

the Arabian sea to the extent of fifty per cent at present? Instead of the waters being wasted, while considering the development of Western Ghats will he consider the question of diverting the water to neighbouring States so that it may be properly utilised?

SHRI MORARJI DESAI: This is being considered. As a matter of fact, we are considering the harnessing of all the waters available in India.

SHRI A. C. GEORGE: Nearly 300 miles of the southern tip of western ghats is on the eastern border of Kerala and it is said that nearly Rs. 25 crores is set apart as part of the programme for Western Ghats Development. In view of the importance of the hill highway which forms part of the Western Ghats Development, will the hon. Prime Minister assure the House that a sizeable portion of the amount of Rs. 25 crores will be set apart for the development of the hill highway in the Kerala State?

SHRI MORARJI DESAI: I cannot make another special area in a special area.

Development Projects for North Bengal

*450. **SHRI K. B. CHETTRI:** Will the Minister of PLANNING be pleased to state:

(a) names of different projects cleared and to be cleared by Government for the development of North Bengal;

(b) whether Government of West Bengal has submitted any scheme for the development of North Bengal; and

(c) if so, main features thereof?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI MORARJI DESAI): (a) to (c). The Planning Commission approves outlays for various heads of development for the State as a whole. Allocations for individual projects or areas are

made by the State Government. No project specifically for the development of North Bengal has been referred to or is pending with the Commission. The States' Five Year Plan contains substantial provisions for investment in North Bengal, including the development of villages, roads, rural markets, cold storages, milk production, traffic improvement schemes and industrial infrastructure. In addition to the normal Plan programmes for different sectors, a sum of Rs. 1 crore has been provided in 1977-78 for special schemes for the improvement of drainage and communications and the development of growth centres.

SHRI K. B. CHETTRI: North Bengal has been neglected in every respect. There is shortage of power creating difficulties for tea industry and other industries. There is the Ramam Hydro Project and if this is taken up the power shortage will be made good. May I know whether you are going to take up the project in the current year? What is the total expenditure and by which time this will be completed?

SHRI MORARJI DESAI: This is for the State Government to say, not for me.

SHRI K. B. CHETTRI: In North Bengal there are backward places like Naxalbari-Phasidewa and Chopra-Islampur. There is no industry there. There was a proposal of the Government to set up a paper mill. I would like to know whether Government is considering to set up a paper mill there and if so what are the salient features.

SHRI MORARJI DESAI: This again has to be proposed by the State Government as I said. I do not know of any paper plant just now. I will certainly find it out.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA: When Dr. K. L. Rao was the Minister for Irrigation and Power, he made a statement—not once but on several occasions, on

the floor of the House stating that a power Plant will be set up in some part of North Bengal—nearabout West Bengal—Dalkola—which will cover the necessity of power supply to North Bengal and North Bihar.

I want to know from the Prime Minister what has happened to that announced power plant at Dalkola.

SHRI MORARJI DESAI: I do not know much about this particular power plant. As I said I will have to find out. The information is not with me.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA: This may lead to the development of North Bengal—not North Bihar.

SHRI JOYTIRMOY BOSU: Sir, in view of the fact that North Bengal's production of tea and jute is contributing substantially to the central exchequer in the shape of foreign exchange, we want the flow to remain uninterrupted. Will the Prime Minister kindly consider—as to what they are going to do with regard to the master plan covering Teesta so as to stop flooding of water due to siltation of river?

SHRI MORARJI DESAI: Master Plan is the concern of the State.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: Teesta Plan is for North Bengal.

SHRI MORARJI DESAI: That must be in the State Plan. It cannot be in the Central Plan. As I said, if the State does it, we will accept it. Let them say that they will have it in the State Plan. I cannot suggest any plan only for North Bengal. More than that, there 40 per cent of the people are scheduled castes and tribals. Therefore, it is even more necessary to pay attention to it. I have no doubt about it and, if the State Government sends a Plan for that as part of their Plan, we will certainly be helpful.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: The question should actually be elaborated

on this issue. I want to know whether the Central Government will consider this issue as a very special issue in view of what has been stated in the floor of the House right now?

MR. SPEAKER: He has already answered that.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: May I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether in view of the development of North Bengal being of strategic importance, he will consider the feasibility and desirability of studying some special project under the Central Plan to meet the growing requirements of that area in addition to the State Plans in this behalf?

SHRI MORARJI DESAI: If that is going to help this area and if it is also in the national interest, Government will certainly consider it.

SHRI JOYTIRMOY BOSU: This should be in addition to the State Project.

SHRI MORARJI DESAI: I cannot say that. If it is an additional project, then I will have to find funds for that.

Production of Khadi

*451. SHRI R. V. SWAMINATHAN: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to step up the production of Khadi in the country during the current financial year;

(b) whether Government are also proposing to set up more Khadi units in the country;

(c) if so, the total amount allocated for the development and production of the Khadi for the current year; and

(d) whether Government are also considering to reduce the price of Khadi?