning work is progressing at high speed. The rest of the rivers have also been surveyed and an estimate has been prepared so that as and when the funds are available for this purpose, the work of cleaning those rivers would be undertaken.

Along with it, some hon. Members have referred to the cement factories as well. Mr. Chairman, Sir, the smoke coming out of the cement factories contains five dust particles and when inhaled that can lead to asthma and cancer. Some hon. Members have suggested that action should be taken against some large factories.

SHRI AZIZ QURESHI : Will you take action against them? Will you initiate action against the Tatas and Birlas?

SHRI BHAJAN LAL : Mr. Chairman, Sir, we have enacted strict laws against pollution. Previously, nobody could make a complaint but now even a private individual can make a complaint. A law has been enacted for this purpose which provides for five yeys' imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 1 lakh.

SHRI AZIZ QURESHI : Rules have been framed but have you ever implemented them?

SHRI BHAJAN LAL : Have patience. I will tell you. About the cement factories I tell you that there are 104 cement factories in the country, out of which 84 are big factories. Of these 84 factories, 64 belong to the private companies and 20 factories are in the public sector. In these 20 factories, treatment plants in 14 factories have already been installed. In the private factories, the work of installing treatment plants has been taken up in 15

factories. Only seven factories are left as in the rest of the factories this work has been completed. A decision has been taken by holding seminars and meetings and a written commitment has been taken from the mill-owners that all the factories will instal these plants within two years, which means that by 1988, every cement factory will have a treatment plant. It has been taken in writing from them. Mr. Chairman, Sir, you may be aware that an expenditure of Rs. 3 crores to 5 crores has to be incurred for installing a treatment plant in a factory. Moreover, no provision was made in the projects which are 20 to 30 years' old. Actually, it creates a lot of problems in installing a treatment plant in an old project. But, the Department has done a good job by holding meetings. They have been made to commit to complete this job by 1988, otherwise action would be taken against them. You are talking of action against the big companies we have not spared any one including Tata India, Patna, Tata Iron Steel work Jamshedpur, Mohan Meakins, Lucknow; National Textile Corporation; Indian Telephone Industries; Delhi Electric Supply Undertaking and Andhra Pradesh Paper Mills. We have not spared even the public sector companies. Cases have been registered against them. What I mean to say is that we are trying our utmost to take the strictest action under the existing laws so that nobody, whether in the private or in public sector may violate them.

Also, on the one hand some hon. Members have said that the forests should be saved, and on the other hand they have asked for permission to start new projects. So, both the things cannot be done at the same time. So far as the question of development of the nation is concerned, that must take place. New industries, thermal power plants should be set up and dams should also be constructed but the important thing to see is how many forests will have to be felled in this process. I want to tell you that this Department has never shown any leniency in this matter as I have seen the old records also. We had received 2,205 proposals from all over the country till 31.10.86, out of which 1075 were accepted, 382 proposals were rejected and 374 were closed. By 'closed'

[Shri Bhajan Lal]

we mean that we put a query as to what arrangements are going to be made regarding the alternative afforestation and rehabilitation of the people going to be displaced. If we do not get an answer within three weeks, we close it and open it only when we get an answer from them. The number of projects pending with us is 46 which are 'one to three months' old. I may tell you that there have been instances when the projects which fulfil the laid down norms have been cleared within a week only. We also realize that the development of the nation is involved but on the other hand the question of saving the forests is also involved. If trees are not saved then the nation will also not be saved. Therefore, the most important thing is to preserve the environment. If the environment is not preserved then the existence of the nation will also be at stake. To save the nation, the environment should be preserved.

Shri Digvijay Singh mentioned some Motions. I want to congratulate him profusely for presenting very good Motion. He has also rightly pointed out the need of strengthening the law. As I have said, there are some lacunae in it and we will remove them and strengthen it in such a way that nobody will be able to flout the law.

So far as the implementation of this law is concerned, the Hon. Prime Minister had announced in the House the other day that it had been enforced from 19th November, 1986 after duly framing the rules so that no one may show laxity and the people who flout the law could be severely punished.

He has rightly mentioned that we should have coordination with the States. Because, if there is no coordination with the States, the things will not improve. We are writing to the States also in this regard and wherever required, the Government of India itself will take action. For this purpose, we are going to form a big organisation so that if the States do not take any action then our organisation may initiate action against such persons.

So far as the question of providing financial help to the States is concerned, norms have already been fixed in this regard. If there is some permanent job to be done they do it with their own funds. The Government of India bears half of the expenses on constructing security posts, manning them by guards, providing wireless sets and jeeps for the security of the forests.

He has also mentioned about the possibility of any lacuna in the notice of 60 days. In this connection, I want to say that we have enacted a foolproof law. It has duly been provided in the law that if satisfactory answer after serving a notice of 60 days is not received then irrespective of one's status, immediate action will be taken against him.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, you know that so far as giving encouragement is concerned, the Government of India has spared no efforts in this regard. We have a Social Forestry Scheme under which we provide saplings to small farmers on subsidised rates so that they may plant the maximum number of trees and at the same time may earn their livelihood also. Besides, it will keep the environment clean.

He has raised a point regarding cattle fodder. Mr. Chairman, Sir, there is scarcity of cattle fodder. I may tell you that total number of cattleheads in our country in 1951 was 29 crores and now it is 45 crores. It means that the number has increased by more than one and a half times. Out of it, 20 per cent cattle depend on forests. They are not given any fodder by their owners. These cattle, like buffaloes, cows, goats and sheeps are left in the forests for grazing. They graze in the forests and in the evening come back and gathered in their places. In the morning again they are left in the open. In our country 20 per cent cattle survive like this. We are trying to adopt some measures to change this practice. Sheep and goats cause more harm to the forests. To prevent it, we have told the Departments of Forests of the State Governments to take the help of the police, if needed, so that no laxity is shown in checking this

practice. All types of help is being provided to meet this situation.

Similar, there are problems of water pollution, air pollution, pollution by thermal power stations, etc. We have duly considered the problem of emission of hydro-carbon. You would have noticed that we have started a new system regarding plying of buses, trucks, four-wheelers etc. Some battery operated buses have been started on experimental basis within the city limits. They are a bit more expensive and their speed is also comparatively less. But there is nothing wrong if the speed of the vehicles plying in the cities is less. We have introduced them on experimental basis and we shall try that battery-operated buses are plied in metropolitan cities. It will also decrease pollution to a large extent.

The hon. Member has rightly said that a motor-cyclist or a scooterist driving behind a bus will not see anything due to the smoke emitted by buses. Besides, his clothes will be spoiled so much that his children will not be able to recognise him as to whether he is their father or someone else. We are, therefore, thinking that at least the silencers of buses etc. should be raised to higher level. If a bus is 10 feet high then its silencer should also be 10 feet high and should have a bend at the top. It will reduce the emission of the smoke to the minimum and will keep the environment a bit more clean. We are considering this proposal.

Similar, there was a mention about the desert also. An hon. Member, Shri Hannam Mollab said that desert is expanding. Trees can control the expansion of the desert. Trees prevent floods also. We are planting forests and this will solve both these problems. It will prevent erosion of soil as well.

Water pollution was also mentioned. Drinking water is certainly polluted when sewerage water from the drains into the rivers. We have made programmes to prevent discharge of dirty water into the rivers.

The issue of sanctuary in the national park has also been raised. Secondly, there was some reference to industrialists as well. I want to say that no leniency will be shown to them. The question of any concession to them does not arise. Any poor man can file a complaint and law is the same for all. Whether, the suit is filed by the Government or some private person, there can be no leniency.

The Bhopal gas tragedy was mentioned it was stated that such factories should not be set up. This factory in Bhopal was a very old one. Something untoward happened there. Now the Government has decided that in future there will be a condition for granting licence that the water treatment plant, air pollution treatment plant and all other safety devices will be provided in the factories to ensure clean environment around them. The factories would be established only after ensuring installation of all such arrangements.

Sir, so far as plantation of trees is concerned, Rs. 100 crores were spent during the Sixth Five Year Plan under the 20-Point Programme. During the first year of the Seventh Five Year Plan, i.e. in 1985-86, a sum of Rs. 425 crores have been spent this purpose. Previously, only Rs. 40 crore per year used to spent. In the Seventh Five Year Plans we shall be spending about Rs. 2500 crores on afforestation so that it is ensured that maximum plantation is done in the country. In 1986-87, Rs. 550 crores will be spent for this purpose.

Shri Manornjan Bhakta mentioned that the meeting of the Regional Committee was held 6 months back but the report has not been received so far. The resolution and the minutes of the meeting were sent to you within seven days of the meeting. Either you have not gone through your mail or it has been misplaced. The Department had sent its report within a week. We shall send you another copy of it so that whatever little misunderstanding is there may be removed.

[*English*]

SHRI. K.P. SINGH DEO : Mr. Chairman, I have a letter here a copy of letter from the Government of Orissa which was written on 31st January, 1986. It was still not being cleared.

[*Translation*]

SHRI BHAJAN LAL : I will explain it. Shri Singh Deo has shown a letter which had been posted in January, 1986. But the Department has fully enquired into this matter and has reported that no such letter has been received. You know that approval is not given by a single department. If the project concerns electricity then it goes to the Department of Electricity ; if it concerns irrigation then it goes to the Department of Irrigation and it comes to us only after passing through various departments. The Department of Finance also looks into it. Technocrats look into the feasibility of the projects and then it comes to us. Moreover, the question of putting hindrances in the way of a genuine project does not arise. I will therefore, ask Shri Singh Deo to send it again to us and we shall try to do the needful at the earliest. There some other schemes. We have to consider them also but simultaneously we have to keep in mind the protection of forests also.

[*English*]

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO : The State Government, at the level of the Secretary to the Government of Orissa got a letter sent to the Secretary to the Government of India, in the Department of Environment, Forest and wild Life, Shajahan Road, New Delhi *vide* letter No. . 2-8-7 . . dated 31 January 1986.

MR. CHAIRMAN : All right. The hon. Minister will look into it. The hon. Minister may look into it.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO : 11 months have already passed.

[*Translation*]

SHRI BHAJAN LAL : I tell you that the Department must have sent you the

copy of the letter you have posted but we have not received it yet. If it has been sent, then we will certainly look into it but we have not received it till now. You may, therefore, send it again. We will certainly take action on it. Please send it again.

He has taken up the question of the tribals also. He has stated that these poor people are harassed for collecting firewood. Mr. Chairman, Sir, here it is not the question of the poor. If they are permitted to cut wood it will create problems for us. Law is the same for all, irrespective of poverty or riches. In the same way, some pending schemes have also been mentioned. These too will be considered.

Likewise, a District Management Policy has been demanded. It already exists. If there is any lacuna in it, we shall remove it. Similarly, he has also pleaded for setting up of industries away from the cities. It is a good suggestion. We shall definitely consider it. He referred to Bastar-Indravati and the Bodh Ghat Projects. Mr. Chairman, Sir, these are very important questions which need to be considered deeply. If the permission involves cutting of a forest then we have to think deeply in this regard. If the permission is to be given then it is granted by the Department within a month. Otherwise, it will explain the reasons due to which the permission cannot be granted.

Shri Kurien mentioned about the siltation and Shri Bharat Singh dwell on the cutting of trees in Delhi and also about the pollution and the dirty water which breeds mosquitoes. There is no doubt that if there is insanitation, there will be mosquitoes also. We will do whatever we can do in this regard. An hon. Member from Jammu and Kashmir has said that forest laws should be made more stringent. I have already discussed this point. Now, regarding the unauthorised possession, people do cut the jungle and try to get it regularised but, Mr. Chairman, Sir, being in the field of politics, we know that after 10 years there is all round pressure and it causes a lot of problems. But in future,

we shall ensure that nobody is able to encroach upon the forest land.

A mention was made about the cement factory of Sata in Madhya Pradesh. Action will be taken in this regard.

SHRI AZIZ QURESHI : Will you take quick action in this regard ?

SHRI BHAJAN LAL : Yes, certainly we shall. I want to tell the House in brief about the measures which we are going to take. The Government has taken many steps for increasing the awareness among the people and also to educate and inform them about the environment. As a result of that, tremendous awareness is now seen among the general public, public and private sector industries, Government employees, policymakers, legislators and politicians.

The details in brief about the steps taken by the Government for creating awareness and providing education and information about the environment are as follows :

(1) Under the new 20-Point Programme (Point No. 17), the following objectives have been fixed for the preservation of the environment :

- (i) Increasing public awareness against the environmental dangers.
- (ii) To motivate popular support for the preservation of environment.
- (iii) To lay stress on the theory that the ecological preservation is essential for development.
- (iv) To ensure the right selection of site and technology for the project.

(2) Recently, "a movement for the awareness of the environment" has been launched to create environmental awareness at all levels. Seminars, Training programmes/workshops for school teachers/students, public meetings, camps, rallies, publicity through posters and other materials are being organised all over the country in order to elaborate its importance.

On the lines of the 20-Point Programme, a 35 Point Programme has been formulated in this regard for the preservation of forests and the environment. This programme will be propagated among the people of the country so that there is minimum deforestation and the ecology of the country can properly be maintained. So far as saving of wood is concerned, it has been decided to use concrete or steel sleepers instead of wooden sleeper for the rail lines, which will save 50 lakh sleepers every year. The wood which is used for making apple boxes has been exempted from excise duty by the Government. There will be no excise duty on general licence so that if somebody wants to import he can do so which will also save our forests.

... (Interruptions)

[English]

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ : I want to raise a point.

MR. CHAIRMAN : I will allow you. Please take your seat. Let the hon. Minister finish his speech.

[Translation]

SHRI BHAJAN LAL : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I want to thank you and all the hon. Members for this late sitting upto 7.15 P.M. I also thank Shri Digvijay Singh and request him to move the amendment so that the Motion may be adopted. We do not have any objection to it.

[English]

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ : I had raised the question of instituting National Forest Commission and I had referred to this Forest Conservation Act. This is not comprehensive. It is bald and sketchy. It has to be comprehensive.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Digvijay Singh to move the amendment.

SHRI DIGVIJAY SINH : I have already moved the amendment.

MR. CHAIRMAN : You have given notice of the amendment. Please move the amendment.

SHRI DIGVIJAY SINH : I move my amendment.

"That in the motion—

- (1) for "Losing" substitute "gaining" and
- (2) for "reviving" substitute "strengthening"

[*Translation*]

SHRI BHAJAN LAL : I want to tell Shri Soz that there are some lacunae in the present Act. We shall remove them soon.

SHRI DIGVIJAY SINH : Mr. Chairman, Sir, for the convenience of the hon. Minister Shri Bhajan Lal, I shall try to speak in Hindi.

SHRI BHAJAN LAL : Surely. Try to speak in Hindi. We should speak in Hindi.

SHRI DIGVIJAY SINH : I want to thank Shri Bhajan Lal and Shri Ansari. I would like to give just one suggestion and nothing more. A number of things can be said about the environment and one can go on speaking for a month on this subject. I had myself started this scheme and it has been included in the Seventh Five Year Plan. There should be a District Environment Committee in every district of the country which should have one third of its members from the elected representatives, another one third members from private agencies and professors and the remaining one third members should be the Government officials. These committees should prepare well-planned schemes for environment and get them implemented at district level. You should direct the State Government in this regard. I want to thank the hon. Speaker, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Shri Bhagat and Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Shrimati Sheila Dikshit without whose cooperation this Motion would not have been presented before the House. I also want to thank the hon. Prime Minister for starting big projects in this regard—one of them being

the Base Line Project at a cost of Rs. 250 crores and the other one being Ganga Authority Project. He is taking keen interest in both of them. He is still the Chairman of the India Wild Life Project. I also thank the hon. Members for a detailed discussion on it. In order to accelerate this movement we shall have to give it a serious thought. The details of this discussion should reach every nook and corner of the country so that the people may become aware of this.

SHRI BHAJAN LAL : Shri Digvijay Sinha has stated about formation of committees. My submission is that these committees already exist at the State level. Their formation at district level may create problems. There is a provision in the 20-Point Programme in this regard and a meeting of this committee is held every month. I shall seriously consider the suggestions given by the hon. Members and whatever good points are there will be taken care of

[*English*]

MR. CHAIRMAN : I shall now put the amendment moved by Shri Digvijay Sinh to the vote of the House.

The question is :

"That in the Motion :

- (i) for "losing substitute "gaining"
- (ii) for "reviving" substitute "strengthening".

The motion was adopted

MR. CHAIRMAN : I shall now put the motion, as amended, to the vote of the House.

The question is :

"That this House is of the opinion that the environmental movement in the country is gaining momentum and recommends to the Government to take steps for strengthening the momentum at the grass-root level".

The motion as amended, was adopted.