

the Central Government for special assistance for exploiting the forest wealth in the Agency areas of Godavari, Visakapatnam and Srikakulam District;

(b) if so, the nature of the assistance asked for; and

(c) the decision taken by Government in the matter?

The Minister of Agriculture (Dr. P. S. Deshmukh): (a) No.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.

I may, however, mention that it is understood from the Government of Andhra that at the instance of the Planning Commission, three new schemes were included recently in the First Five Year Plan, and there are two schemes which the Andhra Government is considering; but they do not refer to the Agency area. One scheme relates to the formation of forest roads in Neelamalai costing about Rs. 1.84 lakhs; the second scheme is for forest regeneration costing about Rs. 3.20 lakhs.

Shri Viswanatha Reddy: May I know whether it has been brought to the notice of Government that sometime ago an expert committee appointed by the Andhra Government to go into the question of the development of the forest regions in the Agency areas has reported that these areas are eminently suitable for the development of coffee, rubber and jeranium plantations?

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: I have not seen the scheme. It has not been reported to us;

Shri B. S. Murthy: May I know whether any grants are being given for the development of the backward areas in Andhra, about which the question is put down?

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: There is no question of backwardness; if there are schemes of soil conservation, they would be considered by Government.

FREIGHT ON FISH

*2544. Shri Kajrolkar: Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state whether there is any proposal to reduce the freight charges on fresh fish?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Shahnawaz Khan): No, Sir.

Shri Kajrolkar: Is the hon. Minister aware that the freight on fresh fruit is at quarter parcel rate?

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: Yes, I am aware of that, and I may also inform the Member that even on seeds which are supplied from government seed stores we charge quarter parcel rate.

Shri Kajrolkar: May I know whether in the case of fresh fish packed with ice and saw-dust, by the time the parcel reaches destination, the weight of the parcel is reduced by half? If so, why should not freight be charged on the same level?

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: When fixing the freight on fish, we also take into consideration the amount of ice and saw-dust.

Shri Kajrolkar: Was there any attempt made by the Food Ministry to get the freight reduced by the Railway Ministry?

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: Not that I am aware of.

Shri Ramachandra Reddi: May I know whether the Railway Rates Committee has been consulted about this?

The Deputy Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Alagesan): No.

Shri Kajrolkar: Is the Railway Board considering the feasibility of running a refrigerator van for fruits, vegetables and fresh fish?

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: Not for the present time