

Title: Urged upon the Government to come to the rescue of the tobacco growers and tobacco industry in Karnataka by fixing the crop size and giving licence permit to all the sale-permit holders in the State.

SHRI G. PUTTA SWAMY GOWDA (HASSAN): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I thank you for the opportunity given to me.

This is a matter of urgent public importance to which I draw the immediate attention of the Central Government.

There is a great demand at the national and the international markets for the tobacco grown in Karnataka. The total production of tobacco has been 25 million kilograms per year. The Government has permitted the growers to increase their production up to 40 million kilograms. The demand for the Karnataka tobacco is increasing day by day. Despite our repeated request, the crop size of tobacco has not been fixed till today. The farmers of Karnataka are persistently pleading to fix the tobacco crop size at 50 million kilograms. A final and favourable decision has to be taken in this regard without any further delay.

The Tobacco Board has neglected the Karnataka tobacco growers. There are more than 40,000 tobacco growers in Karnataka. More than three lakh labourers are engaged in tobacco production in the State. The condition of these growers and labourers is pathetic as the tobacco price has come down drastically. Added to this, the persons with sale permits are demanding the licence permit. Our earnest request is that all these sale-permit-holders should be granted licence permit immediately. These are the most urgent and genuine demands of the tobacco growers of Karnataka. The Karnataka tobacco growers' survival depends upon these two demands.

I, therefore, urge upon the Union Government to take immediate measures to fix the tobacco crop size and issue licence permit to all the sale-permit-holders. They want licence permits.

So, I finally urge upon the Union Government that it should come to the rescue of the tobacco growers of Karnataka and give a new life to the tobacco industry in Karnataka. Thank you.