

[Shri Ramavatar Shastri]

Thus the tribals, illegally dispossessed of their sole source of livelihood eventually become coolie in the mines itself or migrate to the brick-kilns and stone quarries of North Bihar, West Bengal or Uttar Pradesh.

The situation demands immediate intervention by the Government and all democratic and progressive minded people of the country to abolish completely private ownership of the mines and to set up a corporation directly under the management and ownership of the Central Government to run the mines, not with the sole intention of commercial profit making but also with an eye to the welfare of the local tribals whose land and labour contribute so enormously to the nation's progress.

I demand of the Government to intervene immediately in this matter.

(xi) FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO
ORISSA GOVERNMENT FOR UNDERTAKING
SOIL CONSERVATION MEASURES

SHRI LAKSHMAN MALLICK (Jagatsinghpur): Soil erosion has created a serious problem in Orissa. According to an estimate about 47 per cent of the total land surface of the State suffers from soil erosion of some kind or the other. Although erosion through wind is mostly confined to the coastal areas, erosion through water is the problem for the entire State. About 31 lakhs hectares of agricultural uplands which are mostly cultivated without bunds and terraces, suffer from sheet erosion. Stretches of waste lands (28.8 lakhs hectares) devoid of adequate vegetation are also affected by soil salinity or water logging.

In the coastal regions the cultivated lands adjoining about 550 kms of the sea coast are affected by drifting sand dunes through wind erosion. Moreover, shifting cultivation is causing serious problem which has been affecting about 12,770 sq. miles in Koraput,

Kalahandi and other inland districts of the State.

Agriculture plays an important rôle in the economy of Orissa. About 75 per cent of the working force of the State earn their livelihood from farming. But soil erosion has created a serious threat to their cultivation. Therefore, it is necessary to solve the erosional problem. Unless some immediate measures are taken for the conservation of soil and moisture the farming community of the State will continue to suffer. Soil erosion will run the economy of the State.

In view of this, I urge the Government of India that approved soil conservation practices like tree plantations, contour bunding, construction of soil conservation structures and stream bund erosion control measures should be taken up in that largely affected regions. The Government of India should augment the fund allocation for implementing these soil conservation measures in Orissa without any further delay.

13.56 hrs.

DEMANDS FOR GRANTS

MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS-Contd.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now we go to the next item - Discussion and Voting on the Demand for Grants of the Ministry of Communications.

SHRI SUSHIL BHATTACHARYA. Your party has been allowed 22 minutes.

SHRI SUSHIL BHATTACHARYA (Burdwan): Mr. Deputy-speaker, I am expressing my happiness in seeing you in the Chair now. I am saying so because you were an ex-employee of the Posts and Telegraphs, Communications Department and, we are discussing here the Communication Ministry's Demands.