

but at the same time they have to face lot of hardships also because they cannot return back to their homes in the absence of this bridge. That is why hundreds of people from Bolangir and Kalahandi districts are forced to go to Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in search of livelihood. They are forced to leave their home and hearth, their mother, sister, brother and children behind them. Therefore, I would like to submit to the Government through you, that the said bridge should be constructed at the earliest to ameliorate the sufferings of the people of these areas.

[English]

SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE (Jhalawar): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have seen from the newspaper that yesterday the Minister for Environment in a statement in Rajya Sabha said that 1,52,000 hectares of forest land was converted over a period of ten years from 1980 to 1990 and in one year, that is, 1989-90, 1,32,000 hectares of forest land was converted. I bring it to the notice of the House today because the Environment Ministry in particular has been a major block in the development of Rajasthan, particularly in the power sector. The Chief Minister of Rajasthan and the Members from Rajasthan, who are all present here, have brought this to the notice of the House and to the notice of the Prime Minister. If 1,32,000 hectares of land was converted in a year, I would like to ask the Minister why it was converted, how it was converted? And when a coal based thermal power station has been suggested for a particular area or gas based power stations have been suggested for certain areas for the development of the power sector in Rajasthan, why is it that the Environment Ministry time and again brings up excuses to block projects on grounds of environment?

I am sure that all Members of the House who belong to Rajasthan and who are sitting over here today, will join me in my appeal to the Prime Minister, who is present here today, that Rajasthan is suffering from acute power shortage and the Ministry of Environ-

ment cannot condone the blockage of projects, as it has been to do over the last ten years on grounds of disturbance of environment, and it should stand by the developmental projects not only in Rajasthan but also in other States. I would request the Prime Minister to give an assurance to us in the House that of the development of power sector in Rajasthan, he will do his very best to help us.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH (Chittorgarh): Mr. Speaker, Sir, an appeal was made by my capable friend, who comes from my neighboring constituency in Rajasthan, that all the Members of Parliament from Rajasthan should join her. Therefore, I wholeheartedly support her... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Your cause is just. All Members from all the States will join you.

[Translation]

SHRI BUTA SINGH (Jalore): Mr. Speaker, Sir, you will be glad to know that today morning a group of S.C., S.T. Members of Parliament marched from the statue of Baba Saheb Ambedkar to Rashtrapati Bhawan and submitted a memorandum to the President in which attention has been drawn towards increasing atrocities on the Harijans. In the memorandum, we mentioned atrocities concerning distribution of land, usurpation of land, exploitation by the moneylenders in the name of debt, problem related to minimum wages and bonded labourers, atrocities regarding prevention of their entry in the temple due to untouchability, atrocities connected with no permitting S.Cs and S.Ts to draw water from wells or the police atrocities. About all these issues we submitted a detailed memorandum to the President and then we came back. After coming back I met the Prime Minister and I am very happy to know that the Prime Minister agreed to discuss these issues with us. He has given assurance that the orders and directions in this regard would be issued by the Government.