

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER : You get yourself satisfied.

(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER : It is not a debate.

SHRI Z. R. ANSARI : I quite appreciate the suggestion made by the hon. member.

MR. SPEAKER : You send a man there and find out. That is all.

SHRI MAHENDRA SINGH : Thank you Sir.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI MOHANBHAI PATEL : The hon. Prime Minister is here and I would like to bring to his kind notice this important matter. Forests are very useful to the country and there is no doubt about that. But irrigation dams are more useful to the nation. Many useful proposals from the State Government to construct dams are pending with the Central Government and due to disagreement by the Forest Department, these useful proposals could not be taken up. If these dams are constructed, thousands of hectares of land could be irrigated. So it is necessary to rethink about these long-pending proposals. In my constituency, for instance, there are two proposals pending for the last 20 years.....

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI PRATAP BHANU SHARMA : Sir, let us have an Half-an-Hour Discussion on this. There are hundreds of projects lying like this.

MR. SPEAKER : We have talked about it. What more can we do? Mohanbhaiji, you put the question.

SHRI MOHANBHAI PATEL : I request the hon. Prime Minister to take into consideration these very useful proposals and also to explain his views on this issue

which is of national importance. In Saurashtra, there is scarcity of drinking water also and these dams will be very useful, if constructed.

MR. SPEAKER : The request will be given due consideration.

SHRI Z. R. ANSARI : This particular question is regarding one project. I would like to state that not only for this project, but for all those projects, when the Committee takes a decision and recommends certain things either for rejection or for giving clearance, all the facts are taken into account as to what benefits would be derived by the completion of that project and as to what sacrifices we have to make. In this particular project, the benefits that we may derive are very low in comparison to the sacrifices that we have to make.

SHRI HAROOBHAI MIHTA : There are certain projects where there does arise an unavoidable competition between the ecological requirement and the economic development. As for example, in Gujarat, many sensitive works are suffering for want of clearance from the Forest Department. Will the hon. Minister consider to take a little more elastic approach where the question of economic relief comes unavoidably with the ecological requirement?

SHRI Z. R. ANSARI : As a matter of fact, there is no conflict between the two. The economic development is a must. But, the economic development should not be such so that it may spoil the whole ecology of the country, otherwise it is very difficult to live in this country. Because of this degradation of forests, droughts, floods and all sorts of things just happen which bring more losses to our country, than the benefits by these so-called economic development programmes.

#### Allocation of Funds to Karnataka for Wasteland Development

\*251. SHRI V. S. KRISHNA IYER : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether any allocation of funds has been made for the Karnataka State for wasteland development ; and

(b) if not, whether Government propose to consider making allocation of funds for this purpose in the context of the acute scarcity of funds faced by Karnataka for the fourth year in succession ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI): (a) Rs. 43 crores have been allocated for social forestry in the Seventh Plan for Karnataka State which includes afforestation on wastelands.

Rs. 100 lakhs have been allocated to Karnataka in the Central forestry sector under the centrally sponsored scheme viz. Social Forestry including Rural Fuelwood Plantation. Besides, funds to the tune of Rs. 9.30 crores have been allocated under externally aided Social Forestry project in 1985-86. Funds were also made available to Karnataka under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes of the Rural Development Department, viz., the National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) and Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP), utilising which also afforestation is to be undertaken,

(b) The question does not arise.

SHRI V. S. KRISHNA IYER : Sir, the wasteland available in Karnataka is about 25 lakh hectares. The Karnataka Government has set the ball rolling to implement the guidelines given by the National Development Council. The Karnataka Government had already sent this proposal to the Central Government for clearance. May I know from the Government, whether the NDC has given clearance for the development of 121/2 lakh hectares of wasteland ?

SHRI Z. R. ANSARI : I do not follow the question. May I ask him again ?

SHRI V. S. KRISHNA IYER : Sir, 25 lakh hectares of wasteland is available in Karnataka and out of that the Government of Karnataka has sent a proposal for the

development of 121/2 lakh hectares. I would like to know from the Government, whether the National Development Council has given its clearance for this project ?

SHRI Z. R. ANSARI : Sir, the project is under consideration of the Government.

SHRI V. S. KRISHNA IYER : For the year 1986-87, the Government of Karnataka made it as peoples, movement. They want to develop 1,78,000 acres of waste land and they have asked the Government of India for a special assistance of Rs. 85 crores, in addition to what is available in the Plan. In view of the prevailing drought conditions in Karnataka, will the Government consider favourably the request of the Karnataka Government ?

SHRI Z. R. ANSARI : As far as the special grant for drought is concerned, this is a subject matter of the Ministry of Agriculture. We are not concerned with that. As far as the allocation of funds for social forestry and the share of the Central Government is concerned, I have given the figures. As far as this particular project is concerned, they have sent a request for a special grant. The funds are actually available under NREP and RLEGP. As soon as they utilise those funds from those particular schemes, if there is a paucity and when a request will come, certainly we will look into it.

SHRI K. S. RAO : The total area of land under cultivation is said to be 140 million hectares, whereas the wasteland is said to be 170 million hectares of land in the country. Instead of breaking our heads for finding resources for our plan, if Government were to think in terms of giving this land to the poor people in the area, that itself can generate thousands of crores per annum. Will the Minister consider without loss of time, distributing this wasteland to the local poor, and give some finance to them ?

SHRI Z. R. ANSARI : I have already told this hon. House that we are making all efforts to involve as many people in this programme of social forestry and wasteland development as possible, in this particular

area. For that, pattas and other things have also been taken into account. Just distributing land and providing funds will not create an atmosphere. By distributing land and giving money, forests will not come up. A movement has to be launched, and we are all for that—viz. that it should be treated as a people's movement.

MR. SPEAKER : Question 252 Dr. T. Kalpana Devi. Absent. Now Question 253—Mr. Mullappally Ramachandran.

**Allocation to Kerala for social forestry**

\*253. SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) the quantum of funds allotted to the State of Kerala by the Union Government for social forestry schemes during the year 1984-85 ;

(b) whether funds have been made available to the State of Kerala from any other national or international source for the above purpose ; and

(c) whether the Union Government have monitored or called for reports on the utilisation of the said funds ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI) : (a) An amount of Rs. 152.53 lakhs was released as grant by the Central Government to Kerala State during 1984-85 for the centrally sponsored scheme 'Social Forestry' including Rural Fuelwood Plantations'. In addition, Central assistance at a minimum of 10% of NREP allocations, amounting to Rs. 212.00 lakhs was earmarked during the year for the social forestry programme.

(b) A Social Forestry Project is being implemented from 1984-85 with World Bank assistance. Under this, Kerala State will be eligible to get from Government of India additional Plan assistance of about Rs. 26 crores.

(c) The Central Government have called for reports on the utilisation of these funds.

**SHRI MULLAPPALLY**

RAMACHANDRAN : The State of Kerala is blessed with luxuriant forests containing rare species of animals and birds. Our beloved Prime Minister, when he was visiting the Silent Valley was fully convinced of the beauty of our forests. Unfortunately, forests in Kerala are being depleted day by day, for one reason or the other. On the one hand, Government of India is trying its level best to promote afforestation on a larger scale. On the other hand, the very philosophy of afforestation is being diluted by the same Central Government by indiscriminately granting exemptions from the Forest Conservation Act of 1980. These exemptions are given, as I understand it, as a result of undue influence over certain officials at the Centre. Moreover, according to the Forest Minister of Kerala, 24 exemptions have been granted by the Central Government recently. And these forests lands are being used for non-forest purposes in Kerala.

May I know from the hon. Minister how does the Government intend to compromise between the philosophy of afforestation and also of dilution of the policy of afforestation of our country ?

SHRI Z. R. ANSARI : There is no question of diluting the policy of forests conservation. The guidelines which have been given by our Prime Minister are quite clear, viz. that while considering projects for clearance from the forest angle, we have to see that the benefit which we derive from a particular project is so vital and the loss which we have to suffer is very minimal. The areas which have got some special variety of forests are not to be disturbed. The eco-system should not be disturbed. We are taking every step, and our forest policy is forest conservation, and not forest degradation, for the sake of any project.

MR. SPEAKER : The Question Hour is over.