

scheme we have formulated. If we give land to the people from the general forests, then forests will be no more.

[English]

SHRI MUKUL WASNIK: May I know from the hon. Minister whether it is a fact that the Wasteland Development Board is empowered to take forest land for the purpose of afforestation and if so, the area of forest land transferred to the Wasteland Development Board for the purpose of afforestation? Is it also a fact that, because of the Government rules and regulations, the forest land is not transferred to the Wasteland Development Board in time and this has created a lot of hurdles in the proper implementation of the programme of the Wasteland Development Board and if so, the remedies which the Government suggest?

[Translation]

SHRI BHAJAN LAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is not much difference in the duties of the Wasteland Board and the Forest Department. Both are doing identical jobs. The Prime Minister has set up a separate institution to see that more and more afforestation is done in the country and forests are saved, from being denuded. Therefore, the trees are being planted on the wasteland or the degraded forest land or where the forest is not dense. Last year trees were planted on 15 lakh 10 thousand hectares of wasteland

SHRI MUKUL WASNIK: Forest land?

SHRI BHAJAN LAL: I am also referring to the forest land. In 1986-87 trees have been planted on 17 lakh and 20 thousand hectares of land. During the current year lower targets had to be fixed due to failure of rains. This year the target of planting trees on 19 lakh hectares of land has been fixed. By doing so the Wasteland Board and the Forest Department are promoting more and more afforestation. If any institution, be it Panchayat or any

State Government, wants to give land for afforestation, the Board or the Forest Department takes that land happily and tries to plant trees on that land.

[English]

Rejuvenation of Ridge Area

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*224. DR. SUDHIR ROY:
SHRI ANANDA PATHAK:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the ridges of Delhi which were once rich in bird and animal life have become extinct;

(b) if so, the reason thereof; and

(c) the steps taken to rejuvenate the ridges of Delhi?

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BHAJAN LAL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Portion of the ridge which is a part of the Gaon Sabhas land of villages Asola, Sahapur and Maindan Garhi have been notified as a Wildlife sanctuary by the Delhi Administration on 9.10.86. Effective protection, in furtherance of this declaration, will enable the flora and the fauna of the sanctuary to rehabilitate themselves and will help in restoring the ecological balance of the area.

[English]

DR SUDHIR ROY (Burdwan): Sir, Delhi ridge forests are a priceless gift of nature. But because of the greedy contractors, excessive cattle grazing and greedy hunters the forests are being denuded rapidly. True, the Delhi Administration notified it as a wildlife sanctuary in August 1986 but I

would like to know from the Hon. Minister whether under National Capital Region Scheme this forest area can be taken over by the Centre and developed as a wildlife sanctuary?

[*Translation*]

SHRI BHAJAN LAL: Mr Speaker, Sir, there is much weight in what the hon. Member has said. This ridge is a part of the Aravali range which starts from Rajasthan and goes upto Haryana via Delhi. Delhi Administration has decided to set up a sanctuary in the ridge area and formalities have been completed in this regard. The Department has already sanctioned the proposal and work will soon start in this regard so that fauna is protected. He has said it rightly that the wild life has not got the protection it should have got. Because of hunting, different species are becoming extinct. The hunters of Delhi hunt the wild animals and birds in Delhi and Haryana. Earlier wild animals were available in forests but now they have reached Delhi also. In this regard I can say that Delhi Administration has done a good work and the Government of India will assist them fully and the wild life will be protected. A very good sanctuary will be set up here. Setting up a sanctuary does not mean that a tourists' complex will be established. If it is converted into a tourists' complex, then purpose of protecting wild life will be defeated.

This is being done in Delhi belatedly. Delhi Administration wanted that motel and complex on the lines of Haryana should be set up here. The tourists' complexes in Haryana have been set up for different purposes and here it is going to be set up for different purpose. In the sanctuary, wild animals should live freely and should get the protection so that different species may survive. The Delhi Administration has started the work with this purpose and it has made significant progress.

MR SPEAKER: Mr Bhajan Lal, now the hunting of human being has started.

(*Interruptions*)

RAO BIRENDER SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the way the question has been asked and permitted also, it shows that you consider Choudhury Bhajan Lal as magician.

[*English*]

The question has been asked in the form to suggest that Choudhury Bhajan Lal can even make the extinct vanished hills regrow! In (a) it has been asked whether the ridges of Delhi which were once rich in bird and animal life have become extinct. And in (c) the question is about the steps taken to rejuvenate the ridges of Delhi. The Hon. Minister has said in reply to part (a) and (b) that the ridges have not vanished and have not become extinct, and therefore the question does not arise about giving reasons for their extinction. I would like to ask, though it is hypothetical - whether, if they had vanished, could he make them grow again?

[*Translation*]

SHRI BHAJAN LAL: Mr Speaker, Sir, Shri Rao is a very senior Member. I cannot say much. He has talked of magic. If I am some sort of a magician, then he is my 'guru'. He is a bigger magician than I and I have learnt magic from him. (*Interruptions*)

MR SPEAKER: Mr Bhajan Lal in Punjabi there is a saying "Guru jinahn de urun chele jaan charrap" which means that there are pupils who excel even their gurus. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI BHAJAN LAL: Mr Speaker Sir, you too have rightly said that those gurus are the real gurus whose pupils excel them. .

(*Interruptions*)

So far as ridge is concerned, it runs along Gurgaon. You are aware that the animals are eaten both by men and animals. Big persons live in Gurgaon and they too consume some of them... (*Interruptions*)