

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.