

Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir have taken the following measures to reduce felling of green trees in the Himalayan forests:

(i) Uttar Pradesh—Felling of green trees have been stopped above 1000 metres elevation in hilly areas.

(ii) Himachal Pradesh—No commercial green fellings are being carried out.

(iii) Jammu and Kashmir—Felling of green trees has been reduced, especially in hilly areas and places of tourist interest.

(b) The following directives were issued in June, 1964 to the States in the Himalayan Region;

(i) In areas outside Reserved Forests complete ban on green and commercial fellings be imposed till the State Government have identified the sensitive areas, and Management Plans/Schemes have been compiled for their scientific management on priority basis.

(ii) In Reserved Forests areas also, moratorium on green and commercial fellings should be imposed till a Committee constituted by State Government with representatives of the Central Government has examined and reviewed all Working Plans to identify sensitive areas and taken measures for their protection.

(iii) Environmental Conservation should be given due importance while framing the prescriptions of these Management Plans, (Working Plans).

(iv) The ban or moratorium should, however, be subject to maintenance of customary rights of the people, especially the poor with regard to supply of fuelwood for bonafide domestic use.

(c) The National Forest Policy, 1988 states that in the hills and in mountainous regions, the aim should

be to maintain two-thirds of the area under such cover in order to prevent erosion and land degradation and to ensure the stability of the fragile eco-system.

Construction of a Tunnel through Zojila Pass in J. and K.

58. SHRI SHABBIR AHMED SALARIA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir remains cut off for eight months in a year from the rest of the State due to heavy snowfall on the Zojila pass which poses a serious danger to the defence of that region, besides causing grave hardships to the people of that region; and

(b) if so, whether Government propose to construct a tunnel in the manner in which a tunnel connecting Ladakh with Himachal Pradesh is being constructed?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir. Adequate stocking of essential goods and other measures are taken to reduce the hardship to the people of that region in the winter season.

(b) No, Sir.

Waste Land in the Country

59. SHRI SHABBIR AHMED SALARIA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total area of the wasteland in our country, statewise, as per the surveys conducted recently;

(b) whether any plan has been finalised for afforestation of waste land in the country; and

(c) if no plan has been formulated, what are the reasons; therefore; and