

Clause 1, the Enacting Formula, the Preamble and the Title were added to the Bill.

SHRI CHARANJIT CHANANA: I beg to move:

"That the Bill be passed".

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The question is:

"That the Bill be passed."

The motion was adopted.

20.13 hrs.

STATUTORY RESOLUTION RE:
DISAPPROVAL OF FOREST (CON-
SERVATION) ORDINANCE, 1980

AND

FOREST (CONSERVATION) BILL

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The House will now take up statutory resolution and Forest (Conservation) Bill together for which two hours have been allotted.

SHRI SATYANARAYAN JATIYA (Ujjain): I beg to move:

"That this House disapproves of the Forest (Conservation) Ordinance, 1980 (Ordinance No. 17 of 1980) promulgated by the President on the 25th October, 1980."

उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, जहां तक मामला यह है कि डिफारेस्टेशन हो रहा है, इस बात से कोई इनकार नहीं कर सकता है। हिन्दुस्तान की आबादी दिनों दिन बढ़ रही है, जंगल कम हो रहे हैं और जंगल कम होंगे। होते रहेंगे, इसको कोई रोक नहीं पाएगा जब तक कि जंगलों को ठीक तरह से प्लान्टेशन कर के उनकी प्रोथ को बढ़ाने की कोई योजना नहीं बनाई जाती। जंगल के कम होने के और भी कारण हैं। जंगल के नीचे छिने हुए घातुओं के भण्डार हैं, अयस्क हैं। वहां नदियां बहती हैं, बांध बांधने के लिए जंगल कटते हैं। अनेक प्रकार के कारण

हैं जिन से जंगल का कम होना अवश्यम्भावी और निश्चितप्राय है।

ऐसी स्थिति में सरकार की यह मंशा कि जंगलों का कम होना रोका जाना चाहिए इस बात से इन्कार नहीं किया जा सकता। देश की सारी प्राकृतिक स्थिति को बनाए रखने के लिए, देश की जलवायु को स्थिर रखने के लिए, वर्षा समय पर हो और वर्षा होने पर जो बाढ़ की स्थिति पैदा हो जाती है या सूखे की स्थिति पैदा हो जाती है, उस को नियंत्रित करने के लिए जरूरी है कि प्राकृतिक जलवायु को ठीक से बनाए रखा जाय। किन्तु मेरी समझ में नहीं आता है, यह सरकार कहती है कि प्रदेश सरकारें इस बात के लिए अक्षम हैं कि वह डिफारेस्टेशन को रोक सकें। क्या ये सरकारें नाकाबिल हैं, अक्षम हैं? क्या ये सरकारें जो अब तक करती रही हैं, वह गलत करती रही हैं? 33 साल में जो कुछ किया गया है उसके बाद आज उसे इन्कार करना और यह समझना कि केन्द्रीय सरकार ही सक्षम है, केन्द्रीय सरकार ही काबिल है, वही डिफारेस्टेशन को रोक सकेगी, मैं समझता हूं कि यह उचित नहीं है। प्रदेश सरकारें भी संविधान के अनुसार चुनी हुई प्रजातन्त्रीय सरकारें हैं। केन्द्रीय सरकार द्वारा सारे अधिकारों का केन्द्रीयकरण अपने हाथ में करना और अन्य प्रदेशीय सरकारों पर अविश्वास करना, उचित नहीं है। मैं समझता हूं कि सारे अधिकारों को केन्द्रीभूत करने से केन्द्रीय सरकार की मंशा पूरी नहीं होगी। मैं श्री बीरेन्द्र सिंह राव की योग्यता पर या उनके मंत्रालय की योग्यता पर कोई आक्षेप नहीं करता हूं, लेकिन मैं निवेदन करना चाहता हूं कि जिस बात का भी केन्द्रीयकरण अथवा सरकारीकरण हुआ है, वह असफल हुआ है। उसमें सरकार की मंशा पूरी नहीं हुई है। अगर सरकार चाहती है कि डिफारेस्टेशन को रोका जाए, तो उसे देखना होगा कि जो जंगलों में वनवासी हैं, आदिवासी लोग हैं, वे कितनी परेशानी में हैं। उनको वन उपज

का फायदा नहीं मिलता है और हाट बाजारों में जंगलों की उपज कौड़ियों के मोल खरीद ली जाती है। अगर सरकार ने जंगलों में रहने वाले वनवासियों के लिए सोचा होता, उनकी समृद्धि के लिए योजनाएँ बनाई होती, तो वह स्वागतयोग्य होता। कृषि के लिए एक निश्चित नीति बना कर कृषियोग्य भूमि का विकास किया गया होता, तो मैं समझता हूँ कि वह सरकार का बहुत अच्छा काम होता, लेकिन यहां पर हम देखते हैं कि सरकार सारे अधिकारों का केन्द्रीयकरण करना चाहती है। केन्द्रीय सरकार समझती है कि वही काबिल सरकार है और प्रदेश सरकारें नाकाबिल और निकम्मी हैं। इस प्रकार की मंशा ठीक नहीं है। केन्द्रीय सरकार को डिसेंट्रलाइजेशन-आफ-पावर पर अधिक महत्व देना चाहिए था। अगर कोई योजना बनानी है, अगर डिफारेस्टेशन से भूखण्ड उजड़ रहे हैं उस को रोकने के लिए कोई योजना बनानी है या साएल-कन्जर्वेशन के लिए कोई अच्छी योजनाएँ बनानी हैं तब उनके लिए आप ऐसी योजनाएँ बनायें जिन का प्राकृतिक आधार रहे। इस बिल में एग्रीकल्चर मिनिस्ट्री ने यह मंशा व्यक्त की है—

"It, therefore, because necessary to invest the Central Government with the necessary powers to arrest de-forestation and to ensure better integrity of the nature reserves."

मैं सोचता हूँ—ये जो कारण बताये हैं इन के पीछे बहाना कुछ दूसरा है। जंगलों को बेतरतीब काटा गया है और उस वक्त आप की कांग्रेस सरकारें ही थीं। जंगलों के ठेकेदार जिस तरह का व्यवहार जंगलों के साथ करते हैं—वह सब जानते हैं। लेकिन इस बात को सरकार इस बिल के द्वारा रोक सकेगी? यह सम्भव नहीं होगा। सरकार की मंशा कुछ और है, वह करना कुछ और चाहती है। सारे अधिकारों का केन्द्रीयकरण कर देने से एफारेस्टेशन का जो काम है वह भी प्रभावित

होना। मैं समझता हूँ कि बहुत सी प्रदेशीय सरकारों ने एफारेस्टेशन का काम अपने हाथ में ठीक से लिया हुआ था। जंगलों को अधिक बढ़ाने के लिए योजनाएँ बनाई जा सकती थीं। कृषि के लिए भी भूमि को ठीक करना होगा क्योंकि खाद्यान्न की समस्या बढ़ती जा रही है। मिनरल्ज और कोयला जो दबा हुआ पड़ा है, उस को भी ठीक से निकालना होगा। इस के लिए भी योजनाएँ बनाई जा सकती थीं। लेकिन यह जो बिल लाया गया है जिस के लिए पहले आर्डिनेन्स लाया गया, उस की क्या जरूरत थी। कोई हिमालय पहाड़ नहीं टूट गया था। अगर सरकार तरीके से बिल लाती बजाय आर्डिनेन्स लाने के लिए तो तो कोई अनुचित बात नहीं होती। ऐसी जो छोटी-छोटी बातें हैं, वे पार्लियामेंट में विधेयक के रूप में लाई जा सकती थीं। आर्डिनेन्स के रूप में ला कर सरकार ने अपनी योग्यता का परिचय दिया हो, ऐसा मैं नहीं मानता।

मैं इस आधार पर कह सकता हूँ कि यह जो विधेयक लाया गया है, वह ठीक नहीं है। सरकार की यह मंशा कि सारे अधिकारों का केन्द्रीयकरण करना, मैं कहता हूँ कि उससे अव्यवस्था फैलेगी और आपने जो लक्ष्य बनाया है, वह प्रभावित होगा। इसलिए मैं इस बिल का, अध्यादेश का निरनुमोदन करता हूँ, विरोध करता हूँ।

उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं पुनः इस बिल का विरोध करते हुए आपको धन्यवाद देता हूँ कि आपने मुझे बोलने के लिए वक्त दिया।

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Resolution moved:

"That this House disapproves of the Forest (Conservation) Ordinance, 1980 (Ordinance No. 17 of 1980) promulgated by the President on the 25th October, 1980."

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL RECONSTRUCTION AND IRRIGATION (SHRI BIRENDRA SINGH RAO): I beg to move:

"That the Bill to provide for the conservation of forests and for matters connected therewith or ancillary or incidental thereto, be taken into consideration."

I have heard my friend Mr. Jatiya. He has seen more than what is actually in the mind of the Central Government while presenting this Bill before this House. He seems to have misread the intentions of the Government. This is a very simple, short, very essential, beneficial and laudable Bill.

The Central Government wants to fulfil its responsibility towards the country. Because our forest areas were depleting very first, forests were brought under Concurrent List some years back. If the State Governments had fulfilled their responsibility, there would be no need for this. But the Central Government realizes that immediately something has to be done if the situation is to improve. The intention is not to centralize powers at the Central level. The State Government will still be in charge of forests in their respective States. They will also be able to utilize forest lands for development purposes, for any other essential purposes, for the welfare of weaker sections, tribals and others, and for construction of roads and canals. But there has been a tendency, in the past, to utilize forest lands wherever there was pressure upon land, for some non-essential purposes also. We are only providing a check over the State Governments. They will only have to get the approval of the Central Governments, and we shall satisfy ourselves as to the purpose. Before forest land is utilized for any non-forestry purpose, the approval of the Central Government will be sought.

I don't think this measure will result in any undue hardship for people living in forest areas. We have various schemes for their welfare. We know the important part forests play in the economy of tribals. We want to increase forest lands also. I would like to mention that already we have reached a dangerous level as regards our forest areas. Our national forest policy has been that 60 per cent of the hill areas will be under forests, and the plains also would have about 20 per cent of the total area under forests. Unfortunately, forest areas have been decreasing from year to year. At present, out of a total land area in India of 329 million hectares, we have only 75 million hectares under forests. That constitutes a little over 22 per cent which is forest area. This is a very small area. We want to go up to 33 per cent. And for that purpose, some measures have to be adopted. This Bill was absolutely urgently required. If we do not resort to promulgation of Ordinance, there was a danger....that States would have de-reserved any areas overnight and then, it would have been absolutely useless to come to Parliament with this measure. The States know that the Central Government was thinking of bringing a comprehensive Bill before Parliament. Parliament has the powers to enact laws for forests now, as it is a Concurrent subject. We called a meeting of Forest Ministers. The matter was discussed with them but the States wanted that the Bill, the draft Bill, should be circulated. We circulated it. We sought their opinion. Some States have already written to us. Some have agreed. Some have objected. Only one State, that is, Tripura, has objected. There are much larger areas in other States. Madhya Pradesh, Assam, even Arunachal if you take up the North East, then Gujarat, even Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh. U.P. all had large areas Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, also Orissa, all these States have very large forests.

AN HON. MEMBER: Kerala.

SHRI BIRENDRA SINGH RAO: I do not think they have written to me. They have so far not written. If you like I can give the names of the States. But I might go into that later on.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Please give final reply.

SHRI BIRENDRA SINGH RAO: Sir, this should be the final reply. I hope the House will unanimously agree to it.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: That cannot happen till Shri Ram Avatar Shastri is there.

SHRI BIRENDRA SINGH RAO: For a measure like this which is so essential in national interest, I even expect Sastriji to cooperate.

Sir, as I said, during the past few years, there has been great pressure upon forests. We do not blame the States for not looking after their forest areas. But, all the hon. Members would realise that there are certain local pressures upon State Governments and, therefore, it is only to help the State Governments, to withstand those pressures by taking shelter behind the provisions that we are making that the Central Government's approval is necessary. That is the only purpose. (Interruptions) During the years from 1951-52 to 1975-76, Sir, as much as 41 lakh hectares of forest area was de-forested. It is not a small figure and after that, it was faster unfortunately. After that, it was faster. (Interruptions) In the year, 1976-77, the total area that was de-forested was 1,20,000 hectares. In 1977-78, it came down to about 23000 hectares. But, in the year, 1978-79, it jumped up to 41,000 hectares. Double. Double within one year. That is the rate at which forests are being degraded.

SHRI SUDHIR GIRI (Contai): Before the promulgation of the Ordinance how much land had been deforested? You said that there was imminent danger of reforestation. I want to know.

SHRI BIRENDRA SINGH RAO: That is what I was explaining. 41 lakh hectares from 1951-52 to 1975-76. In 1977-78 it was only 21,000 hectares. In 1978-79 it jumped to 41,000 hectares. Every year this has been the degradation.

This measure applies to dereservation of forests. There are certain classes of forests, protected forests in which tribals and others have certain rights; we are not touching their rights. There are also unclassified forests; we are not interfering with the rights therein. I hope this Bill be passed without any controversy.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Motion moved:

"That the Bill to provide for the conservation of forests and for matters connected therewith or ancillary or incidental thereto, be taken into consideration."

The consideration motion has been moved. Are any amendments moved.

SHRI MOOL CHAND DAGA (Pali): I beg to move:

"That the Bill to provide for the conservation of forests and for matters connected therewith or ancillary or incidental thereto, be referred to a Select Committee consisting of ten members, namely: Shri Gulam Nabi Azad, Shri Chitta Basu, Shri V. N. Gadgil, Shri Vir-dhi Chander Jain, Birendra Singh Rao, Shri Chiranjil Lal Sharma, Shri K. P. Unnikrishnan, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Shri Chand-rajit Yadav and Shri Mool Chand Daga, with instructions to report by the 31st January, 1981." (6)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Shri Zainal Abedin.

*SHRI ZAINAL ABEDIN (Jangipur): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are today discussing the Forest (Conservation) Bill. The conservation of forests is an extremely important subject from various angles. But after 33 years of independence we find it in a very bad state. Forest wealth can play a vital role in the economic development and prosperity of a nation. Forests have an important effect on rainfall and soil conservation, on floods and drought and they help in maintaining an ecological balance in nature. They help in the development of agriculture, they help in the development of industry and they help the people living in forests and the adjoining areas by providing them with extensive means of livelihood. In these ways forests play a very vital role in the life of a nation. Therefore we cannot deny the importance of conservation of forests.

But, Sir, the question that deserves to be considered very deeply is: we have a national forest policy before us, we observe 'Vanamahotsava' every year with great gusto. We are going ahead with various schemes of afforestation. In 1973 the National Commission on Agriculture had made very valuable suggestions for the conservation of forests in their report. But in spite of all that, we just now heard from the statement of the hon. Minister that there has been large scale denudation of forests. Why is it so? If we cannot locate the root cause for this, then we will not be able to preserve and protect the forests merely through this legislation. If we can find the cause of a particular disease only then we can administer the correct treatment. But if we try to treat a disease without correctly finding the root cause, then the disease will not be cured rather the patient will die. Therefore unless we find the cause of this extensive deforestation, we will not be able to stop it through legislation alone. The forest policy pursued by the Government in the cause of such deforesta-

tion. No legislation and no programme can be successful unless the people whose interests are affected by such legislation or programme are associated with it. Sir, the tribal people whose lives are intimately entangled with forests shall have to be convinced first that this legislation is for protecting their interests. Unless their active participation and cooperation is ensured in a legislation, no legislation can be successful and effective in this regard. For the past 30 years and more the Government has not made any efforts to bring these tribal people in the orbit of civilization. They have been totally neglected and left in an uncivilised condition. These people are in love with the forests. Their lives have mingled intimately with forests. Therefore we should not take any such step today whereby these people may be removed away from the forests. If you only make some legislation and impose it on them then you cannot conserve the forests. Government has now got the National Security Act in their armoury. Though that act they may be able to enforce this legislation also. The tribals will not accept this legislation. But they will be detained and kept in jails under the National Security Act. They may be driven away from the forests they may be taken in jails you may force them to abide by this law but you can never drive away forests from their hearts.

Therefore before we make any law for the conservation of forests, it is necessary to make a law for the protection and conservation of these tribal people. This has to be remembered. Till a law is made for the protection of these tribal people, no law for the conservation of forests can be effective and successful. They should be persuaded and efforts should be made to convince them that the law for conservation of forests is for protecting their interests and for their benefit only. Then only they

*The original speech was delivered in Bengali.

will willingly accept it. Otherwise it will give rise to new problems. Already we have heard that in the Kachar district of Assam the tribal people who lived in the forests for generations have been uprooted and driven away on a mass scale from their hearth and home and from the land they used to cultivate. Therefore, the primary question today is how to protect these people. We will be in a position to advise these people to have peaceful co-existence with nature only when we will be in a position to provide them with food, shelter and means of earning their livelihood. The hon. Minister should apply his mind to the solution of fresh problems that will arise when this law is enforced. You know Sir, these people collect their firewood and fruits from the forests. They also collect the seeds of 'Saal and Mahua trees and the leaves of Kendu tree and thus make their livelihood. Will they be able to collect these things from the forests after this law is enacted? If you do not provide for at least one log each family every year for making their ploughs and at least three logs each for making their homes, then they will never accept this legislation.

Lastly I want to conclude by saying that, today the people all over the country are clamouring for more autonomy and power for the States. But on the other hand this Government I do not know whether I should call it a Government or a factory for producing ordinances, is issuing one ordinance after another and is trying to take away the powers from the States and trying to centralise all powers in their own hands! This effort of the Government to impose these legislations on the States and on the people has generated from their attitude of dictatorship. With this attitude of dictatorship they cannot conserve the forests simply by imposing this legislation on the States. In the name of abolition of Zamindari the Government made a law for the preservation of Zamindari, in the name of protection of democracy,

the Government has enacted an undemocratic law. Similarly in the name of conservation of forests, the Government should not make a law for the destruction of forests. If the Government is sincere about conserving forests, then they should first make a law for the protection of the tribals and others who are totally dependent on the forests for their livelihood. Law for conservation of forests can come afterwards. With that Sir, I oppose this Bill and conclude my speech.

SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO (Dhenkanal): I rise to support this Bill. The Minister while moving the Bill has made it abundantly clear about the objects and reasons for bringing this ordinance and the Bill.

The Bill itself has enough safeguards. So much so that it provides an advisory committee to apprise regarding the implementation of this Bill. The Minister also very rightly pointed out the urgent need for bringing this legislation. And the two impassioned speeches which I heard from the opposition benches did not question the importance of forests or the role of forests. They only questioned the mode of bringing this legislation. I would have been happier if a more comprehensive bill had been brought which would have updated the Indian Forest Act of 1994, the Act of 1927 as well as the Wild Life Protection Act of 1972. I suppose, the Minister will bring such a comprehensive Bill some time later and will also include the State of Jammu and Kashmir which has been left out.

From time immemorial, right from the time of evolution, man has intimate relationship with forests because of his food and shelter. We in India always have a tradition and it has been our way of life of planting not only forests but protecting forests also right from our scriptures. In the Ashoka rock edicts, of which we have the emblem, it is mentioned.

[Shri K. R. Singh Deo]

Therefore, the protection or conservation of forests is nothing new to us. But the fact is, in spite of the legislation, in spite of the National Forest Policy of 1952, in spite of the various recommendations of the Indian Board for Wild Life and the Central Board of Forestry, in spite of the fact that we have umpteen number of discussions here and in international forums, the Minister stated that in 30 years more than four and a half million hectares of forests have been destroyed, or have been utilized for other purposes. According to Government record only 74.8 million hectares of forests remain, about 22 per cent. But if you go on ground, it will be far less, about 15 per cent. Therefore, there is enough cause for concern and rightly the hon. Minister has brought this legislation at this very crucial moment.

The hon. Member on the other side was saying that this has taken on a political angle. They are waxing eloquent all right, but the fact remains that in the last 33 years the State Governments have done precious little to protect, conserve or preserve the forests, because of which the Central Government had to bring this legislation. Not only that, the Prime Minister launched the World Conservation Strategy on the 6th March 1980 at Vigyan Bhavan, the only head of the Government in the world to give impetus to the world conservation strategy. After that, she wrote to the Chief Minister of the various States some time in June. Then the Central Board of Forestry met some time in August and gave their recommendations. On the basis of that, the Prime Minister called a meeting on the 2nd April, 1980 and a Committee on Environmental Protection, directly under the Prime Minister, has been formed on the 1st of November. These are the positive steps which the Central Government had taken under the leadership of Shrimati Gandhi, because it was seen that in the last 33 years the State

Governments have done precious little to protect the existing forests. Rather, the forests had been sacrificed at the altar of political expediencies, of which my hon. friends may be well aware, because they had been in the State Governments for so many years and as members of the State Legislature they have been taking part in these agitations and in the move to deforest these areas.

I come from a State which has a lot of forests which are giving sustenance to the tribal population, of which my hon. friend on the other side was waxing so eloquent. In Orissa itself, in the district of Mayurbhanj, in the Simlipal forests, where one of the two tiger preserves is located, only a few days back about 400 people were arrested, because they destroyed the forests. As my hon. friend Shri Zainal Abedin mentioned, they are not aware that they were not supposed to cut down the forests; they were not aware that denudation or destruction of the forests would ultimately result in their own survival being threatened. Then, in Dandakaranya and Koraput the shifting cultivation, or jhum cultivation, has resulted in the top soil being denuded. Therefore, this is a subject which cannot be left to the whims of the State Governments. There has to be a Central directive because the forests affect the economy of the country as a whole. Being an agricultural economy, depending upon the vagaries of the monsoon, we have seen the devastation which the monsoon has played, the havoc it has caused to our economy in the industrial and agricultural output and in the price rise, of which the hon. Member waxed eloquent, because it is directly as a result of the failure of the monsoon, which has affected agriculture and industry.

Therefore, forests play an important role in the general economic development in the form of forest produce, major and minor. It affects industry, defence, communication, public utilities; it has its domestic use,

apart from export. It generates employment in the primary, secondary and tertiary sector, it provides firewood, it provides timber and grazing fields, about which our friends have waxed eloquent. It also results in soil and water conservation, helps recreation and finally, wild life, the flora and fauna. So, the main reason why there is lack of awareness is because the common man is not benefited, it is only a number of contractors, a few industrialists and others who have derived the benefit in the past from forest resources. Therefore, to right this wrong, the Central Government must have a uniform policy throughout the country. After all forests are a complex ecosystem consisting of vertical stratification of varying degree into canopy layer, middle layer, ground layer vegetation and special substratum combining soil and moisture, flora and fauna, micro-organisms and an energy transfer system that moderates the climate, maintains the soil mental, regulates water supplies, purifies the air and helps the noise abatement. To restore, protect and regulate exploitation, the National Forest policy has been announced in 1894, but so far precious little has been done as far as the implementation of that policy is concerned. The Central Government has only recommended it by playing an advisory role. Therefore, to make it more effective, this Bill is necessary and to make it a success there should be an awareness among the people and it should start right from the school stage. The nature conservation should not only form part of the curricula of studies, but the Government and other agencies must have interaction with the tribal people, the weaker sections of society who derive their livelihood from the forest products and also they should create an awareness among the people on the importance of forests.

With these words, I support the Bill.

SHRI G. NARSIMHA REDDY (Adilabad): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I

rise to support the Bill. I would not like to make an elaborate speech. As this is a very important subject, I wanted to bring certain important points to the notice of our hon. Minister. Just now my colleague has given a very elaborate speech and my hon. friend from that side also has made a very good speech, but he has forgotten one thing. I would like to remind him that this is a Bill which is going to be advantageous to the tribals and not disadvantageous to them. I am going to tell how it is advantageous to the tribals. (Interruptions). Sir it is going to be advantageous to the tribals because in our entire country we know very well that our tribal population resides in forests. There are so many places like Bastar district in Madhya Pradesh where tribals even today are in a primitive stage. Their main livelihood is in forests. They go and collect all the things which my friend has mentioned, from the forests. From the way the forests are destroyed, I apprehend that after the forests are destroyed, the tribals will have nothing to live upon. Forests must be preserved if we want the tribals to live in forests.

(Interruptions)

This Bill should have come much earlier, but if you see its Statement of Objects and Reasons it says firstly that deforestation causes ecological imbalance etc., and secondly that the ordinance makes the prior approval of the Central Government necessary for de-reservation of reserved forests. There is no link between the two. Today, the ecological balance of the country is being lost not because of de-reservation, but only because of deforestation. Deforestation does not mean de-reservation.

As the hon. Minister knows, there are so many varieties of forests, including protected forests in this country. Let us confine ourselves to reserved forests. This Bill in one sentence means that no State Government will be allowed to de-reserve

[Shri G. Narsimha]

forests, that the land reserved for forests in this country will not be allowed to be used for any other purpose. If the States want to use it for any other purpose, they will have to take the approval of the Central Government.

As per statistics, the land allotted for reserved forests is 22 per cent, as the hon. Minister has stated. But the actual land comprising forests is only 17 or 18 per cent. So, we are not interested whether the forest is de-reserved or not.

Without knowing who is responsible for deforestation, the officers and the bureaucrats and even so many of the politicians blame only the tribals, and also say that we are using this land for agricultural and industrial purposes etc. Actually we are losing only a certain percentage out of these uses. Our population has almost doubled, and naturally we want more land for these purposes. But that is not the only nor even the main reason for the deforestation of the country.

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI MALIKARJUN): I request you to kindly seek the leave of the House for extending the time some more. (Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: You come to some understanding.

SHRI RAMAVTAR SHASTRI (Patna): The Business Advisory Commit-

tee recommended that we should sit upto 9 P.M. We agreed to that. We cannot sit beyond that.

SHRI MOOL CHAND DAGA: The Business Advisory Committee had taken a decision to sit upto 9 P.M. We are sitting upto 9 P.M. We cannot sit beyond 9 P.M. We have got other engagements also. We have no lunch hour also. Why not continue it tomorrow? What is the hurry about it?

21.00 hrs.

श्री रामावतार शास्त्री : ऐसा मत कीजिए । इसका मतलब होगा कि आप स्टीम रोलिंग करना चाहते हैं । इस पर बहुत बहस होगी ।

You cannot force us to sit beyond 9 P.M. (Interruptions)

SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE (Howrah): Let the leaders of the various parties sit together tomorrow and decide.

SHRI BIRENDRA SINGH RAO: Let it continue tomorrow. We might adjourn now. We may take it up tomorrow.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Mr. Narsimha Reddy, you continue your speech tomorrow.

The House stands adjourned to re-assemble tomorrow at 11 A.M.

21.03 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Friday, December 19, 1980/Agrahayana 28, 1902 (Saka)