

SHRI T. BASHEER : As the hon. Minister has stated, a committee has visited Kerala and they in their report, to my knowledge, have said that Kerala is a suitable place for locating an atomic plant. The name of the place is Bhootha-thankettu. So I would like to know when a decision in this regard is going to be taken ?

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL : I have already said that taking the decision depends on the availability of funds also. Simply saying that we are going to have a nuclear power plant at a particular place is not going to help unless we have the funds to have the power-plant there. So, Sir, it is not proper for me to give any time-limit or time frame within which the decision will be taken and we would have this plant there.

Forest land in Kerala

*702. **SHRI VAKKOM PURUSHOTHAMAN :** Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) the total area of forest left in Kerala without clear felling; and

(b) the area of forest land which is now in the adverse possession of farmers in Kerala ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT, ATOMIC ENERGY, ELECTRONICS AND SPACE (SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL) : (a) The total area of forests left in Kerala without being clear-felled is 7870 square kilometres.

(b) An estimated area of 20805 hectares of Reserve Forest land is in the adverse possession of farmers in Kerala.

SHRI VAKKOM PURUSHOTHAMAN : Sir, I understand that the Kerala Government have taken a policy decision that the forest lands in the adverse possession of the encroachers before 1-1-1977 will be assigned to them. I would like to know whether the Government of Kerala have approached the Government

of India for permission for the same and if so whether permission has been given.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL : In fact, the joint inspection has to be done by the Revenue Department and the Forest Department. They have already inspected the land and they are assessing as to how much land is adversely possessed by the private persons. I think about 16,000 hectares of land are already admeasured and assessed as to find out whether it is adversely possessed or it is in the possession of the Government.

SHRI VAKKOM PURUSHOTHAMAN : I am extremely sorry to say that the answer to part (b) of my question, that is, only 20,805 hectares of Reserve Forest land is in the adverse possession of farmers in Kerala is not satisfactory. In one taluq, that is, in Udumbanchola taluk alone, in Idukki, more than one lakh acres of forest land is in adverse possession of agriculturists for a long time and since the Government of Kerala has taken a decision to assign the land to the encroachers before 1-1-1977, I would like to know from the hon. Minister the area encroached upon by the people before 1-1-1977 and the area under encroachment after 1-1-1977 and whether the Government has taken any steps to vocate those encroachers, that is, the latter category of people, who have occupied the land after 1-1-1977.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL : The area which has been allowed to be cultivated by the private persons is in the vicinity of 8,000 hectares and the remaining area is not given to the private persons. The report which we got from the Kerala Government is the basis for the answer given to your question.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN : Sir, protection of forest is very important but the answer given by the hon. Minister is not in conformity with the facts because more than 20,000 hectares of land are under the possession of the farming. Sir, when I visited Idukki district, I went to one of the towns and I saw the buildings constructed there were more than 20 or 25 years old and those people told me that that town itself was a forest area as per your

record. I have found that a number of such areas where people are inhabited for the last 20 or 25 years are recorded as forests. It is these forests you are to protect. How can we protect these forests? - Therefore, what is most important is the actual demarcation of forests land actually occupied. This has not been done. It is not correct that only 20000 hectares of forest land is under occupation of farmers; it is much more than that. I would like to know from the Minister whether he would initiate steps to demarcate the real forest land and also assess the extent of acreage under the possession of the farmers for a long time, and to assign them to the farmers

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL : The problems relating to the demarcation, preservation and conservation are generally looked after by the State Governments. We give them the help and technical assistance as also guidance. The laws which are in existence have to be implemented by them. The information which I am giving to this august House is based on the information which has been provided to us by the State Government. Whether much more land than what is stated in the reply is adversely possessed or not, we have to verify it, but the basis is information given by the State Government.

We are trying to find out as to how we can conserve the forests and at the same time, we are also trying to see that those who are having land in their possession and are dependent entirely on that land are not disturbed. These are the two things which have to be balanced. That is why a date has been fixed; before 1-1-1977 if anybody was in possession of the land, he would be allowed to continue in the possession of the land, but after that date, if he was not in possession of the land on 1-1-1977, then that land will be taken out of his possession and it will be given to the Forest Department.

SHRI SURESH KURUP : I hope the Minister would take note of the information we members give. In spite of the Forest Conservation Act, systematic encroachment has been taking place in Kerala.

MR. SPEAKER : Is it their speciality ?

SHRI SURESH KURUP : Yes, encroachment still takes place and it is a continuous process...

(Interruptions)

At the initiative of the Prime Minister, the Silent Valley was declared as a national park. But at the time of construction of the hydro-electric project, approach roads were built to that forest. Even after this Silent Valley has been declared as a national park, approach road from Agali to project site is still open. Encroachers get into the forest areas and cut the good old trees and go away. That is what is happening in Kerala. I would like to know whether it has come to the notice of the Minister and what action the Government propose to take regarding the encroachment of the forest land.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL : The importance of preservation and protecting the forests is very clearly understood at the national level. The hon. Prime Minister has written to all the Chief Ministers saying that they should take steps to see that the forests are preserved and no encroachment is allowed on any land. The forest land becoming deforested has actually come down. There was a time when 1.5 lakh hectares of land was used for non forest purposes; now it has come down to 60 to 65 thousand hectares of land. Because of the persuasion of the Central Government, the State Governments are taking some steps and they are trying to preserve the land.

As far as Kerala State is concerned, the rate of turning the forests land into non-forest land is little less than in other States.

SHRI CHANDRA PRATAP NARAIN SINGH : SIR...

MR. SPEAKER : Does your question happen to relate to Kerala ?

SHRI CHANDRA PRATAP NARAIN SINGH : Yes, it is an all-India and also a Kerala question.

The hon. Minister has stated that 8,000 hectares are in the adverse possession of the farmers. According to the information supplied by the National-Remote Sensing Agency, which had been forwarded to all the Members of Parliament on 28 August 1985 by the hon. Minister himself, at the behest of the hon. Prime Minister, it is to be noted that of the reductions, 1180 sq. Km. of closed forest have been completely deforested. The Total forest area has been reduced by 18.74 per cent in the seven year period, i.e. during 1975-82. This information pertains to all India. Now, will the Minister let us know what the percentage in Kerala is? Secondly, does he go by the figures supplied by the State Government or the figures of his own Department?

MR. SPEAKER : Whichever suits !

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL : In 1972-75, the forest land in Kerala was 0.86 million hectares. In 1980-82, the forest land was reduced to 0.74 million hectares. Now the estimated reduction is 0.12 million hectares. These are the figures relating to Kerala. As far as the figures relating to other areas are concerned, in 1972-75, the forest area was 55.52 million hectares. In 1980-82, it was reduced to 46.35 million hectares. The estimated reduction was 9.17 million hectares. This reduction is about 10 per cent of the forest in ten years time.

SHRI CHANDRA PRATAP NARAIN SINGH : Then the information supplied to us is wrong. In this, it is about 17.4 per cent. Just now you have said 10 per cent.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL : I am giving the information about Kerala. You are asking about the information as far as the entire country is concerned. Also, I did not say that only 8000 hectares of land is in adverse possession. I said 20,000 hectares.

SHRI CHANDRA PRATAP NARAIN SINGH : I would like to know whether the information that is supplied just now is correct or the one that was supplied in 1985 was correct. Or are both correct?

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL : I would not like to put it that way. The information which is given by the Forest Department is a little different from the information that is given by the Remote Sensing Department. There is a difference of opinion. According to the information collected by using remote sensing technology, the forest cover is a little less than the forest cover which is said to be there according to the Forest Department. When the imagery is taken from above, only the green areas are covered. There are so many difficulties. To tally the figures of the Remote Sensing Department with the figures of the Forests Departments we shall have to understand the difficulties in between. If you have any difficulty, I can explain to you outside the House.

SHRI CHANDRA PRATAP NARAIN SINGH : That is what exactly I am saying. Information which is given by your Scientific Department and the information collected through old methods, i.e. with the help of old revenue records, between these two, which is correct?

New technology for dental health care

*704. SHRIMATI MADHUREE SINGH : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether technological advances in dental health care, equipment and materials, metal dental plates, making loose teeth firm and healthy have been developed by the Army Dental Corps;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) how common man will derive benefits in hospitals from the new technology and materials?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARUN SINGH) : (a) to (c) Materials for casting metal crowns and bridges, for providing support to teeth and dentures and for the regrowth of bone around loose teeth have been developed indigenously by the Army Dental Corps. The products are under trial. Further,