

**"Evaluation of the green belts programme"**

138. PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state;

(a) what percentage of land has been covered under social forestry programmes in the country;

(b) whether there has been an evaluation of the green belts programme in the country;

(c) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(d) if not, what steps are likely to be taken to enlarge the scope of green belts programme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SMT. MANEKA GANDHI): (a) In the Sixth Plan period (1980-85) about 4.65 million hectares of area was covered under the Afforestation Programme, including Social Forestry. During the first four years of the Seventh Plan, i.e. 1985-86 to 1988-89, 7.14 million hectares have been covered. The expected area coverage during the Seventh Plan period (1985-90) is about 9.0 million hectares.

(b) and (c) Under the Social Forestry Programme, activities for developing green belts in and around urban areas are already being implemented by the state level agencies. A country-wide evaluation of these activities has not been carried out so far.

(d) The Social Forestry Programme has been enlarged substantially during the Seventh Plan period and this trend is expected to continue.

**Reconsideration of setting up of atomic power stations in the country**

139. PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state;

(a) whether there is a proposal for reconsideration with regard to setting up of atomic power stations in view of the persistent agitation by the

people, environmentalists and others about the hazards involved in it;

(b) if so, what alternative plans are envisaged for meeting the power needs in the country; and

(c) if the answer to part (a) above be in the negative what definite steps would be taken to meet the objection of the environmentalists and others?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (PROF. M. G. K. MENON): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Nuclear Power Plants are environmentally benign during normal operations. Adequate engineered safety features are provided to minimise to a very low level the risk of a serious accident, and also mitigate the consequences in the unlikely event of an occurrence. The steps taken towards safety and environmental protection include the following:

(i) Continuous review and upgradation of safety features to internationally accepted levels to achieve improved levels of safety.

(ii) Obtaining clearances on safety and environmental questions from the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) and Ministry of Environment and Forests.

(iii) Review of safety aspects by the AERB at all stages in setting up the Plants and their operation and complying with the limits stipulated by AERB.

(iv) As a matter of abundant caution working out the off-site emergency plans for all nuclear power plants and their review by State/National Emergency Response Committees set up by the Government.

(v) Intensifying efforts on development of technology for ultimate disposal of the relatively small quan-