

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION (SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH): (a) In the context of Rural Development Programme, the Rural Roads are proposed to be assigned a comparatively higher priority so as to bring villages into the national main-stream. During the five years (1978-83) it is proposed to cover the remaining villages with a population of above 1500 and above with a link road. In addition, about half the number of villages that have a population between 1000 to 1500 will be provided with the link road, the remaining half will be covered in the period (1983-88).

(b): The information is as follows:—

Population size category	The no. of villages remaining to be connected with an all-weather road as on 1-4-1978
(i) 1500 and above	1099
(ii) 500-1500	2835

(c) Yes, Sir. As already stated in reply to part (a) above, it is proposed to cover the remaining villages having a population of 1500 and above with a link road during 1978-83. In addition, about half the number of villages that have a population between 1000 to 1500 will be provided with the link road during 1978-83, the remaining half will be covered in the period (1983-88).

(d) A provision of Rs. 800 crores has been made in the Plan (1978-83). A special Centrally Sponsored Scheme for construction of roads in tribal areas is being started in view of the pressing need for developing these areas; this will supplement the outlay of Rs. 275 crores in the State Sector.

Chatham saw mill, Andaman and Nicobar Islands)

4542. **SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA:** Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION be pleased to state:

(a) the total expenditure incurred in the Chatham Saw Mill, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, during last three years, year-wise;

(b) the total income earned by the said mill during last three years;

(c) the total mandays lost in various sections of the mill, section-wise due to breakdown of machinery state details of such break down; and

(d) the proposal to improve the working of the mill?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION (SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA): (a) The total expenditure incurred in Chatham Saw Mill of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands during the last three years is as follows:—

Year	Total expenditure incurred
	Rs.
1975-76 . . .	94.64 lakhs
1976-77 . . .	75.89 lakhs
1977-78 . . .	78.66 lakhs

(b) The total income earned by Chatham Saw Mill during the last three years including sales of Swan Timber through Andaman Government Timber Depot at Calcutta and Madras is as follows:—

Year	Total income earned
	Rs.
1975-76 . . .	69.43 lakhs
1976-77 . . .	80.98 lakhs
1977-78 . . .	69.63 lakhs

(c) Loss of mandays due to breakdown of machinery in the Mill Section of the Saw mill has been as follows:—

Year			
1975-76	.	.	Nil
1976-77	.	.	1125 mandays
1977-78	.	.	4880 mandays

There has been no loss of mandays in other Sections of the Mill due to breakdown of machinery.

(d): The proposal of the Andaman Administration for replacement of 8-foot Band Saw Mill with a 1.82 M (72") Hearing has been accepted by Government and foreign exchange to the extent of Rs. 13,51,989 for the import of the machinery from U.K. has been released. Government is also considering modernizing the Chatham Saw Mill replenishing the old machinery by modern machinery.

Jute Production

4543. SHRI AHMED M. PATEL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION be pleased to state:

(a) the approximate production of Jute in the country at present;

(b) whether the jute production has declined;

(c) if so, the reasons therefore;

(d) the annual consumption of jute in the country; and

(e) the measures taken by the Government to meet the demand?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION (SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA): (a) to (c). The production of jute during 1977-78 has been placed at 53.4 lakh bales of 180 kgs. each. Jute production is

marked by fluctuations but the overall trend indicates a growth rate of 1.82 per cent per annum between the triennium ended 1970-71 and that ended 1977-78. The production of mesta which supplements jute, has registered a growth rate of 6.2 per cent per annum during the above period. The combined production of jute and mesta in 1977-78 has been 71.18 lakh bales.

(d) The annual consumption of jute and mesta has been estimated at 70 to 71 lakh of bales of 180 kgs. each during 1977-78.

(e) The main effort of the Government is that the entire demand for jute and mesta is met from indigenous production. A comprehensive Centrally Sponsored Scheme of intensive Jute/Mesta District Programme is being implemented in 20 selected districts of 6 major jute/mesta growing States. The strategy adopted relates to demonstration of improved package of practices in rainfed and irrigated areas, motivational campaign for use of essential inputs at recommended doses through larger flow of institutional credit, extension of jute under irrigation, adoption of suitable cropping schedules and provision of improved grading and marketing facilities.

Effect of Bio-Gas Plant on use of Firewood

4544. SHRI RAMACHANDRAN KADANNAPPALLI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that the consumption of about 130 million tonnes of firewood require cutting down a few million trees every year for burning alone; and

(b) whether Government see any prospect of using bio-gas from litter as fuel by giving facilities to the people through Energy Ministry?