

(v) **Demand for preserving the ecological balance in the Western Ghats**

SHRI RANJIT SINGH GAEKWAD (Baroda) : Sir, the Western Ghats cover an area of approximately 51585 sq. miles spreading over five States geographically situated along the western peninsular side of the country, acting as a buffer for rainfall in the area which is about 520 cms. Due to this, the rain forests with rich flora and fauna are very few.

Due to indiscriminate encroachment and ill-conceived industrial growth this forest and its inhabitants are fast facing extinction. Dr. P. W. Richards, a British botanist has said that if proper care to safeguard these rain forests is not taken, they will all perish in another 30-40 years.

Hydroelectric projects, agricultural and industrial activities and mining work have all been responsible for destruction of the forests, hydroelectric projects being the biggest culprit of them all. Unlike those feeder rivers and streams which get their water from the melting snows of the Himalayas, the rivers and streams from the Western Ghats depend on the rain water which is again dependent on the rain forests. With the destruction of these forests rainfall is dropping rapidly and soil erosion has started causing silting. This in turn has affected the efficiency of the hydroelectrical projects. The Kali hydroelectric project is an excellent example of inefficiency due to silting. The Sharavathi project is another example where even with enough rain due to ecological balances the project is running at loss. I hope, the Government takes a serious view of the matter.

[*Translation*]

(vi) **Need to direct the Rajasthan Government to stop recovery of dues from the Indira Gandhi Canal Project Area**

SHRI BIRBAL (Ganganagar) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to raise a question of urgent public importance in the House.

The construction of Indira Gandhi Canal Project is being undertaken with the

special cooperation and assistance of the Central Government. The water courses have been brick-lined. Besides the estimated expenditure, the administrative expenditure, interest and compound interest work out to be 5 to 6 times the original allocation. The land for the construction of small drains has been acquired from the farmers. These drains have increased the irrigation capacity because of which the State Government will get more revenue. Why should the State Government then charge more from the farmers? The State Government should itself bear the whole expenditure.

There have been several other bunglings in the construction of brick-lined drains for which the farmers are being made to pay. The banks are issuing attachment notices to the farmers. There is great unrest among the farmers because they are being made to pay for the bunglings of the Department. I had also apprised the House of the facts in this regard during the last session. The neighbouring States of Punjab and Haryana have waived the loans of their farmers granted for bricklined water courses. The Rajasthan Government should also be asked to waive the loans. I would request the Central Government to issue immediate instructions to the Rajasthan Government to stop the realisation immediately, so as to provide relief to the farmers. Necessary orders should be issued to the Rajasthan Government to take appropriate action to solve the problems of the farmers.

[*English*]

(vii) **Demand for measures for rapid industrialisation of Kerala**

SHRI K. MOHANDAS (Mukundapuram) : Kerala is a state where Central investment is below the national average. This has held back the development of the state and pushed up unemployment. Kerala is one of the very few States which earn a lot of foreign exchange for the country. A major share of foreign remittances comes from the workers of Kerala who are contributing to the prosperity of the country by their hard work in the Gulf countries. Yet the state has not got its due share of central investment in the industrial sector.