

soon as possible, but not later than two months.

Suitable honorarium, etc...

As I said, the Chairman of the Committee is Shri P.R. Chauhan, former Commissioner, Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan. The other members of the Committee are: Shri Y.P. Puran, Dr. H.C. Khatyal and Shri M.L. Babbar. All of them are educationists and principals.

इस तरह से आप देखेंगे कि हमने इस बारे में पूरा प्रयास किया है और पूरी सावधानी रखने की कोशिश की है कि हमारे बोर्डों की जो परीक्षा पद्धति है, उसकी विश्वासनीयता बनी रहे और लोग इस परीक्षा प्रणाली के परिणामों से संतुष्ट रहें और इसके बारे में किसी प्रकार का कोई संदेह न हो। मैं माननीय सदस्य से यह निवेदन करना चाहता हूँ कि अगर उनके पास कोई भी सुझाव है या शिकायतें हैं तो वे इस कमेटी को भेज दें, कमेटी इस पर पूरा विचार करेगी।

SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN: Sir, in the case of certain State Education Boards, undue delay takes place in some years in regard to declaration of results. As a result of this, students in those States lose the opportunity to appear for certain entrance examinations. Therefore, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether his Ministry would take some steps to have some kind of a co-ordination with the State Boards as well as the Central Boards so that the results are declared almost at the same time.

DR. M.M. JOSHI: Mr. Chairman, Sir, as a matter of fact, in the case of those State Boards whose results are declared a little bit late, but the students have to appear for some entrance examinations, in many States, they are allowed to appear, subject to their qualifying in the examination and obtaining the requisite marks. This system is already there in many States. But if there is any State where the universities which hold entrance examinations do not give this facility to the students of the other Boards, please bring it to my notice. We will ensure that this facility is extended to them.

The COBSE meets occasionally and we discuss such problems and try to ensure that the interests of the student community are not impaired. We take good care to see that the fu-

ture of the students proceeds and progresses well.

श्री ओंकार सिंह लुहाना: माननीय मंत्री महोदय ने जो उत्तर परीक्षा प्रणाली के बारे में दिया है उससे पूरक प्रश्न पैदा होता है कि क्या परीक्षा प्रणाली के साथ-साथ शिक्षा प्रणाली के परिवर्तन पर भी विचार कर रहे हैं

MR. CHAIRMAN: This supplementary does not arise out of this question.

SHRI ASHOK MITRA: Sir, apart from this question of delays in examinations, the other major problem is the non-uniformity in the standards of examination. Some Boards tend to examine the scripts liberally, while others are a little conservative. So, at the time of applying for admission to courses for further studies, we find that some students are discriminated against. This is a problem which is very ticklish, and in a country of our size and dimension it is not always easy to try to reach a uniformity. But I still hope that the Minister would like to suggest some ways to tackle this problem.

DR. M.M. JOSHI: Sir, this problem will be placed before the COBSE, and they will try to coordinate, request, appeal and direct all the State Boards to do it. But, as you know, the State Boards are not under the control of the Government of India. They function autonomously or under the guidance of the respective State Governments. We can only advise them. We shall keep this advise in mind. We will again advise them to look into the interests of the students and see that they are not discriminated because of different attitudes in the marking system. If the hon. Member has any positive suggestions on how to meet this problem, I will welcome them. I assure you that we will place it before the COBSE and see that it is implemented.

Plantation on degraded forest Land

*262. **SHRI KHAGEN DAS :** Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the rubber plantation is not permitted on degraded forest land even for taking up a settlement project for the tribals who are dependent on shifting cultivation;

(b) if so, the rationale behind such a decision;

(c) whether Government recognise that despite its not permitting economically sustainable settlement project for the tribals, shifting cultivation is continuing in the forest areas; and

(d) whether a proposal has been received for allowing such settlement project atleast on degraded forest land so that twin objectives of environment protection as well as tribal welfare could be achieved?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FOREST (SHRI SURESH PRABHU):

(a) to (d) A statement is paid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) Under the provision of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, planting of rubber, tea, coffee and other cash crops comes under the category of non-forest activity. Plantation of such cash crops including rubber can be carried out over degraded forest land only with the prior approval of Central Government under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.

(b) The said provision aims at safeguarding conversion of bio-diversity rich natural forest to mono-culture cash crops.

(c) and (d) Recognising the importance of rehabilitation of shifting cultivation areas and issue of settlement of tribals engaged in this practice, the Ministry has exempted levying of compensatory afforestation in respect of such proposal received under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 from State of Tripura. A proposal for diversion of 1500 hectares of forest land for the purpose of resettling the tribal jhumias through raising rubber plantation in Tripura has been approved on 23.12.1997.

SHRI KHAGEN DAS : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I appreciate the decision of the Government of India to release degraded forest land for rehabilitation of the tribals, the most backward sections among the people of the country. We have been demanding this since long. Numerous strugglers have been organised by the Kisan Sabha and other democratic organisations. I as Revenue Minister of the Govern-

ment of Tripura, Mr. Vinay Choudhry as Revenue Minister and the Revenue Ministers of different States, including Mr. S.R. Bommai, have demanded this several times in 1980 at the Revenue Ministers' Conference. I want to know from the hon. Minister how many States have put forward their proposals to the Central Government for releasing degraded forest land for rehabilitation of tribals and in how many cases the government of India has acceded to the demands of the State Governments.

Number two, in Tripura, there are 55,000 landless Jhumias, and among them 26,000 are hard core. The State Government has sent proposals for releasing 9,000 hectares of degraded forest land, but only 1,500 hectares of land has been released. Will the Minister please let me know when the remaining land will be released for rehabilitation purposes?

SHRI SURESH PRABHU: Sir, under the provisions of the Forest Conservation Act, cultivation of cash crops, particularly like rubber, tea, coffee etc. is not permitted directly unless specific permission is accorded by the Union Government on an application received from the State Government. Such permissions have been granted on a case-to-case basis. It is true that there are 55,000 families which are living on the basis of jhuming cultivation. For the first time the permission was granted. The application was received for conversion of 8,000 hectares of land from forest land to non-forest land for non-forest purposes, for planting of rubber. Though the application was for 8,000 hectares, since it was considered for the first time, the permission was granted for cultivation of 1,500 hectares only on an experimental basis.

The reason why it was not granted uniformly or why a blanket permission is not given is that it is considered from a case-to-case basis because once a forest land is diverted for a cash crop like rubber, it is difficult to retain the biodiversity of the natural forest.

The sufferers are likely to be the same tribals, whose land is being diverted in this fashion. However, it is also true since as much as 55,000 families are supposed to be living

in such form of cultivation. It is therefore, necessary to ensure that they will also have sustainable cultivation like the cash crop in certain areas. It has been found out in various States, particularly after the Rajamani Committee appointed by the Ministry of Environment and Forests and after the report was completed by the administrative Staff College, Hyderabad that such jhooming cultivation prevents a natural growth of forests. Particularly in the case of rubber plantation, there is no under-growth. So, mono-culture is not in the interest of ecology in that region. Since we have granted permission only last year for 1,500 hectares, we are now examining the results. However, in view of the representation that I have received from various Members of Parliament in regard to this question in particular, I have already directed the Forest Reserve Survey of India, Dehra Dun, to conduct a study and find out the ill-effects, if any, that would accrue as a result of this cultivation. As soon as its report is received, we will definitely take action.

Sir, I realise that unless such permission is granted, the sustenance level of the farmers will not increase. We are examining it in great detail.

As far as Tripura is concerned, this was the only request that we received. As far as the North-Eastern States are concerned, Jhooming cultivation is in practice there. We have not received any application for converting the forest land into non-forest purpose to plant rubber. Tripura is the only State from that region from whom we have received such a request. We have received several schemes from the tribals and I would be very happy to supply information on those schemes to the hon. Members. I would also welcome suggestion from the hon. Members in that regard. In fact, during the session itself, I have invited all the Members of Parliament from tribal areas to discuss these issues and to find out other schemes. This meeting is scheduled only two weeks from now. I am sure the hon. Members have received the invitation.

SHRI KHAGEN DAS: Sir, the hon. Member is well aware that Tripura is one of the

most backward States of the North-East region. The State is almost entirely dependent on the Centre's assistance for its development. In this background, I would like to inform the hon. Minister that the State Government has sent a proposal for financial assistance to the tune of Rs. 5.25 crores to the Government of India for the rehabilitation of the tribals - Jhoomias in rubber plantation, tea plantation and coffee plantation on this land. Will the hon. Minister tell us whether the proposal of the State Government has already been considered. If not, when it will be considered and the fund released?

SHRI SURESH PRABHU: Sir, there is an on-going scheme of the Government of India, which rehabilitates tribals, who otherwise are residing in the National Park and Reserve Forest areas. There is a specific fund earmarked for the resettlement of those who move out from there. Right now there is no specific scheme for rehabilitation of tribals, who are otherwise engaged in jhooming cultivation. But, since this is a problem of social and economic nature, we will consider it. This would be one of the points for consideration in the meeting that we are going to have shortly.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Sir, so far as the objective of the Bill to safeguard the conversion of bio-diversity of the natural forests is concerned, there is no dispute. But the question is with regard to the degraded forest land. Sir, whenever the question of utilisation of degraded forest land comes up for the purpose of plantation of cash crop, some sort of *ad hoc* decisions are taken by the Ministry, as has happened in the instance case. Permission has been given to the Tripura Government. Sir, on the basis of the observations made by the hon. Minister, I would like to have this reaction on two points. One, there was a suggestion to suitably amend the Forest Act to take care of the problems of degraded forest land for plantation of the cash crops. Second, I would like to know whether he can provide some sort of broad guidelines, which will help the Central Government to take decisions when these permissions are given on an *ad hoc* basis.

SHRI SURESH PRABHU: Mr. Chairman, Sir, degraded forest land needs to be classified further in two or three types. Sir, in the degraded forest land the root stock is still alive. If it is properly guarded, then, regeneration takes place automatically. That is the most desirable form of forest regeneration because what we really regenerate is natural forest which is very necessary to maintain bio-diversity. But there is also a possibility that some part of degraded forest land can be regenerated partially, but it needs some human intervention and effort. That is the second type of degraded forest land. With regard to the third type of forest land where natural regeneration is not possible. In fact, we have already started working on this land for the last two months to find out and classify the entire forest land into three parts. We will be holding a meeting of the Forest Ministers and this point will be kept for their consideration. The Forest Survey of India has also been asked to identify and reclassify the land on this basis. The third category of land which has no potential for regeneration will certainly be considered for the purpose that the hon. Member has mentioned. I think that would be the most logical thing to do because here we are really not damaging the ecology and at the same time we are making the best use of land which is otherwise lying idle. Sir, the point is worth considering.

Sir, in addition to the forest land which has been recorded as forest land in the records of the Government, there is a large wasteland which is available within the country. This wasteland can also be exploited for the purpose of cash crops. So, I think we have to really take a decision very carefully to ensure that once we divert the forest land to non-forest purposes, particularly, cash crops, it will be very, very difficult to redirect that land to forest purposes. We will be losing forest cover permanently which needs to be kept in mind while considering any such proposal.

Sir, with regard to the observation made by the hon. Member that in an *ad hoc* way such proposals are considered, I would like to inform the hon. Member that there are well laid down procedures under the Forest Conservation and Preservation Act. There is a

Forest Advisory Committee. It meets under the chairmanship of the Inspector General of Forests. It has some officials from the Ministry as members. Of course, the Secretary is also there. There are three non-Governmental organisations which are represented in this Committee. Two environmentalists are also included in this Committee. This Committee takes decision on a case-to-case basis. However, if the hon. Member feels that there are any instances in which *ad hoc* decisions have been taken, he can bring the same to the notice of the Ministry. I can assure him that we will take action.

SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Mr. Chairman, Sir, it can be seen from the answer of the Minister that there is no definite clear-cut policy as to how to utilise the degraded forest land in this country. I would like to know from the Minister: Is there a definite policy with the Government of India to deal with degraded forests? If it is so, how much land in India can be called as degraded forests? Is he having State-wise records for it? Which States are using this degraded forest land for re-forestation and to what extent have they been successful?

SHRI SURESH PRABHU: Sir, I tend to disagree with the observation of the hon. Member that the Government does not have a specific plan.

SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: I said, about policy, not plan.

SHRI SURESH PRABHU: Sir, the observation of the hon. Member stems from non-availability of information from the Ministry. Perhaps it has not been circulated to the hon. Member. The degraded forest land is under the Forest Conservation Act. It can be used only for forest purposes. This Act has been enacted by this honourable House and I am duty-bound to implement this Act. It has been specified in that Act that degraded forest land should be used for forest purposes except in specific cases which have been diverted for non-forest purposes. The information on the extent of degraded forest land is available with the Ministry. Since it is not part of the original question, I will not be able to supply this

information to the hon. Member right now. However, I will be able to pass on this information to the hon. Member along with the report of the Forest Survey of India, 1997 which is published from year to year. I will be very happy to supply this copy to the hon. Member.

*263. [The questioner (Shri Raj Nath Singh) was absent. For Answer vide Col. 23 infra.]

*264. [The questioner (Shri Bangaru Laxman) was absent. For Answer vide Col. 24 infra]

*265. [The questioner (Shri Vayalar Ravi) was absent. For Answer vide col. 25 infra.]

Amendments in the Rules of Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan

*266. SHRI GOVINDRAM MIRI:
SHRI RAGHAVJI:†

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Rules 3(b) and 19(9), respectively, of the Memorandum of Association and Rules of the Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan have since been amended/scrapped;

(b) if so, the details of the meeting of the KVS and its Board of Governors when/wherein such a decision had been arrived at; and

(c) the need and justification therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the table of the Sabha.

(a) to (c) A decision was taken by the Board of Governors of Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS) in their meeting held on 6th September, 1993, to delete Rule 3(b) and amend Rule 19(9) of the Memorandum of Association and Rules of the Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan. This decision was subsequently approved by the General Body of the KVS in its meeting held on 9th February, 1994.

Rule 3(b) provided for the Government of India to appoint any person or persons to be Member or Members of the Sangathan. Under this provision, any number of nominations could be made and therefore it was an opened

provision. The Board of Governors in its meeting on 6th September, 1993, while considering a proposal from the Parliamentary Committee on the Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes on the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Education, to provide nomination of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes on the General Body of the Sangathan and its Board of Governors, resolved to delete Rule 3(b) and suitably amend Rule 3(a) in order to provide for nominations of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the General Body of the Sangathan. Deletion of Rule 3(b) has done away with the open ended nature of the provisions for nominations, thereby preventing the Sangathan from being unwieldy.

Rule 19(9) which provided for nomination of one or more members of the Sangathan by Government of India in the Board of Governors was amended to ensure that such nominations would include at least one member from Scheduled Castes and one from Scheduled Tribes community.

श्री राघवजी: सभापति जी, माननीय मंत्री जी ने यह बताया है कि संशोधन करके जो नामांकित सदस्य होते थे उन सदस्यों को हटा दिया गया है। मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या यह बोर्ड ऑफ गवर्नेस की मीटिंग में तय हुआ था कि संगठन में कर्मचारियों का प्रतिनिधित्व होगा और प्रतिनिधित्व देने के लिए वह कण्डिका जोड़ी गई थी जिसमें कि वे नामांकित किए जा सकते हैं? मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या अध्यापकों को उनके संगठन में कोई उपयोगिता नहीं समझी गई? क्या उसका वैल्यूएशन किया गया और क्या उसके बाद वह कलेंज हटाई गई?

श्री मुरली मनोहर जोशी: सभापति जी, इस संगठन के बारे में हमारे ह्यूमन रिसोर्सेस डेवलपमेंट की पार्लियामेंट्री स्टैंडिंग कमिटी ने 1993 में एक सिफारिश की थी कि इस बोर्ड में एक शैड्यूल्ड कास्ट और एक शैड्यूल्ड ट्राइब्स का सदस्य होना अनिवार्य है। इस आलेख में बोर्ड की बैठक हुई और उस बैठक में, जहां अध्यापकों के प्रतिनिधि भी उपस्थित थे, यह निर्णय लिया गया कि इस संगठन के नियमों में संशोधन कर दिया जाए। मैं माननीय सदस्य को यह बताना चाहता हूँ कि ये सभी अध्यापक सदस्य भी जो उसके सदस्य थे वह भी उस समय मीटिंग

† The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Raghavji.