

There is also a question of H.P.C. taking over these two projects also in U.P. and Madhya Pradesh. This is under consideration. But, unfortunately, there are constraints of resources. We have some proposals with regard to resources also. This is a matter which is still under discussion with the Planning Commission as far as these two projects are concerned.

Apart from that, we have already licensed sufficient capacity in the private sector and they are all coming forward with regard to expansion. Therefore, there is no question of, for the purpose of just getting more production, ourselves to contribute to the equity and grant the management to the private sector. It is not going to happen. If it is necessary, I would like to take up in the public sector. I think, we can manage the resources also. This is my judgment. But it is ultimately the Planning Commission and the Finance Ministry also to agree.

Then, the hon. Member mentioned about small plants. Here also, small plants are coming up, say, of 20 tonnes, 25 tonnes, etc. There is no question of big houses coming in. There are quite a few small projects which are already under operation and new projects are also under implementation. Therefore, we should not confuse the issues by saying that because there is the shortage of paper, let us yield to the compulsions of the circumstances and let us accept all the terms put forward by the larger houses. That is not going to happen.

SHRI B. V. NAIK: Where has the joint sector succeeded then?

SHRI C SUBRAMANIAM: We have a large number of joint sector projects. Take, for example, the Gujarat Fertiliser Factory. It is a joint sector project with complete Government management. It has succeeded. Then, there is the Scooters Ltd. which is being put up as a joint sector project. It is a joint sector project, Government owning 51 per cent

and even a foreign party owing 10 per cent along with a private party. A large number of projects are being implemented by the State. Governments and private people participating together. Already, there are quite a large number of projects under implementation and also under production. Therefore, this is not new concept. But here, because they think that they are bigger houses and they can dictate terms, and they think we should yield to them with regard to the question of having Managing Directors, they are under an illusion.

18.20 hrs.

DISCUSSION RE: RECENT ROCK-BURSTS AND LANDSLIDES IN KERALA

MR CHAIRMAN: Now we take up the discussion under Rule 1973 Mr. C M Stephen to raise a discussion on the recent rock-bursts and landslides in Kerala.

SHRI C. M Stephen (Muvattupuzha): Mr. Chairman, I am really sorry that I have to take the time of the House at this late hour. But there is ample justification for it. If my memory is correct, this is the first time that on an issue like this concerning Kerala we are seeking the indulgence of the House for a hearing. I have heard discussion about drought and floods being raised umpteen times, but we have never come here to place before the conscience of India the agony which Kerala is now going through. I use the word 'agony' with the full implications of it, realising the situation there.

What has been happening in Kerala today is a total disaster, if I may say so. The disaster is three-dimensional, coming simultaneously. There is on the one side the sea erosion on a large scale rendering a large number of fishermen in a situation of complete starvation and water encroaching into the land of Kerala. Then as far as the middle low-lying area of Kerala,

floods have come in a torrential way consuming large areas of paddy fields and completely putting in desolation the granary of Kerala, Kottanad and other places. To this we are accustomed. But what is new now is that the entire western ghats, a substantial portion of them, has been practically shaken up and huge landslides have taken place. Boulders have come rushing down. Vast masses of sand have gushed out and different areas on the Western Ghats have had the devastating, fatal impact of this nature's perversity ..

THE MINISTER OF IRRIGATION AND POWER (SHRI K. C. PANT):
Fury.

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: Yes; nature's fury.

From the north to the south Kerala has felt the impact of it. Cananore has been affected, Calicut has been affected I would leave it to Mr Unnikrishnan who may follow me, and also to Shri Ramachandran Kadannappalli who represents Cananore to tell you what has happened in these districts. But the cruelest blow has fallen on the well known district of Idikki which is the cradle of hydro-electric projects of this country. I have had occasion to see Idikki area about 20 years back; it was only a forest area at that time. Now a new district of Idikki, with agricultural prosperity, has grown from out of that area in the course of the last 20 years. Persons, common men, with no massive investment have migrated to that area, and Idikki is presenting a picture, a model, of what miracle human labour can perform by investing its sweat on a receptive soil. Schools have come up, houses have come up, and there we have got the cash crops, coconut, paddy; every type of crop ranging from cardamum down to paddy.

One fine morning, rather one black morning—it has been described by the *National Herald* and many other papers as a black Friday—suddenly

landslide occurred and hillock after hillock, if I may use the word—I do not know whether it is permissible—have just exploded; boulders have come down and have just crushed the houses one after another under its mighty fold; people have been crushed under it, about 34 people died; roads have given way; culverts have succumbed. Houses have just vanished. School buildings have been finished up. People have been crushed down. Large numbers, thousands of people have just been thrown on the streets. Peasants who were flourishing till yesterday have been reduced to the position of penury. They have been left with nothing except the cloth they have on. And the worst of it is that the area has become inaccessible. Communications have become distributed and it is impossible to get to that area. That is the position to which Idikki has been reduced. A complete fury, unprecedented, unheard of and untasted in that area. There we don't have the problem of floods. We do not have the problem of drought. We have got a new problem, the problem of the shaking up of and the collapsing of the Western Ghats in substantial portions thereof. That is the problem we are now having there.

Various estimates have been given. The hon Minister, Pantji, made a statement on the floor of the House and said that the estimated loss is Rs 6 crores and said that in Idikki alone the estimated loss is Rs. 2 crores. As I submitted yesterday here, the Pradesh Congress Committee President with his team visited that area and his estimate on the basis of the information collected from various quarters was that in Idikki alone the loss is to the extent of Rs. 6 crores. I do not know. Yesterday night, the PWD Minister, Shri Divakaran and the Agriculture Minister, Shri Purushottaman, after visiting that area, rang me up and said that the damages the area has sustained are far in excess

of their wildest imagination and the loss is terrible. That is what he told me. The Governor also visited that area yesterday.

Now, the question is, whether or not the nation, the country and the Government have a responsibility to the people who have been thrown into penury for no fault of their own—an industrious people who built up the wealth of this country, who gave you foreign exchange, who contributed to the granary of this country, who gave you cash crops and who sold their everything and migrated to that area and built up a new district and who are now reduced to the position of beggars. It is enough that we simply look on doing nothing? That is the concept that I want to place before you.

Now I am stating these facts, as I submitted, in a mood of complete agony and pain and not in a mood of anger, but rather in a mood of anguish. I am trying to give vent to heart which is bleeding in Kerala and I do it in the realisation that this being the temple of democracy of India, the Government and the people of this country will hear that I make this appeal on behalf of the people who have never come before you, who have never stretched their hand to give up some relief either for floods or for drought. We do it now because the challenges before us are beyond us, beyond our capacity.

Now, the obligation of the State to extend a helping hand in this position is absolutely beyond doubt. The Sixth Finance Commission in their report on relief expenditure say.

"The State has to step in whenever natural calamities such as floods, cyclones and earthquakes cause extensive damage to crops and property. Even prior to Independence, it was one of the main tasks of the administrative machinery to tackle emergencies of this nature and consequently, rules and instructions for the guidance of field

staff in administering programmes of relief came to be codified."

They go on to say that. The question is that the State has got a responsibility, a moral responsibility and an administrative responsibility to come to the aid of the people whom they are governing is certainly beyond a shadow of doubt. Article 282 confers on the Government the power to give grants for public causes whenever it is necessary and I would submit that this is one of the reasons under which the Government are bound statutorily to act.

Now, having said that, the difficulty now is that it appears as to who should bear the burden. That seems to be the difficulty. Now I may say incidentally that there is another important aspect about the whole thing. Fortunately for us and unfortunately for the nation the Idikki project has not been affected but I was told by the PWD Minister yesterday that it would not be possible to take the materials to the Idikki project in the near future. The entire communications are disrupted. Heavy materials have to be taken to the Idikki project. It is not possible to take the material to the Idikki project. That means, it will be moderately and considerably delayed. That is a national problem if I may say so. That is the position before us. Formerly there was a system and this system was like this. Every Finance Commission would project their estimate of the need of the quantum of financial accommodation necessary in the interest of national production. That point was taken care of. But when there is a natural calamity there was a procedure whereby a team would go to the place, assess the damage, fix up ceiling and within the ceiling whatever may be spent, over and above what is postulated by the Finance Commission, seventy-five per cent will be shared by Central Government, 25 per cent by grant, 50 per cent by loan and this has been the system. The Sixth Finance Commission deviated in the whole procedure.

They have said when accommodation is being done nothing more need be done. That is what they have stated. What I submit is this. It is a misconception. I would like to state what the Sixth Finance Commission said. They have stated two procedures. A new scheme has been put forth by them. First they said, rather than rushing up with the aid to the flood hit and drought-hit areas and rather than putting up ad hoc schemes you evolve your scheme in the five-year plan period and treat those flood-prone and drought-prone areas in a scientific basis so that there is no waste. This is what they have stated

"Alternative schemes for tackling effectively the problems of relief of distress and development of drought/flood prone areas should be designed to overcome these two basic defects. We suggest that detailed programmes of both medium and long term significance for permanent improvement of the areas liable to drought and flood should be drawn up with the utmost urgency and these programmes fully integrated with the plan"

My problem in respect of the district about which I am speaking is not one of flood or drought. Other hon friends will be speaking about the other districts. Money has no doubt been provided but not a pie of that will be spent in that area because it is not a drought-prone area or flood-prone area. This money is not for that purpose. The Finance Commission said:

"Whatever assistance is provided to a State for drought relief or flood control should be adjusted against the ceilings of Central assistance for the Plan. This should not cause great hardship to any State or impair its capacity to meet its genuine requirements of relief expenditure because we visualise very large increases in the outlays in Central and State Plans on programmes of

development of drought-prone areas. We are also providing for a substantial increase in the present margins under 64-Famine Relief within the framework of our Award.'

These are two basis of justification. They have said these things: One, we are providing money or the Finance Commission is providing the money to drought prone or flood-prone areas. And therefore, this limited amount, the ceiling of which is to be fixed, will not cause any hardship because under the other general allocation this drought-prone and flood-prone area will be treated. My submission is this. This thing does not apply in this case. One will be shocked to hear what allotments were made. This is Rs 30 lakhs per year. Did not the Finance Commission say this also? They said, the States have come up with bloated estimates of expenditure for fixing the new allocation. That is how it has happened

As far as Kerala is concerned, what is it that we have drawn in the course of a year and what is it that we have expended. It is as follows:-

Year	(On notional basis) Total Amount expenditure spent by Kerala	
	Rs. lakhs	Rs. lakhs
1957-58 . . .	866	3
1958-59 . . .	1,641	6
1959-60 . . .	1,018	5
1960-61 . . .	1,815	4
1961-62 . . .	1,984	16
1962-63 . . .	1,319	13
1963-64 . . .	1,352	8
1964-65 . . .	1,409	7

MR CHAIRMAN. Now come straight to 1973-74.

SHRI C M STEPHEN:			
	Rs. lakhs	Rs lakhs	
1965-66	1,542		6
1966-67	7,685		3
1967-68	8,272		9
1971-72	21,667		125

This is the picture. What happened was that in the First and Second Finance Commissions, they only took the previous expenditure and took the average of the five years and then fixed this by adding to it 25 per cent of the figure arrived at. So, continuously, Rs 10 lakhs were allotted to Kerala. Even Rs 10 lakhs were not spent. Still, we did not come to Government of India for any additional amount. The first time that we came to the Government of India for the additional amount was in the course of past three or four years only. Before that we never came before them. I am emphasising the point for two purposes—firstly ours is not a State which would rather make a commercial deal which is mainly rejected. We are satisfied with our own humble lot. We did not want to work as a group in order to get money for developmental or non-developmental expenditure. That would be seen by the statistics that I have given. Secondly, as a result of the honesty of our people, of our government over a period of years, the amount allotted to us became only Rs 30 lakhs per year. This Rs 30 lakhs per year is nothing at all.

Therefore I am submitting let not the Sixth Finance Commission's Report be taken as a seal to refuse to discharge your obligations to the people. It is not the question of Kerala Government, it is not the question of Kerala Government versus the Central Government. It is the question of our people and the Government of Kerala but, who should bear the burden, is a matter to be settled between the Central Government and the Kerala Government. Sir, remember

the shivering and frozen men and women on the streets of Idikki District. Their houses have been destroyed; bridges were collapsed. Think of the starvation of the people and think of the men who have died. Think that you are here to discharge your responsibility to the people. These people are not idling. These people have laboured hard to make this country rich and prosperous. They are now the victims of a colossal attack by the cruel nature. Unless you go to their aid, they will just be wiped out. The question there is not one of relief but it is one of restructuring the districts that has been finished up. That task cannot be fulfilled by the State Government because the State Government is near to bankruptcy. That is a matter which everybody knows. The State Government is undergoing financial strain, it is undergoing difficulties in regard to food. We are labouring still. Over and above that, please do not put on us this task. If you put it, then it would be the last straw on camel's back. Do not that. Rush up aid to the people. I have to make an appeal to this House, through you, to Government of India and through Government of India, to the people of India to give the people food etc. I am making this appeal because here are the people who can never come here with a begging bowl. Please help us at this juncture. That is all what I want to submit.

SHRI C K CHANDRAPPA (Tellicherry). My hon Friend Shri Stephen has presented the case with great emotion. He has presented before this House a graphic picture of the tragedy which has befallen Kerala. So, I do not want to further dwell on that aspect of the matter.

At the outset, I would like to thank the Central Government for the friendly gesture that they have shown to Kerala at this moment of great crisis. They have come forward with the gesture of allotting of Rs 1 crore to meet the situation. My submission is that the situation is still more se-

rious and graver than was depicted before the Centre. A preliminary assessment, as was pointed out, has shown that the loss is to the tune of Rs. 6 crores, but it is now unofficially estimated, and it may be that it would be near correctness or nearer to facts, that the loss may be somewhere between Rs. 20 to 25 crores. When the Central Government were told that a loss of Rs. 6 crores had resulted because of this natural calamity they came forward with the gesture of providing Rs. 1 crore. My point is that if today the loss is much more than that, the Centre should come forward in a much bigger way than they have done at the moment.

This is not to be looked at as a tragedy which occurred in Kerala only. It should be understood as a national calamity. I know that there are floods and other calamities that occur in other parts of the country also.

But as Mr. Stephen has described, the seriousness of the matter and the gravity of the situation should be realised and it should be treated as a national problem. If the Centre would come forward to deal with it as a national problem, I think that nothing will stand in the way of the Centre's helping Kerala, because even though the Finance Commission might have granted only Rs. 30 lakhs, the Centre has already waived it and they have allotted Rs. 1 crore. I submit that in the same spirit they will have to come forward in a much bigger way to allot several crores of rupees to Kerala so that there can be reconstruction activities carried on in an effective manner. I have a suggestion to make in this regard, namely that the Centre should deal with this matter in a more serious manner on a war footing. They have to send immediately a team from the Centre to investigate what has happened there in Kerala. Let this team go immediately, and on the basis of their report, the Centre should take a fresh look at this matter and should take

a more sympathetic view and help the State so that the State will find itself in a situation where it can tide over the difficulties in which it is today.

There are two aspects which the Centre has to decide in regard to what they are going to do in future. One is short-term measures and the other is long-term measures. As a short-term measure, I suggested that a team might be sent to Kerala; they will come back and present a report and on the basis of that, the Centre will take a decision.

The minimum requirement is a big relief measure. Tens of thousands of people are today dispossessed; they are to be evacuated and they are starving and hungry. The Centre should immediately provide money so that they will be given some relief. Secondly, immediately food materials should be rushed to Kerala so that the people who are starving today would not die of starvation and hunger. I should say here that all the political parties, including my own in Kerala, are responsible for creating a serious ecological imbalance there. That is why the entire high ranges today have exploded due to soil erosion. It is not to be looked upon as merely a natural phenomenon that has come on like a thunder bolt. It is the result of indiscriminate deforestation which was carried on in that State. There should be perspective planning to stop this menace.

When such a situation has occurred in other countries they have adopted certain measures to help the people who were suffering. I remember some years ago there was a big earthquake in Tashkent. It was considered one of the biggest tragedies. The Soviet Government looked on it as a national problem. They called upon the entire country to rally behind Tashkent and every nationality, every state in the country sent voluntary help and within a short period Tashkent was rebuilt in a much

bigger way. The Centre should not only depend upon its budgetary resources which are dwindling because of the inflation as will be pointed out by Mr. Ganesh when he speaks but they should also call upon the people of the country to come forward and help Kerala in a big way so that in this period of struggle that State will be helped in a meaningful way.

DR. HENRY AUSTIN (Ernakulam): Sages have said it is wise to dedicate a day or two to the memory of those who passed away but the situation in Kerala is such that an hour or two should be set apart not only for those who have joined the majority but also for the land and homesteads that our compatriots there occupied. If one is to rely on reports in Kerala papers, areas occupied by thousands of people in my friend Mr. Stephen's constituency, people who have devoted their entire life for the development of that region, had been submerged not by ordinary floods but by big, unprecedented and unheard of cloud bursts and rock bursts and huge landslides. Here is a situation where not only human lives and their homesteads but whole regions are affected. These are some of the richest spice bowls of our land. Vast region have been submerged and if after a thousand or two thousand years somebody drills for exploration purposes, they may unearth in that place a big civilization. That is the magnitude of the situation that has developed.

In our State there are three clear topographical divisions. First is the coastal belt consisting of low lands where the density of population is highest, second only perhaps to Bali island in Indonesia. My own constituency is situated there. I know the havoc wrought as a result of floods consequent on the landslides in the hilly regions. Lakhs of fishermen live on the sea coast and they earn foreign exchange for the country. They sacrifice their lives to bring proteinous food. But their homesteads have been wiped away by sea erosion

and this has created a very difficult situation for them. They are managed in seasonal jobs and they have to sustain themselves for the whole year what they earn in 4 or 5 months. So, lakhs and lakhs of people have to be rehabilitated there.

Then we have the midlands where we raise vegetables, tapioca, which is almost our staple food, paddy, etc. Several of these beautiful hillocks have been washed away. I have a letter from one of my colleagues saying that Cochin city has been completely cut off from Alwaye town, 12 miles away in the midland region. People cannot travel by buses.

Then we have the highlands where we grew timber, rosewood, tea gardens, rubber plantations, cardamom, other spices and cash crops. In the fifth plan provision has been made for the development of Malnad in the Western Ghats. Now the sight there is awful. I just cannot picture the situation, which is so grave. All these three clear topographical divisions—highlands, midlands and low lands—have been gravely affected. The situation has been graphically described by Mr. Stephen whose constituency includes Idikki district which has been affected most severely.

I do not want to localise this issue. I am equally grieved over the disaster that has befallen Arunachal, Assam, Bihar, South Kanara and other parts of the country. We have to consider it as an integrated situation and think in terms of long range perspective.

I just want to narrate one incident.

I come from the coastal region. There was a terrible sea erosion in our area during my college days—that was the Maharaja's time—we went on a deputation to the Chief Secretary and to the Dewan saying, "The sea erosion is aggravating; something has to be done about it. Some anti-sea erosion works must be undertaken. You do something about it." We highlighted certain facts that mineral deposits like monozite, ilmenite, etc.

which are all important elements in the production of atomic energy, were being washed away. We emphasized that other national wealth, amounting to crores of rupees was being washed every year. When we highlighted these facts of destruction of national wealth and natural resources, do you know what the Chief Secretary said, "What does it matter? We have enough land. India is such a big country." That was the callous attitude of the bureaucrats and the rulers of the country then.

After the Independence, the situation has changed. The Central Government has so far invested crores of rupees for anti-sea erosion works in Kerala alone. They are planning to have a provision of Rs. 40 crores. That is the situation now. So, we have to look at problem like this from a national angle. It should not be considered as a local matter. The national consciousness on problems like this has to be aroused; the feeling that it is a national calamity has to be aroused.

Just as we did it during the Bihar earthquake, trainloads of volunteers from various political parties, from various regions, should have reached Kerala. They should have considered it as a national destruction. It is this awareness that is important. If this awareness has to be created at the national level, at people's level, the Parliament has to focus the attention of the people to this national calamity.

It is in this context that I suggest that a massive people's effort has to be organised to meet the challenge and to alleviate the agony of the people there. Therefore, I would urge upon the hon. Minister to take some positive measures and accept some of the suggestions already put forward by my colleagues.

I must gratefully say that already Central Government has responded in a very sympathetic manner. Some M.P.s. from Kerala met the Prime Minister. She has been good enough to make a positive response by grant-

ing help to the tune of Rs. 1 crore as an initial step. But that will not be enough. There has been severe destruction and new structures have to be built up. That will require at least Rs. 25 crores.

Not only that can be met by the Central Government; yet, it should come out with more grants and other ways of helping us at this critical juncture. An appeal should be made by national leaders of various political parties and other voluntary organisations to collect money for relief and rehabilitation operations. Whatever may be the findings of the Finance Commission with respect to Kerala, provision has to be made for undertaking relief work. Considering the importance of Kerala State, and particularly the effected areas as spice and other cash crop producing areas, help must reach there in adequate measure. I suggest that a high-power commission or something like that should be appointed and the necessary measures to alleviate the sufferings of the people of the affected areas should be taken on the basis of its assessment, social workers and others should send their teams to help in the relief and rehabilitation work that is now being undertaken both at official and non-official level in Kerala.

It is very kind of the Speaker and the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs to have arranged a special debate on this matter and, I am sure, the gravity of the situation has been fully realized by them and this discussion, though brief, will create a national consciousness on this national calamity that has befallen on the people of Kerala and, as a matter of fact, on our country.

19 hrs.

SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN (Bedagara): Mr. Chairman, Mr. Stephen, who moved this motion and the Speakers who preceded me, Mr. Chandrappan and Dr. Henry Austin, have drawn the attention of

[Shri K. P. Unnikrishnan]

this House to the horrifying tale of misery and distress that has suddenly descended upon our rather unfortunate State. Eight out of the eleven districts in Kerala have been affected. Nearly three million people have been directly effected by the great deluge that has taken place as a result of rock bursts and landslides. Whatever may be the reasons or the background of this phenomenon, after July 21 and particularly on 24, 25 and 26 July, nearly three million people have become orphans, orphans in the literal sense because in the eastern portions of my constituency one village called, Tiruvambadi, has completely disappeared and has been wiped out. This is the situation Mr Stephen has drawn attention to the tragic situation of Idikkil district. In Cananore, Calicut and Malappuram districts—I know, it has happened in my constituency; a whole village has been wiped out—25 years of the hard work of settlers has been undone in a matter of 48 hours. The total estimated loss varies from Rs 6 to 20 crores. Rs 6 crores were on earlier estimate, a classical under-estimate by the State Government officials who have reached only points where there is accessibility. Roads have disappeared, culverts have disappeared, and all the 41 rivers of our State are swollen today and consequently the flood has affected every part of every district except perhaps Trivandrum and Palghat.

I entirely agree with my friend, Mr. Chandrappan, in what he has said, that the ecological balance of Kerala has been upset. I very strongly support the suggestion made by him that, as a long term measure, we have to look into this because whether it is sea erosion or whether it is as a result or up set in ecological balance or whether rock-bursts and landslides take place, the whole State and consequently the entire nation suffers. I wish to point out the need for evolution, as a long term measure, of a national forest policy. Deforestation, the term used by my friend, Shri

Chandrappan, I would say, is an under-statement. Marauders have been allowed to destroy the entire high ranges; in the name of giving lands to the landless, people deputed by the big timber merchants and the big smugglers of sandal wood and rose wood which takes 100 to 120 years to mature have marauded the State of its entire forest wealth. I do not exempt any Ministry, whether it was that of Mr Namboodiripad or that of Congress Chief Ministers or that of Mr Achutha Menon. All those Governments in that State and the Central Government have been silent spectators to this tragic situation that has developed over the years in that State. Consequently a very wrong agricultural practice has been encouraged because of the pressure on land and the land-use pattern in that State, that is, a wrong type of cultivation in the hilly slopes of Kerala, particularly tapioca. The Centre is to be blamed for this because they have not given us enough rice. We earn foreign exchange for the country, we have the precious wealth which is a national wealth, and it is the duty of the Centre to provide this so that such practices can be stopped. Tapioca, according to an FAO expert—fortunately, my friend, Shri Maurya is not here—its cultivation in these hilly slopes loosens the ground and leads to soil erosion. This has been an expert's study and I do not know how far it is true. That is what I found from a newspaper report a few months ago. This is what is going on and if this is to be put an end to then the Central Government has to take immediate steps for evolving a national forest policy and also for the right type of agricultural practices and see that the States implement them.

Now, we are deeply indebted to our Prime Minister for her sympathetic reaction to the situation in the State. Immediately she was good enough to make, though a small, contribution from her own Relief Fund. But I want to impress upon this

House and the Government that what has happened there is an extraordinary phenomenon. This is not even something of a natural calamity as is normally understood. Mr Stephen referred to the Sixth Finance Commission's report and its recommendations that have been accepted by the Government which gave us a relief of Rs 30 lakhs. He also referred to various figures. But one figure I would probably remind the House and which he left out is that 1973-74, out of Rs. 320 crores on drought relief, Kerala was allotted only Rs 125 crores. If we are going to be bound by these technicalities and if we are going to be bound by such recommendations, then, that is not the way to meet the situation created by an extra-ordinary natural phenomenon in Kerala. Are you going to deal with this picture of misery which has resulted in loss of life and destruction of cash crops and gardens built over a period of 20-25 years by a measly crore of ways and means advance? Is it possible for any State Government particularly, Kerala Government? I would like to underline this aspect for the financial position of the State last year was an overdraft of Rs 30 crores and this year, ignoring the need to meet the present situation, it is expected to mount up to Rs 55 crores. I do not want to defend anybody—Government or anybody, but what I would like to emphasize is that the Central Government itself has to be concerned about the situation not only because Kerala is an integral part of India which fact has unfortunately, to be reminded and repeated time and again because many people think that this is some far-off corner of some place but cash crops which have been destroyed take about 5-6 years to come up. It will take a minimum of 5 years, whether it is ginger or pepper or arecanut and all the desettled places in these hill slopes are full of pepper gardens and consequently, it will amount to a huge colossal loss in our export earnings. What about rubber which earns or saves foreign

exchange in another way? Are you going to help these people in distress because in the next 5-6 years they have to develop these and they are left with nothing? Are you going to help the 3 million people? That is the basic question before the Government today. It is not a question of adjustment of a crore or two here and there because it is impossible to conceive a situation where the people of Kerala or the State Government of Kerala can meet the situation and meet the challenge themselves.

I would say the much-maligned Catholic Church and the Church organisation with which I do not agree on many questions are the only agency which has started doing some relief work. It is rather regrettable that the Opposition Parties, particularly, the CPM and the Kerala Congress are trying to fish in these troubled waters though I find they are absent when the House in discussing this vital question. I impress this upon the hon. Ministers. Three of them are here. One hon. Minister is from my own State. He should be concerned because his Ministry, if not today, for another 5 years will suffer if the Central Government does not come with aid to meet the challenging situation.

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI K RAGHURAMAIAH): He is very much concerned, he is feeling miserable as he is not able to take part in the debate, being a Minister!

SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN Sir, I would urge upon the Government to send a team immediately. They should not wait for the final report of the team which necessarily involve bureaucratic delays. They should go all out on a frontal warlike effort to meet the challenges posed by the situation in Kerala.

SHRI RAMACHANDRAN KADANNAPALLI (Kasargod): I am extremely thankful to you for giving

[Shri Ramchandran Kadamapalli] us an opportunity to discuss and seek redress about the havoc and the calamity unprecedented in the history of Kerala. Never in the living memory Kerala had been subjected to the wrath of the nature of such a severity. What happened in Kerala last week was a three pronged attack of nature against that small strip of land. There was cloud burst and landslide amounting to deluge in the hill districts. There was unprecedented flood in the middle land and there was cruel sea erosion on the coastal districts. Except for the two districts all the other nine districts of Kerala were the victims of the nature's onslaught.

It was not only the floods, in fact, flood was only incidental. It was not even a pincer attack from the mountain and the sea. It was a three pronged move against the small state of 14,000 sq. miles with 22 million people, the highest density of population in the world, three times the Indian national average. You know very well that the land strip of Kerala is one of the smallest in our country. Out of these small land strip itself one-third is of mountains. The people Oak out a merge living out of the land subjected to the highest density of the population. It is this land which has been left devastated by an unheard of phenomenon of the cloud-burst and the landslide, floods of uncommon magnitude in living memory and sea erosion which is by this time well known for its merciness vengeance.

25 years back, because of the great pressure on land the hard-working, industrious and soil-loving people from Central Travancore migrated in an exodus to the forest lands east of Travancore-Cochin in the northern tracts of Malabar. These people now familiarly known as Chettanan and those tracts of the hills and mountains of Malabr, Calicut, Mallapuram, Palghat, Cannanore and Idikki districts are the major contributors to foreign exchange earnings of our country. More than 20 per cent of total coffee

crop of India is grown here. More than 70 per cent of the total rubber production of the country is grown here. More than 70 per cent of the cardamom is produced here. More than 80 per cent of India's pepper go out of their hands. More than 20 per cent of India's total tea crop is grown here.

Sir, the total foreign exchange earning from these five to six mountain districts alone will come to more than Rs. 125 crores of foreign exchange in hard currency—all earned by the adventurous and hardworking people of the area. During the past 25—30 years the entire face of the earth has been changed into a prosperous garden. Sir, it is said that the earth was created by God, but Dutch created Holland. With a similar analogy, I can say Kerala was created by Parasurama, but Malabar was created by the Settlers. All over the place, mountains denuded, rivers swollen, villages disappeared and tens of thousands of orphans moved to public buildings, if they managed to survive. Sir, in my constituency, i.e., Kasargode, the entire eastern tract has for all practical purposes disappeared. In vast and eastern areas of Calicut district much is not left behind. Iddiki district is a picture of devastation. In fact, I may say that three of our Members of Parliament from Kerala, Shri C. M. Stephen, Shri K. P. Unnikrishnan and myself are left without constituencies. I am prepared to concede that floods are natural calamities.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We do not require you to resign.

SHRI RAMACHANDRAN KADAMAPALLI: Sir, the two weeks of this unprecedented nature's wrath has eaten up our constituencies. In fact, Sir, it may be even a privilege issue—'Members of Parliament robbed of their Constituencies'.

Sir, I am prepared to concede that floods are natural calamities and are a perennial phenomenon in our coun-

try—in the North, the West or the South. But, here, Sir, it is not floods, it is an inexplicable phenomenon. Some experts say it has relevance to some earth tremor far away in the North. Sir, in the case of paddy or wheat, if a crop is wiped out, we can have a small consolation that the next crop may be good—within six months. In the case of Kerala, the land of cash crops which contribute mightily to the foreign exchange earning of our country, all these crops have long gestation periods. Rubber sapping will take seven years to yield, cardamom will take at least five to six years to yield, pepper vine will not give fruits before six years, coffee will take six years and tea will take five to six years. In the light of this fact, the Government of India is not only to rush relief, but plan for reconstruction and rehabilitation I have asked for immediate help to see that the starving millions are helped out of this situation and more important is the planned programme for replanting, contouring and soil conservation. In the present situation in Kerala it is not enough if we rush a crore or two to solve the present problem. Originally we thought that the damage was to the extent of Rs. 6 crores. But as the picture emerges clearer, we may have to reckon with the devastation to the tune of 12 or 15 crores. Sir, if the Government of India and the concerned authorities do not move in immediately on war footing, we may have to regret about the loss of the vital commodities which were the monopolies of our country. The Tea Board, Coffee Board, Cardamom Board, Spices Council and the Commodity Boards will have to move with their full machinery.

The entire Government of India must give the support to boost these efforts. The great forest wealth and the rich spice districts of Kerala, namely, Iddiki, Cannanore Calicut, Malapuram and Palghat will have to be preserved and reconstructed.

SHRI K. K. SHETTY (Mangalore):
My constituency has also been affect-

ed by flood very much just like Malabar. While entirely sympathising with my hon. friends from Kerala, I also feel, after visiting my constituency and my district, from where I returned only yesterday, that a great calamity has overtaken us. This is an extraordinary situation. We need not speak now of the allotments. Finance Commission or this or that grant from the Government. It is a calamity brought by nature. It happens once in 50 years or once in 30 or 40 years, and it has to be tackled in an extraordinary way. Generally, such floods never occur in our district or in Kerala. Some floods will be there every year during the rainy season; when torrential rains come and when wind blows, but not of such magnitude. I am told that in the ghat section, at Gundia, where the Hasan-Mangalore railway work is being carried out, on the 25th of last month, 18 inches ram fell. You can understand the torrents and the current flowing down. The same thing must have happened throughout the Western Ghats on the Kerala side also. It is unusual that 18 inches of rain could be there on one day during 24 hours. So, the whole of our district has suffered. Two constituencies, Bantwal and Mangalore have suffered the worst havoc in this flood.

On the 25th July, there were such torrential rains, and as a result on the 26th, like a tidal wave, water suddenly rushed down the Ghats. Fortunately, the floods came during the daytime. Otherwise, hundreds of people would have lost their lives. The current was such that even boats could not carry the people. It was extraordinary and unprecedented in our district. People had to rush out of their houses leaving everything else with only the clothes they were wearing and nothing else. The houses fell like a pack of cards. Hundreds of houses have fallen. The people helplessly saw the houses fall before their own eyes, and they had to rush out leaving everything that belonged to them. They had to lose everything that belonged to them. I do not want to exaggerate

[Shri K. K. Shetty]

things or be sentimental about it. I have toured my district for four days and seen the suffering of the people myself which was most tragic.

Mr. Shenoy had also come with me. We had left this place on the 30th of last month. On the 29th we wrote to the Prime Minister that a calamity had overtaken our district. We had pointed out that such flood havoc had not taken place in our district for the last fifty years, and most of the poor workers, the hiri workers, the factory workers and agricultural workers who had built some houses with their savings of 50 years, some of them had built tiled houses have suddenly lost everything within a few hours, and became homeless; as a token of sympathy with them we had requested the Prime Minister to give us some relief from the National Relief Fund. At once she sanctioned a sum of Rs. 1 lakh. Our people are thankful for this gesture of the Prime Minister. By the time we went, I am proud to say, our people had made total efforts to organise relief work, opened camps and gruel centres and distributed clothes.

After the hon. Minister for Heavy Industries, Shri T. A. Pai had toured the district much more relief was made available. He got help not only for South Kanara but for Kerala also. He got thousands of saris and dhoties from Bombay. In Bombay, they have started collecting funds for the relief of the Kerala and South Kanara people. I am very thankful to the Bombay people who have begun collecting funds for relief. They have already sent about Rs. 50,000 to Kerala and Rs. 50,000 to us. More funds are also being collected. When Mr. Pai had gone there, voluntary collections in our district had come to about Rs. 4 lakhs. All the people, irrespective of caste, community or party have joined in organising relief and give saris, dhoties and other clothes to the flood stricken people. I am very glad to say that we do not want any help from the Central Government for emergency relief, because that is well

organised, and the State Government has also given us Rs. 10 lakhs for temporary relief; State Governments have distributed Rs. 100 to every family. It is no use blaming anybody for the situation. Everybody should sympathise and work and help the poor people. That is the only attitude that our people have taken. All the social welfare organisations like the Lion's Club, the Junior Chamber, the Rotary organisation and others have co-operated in giving relief to the people. The District Relief Committee was constituted in the district under the chairmanship of Mr. K. Suryanarayana Adiga, chairman of the Karnataka Bank, and emergency relief has been given to everybody. I do not think that there is any complaint about the matter, because I have gone round and seen the people, and they are satisfied.

Now, we are very much concerned with rehabilitation. About 7000 houses have fallen throughout the district. About 40,000 people have been rendered homeless. They have lost everything. I had discussed this matter with Mr. Pai also who has returned to Delhi yesterday. The earlier estimate of the loss was about Rs. 1½ crores, but after the reports came from all the villages, the loss is estimated to be about Rs. 3½ crores. Now, it is the question of rehabilitating those people and building some houses for them. Permanent sheds are being built for them with zinc sheets. But the question is one of permanent rehabilitation of these 40,000 people who have lost everything when these 7000 houses fell within a few hours during the flood. My request to the Central Government is to help us in rehabilitating these people. We do not want any grant or any such thing. We only want loans for these people; we only demand interest-free loans, so that they could build their own houses with the help of the State and Central Governments, and the charitable organisations and the money collected by the Flood Relief Committee. My request to the Central Government is that they

should help us by giving some loans, interest-free, payable over a period of ten or fifteen years or loans at the lowest interest possible. If the loans could be given, they could be rehabilitated.

In the present circumstances, the State Government cannot cope with this magnitude of relief or rehabilitation. So, I request that the Central Government should give us some help. As for the estimate of the havoc, they may send their own team and examine the matter and prepare an estimate of the loss and the money required for rehabilitation. But after that, the Central Government should give us some help by way of loans to these people to rehabilitate themselves because the State Government by itself is not in a position to meet the expenses in connection with this kind of rehabilitation work.

SHRI P. R. SHENOY (Udipi): Floods in the West Coast are very common. So, the people of that region have learnt to live with these floods and the fast-flowing rivers which cause these floods, and also the sea which sometimes threaten to swallow the whole coast during the rainy season. But this time the floods were unusual as has been described already by the previous speakers.

So far as the South Kanara district is concerned, this is the worst flood havoc which we have had during the last fifty years. Mr. K. K. Shetty and I had gone to the district during the last week and we have collected some facts and figures regarding the damage caused by the floods in our district. 11 people had lost their lives. About 7,000 houses collapsed. Innumerable houses, though appear to be in tact, have become unsafe for human habitation. Then there was at least one major landslide in Bajpe, near the airport. It has caused damage to the road. In addition to houses, people lost rice, clothes, and other household articles. Due to sea erosion lands have been eroded here and there.

There is also loss to standing crop in some places. The total loss has been estimated at Rs. 5 crores.

I must congratulate the people of the district who did an excellent work in organising immediate relief to the suffering people. Many persons risked their life to rescue the suffering people who were caught in flood waters. I also thank our Prime Minister for giving a lakh of rupees from the national relief fund as a token of her sympathy towards the people of the district. This has been appreciated very much by the people. I must also join Mr. K. K. Shetty in thanking Mr. T. A. Pai, the Minister of Heavy Industries in personally organising and supervising the relief work. We do not want, as Mr. Shetty said any grant from the Central Government. People have collected funds there and the State Government has given Rs. 10 lakhs for immediate relief to people who have lost their houses and who are in the streets or in the school buildings. Now they have to be rehabilitated. For them we want loans. The State Government has made some arrangement to give them interest-free loan but they will not be able to give loans to the full extent and to all the people. So I request the Central Government to give some loan to the State Government so that they may give it to the suffering people for rebuilding their houses. The Central Government has never stood on technicalities while meeting calamities of this kind in the past and therefore I request them not to stand on technicalities now. Where there is a will there is a way. I am sure the Central Government will be able to find funds to give loans to the Karnataka Government so that the people who have lost their houses in my district may rebuild their houses. If it is not possible to give direct loans, they can give green signal to the nationalised banks to give such loans without interest. Our district has given birth to five scheduled banks; out of this five, two are nationalised banks. LIC may also consider giving loans to these people. Loans may be long term, in-

[Shri P. R. Shenoy]
 terest free and on liberal terms You must also enable the people to face floods in future As I have already said floods are common in my district and therefore you must enable the people to face floods with more courage and less difficulty

We have a number of rivers and drainage channels in the district for which foot bridges are necessary There are hundreds of islets within the rivers to which there is no access during the rainy season and most of them get submerged during the rainy season In order to enable the children to go to the school and enable the people to move about and for crossing drainage channels we require hundreds of foot bridges When we approach the State PWD they say we construct only bridges and not foot bridges Therefore for constructing footbridges and foot paths in islets we require a loan of about a crore of rupees from the Central Government

If the Central Government gives a loan of Rs 1 crore for our district I think about 500 small and big foot-bridges can be built I request the Government to give a similar loan to Kerala also because Kerala and South Kanara together form the west coast of Parasurama Srishti If that is done, the Centre will be making a beginning towards meeting the challenges caused by the floods

श्री रामाबाबु नर शास्त्री (पटना)
 प्राकृतिक प्रकोप की शिकार और उससे दुखी केरल तथा कर्नाटक की बहादुर और महा जमता के प्रति मैं अपनी हार्दिक सहानुभूति प्रकट करता हूँ। जहाँ मुझे एक गाने की दो पंक्तियाँ याद आती हैं। चायल की गति चायल जाने और न जान कँच। इसका अर्थ यह हुआ कि हम बिहार के लोग बराबर इस प्रकार के दुख में रहते हैं। इस साल भी बाढ़ों में हमारा पूरा भा और खाम तोर से उतरा बिहार दूबा हुआ है। टाढा भ बहा हा रहे है।

बहुत से जिने बाढ़ों से प्रभावित हुये है हम जानते हैं कि इनकी वजह से लोगों को किस किस प्रकार की तकलीफ सहन करनी पड़ती है। इसलिए दिल से मैं अपनी सहानुभूति प्रकट करता हूँ और भारत सरकार में माग करता हूँ कि जो जो मागे बहा के लोगों ने रखी है कर्नाटक के लोगों ने रखी है उन को पूरा किया जाये। खास तोर से उस स्थिति में जब कि आपने घोबर ड्राफ्ट देना केरल सरकार को बद कर दिया है वहा पर सरकार की आर्थिक स्थिति बहुत ही दर्शनीय हो गयी है। फिर वहा की बहादुर जमता इस मुसीबत का सामना करने को तैयार है और कर रही है और इस ग वहा आपकी सहायता चाहती है। इस सक्क की घडी में पूरे हिन्दुस्तान की जमता का भी फर्ज है कि वह वहा के लोगों की सहायता करे और वो कर भी रही है जैसे बम्बई बगीच में लाग कर रहे है लेकिन उममे में भी ज्यादा दायित्व आप का है और मुझे उमीद है कि सरकार इस मौके पर ग छे नहीं रहेगी और केरल की जमता की पूरी पूरी मदद करेगी ताकि वह अपनी एक तकलीफ में कुछ हिम्मत में काम कर सके।

SHRI F G MAVALANKAR (AHMEDABAD) Sir, although I had intended only to attend this debate and not participate in it, after hearing the moving speeches of Mr Stephen and others, I think it my duty to joint you, Sir, and other honourable members, to say that the entire country is with the people of Kerala and Karnataka, who have suffered most in this crisis This has been a truly national calamity, as you said I visited Kerala many years ago along with my father and stayed there for nearly a month I vividly remember the beautiful landscape there My heart weeps when I hear the pathetic tale of these brethren of ours who have lost their lives, Many have lost their shelter and other belongings I do sincerely hope that the entire machinery of the Government of India will move forward not only with massive and

urgent assistance in terms of financial and other resources but will also get rid of the bureaucratic and other obstacles in the way.

I want to support my hon. friend, Shri Chandrappan, and also my hon. friend, Shri Unnikrishnan, when they pleaded with the Government for the formation of a truly national forest policy. That is also a very important point which must be looked into.

Kerala also has many rivers. Why not the rivers be harnessed? In this country, many States have got rivers, big and small. Some have been harnessed, other rivers also will be harnessed. This will benefit not only Kerala but also the entire country.

I want to conclude by saying that the entire country, as indeed this House has shown during the debate today, is with the people who have suffered due to floods, whether they be in Kerala, Karnataka, Assam, Meghalaya or any other State. Let the Central Government assistance go through Central machinery over and above the State machinery. I know from my experience of Gujarat that wherever in the States, there are voluntary agencies and social workers doing good work, it always pays if you give massive assistance to them and distribute things through them. If it is done only through State machinery, you will not be able to do it. The danger will be that much of the assistance may go, not to the people who need it, but to the people who are in the middle to give assistance to the people.

With these words, I extend my sincere sympathies to the people who have suffered.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI K. R. GANESH): Mr. Chairman, Sir, before my senior colleague replies to this debate, I have one clarification to make. But since I have to clarify this matter, it is not possible not to say a few words when I

am standing before the House on the nature of the debate.

It is a great tragedy through which Kerala is passing. The agony of the people of Kerala has been very aptly symbolised by the hon. Member, Shri Stephen and others. It seems that Kerala is in a state of desolation and it will require a national effort to come to the aid and succour and relief of the people of Kerala. I join with other hon. Members of the House in expressing sympathy and solidarity with the people of Kerala.

I am sure, the ways and means will be found—I am not using the expression “ways and means” in the narrow budgetary terminology. I am speaking of the ways and means as a national effort. This nation has its own achievements as far as the national tragedies are concerned. It will require a real national effort indeed to help the people of Kerala in the kind of destruction as has been vividly described here by the hon. Members.

I have a very small technical job to do in relation to the debate. In order to provide immediate relief, in response to the request of the State Government, the Central Government has given Rs. 1 crore as ways and means advance to the State Government so that their ways and means position is not strained in taking up immediate relief measures. All of us know that ways and means position of Kerala is pretty bad. The damage reported by the State Government is to the tune of Rs 6 crores. About Rs. 30 lakhs which is given by the Finance Commission will also be available to the State Government. As many areas are inaccessible, the whole picture of the requirement of Kerala will be available only later. The ways and means will have to be found to help the people of Kerala.

Since I am standing before this House, it is necessary for me to indicate that in a large country like ours with its recurring floods and

droughts and natural calamities of this type, I cannot but mention that the textbook idea of deficit financing, which of course has always been attacked in this House, cannot always be adhered to. I may also draw the attention of the House to what the Finance Minister has said time and again when he was attacked for not controlling deficit financing; he has said what could the Finance Minister or the Government do when a situation comes like drought or floods. When a situation comes like the one in Kerala today in which the whole constituency has disappeared, a very rich district like Mr. Stephen's has been completely desolated, what could we do? This Government cannot leave the people in their sufferings just because there are textbook concepts on deficit financing. It is very unfortunate that this tragedy should have come in this particular situation in which the nation and its economy finds itself today. However, there is enough strength in the Government of India under the leadership of the Prime Minister to spend all our efforts to come to the succor of the people of Kerala.

THE MINISTER OF IRRIGATION AND POWER (SHRI K. C. PANT):

Sir, my task has been made very much easier by the intervention of my colleague. He has not only understood, if I may say so, with full sympathy the anguish of the members who spoke here but he has also explained the ambit within which the Government of India would like to be of practical assistance in helping the State of Kerala. And I took note of the fact that the members from Karnataka share this particular tragedy, coming from an area which adjoins Kerala, which is no less beautiful and which resembles Kerala in many ways; if I call it an extension of Kerala, they will not like it; but it is very similar.

Shri Stephen set the tone of the debate by making, as my friend Shri Mavalankar said, a moving speech.

He always makes strong and powerful speeches, but today he spoke from his heart and he spoke of the hardship and misery in his own constituency; he spoke about the difficulties of the people amongst whom he lives and who have sent him here, and as one who went to that area only recently, in the last couple of months, I can fully understand the anguish and the agony with which he spoke.

The monsoon has behaved somewhat erratically this year in Kerala. Firstly, it was a little ahead of time—four days ahead of time, in the month of May. Then, for a period it was delayed to such an extent that we began to be worried about agricultural production and power generation. Then, in the last week of July it rained so heavily that the monsoon affected a number of districts through floods, through landslides, etc., the details of which have been given by my friends earlier. Although they referred to it, I know this has affected the districts of Cannanore, Kozhikode, Malappuram, Ernakulam, Kottayam, Trichur and Alleppey. Now, in a small State like Kerala, this is a very large area

So, the monsoon came with fury and the fury was very widespread. Certain areas in Kerala, as was explained by my hon. friends, are low-lying and there, the flood creates an immediate situation. The flood certainly creates problems in those areas almost every year and this year, the particular problem to which a special reference has been made is the problem landslides, rockbursts, as some friends said. Now, coming from a hill area myself, I fully understand the havoc that can be wrought by landslides and I fully sympathise with the difficulties and the hardships of the people who have been subjected to these landslides. I think Mr. Unnikrishnan referred to the fact that one of the villages has been swept away by the

landslide. I have plenty of experience of such cases and in my area several times I have seen this happen. He knows from the geological point of view the Himalayan ranges are very recent than the Western Ghats and are more prone to landslides and to this sudden and severe erosion by monsoon and rainfall which causes the landslides to happen and sometimes the whole village goes down with it. I can understand this problem.

I have been trying to understand in terms of money—what the losses have been. I know certain lives have been lost I think someone referred to 32 but the figure with me is 27. That is neither here nor there but some valuable lives have been lost. We know the communications have been disrupted and Mr. M. M. Govindan Nair whom I met a few days ago told me about the disruption of communications in the area of Idikki which has created a problem of conveying equipment to Idikki at this point of time when we are so anxious that Idikki should start generating power by June next ...

SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN: Then there is the Neriamangalam power station.

SHR. K. C. PANT: Yes, one power station has been damaged and also an irrigation project. These in fact are the two specific damages of developmental works which have come to our notice.

So far as the losses go, the State Government have told us that it has not been possible to get a very clear picture of the havoc caused by the rains, floods and landslides and it will take sometime to make a reasonably accurate assessment. In general terms they have reported the damage. They have referred to the various kinds of losses which are mentioned here in this House during the debate. They have said about loss of crops which also was there, public utilities, roads, bridges, and so on. Someone said, I had said a few days ago,

that loss was of the figure of 6 crores of which 2 crores would be attributable to Idikki project alone. Now these were figures we have got from State Government. I have before me another figure. It says that the total may exceed Rs. 10 crores but at this state I do not think I need go into these details. These matters will have to be gone into further.

Some Members said that these problems are not confined to landslides but that sea erosion is one of the great problems of Kerala. I visited Kerala several times I have seen some areas where this is a problem. About Rs. 177 crores are spent so far till the end of Fourth Plan on protective measure against sea erosion. Fishermen are affected. Hon. Members referred to this point. They certainly need protection from sea erosion which in certain areas, as I said, poses a problem. But this is ordinarily within the State Government, but here, the Centre has during the last two years of the Fourth Plan been giving assistance for protection measures against sea erosion.

Fifth Plan pattern of assistance in respect of protection measures against sea erosion is a matter which is being discussed by Planning Commission with the State Government. Floods pose the second problem. Rs. 3.16 crores were spent till end of the Fourth Plan Flood protection measures again is in the State sector. A master Plan was prepared by State Government; that was sent to the Centre; by Centre, I mean, the Central Water and Power Commission; and certain changes were suggested to the State Government and they are now working on it.

With regard to immediate relief I know that the State Government have taken measures for rescue and relief and they have given us information about this. I do not want to go into details. Relief measures include providing shelter for people evacuated, free food and in some cases

cash assistance. The family of persons who lost their lives was sanctioned Rs 1,000 each. As an instance of Rs 500 was given for fully damaged house and Rs 250 for partially damaged house. So, this assistance is being provided for the reconstruction and repair. These are the steps which the State Government has already taken in this regard.

20 00 hrs

Now the question of assistance from the Centre has been dealt with by my colleague. I do not want to go into that further. The difference between the past practice of release of central assistance for relief to the States in the case of natural calamities and the difference which has now been brought about by the acceptance of the recommendations of the Finance Commission has certainly been brewing in the minds of the Members who have spoken. It is not really for me to unilaterally give a decision in the matter. But I think I have to explain to Shri Stephen that the Finance Commission's recommendations have covered all natural calamities. Now that an extraordinary situation has arisen as to what can be done is a matter to which my colleague has referred. So far as the document from which he read goes, it has covered natural calamities as a whole.

A suggestion was made that a team should be sent from the Centre to Kerala. I can assure my hon friends that I have been thinking of sending some experts who might be able to advise on whether we would speed this up or whether we could help in overcoming the difficulties that have come up in the Iddiki project on account of landslides and the breaking of bridges and disruption of communications. Both, now it is also necessary to know what exactly has happened there. The question of rock bursts has been raised. And, as the House just heard many hon Members have said that this is the worst kind of calamity that has taken place in

the western ghat area. I think Mr Shetty said that it is the worst kind of calamity that has happened in the last fifty years. So we have decided to send the Team. That team will include a geological expert also. There will be an agricultural expert—one on irrigation and one on power. We have decided that this team should be sent to Kerala immediately to look into all the technical aspects of the situation.

Apart from the question of technical assistance this team would look into the supply of inputs required for agricultural operations, fertilisers, seeds and so on. It is again something which will require looking into immediately from the point of view of the farmers. One suggestion was also made to which I attach a great deal of importance. That is the question of afforestation or prevention of deforestation. This is a debate on the situation in Kerala. But I entirely share the sentiments expressed by three of my colleagues on this matter and I feel very strongly not only about the whole of western ghat but the whole country also, certainly of the catchment areas and it is if I may say so one of the basic reasons for landslides in the Himalayan region. That I can say from personal experience I have seen the ill effects of reckless deforestation. It always causes soil erosion not only does it lead to landslides but also later on it brings down silt in the rivers which creates all manner of problems. You can see that at all points where the river comes down from the hills to the plains I am happy that this problem has received the attention which it ought to in the course of this debate. I think from the long term point of view this is one aspect of the matter which requires attention all over the country.

Shri Chandrappan referred to the Taskani earthquake and what the Soviet Government did. I would request him to consider this also, in the last few years our Government here

with all our limitations and paucity of resource_s has been doing as much as anyone could expect in trying to help the States in improving the situation in times of scarcity, drought and floods. They would recall the drought situation that afflicted large areas of the country just a couple of years back and how much this Government did by way of not merely direct assistance such as rushing food and so on but also providing employment and spending something like Rs. 90 crores on this. I think that we can say, that we have not ignored the human aspect of the problem. In fact central assistance to States towards natural calamities relief expenditure, to which reference was made by Mr. Stephen rose from Rs. 8.15 crores in 1965-66 to 216.67 crores in 1972-73.

Shri Unnikrishnan referred to an important problem. We have to take into account the ecological factors, the effect of crops we grow in hillsides if we are to tackle the problem at its root. We are going to have a debate soon I think on the flood situation in the country. In most States people come to me and tell me individually their problems; you will hear that almost every State is today facing a tremendous problem because of floods. Strangely enough in the midst of floods there is drought in some parts

MR. CHAIRMAN: We remember the magnitude and seriousness of the problem when floods are there. After that the tendency is: we forget and get involved in some other problems That has been the story till now.

SHRI K. C. PANT: I am so happy that pointed attention has been drawn to this aspect of the problem during this debate. If your wise words are heeded, in future we will not forget it after the floods are over; we will remember it and we hope that you will remind us in case we tend to forget it.

Finally, there was the question of organised relief. Shri Shetty gave us a very heartening account of efforts made in Mangalore. These are national problems and we all share the anxiety of our friends. Their constituencies may be different but we share their anxiety. We want to relieve the situation not merely as ministers but as citizens of this country. The organisation of relief on a people to people basis would certainly help and it has helped. The people of India always come out and help in such situations. Bombay has set an example. This kind of operation has to be organised on a wider scale I am sure if the organisations which usually organise such relief work and other friends take up this work in their respective areas, it will certainly relieve the situation and also encourage a feeling of participation in helping out people in a difficult situation. And this, Sir, is what keeps this country together in the ultimate analysis.

20.12 hrs.

The Lok Sabha adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Thursday, August 6, 1974; SraVana 17, 1896 (Saka).