

श्री शिव चन्द्र झा]

घटना जो कोटा के पास बरनाल मे हुई यह एक निन्दनीय बात है। मैं इस सदन के जरिये, और आपके जरिये मांग करूंगा कि इसकी पूरी जांच हो, उच्चस्तरीय जांच हो या जुडिशियल इन्क्वायरी जिसे कहते है वह तुरन्त बैठाई जाए ताकि यह पता चल सके कि गोली क्यों चलाई गई ? क्यों गोली से विद्यार्थियों की जानें गई ।

गृह मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री धनिक लाल मंडल) : जुडिशियल इन्क्वायरी बैठा दी गई है ।

श्री शिव चन्द्र झा : दूसरी बात जो मैं सरकार से कहना चाहता हूं वह यह है कि जिन विद्यार्थियों की जानें गई उनके परिवार को मुआवजा देना कोई सब्स्टीट्यूट नहीं है जान के लिये, फिर भी रेलवे प्रशासन उस परिवार को जो अपने नौजवान से महत्त्व हो गया है उचित मुआवजा दे और सरकार एक नीति बनाये कि पुलिस वाले, प्रोटेक्शन फोर्स वाले, रेलवे प्रोटेक्शन फोर्स वाले किसी भी हालत मे ऐसी गोली जिससे किसी की जान जाये, न चलायें । बल्कि ऐसी रबड़ की गोली जो होती है उसका उपयोग किया जाय । मैं चाहता हूं कि कोई इस तरह का रास्ता अख्तियार किया जाय जिससे यदि कोई भीड़ उत्तेजित होती है तो उसको आसानी से काबू कर लिया जाय, लेकिन किसी हालत में भी जानें नही जानी चाहिए । ये तीन बातें मैं सदन के सामने रखना चाहता हूं और आशा करता हूं कि सरकार इन बातों पर ध्यान देगी ।

श्री उपसभापति : अब सदन की कार्यवाही 2 बजे तक के लिए स्थगित की जाती है ।

The House then adjourned for lunch at fifty-six minutes past twelve of the clock.

The House reassembled after lunch at eight minutes past two of the

clock—MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

THE COPRA CESS BILL, 1979—contd. THE COCONUT DEVELOPMENT BOARD BILL, 1979—contd.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now we shall resume discussion on the two Bills.

SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR SAHU (Orissa): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, we are discussing the Copra Cess Bill, 1979 and the Coconut Development Board Bill, 1979. The aim of the Bills is mentioned to be "to provide for the development under the control of the Union of the coconut industry and for matters connected therewith. Actually, the setting up of the Coconut Development Board is a laudable project. There is nothing to object to that. But while speaking on the Bills, I would like to tell you, Sir, and through you to the hon. Minister that we have some experience about such boards set up in the past regarding some agricultural commodities. I would just like to mention to this House the case of the Jute Corporation of India, which has been functioning for the last so many years. Sir, if you see the latest PAC Report and the statement of its Chairman, Shri Jyotirmoy Bosu, it has been stated that though the Jute Corporation of India was meant for promoting the small farmers and the production of jute as such, unfortunately it has become an agent of the mill-owners—IJMA. Though the Bills were presented for laudable aims—to protect the interests of the farmers, to increase production, to help in the development of some agro-based industries—unfortunately we had experiences like this. The JCI has completely failed according to the Report of the Chairman of the Public Account Committee, an august body set up by the two Houses. Sir, I belong to the State of Orissa. I know how the jute growers there are suffering. The J.C.I. have not protected their interest. Therefore, sometime

they prefer to sell their jute even to private Merchants because they offer better price and better facilities. I think, Sir, the Coconut Development Board is a laudable project. We are one of the largest producers of coconut in the whole world. We must think how to develop this coconut plantation, how to have more scientific research and development to root out pest diseases due to which the Kerala coconut is suffering along with coconut in other States. The question is how to have better utilisation so that ultimately the small farmer who grows coconut in their field can have better utility.

Sir, in the Bill presented here, unfortunately, the aim is written in a very short form and people nurse reasonable apprehension whether this Board will function only as a part of the department of the Central Government or it will play a more vital role.

Sir, the aims and objects have been included in section 10 but we do not know how the small farmer's interest will be served. So I simply suggest that through this Bill has laudable object, the Board should be formed in such a way that no under-developed State which is trying to have more plantation of coconut is neglected. What happens in the Jute Corporation of India? In my State of Orissa jute growers have not benefited at all. What is primarily more important is agricultural planning as they have done in other countries like Malaysia. This Board must develop certain areas. In all the States they must develop certain farms where they should have done in other countries like Malaysia can emulate. It should not be a lopsided view, namely, there will be development in some areas and no development in other areas. Ours is a vast country and without proper planning the small farmer will be totally neglected. As the hon'ble Minister has told here as well as in the Lok Sabha 90 per cent. of the land under plantation of coconut belongs to the small farmer having a plantation of less than one hectare of land. So we should have such commercial crops where more and more of small farmers

are interested in. The protection of their interest is a colossal task. I had been to the Andamans in the Assurances Committee. There it is natural growth of coconut. But the actual peasant is getting much less because till now it was monopolised by some private company. Because it is far away from the mainland there was no possibility of the farmer selling his product to commercial places. So it was monopolised by a certain company. Fortunately, through the people's pressure a co-operative society has been formed. But it is the old managers who are occupying important places and the farmer is not getting his real price. Now these places require special attention so that the growers, the planters get the real price.

As pointed in the Bill there are many industries which can be developed with coconut production. They were hitherto neglected. But the main question is that we have not been able to control the pest. In Kerala many trees have died. But we have no scientific and technological know-how. If there is any research conducted it is all in some glass house. The find of the research centres has not gone to the farmer. What is important in this connection is how the farmer can get the know-how and how more and more research can be conducted. But, unfortunately, what I was telling is that in this section 10 there is no mention of scientific approach and extension of this knowledge to the farmer.

Now, Sir, there are two main problems: (1) how we should have more scientific growth of the coconut plantation in different areas. Because it is a very good commercial crop it can grow in all the coastal areas of the different States of this country, and (2) how to have better utilisation and better marketing. Marketing should be organised. Then the question is how new industries can be set up. One more important thing we must bear in mind is the traditional industries which can give colossal employment to the rural people. So you

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should not think of more capital for sophisticated industries in some towns but of the growth of small industries which are indigenously practised in the different States. For them to survive, there should be a marketing organisation, there should be technical knowhow and for all these there should be some provision in this Bill.

Now coming to the Copra Cess Bill the rise from sixty paise to five rupees is something unimaginable. This Government has certain duties to perform also. Now, Sir, clause 4 is a very good provision. It guarantees certain things. For example, it says that the money levied will go to the Consolidated Fund of India. But the other part of it is very nauseating to me. It says:—"...and the Central Government may, if Parliament, by appropriation made by law in this behalf, so provides, pay to the Board, from time to time, from out of such proceeds, after deducting the expenses on collection and the amount, if any, refunded under section 9, such sums of money as it may think fit for being utilised for the purposes of the Coconut Development Board Act, 1979." But what is this expenses on collection, Sir? Have you not any responsibility? When we are collecting cess from the poor farmers, can we not give the whole fund for the Development Board? Can we not utilise the money for the development of the small farmers in having more knowledge, in having more extension programmes and in setting up more industries? Have we to deduct the amount which is spent on the collection of cess? Sir, we know that in Administration the bureaucratic machinery is top-heavy. For example, Sir, out of the money meant for spending on the Adivasis, 50 to 60 per cent of it goes for administration only. In the bureaucratic set-up they appoint new officers with cars and all that and actually the small man in the village is forgotten. Therefore, I strongly urge upon the hon. Minister to delete this part of the provision about deduction of expenses on collection. It is a laudable clause otherwise, where it is said that Parliament can appropriate by law. When

they have got so many collection agencies, what is the difficulty for the Central Government to collect these funds? They can take the help of the State Governments or create another department if necessary which can be authorised to collect it. Therefore, this part of the clause should be deleted.

The second point is, we must also see that the amount collected in this way really goes to the poor farmers for the development of the coconut industry and coconut plantations and only a certain percentage of the amount should be spent on administration costs. Now Parkinson's Law is in full swing in India, and with the Consolidated Fund of India expanding, every officer is surrounded by ten per cent of what we provide for in put on the Exchequer whereas the really poor man, the small farmer, who is to be benefited gets hardly 25 per cent of what we provide for in the Budget. After all this will be hard-earned money which you will be collecting from the poor farmers. Therefore, that money should be ploughed back and there must be a guarantee in this Bill that the money will be spent for the development of the small farmer who must drive the benefit. We have to do it. Though the objectives are laudable, in this form it will create complications in future.

Coming to the other provisions of the Bill, I would like to tell you simply that we should lay more stress on real development of the industry and we must have a provision to the effect that we would not unnecessarily create some complications in the social and cultural life of the people. This is my experience. I had been to the Great Nicobar island and saw the Mongoloid people living there who have their own cultural values. For example, they have not taken rice or chapatty up till now but they have grown very healthy. On the other side in Hut Bay and Dunger Creek we say the Bengali refugees trying to plant coconut palms but the plants are destroyed by pests. They are decaying. There is no agricultural exten-

sion service up till now. Coconut farming is an age-old traditional occupation in India. In Kerala and other States they have traditional industries and they are improving upon them by setting up more sophisticated industries which do not ignore the people who are employed there. For that, there should be a revision because there are so many small industries in the small-scale sector which are being run in the villages and which are maintaining the economy of the whole rural life. We want to disturb that by bringing in large-scale industries. But we have to consider for the small-scale sector. Many people are surviving on agriculture, especially on coconut. We are not giving them the know-how to improve the quality of their artisanship and, at the same time, we have not organised a proper marketing sector for them. Therefore, it is very important, when we are thinking on the broad national scale about the development of coconut and we are imposing such a heavy levy on copra, that their interests are looked after. The money collected from them should go for the benefit of the small farmers and not be spent on the administrative cost. The second thing is that rural industries based on coconut should be developed, and for that extension knowledge should be expanded. The Central Government can take up that responsibility. Although, agriculture is a State subject, we are now trying to levy a cess upon copra, an agricultural produce. So the State Government will be devoid of its net return which it was expecting or which it may have taken note in their Budget. So it is necessary that every State must also get the extension benefit, must get the research benefit. For that, there must be sufficient newspapers and bulletins so that these can be circulated. The third thing is that just as in the case of the Jute Corporation of India, which was initially started to organise the jute growers and see that they are benefited, but has failed in that direction, it may not see the same fate. The Jute growers were to be benefited, but the Public Accounts Committee has said that the Corporation has become

a broker for the industrialists. So that should not happen here. The interests of the farmers must be safeguarded. Whatever the purpose of the Bill, they cannot be served.

Sir, under the Copra Cess Bill, the proposed levy of Rs. 5 is too heavy. I would like the Minister to consider it. Otherwise, it would hard hit the development in the newly developing States. I belong to Orissa. In Orissa, we are trying to have more and more of coconut and cashewnut plantations. If, at this stage, such a levy is imposed, it will mean a set-back to any prospect of setting up new industry there. So I say this levy should be reasonably curtailed. It should not be so abruptly high that it will hard hit the market. The more important thing is those who grow coconut, whether in the Andamans, Laccadives or other places, have no marketing facilities. It would be an immense service to them if the Board takes up these activities and give the benefits to the farmers. The second important thing is that we should continue scientific research for control of pest and for better yield of coconut and that knowledge should not be limited to the capital of India, but should go to the farmers, extension programme so that the farmer can get better seed-lines and have knowledge of better protective measures against diseases. The third is how the rural industry can survive in an under-developed State. There may also be some industry set up because that will have a vast potentiality of employment. So much of the waste materials is being wasted now. There should be knowledge about utilization of these materials and such industries should be set up at different places. It will help the rural poor people to get more employment and the producers will get better prices in the market. A small-scale sector should be organised so that all the commodities which they produce in the industry can be sold at real prices. These are the three things which are very important.

I think this Bill should have been more carefully drafted and all these

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problems should have been looked into greater details. I have also suggested about the collection of the fees. Whatever be the expenditure, why we put it on the farmers? Only the farmers are responsible for development. They are the producers and they are hard hit these days. We have been hearing speeches on the President's Address all these days. We have heard how the poor farmers are suffering. They are not getting proper prices. If we collect the levy also, how do we propose to charge the fees? Is it to be deducted from that? When we give relief on export duty, the collection charge can be the responsibility of the Government. So, Sir, this is a reasonable amendment which I would request the hon. Minister to accept. The poor people, the small farmers should not be burdened. The Government promises to help the farmers but they are neglected. A levy on the export of turmeric and cotton was imposed, which we talked about yesterday. And again today we have this Copra Cess Bill which is raising cess from 60 paise to five rupees. Ultimately, what is the genesis of it. The statement of the Agriculture Minister is that it is not the kulak of the big farmers which produces coconut. Ninety per cent of the coconut is produced by 90 per cent farmers. If we are going to raise the cess from 60 paise to five rupees, it is going to affect these small farmers. So, whatever we may say politically that we are going to help the small farmers, we are taxing them every day through new Bills because they are not organised. Other privileged sectors claim more bonus and other things and we are agreeing to them, but we tax the small farmers though we say that we are going to help them. This is a glaring example. I would request the hon. Minister to consider whether the rise in the cess from 60 paise to five rupees is not high. It should be decreased. The small farmers should really be benefited.

I only wish that more farmers should come to the Board so that we

can understand the miserable conditions of the Board. Otherwise we can never know their plight. There must be a provision to have representatives from each State, not only the representatives, but the real farmers who know the problems. There should be more scope in the Bill for the farmers to come directly to the Board and tell them, so that we can have a genuine sympathy and know their real problems. And this Board which is envisaged in this Bill, should really provide for the development of the coconut industry and matters connected therewith. Thank you.

DR. MALCOLM S. ADISESHIAH (Nominated): Mr. Deputy Chairman, I rise to support the Coconut Development Board Bill, 1979. As other speakers have said, it is of very great importance to millions of households all over the country and particularly to Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka the southern States. The coconut tree is a multiproduct tree. There are at least seven products which it produces, which are in common use, all over the country and particularly in the southern States. It produces copra to which a reference has been made. It produces oil, coconut oil, out of copra. It also acts as a very important vegetable, particularly in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. In fact, you cannot think of food in Kerala or Tamil Nadu without coconut as a vegetable. It is the basic vegetable there. Fourthly there is the product of coir. Fifthly there is the roofing material which the coconut tree supplies to the poor masses in our villages. And sixthly it supplies other housing materials also. And finally it produces a drink. It could be either a soft drink as it is in my State which has prohibited or a hard drink as it is in Kerala and Karnataka. I might say that this drink costs only 25 paise per bottle. As against this, the substitute of 'Coca Cola' 'Campa Cola' costs Rs. 1.35 P. per bottle. So, the kind of prohibition

that we are thinking of must take into account the other sources where the villagers are forced to spend their limited resources.

Now, as against the multiple importance of this industry of the coconut plantation in the south—the tree gives six or seven various products—we are facing a very serious crisis in Kerala which is spreading to Tamil Nadu. This is with regard to the root wilt disease and the bunch top disease, resulting today in the replacement of coconut plantation by cocoa and pepper plantations. They are rapidly replacing coconut plantations in Kerala and they are also moving into Tamil Nadu. Therefore, Mr. Deputy Chairman, in my opinion the most serious problem that this Board faces is the problem of scientific research which has so far not produced any results. And the research which has been done and the development which has been tried out has not stopped the root wilt disease or the bunch top disease. The diseases from which coconut plantation are suffering and because of which these plantations are being replaced. Therefore, it is my hope that this Board that we are forming under this Bill will also have some scientists and technologists, who can attend to this most serious situation that we are facing with regard to this industry in the southern States. I have a feeling that unless this is dealt with before the end of the Sixth Plan, our coconut plantations could very considerably be reduced.

Now, the kind of research that is going on and that is being tried is producing its own problems. The Agricultural Research Centre in one of the locations in my State, at Vaniyambadi in Tamil Nadu, used the trunk injection of Nuvacron in the coconut trees in order to destroy *Nophantis* caterpillars and rats which are serious pests. The result of the injection of this pesticide with regard to the fruits which are formed after the injection of this pesticide has not been investigated. There are fears that the fruits that are produced after

the injection might contain harmful pesticide ingredients, harmful to human life. Therefore, the kind of research that is being done, the research that is being tried out, needs to be very carefully monitored. And it is my hope that the Board will contain scientists and technologists, not only administrators and planners who would be able to bring together the technological and scientific research in order to deal with this root wilt problem. There is a proposal made by the Indian Coconut Development Council that the coconut plantations should go in for a massive replanting programme. They have proposed that we should use the D.X. hybrid seedlings in order to replace the existing dying and sick plantations. They have also recommended that the main emphasis in future should be with regard to small coconut holdings. These are good recommendations. But how they are to be operationalised has to be considered. My hope is that the Coconut Development Board that we are proposing here would take the leadership in this matter. Now, coming to the functions of the Board clause 10(2)(j) says:

“assisting, encouraging, promoting or financing agricultural, technological, industrial or economic research on coconut and its products....”

I agree with Mr. Gowda who said yesterday that the primary function of the Board should be research and development with regard to these diseases and not simply marketing. I agree with him and I do not agree with Prof. Ranga on his emphasis on marketing or on raising of prices and so on. I think that the first task is to save the plantations. And from that point of view I am a little disturbed. Looking at the membership of the Board put forth in sub-clause (4) I would hope very much that the language used there, “two members to be appointed by the Central Government to represent such other interests connected with the coconut industry...” would include scientists and technologists.

[Dr. Malcolm S. Adiseshiah]

I also support the Coconut Cess Bill but with certain misgivings. In relation to the cess to be collected the Bill says that the cess, the excise, should not exceed Rs. 5 per quintal of copra and until a Government decision is made the existing rate of 65 paise per quintal of copra should be continued. I think there is a big jump from 65 paise per quintal to Rs. 5 per quintal. I would like to know whether any decision has been made as to what it is going to be in the near future. With regard to the rate of collection of the excise, it is more related to the replanting programme on which all of us are agreed. The Indian Coconut Development Council made a strong recommendation and I take it that the Development Board would be acting on it. But such action will depend upon what the coconut growers, the small growers, are going to look forward to in relation to the price and the price in turn will depend upon the cess on copra. In regard to the levy of the excise I would call your attention to the fact that there are six or seven or eight products that coconut plantations yield us. But we are levying the cess only on one of them. Mr. Kumaran from Kerala said yesterday that it was going to bear very heavily on the people of Kerala who are the users of coconut oil on a massive scale in this country. It is, therefore, important that we bear in mind that there is only one out of these six or seven products that has been taxed. That should be borne in mind by the Government.

Then I would like to join with the last speaker in saying that this is not one of the industries like coffee or tea which can be financed entirely from resources raised by cess. It may be that some of the resources that were allocated for scientific research in agriculture through the ICAR would also have to be made available to the Board. The Board is not solely dependent upon this particular cess that is raised from copra.

With these comments I commend the Bill.

SHRI LAKSHMANA MAHAPATRO (Orissa): Sir, the land of India has been endowed by nature with so many rare gifts and coconut is one such gift. But unfortunately for a long time we did not think of working on that rare gift. At a very late hour of the day somehow for regulating and helping the industries connected with coconut a board is going to be formed by this Bill. There were earlier coconut development boards and other boards which the Agriculture Ministry had formed to look after better production of coconut and do research on coconut. But as has been pointed out by other Members, not much headway has been done in that field so much so not only in Kerala but in all other coastal States including that of mine where coconut is grown in a very big way, the plants are dying because of diseases which have not been tackled by the research scholars, by their research activities. As I said at the beginning, this particular Bill has defined a cooperative industry in vegetative form. It has said that coconut industry would mean not this. In fact it has said that it would not mean these two and thus excluded coir industry and oil industry. There are many things which would be classed as coconut industry. But Government themselves possibly do not know what they are and therefore they could not think of putting it in a positive way and ultimately they produced this negative definition excluding two.

There may be other reasons too for excluding these two. The Coir Board is already there to look after the coir industry and as far as oil industry is concerned there are others. That comes within the purview of the Industry Ministry and possibly for that reason oil industry was not touched. The Coconut Development Board will, therefore, be taking up activities relating to other industries.

The Agriculture Minister was the person who through his Trade Fair Authority organised an Agro-Expo Exhibition in 1978. He can probably recollect the Karnataka pavilion in the exhibition. They had built a particular house inside their pavilion where you did not find anything other than materials made out of coconut, except perhaps nails which were required to put these materials together. Everything there including lamp-shades, table, chair, pillars and roof was made out of coconut products. That should have given good knowledge to everybody who had gone there.

Therefore, in the South, as was said by Dr. Adiseshiah people make a variety of uses from this particular plant and the poor among them not only have their huts and roofs made out of coconut products, but make a living also out of it.

We are very happy that the Coconut Development Board is being formed. Their functions are enumerated in clause 10 of the Bill. There is a long list of functions. Would all of them be attended to by this Board? Would it not be true that most of them are there simply to make the list longer, but never to be attended to? This is where I express my apprehension. If you are forming this Board please see that it works in the interests of the growers without whom no coconut can come up or the industry survive. Therefore, their interests should be attended to. The Board should establish relations with the growers. This should be the first task. Their interests should not be neglected as is usually done.

One of their important functions, as has been pointed out should be extension programme. Had this rare gift not been there, could we have a hybrid variety of coconut? In order to have hybrid variety, we should have a natural variety. If natural variety is preserved, then we can think of more industries.

At one time the Agricultural Re-

finance Corporation was giving money for plantation of coconuts at the rate of Rs. 1,800 per acre from the Development Bank. It has been abruptly stopped. I don't know. How are you going to have bigger patches? Are you interested in limiting your coconut growing to 11.1 million hectares only which you are having now? Are you interested in having only 600 per hectare as now or in increasing the same to nearly thousand or thousand two hundred? If you are not interested that way, then, of course, you may continue with this. Otherwise, you will have to do it. The second thing that I want to point out, as has been pointed out, is this: It has been said that these trees die and replanting is necessary. There has been a demand for a very long time that a replanting subsidy should be there. The Board will be formed now and you will get the money by implementing the Copra Cess Bill and after that there will have to be appropriation by Parliament and all these will take a very long time. But immediately you are required to provide money and replanting subsidy should be immediately available to the coconut growers. Otherwise, as has been pointed out, replanting will not be there and also, many more trees will die because of the disease that is attacking them now to control which nothing is being done.

Sir, there is another thing that can be made use of. At the moment all the States, all the coastal States, are required to send their coastal development programmes and plans and, as you know, this is a particular plant which can be very well grown in the coastal areas and it has grown because the salinity there does not affect it. Rather, Sir, in some places it has been experimentally shown that saline water can be used very well for growing coconut trees. So, if you provide one acre of the coastal area to an unemployed youth and ask him to take care of the plants that grow there, I think you will be solving the unemployment problem in a very big way and, at the same time, you will be adding to the number of nuts that you

[Shri Lakshmana Mahapatro]
are producing every year and, ultimately, you will be doing a service to the Coconut Development Board which you are going to form now to look after the development of coconut. Therefore, this coastal development plan should contain a provision like this and this should be ensured and the Central Government should make it a point to ask the concerned State Governments to provide in their coastal development programmes or plans for making the youths take charge of this. There should be a provision to the effect that at least one acre should be allotted to an unemployed youth and he should also be provided with money as was being provided earlier for growing these trees and for looking after them and thus they can make out a living for themselves. At the moment, as has been pointed out, about 70 per cent of the coconut is grown in Kerala. Some say that it is 67 per cent and some others say that it is 70 per cent. But, Sir, not all the coconut is put to industrial use, but only 5 per cent is put to industrial use. 95 per cent of the coconut that is produced is used as green coconut and in the form of kernel and all that is eaten up. Of course, it is the necessity of our people also, because, Sir, sometimes we require green coconut and kernel to be used as a substitute for Campa-Cola or the other hot drinks and sometimes for medicinal purposes also we require them. But, Sir, the Kerala Government. I remember, not by law, but by some administrative or executive order, at one time, ordered that green coconuts could not be used. Unless you produce a medical certificate to the effect that it is necessary, you cannot use it, this was done because it was interesting in seeing that the coconut grows to such a size and used in a real way and that is not eaten up in the green state itself. So, can we think of a law like this so that we can ensure that not 95 per cent of it is used otherwise and only 5 per cent is available for industrial use as now? If you form the Board to look after the development of

coconut, you must see that sufficient coconut is available for industrial use also. Therefore, you will have to see that much of these coconuts are made available for the industry, and for that there would be a law framed authorising the Central Governments otherwise we will not be able to get sufficient quantity for industries.

Sir, according to what I said in the beginning, since the definition of coconut "industry" excludes all industries from which products out of coconut oil are manufactured, all the same, you will have to have small oil extracting units of coconut. The Development Board should look after them. It is only by that process that you can pay proper money to the small farmer, who form the bulk of the producers of coconuts. There can also be some cooperative small units. At the moment, big houses, monopolists, are engaged in this work because they get money from them. Therefore, poor people really engaged in this should also be associated by having cooperative units. . . (Time Bell Rings)

Sir, I have one or two more points. Cooperative units and small units should also be encouraged by this Board.

Sir, the other day we have had the experience in relation to the Tobacco Board. Of course, this is not about the headquarters. We had demanded that Guntur should be continued to be the headquarters. It continues to be at Delhi still. I do not know where they will locate it ultimately. It would be wrong on the part of the Central Government to have it at any place other than Allepey. It is the proper place for it. It is the centre of coconut production in the whole country. It is in Kerala, no doubt. It will be convenient to ameliorate the miseries of growers. You can have industries at the place where it has concentrated growth. Only such place should be the headquarters. The Board can function properly, if it is at Delhi. Of course, I am interested in the Board's functioning well. It has come now. Therefore, I welcome its formation. I want that it should work well.

This particular levy is on the mills. There should be no objection to it, as Mr. Sahu and Mr. Adiseshiah pointed out, because this particular levy is on the mills; it is not on the growers. The mills will have to pay at the rate of Rs. 5.... (

AN HON. MEMBER: At the highest—as the maximum.

SHRI LAKSHMANA MAHAPATRO: Sixty per cent. In the Financial Statement, it is stated that it will be about one crore and eighteen lakhs and that round about 1.06 or something to 2 lakhs will be spent for collection purposes. So they have already decided. Of course, I am not able to calculate it properly, because I do not know how many, according to their reports, are available at the mills now and how many, according to their estimates, will be available by the time the Copra Cess Bill will be implemented. They have some figures and on the basis of Rs. 5 or something less than that, they have worked out and said that they will be getting between Rs. 80 lakhs and Rs. 1 lakhs. Sir, this levy could be made. It is not very high, according to me. It was earlier 60 paise when there was no Board. When you want to have a Board, when you want to ask the Board to perform on so many fronts, naturally, the levy should be there. On the other hand, I have a grouse. I wish that the funds of the Board should be much more. It may not be by way of a cess on copra. But in some other forms also, the money has to be given because, as I said earlier, it is a rare gift of the nature and its utility being so well-known, we cannot afford to neglect it any further. And we will have to have more of money; and more of money should be ploughed into it so that there can be extension programmes for having bigger areas under coconut plantation, for having better variety of coconut plantation, for eradicating the disease that the coconut plantation is now facing, and ultimately paying the grower a proper remuneration for the efforts he puts in.

Sir, if you look at the Bill that is placed before us for levying and realising this cess, the definition of the Collector is given. It says: "Collector means the office appointed by the Central Government to perform in any specified area the duties of a Collector under the provisions of this Act and the rules made thereunder, and includes any officer subordinated to that officer whom he may, by order in writing, authorise to perform his duties under these provisions." So, they say that this will be an officer who will be so appointed under the provisions of the Act. But, Sir, this Act nowhere provides for the appointment of a Collector. It provides for the functions and the duties and the powers of the Collectors. But nowhere does it provide for the appointment of a Collector. It does not say that the Central Government could appoint a Collector for performing the duties as assigned to him under this Act or the rules made thereunder or something like that. Nothing of that sort is mentioned here. I do not know wherefrom the Central Government gets a right under this Act to appoint a Collector. Here, the definition of 'Collector' says that the appointment is made under the Act for functioning in a particular way. Therefore, Sir, I do not know whether, in spite of such an omission, a Collector could be appointed and he could go to any place, get the returns submitted and penalise the people for not submitting the details. I am very doubtful about this. This is a thing which needs to be attended to. I do not insist on that. But all the same, this difficulty may be there. I pointed out this so that the Minister may clarify the position.

Incidentally, Sir, I just want to refer to two other important rare gifts of the nature. One is mango and the other is banana. These are the fruits which are available on the coasts of India, and they are available in plenty. They need attention. The Government should think of giving some attention to these either by having some boards like this Board or in some other way. The Government should pay immediate attention to these fruits. It is

3.00 P.M.

SHRI HAMID ALI SCHAMNAD (Kerala): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I support this Bill. There was a long-felt need for this Board and it was the desire of the people of the South and also of the people of the coconut-growing areas that they should have such a Board and they were demanding from the Government of India that it should constitute a Coconut Board for the development of coconuts as it had constituted a Rubber Board in the case of rubber. While welcoming this Bill, I should like to point out some of the matters connected with coconuts. When we speak about the coconut industry, when we speak about the export and import of coconuts and all that, the main thing is the source of coconuts, i.e., the coconut trees. That is the main thing. Unless we plant coconut trees and pluck coconuts, we cannot have the other things; that much goes without saying. So, the main thing is the cultivation of coconut trees. If coconut trees are not planted or cultivated, there is no question of having coconut industry, there is no question of export of coconuts or having a Coir Board or coir industry or any other thing connected

with it. But, what is the position about the cultivation of coconut trees? As far as my own State of Kerala is concerned, as we all know Kerala is the land of coconuts, the name of Kerala itself has come from the name of coconuts, so far as the cultivation of coconut trees is concerned the cultivator is being harassed to the maximum extent possible today. The man who cultivate coconut trees has, firstly, to pay land revenue. I can understand that and everybody will understand that. But he has also to pay plantation tax. That is another tax to be paid to the State Government if he has got more than two acres of land; any land, whether coconut bearing or arecanut bearing, he has to pay the plantation tax. The Government is not satisfied with all that. He has also to pay agricultural income-tax. So, in all, he has to pay agricultural income-tax, plantation tax, land revenue and also sometimes property tax to the municipality. These are the taxes to be paid by the coconut cultivators. They are not big planters and we cannot afford to have big planters in Kerala today because of the ceiling on land holdings. The land reform measures have been implemented and under the present ceiling laws nobody can have more than two acres of coconut trees in Kerala because two acres of land is the maximum that one family can have in Kerala. The family would constitute of husband, wife and minor children and such a family can have only two acres of land and not more than that. There is no question of anybody having 25 acres or 30 acres or hundreds of acres of land. This family will have to pay plantation tax, agricultural income-tax and land revenue. What is it that he gets from the Government in lieu? Nothing. The irrigation facilities are not there. Electricity connections are not given to farmers in villages and other benefits are not extended to cultivators in villages. Therefore, I would appeal to the Agriculture Minister to see that some subsidy is given to coconut

cultivators. That is my point. The re-claimed land, the land that was the waste land so far or the forest land or the land adjoining the sea side, should be brought under coconut cultivation and the Government should provide subsidy. Credit facilities should be extended to the coconut cultivators at the minimum rate of interest. But that is not being done. And that is my main appeal to the Government. We have to first think of the growers and only afterwards we can think of other people, the copra industry and the business people, so that the merchants and the traders do not squeeze the growers. I would, therefore, appeal to the Minister of Agriculture to see that subsidy is given to them.

My friend earlier has already pointed out about the various diseases like the root disease. This disease has not been diagnosed and there is no remedy for it. Then there is the disease to the leaves when the leaves fall down. This disease also has no remedy. Then there is the disease of tender nuts. Before they mature, they fall down due to certain disease. The scientists have not been able to find out a remedy for it. The cultivator thinks of getting so many coconuts but once the coconuts become diseased, the cultivator is not able to do anything because he does not know the reasons and does not get the medicines. This aspect has also to be looked into.

With regard to the constitution of the Coconut Board, much has been said by many hon. Members. Prof. Ranga also mentioned about it and many hon. Members from both the sides referred to it. Only persons who have got an interest in coconut cultivation, who represent the real farmer in coconut cultivation, the people who are interested in this field like the agricultural scientists, those who have specialised in the coconut diseases, should get priority for being nominated on the Coconut Board. This should not be merely on political party basis. The farmers should be

given the representation along with other allied people connected with marketing, the business community connected with export of coconuts, and connected with marketing process. Main representation should be given to the coconut growers. That is my main appeal to the hon. Minister of Agriculture when he thinks of constituting the Coconut Board. Bulk of the members on the Board should represent the real growers of the coconut. When they think of having the headquarters, I would definitely plead that this should be in Kerala. This goes without saying. I would suggest that this should be located in Kesaragod because the central plantation crop research station is situated there. One of the biggest coconut research stations today in the whole of India is in Kasaragod. Hundreds of scientists are working there. As a matter of fact, the services of the Director of the plantation crop research station have been requisitioned by the Government of Ceylon and he has gone to Ceylon. This only shows the quality of research that is being conducted there. This only shows how brilliant are the scientists and doctors in agriculture who are working there day and night, in the Kasaragod central plantation crop research station. They have got a big coconut farm there which consists of more than 300 acres of land and adjoining this farm, there is another arecanut farm also. Therefore, it is in the fitness of things that the head office should be located in Kasaragod. Further, the scientists of this farm should have a say in the matter and their advice should also be sought in formulating the various policies.

My friend spoke about having banana cultivation, mango cultivation and so on. I would like to make one suggestion in this matter. Now, in the coconut farm itself, you can grow many other plants. Inter-cultivation should be done. Now, because of the ceiling on land, the tendency is to grow the maximum in the minimum area of land. This is the policy now-

[Shri Hamid Ali Schamnad] adays. They are scientifically working it out. In one acre of land, you can grow coconut and, in between coconut, you can also grow cocoa. It has been scientifically laid down that between one tree and another, there should be ten feet. It has also been scientifically laid down that in one acre of land, there should not be more than 80 coconut trees. You can have inter-cultivation. You can have cocoa, banana, sweet potatoes and so on. Pepper is also being grown. You can also have banana. Of course, you should have irrigation facility. You can grow things like sweet potatoes and so on. The attempt should be to get the maximum yield from the coconut farm. You should adopt inter-cultivation. You can grow things like pine-apple.

Once again, my submission to the hon. Minister is that he should take care of the coconut planters, the farmers. Unless they grow coconut, there will be no coconut industry, there will be no coir industry and so on. The people who grow coconut should be taken care of and they should be given subsidy, credit facilities, marketing facilities and so on. They should be given all encouragement by the Government of India.

SHRIMATI LEELA DAMODARA MENON (Kerala): Sir, I rise to support the Coconut Development Board Bill. Sir, we have been asking for such a Bill for a long time. I am glad, at least now, it has come before the House. My first submission, Sir, is that the head office of this Board should be in Kerala.

SHRI HAMID ALI SCHAMNAD: In Kasaragod.

SHRIMATI LEELA DAMODARA MENON: I refuse to pick up a quarrel with my friend. I say this should be located in Kerala. You may ask why. You may ask 'Why should it not be in Karnataka and so on?'. The word 'Kerala' itself is a big pointer that this should be in Kerala. Kerala is the land of coconut trees. Sir, we teach our little children:

"Kerala theeram kera kedaram nityanandakaram". These are the words that every child in Kerala is taught. For the people of Kerala, the coconut tree is a source of life. It is a part of Kerala's life. Its bulk goes into the rafters of the home. Its leaf is used for patching the home. Coconut fruits are used as food. The shell of coconut is used as firewood. The waste material of coconut is used as firewood. Much of the water of the coconut is wasted; nevertheless, it is also very useful. Therefore, every part of the coconut tree . . .

SHRI VISWANATHA MENON (Kerala): You are forgetting today.

SHRIMATI LEELA DAMODARA MENON: I do not want to encourage drinking. Therefore, I am not going into it. Then, it is used for coconut oil, copra, everything. Therefore, from this point of view I say that the headquarters of the Development Board should be in Kerala. The other reason for having the headquarters of the Board in Kerala is that almost 70 per cent of the total area of production of coconut in this country is in Kerala. Of course the figures may vary, but I think it is more than 67 per cent or 70 per cent or 80 per cent of the total production. Now let us see what is the condition. Only recently, the Kerala State has established a Coconut Complex Development Corporation in order to get the maximum use of the various parts of the coconut tree and also to use it for industrial purposes, but till today nothing much has been done. A lot of it is wasted and the whole thing is in a very disorganised condition. My friend, Shri Schamnad, said that the coconut producers are mainly small growers. Yes, Sir. We do not have large coconut plantations because of the land ceilings and because of other things. Because of small holdings, the coconut growers do not get a fair price. Although the coconut industry makes a lot of money, but the coconut grower does not get a fair price. It is also a sad fact that in spite of various

experiments it has not been possible to find a solution for the coconut diseases, like root wilt disease, etc. There is a lot of provision in this Bill that the Board should undertake research work. If it is on the same lines as the research that is now going on regarding these diseases that affect the coconut trees, I think the hon. Minister will have to have second thoughts about this. The existing pattern of research has not been able to find out an answer to this problem so far. Is it because there are not sufficient funds for this research work, or is it because, as the hon. Member has been saying, of the scientists that have been going out from our country to Colombo and other places? Is it because they are not fully qualified? What is the reason? How is it that no answer is forthcoming? I hope, when the Board is formed, we will have better answers for this. I was referring to the diseases that affect the coconut trees. As such, the maximum production is not taken care of. Enough subsidies are not given to the small growers. These are certain problems to which we think the Development Board will have to pay attention at the very initial stages. Sir, it is also a sad fact that today in spite of all this we have to import coconut from abroad. Therefore, I hope the Coconut Development Board will pay more attention to the production programme of coconut in various parts of India, which can grow coconut, which have the pragmatic conditions to grow coconut. All the more, I hope Kerala will retain its position as the first and the best producer of coconut trees while the Board functions.

Sir, a mention has also been that there has been a mixed crop pattern. Therefore, the rules should be framed in such a manner that they should not affect the small holdings and the small growers. And the small growers will be able to utilise any scientific and technical know-how that will be given.

Sir, on going through the constitution of the Board, I find that it is

mainly consisting of officials. I also note that the coconut-processing industry is represented, but the Kerala Corporation which is already functioning is not represented on this Board. I would also submit that a few more non-officials who have interest in the development of the industry should be included so that they will be like watch-dogs over the activities, progress and development of the industry.

Sir, we could have enough foreign market if we properly organise the coconut industry; it can be an exportable item. The small island of Ceylon exports a lot of coconut products outside Sri Lanka. Why should it not be that we, who have such vast areas under coconut-growing today, too see to product with an eye on the export markets?

Coming to the provisions contained in clause 10 regarding the functions of the Board, I would submit that Kerala has 50 per cent of its agricultural programme under the State agricultural activities. If the entire activities of the State Government are taken over by the Board, that will be a hard thing. So you should kindly consider the Kerala Government's request to have the original proposal that the extension agencies for the development of the coconut industry functioning under the State Department will continue to function under the State Government of course in coordination with the programmes of the Development Board so that it will not come into confrontation or conflict with the activities that are going on in the Development Board. I would also submit that the representation on the Board from Kerala should be in the same proportion as its production. I do not mean to suggest that as a permanent thing. You can change it if there are other States that come up in their coconut production. Then you can change it and have them. But as it stands at the present moment, you must give some weight to Kerala because it is one of the prime producers of coconut.

SHRI G. LAKSHMANAN (Tamil Nadu): Mrs. Menon, you are producing 70 per cent of the coconut available in India. How much are you consuming in Kerala out of this 70 per cent?

SHRIMATI LEELA DAMODARA MENON: Sir, if we start consuming every thing that we produce, what will the other States do? We have to give it to them. So we sacrifice and give it to other States. I am not going into the figures, but we will try to sacrifice as much as possible so that the rest of the country shares what we produce. We are always willing to sacrifice for the sake of other States.

With regard to the copra cess, which goes hand-in-hand with this Development Board, I have one submission to make. I do feel that the copra cess up to Rs. 5 is a little too much. Somebody said that it will be mostly borne by the copra milling sector and the mill-owners. I am afraid it will not be so. Mainly, the burden of the copra cess will be falling on the poor growers who, in order that his coconut may not go waste, or that it should not get spoiled, will dry the coconut when it is late to be lifted and keep it as dry copra. Also most of the milling is done out of Kerala. So why should it not be two points so that it is done both by mill owners as well as copra producers? So let the cess be on two points. I think that will be helpful. As some hon'ble Members suggested, we should have more resources. But that requires more money. So while welcoming this Bill I would submit that the Government should consider these points.

I have one more submission to make. Sir, while developing the various products of coconut, the complex that is now being taken up in Kerala should be especially assisted so that this programme succeeds in the beginning itself so that other States producing coconut also benefit. Just now I understand they do not have enough funds to start with. There are

other problems which the Kerala Government is facing with regard to the starting of this Corporation. So even before the Board comes into existence the Government should look into the matter and assist this programme.

SHRI P. K. KUNJACHEN (Kerala): Sir, the people of Kerala require facilities. For the people of Kerala have been demanding the constitution of a Coconut Board for a long time, not only demanding, they were actually conducting agitations one after another for the constitution of this Board.

[The Vice-Chairman, Shri G. Lakshmanan] in the Chair]

Now the Government of India have accepted their demand and has brought forward the Bill, for the constitution of this Coconut Board. I whole-heartedly support this Bill.

Sir, even though the Bill has been brought forward they have not taken into account all the demands put forward by the peasants, by the people of Kerala or the Government of Kerala. I know how much correspondence has been going on between the Government of Kerala and the Government of India for a long time. Some of the issues raised by the Kerala Government have been accepted in this Bill. But many of the other things are remaining; they have not been accepted fully.

Sir, the Coconut Board is going to be formed according to this Bill. The object is mentioned. But when we look into this question, we should, first of all, consider about the coconut growers. What is their actual problem? Sir, coconut growing is deteriorating day by day. The main reason is disease. One is leaf disease. The other is root disease and the third is the feeling of tender coconut at certain times which will not enable it to grow into good coconut. These are the three main diseases. Previously also some research centres were conducting research in Kerala. One such centre is in Kasargod and one, as my friend, Mr. Hamid Ali Schamnad, was

saying, in Kayamkulam, near Trivandrum. But though research has been going on for a long time, unfortunately, no remedy has been found for these diseases; no medicine has been found out. They have not been able to find out by what way these diseases can be prevented. I do not know whether they will be able to find out the remedy in a short period. But we firmly have our apprehension that this research organisation is not up to the mark. Funds are not there. Sufficient scientists are not there. As far as I know, some people from the Agriculture Department, etc., have been deputed for doing research work but I do not think any serious attempt has been made by the Government of India to conduct research to find out the disease and prevent it. I am saying this because the people of Kerala are very much depend upon the coconut. Especially the poor peasant—one-acre-wallah, two-acre-wallah and half-acre-wallah—is very much dependent upon this because it is grown in every part of Kerala, even in a land of two cent or five cents. Out of the total production in India, Kerala's portion comes to nearly 70 per cent. So you will have to do intensive research for protecting the tree first. I believe that after the constitution of the Board some attempt will be made on those lines.

Similarly, another thing has to be done and that is about the development of cultivation. At present it is growing in every acre of land but irrigation facilities are not there. If ample irrigation facilities are given—it is not possible to increase the acreage of cultivation—yield can be increased. If you give the necessary protection and make necessary arrangement for irrigation facilities, the yield of coconuts can be at least doubled. In the hot season, tender coconuts fall down in large quantities, but if irrigation facilities are given or water is given, they won't fall like that. So, per acre yield increases have to be made.

Similarly, there is another thing which I wish to point out. When the Coconut Board comes into existence, it should not be a hindrance to the cultivators. If they insist on growing coconuts alone, that will create much trouble for the people of Kerala because inter-cropping is an usual process in Kerala. Plantation of arecanuts, pepper, even coffee—and now, cocoa on a large scale—is being done. So they should be allowed to continue this inter-cropping pattern. Otherwise they will be put to much difficulty.

Another thing is, while the Board is constituted, there should be representation on the Board of people whose interests have to be protected. Normally when a Board is constituted, the old system is being followed and that old system is being followed by the Janata Government also. When a Board is constituted, normally some IAS officers or some other officers dominate and they do not actually know the problems also. Some people may, of course, take the initiative and study the problems—I don't blame all. But my personal experience is that many of them will not be interested and only a few will be interested. Those who are interested may study things and act accordingly. Therefore, representation of non-officials should be given a prominent place and representatives of the actual cultivators must be given a prominent place. That has not been done. At least the Chairman should be a non-official and not an official. Similarly, no representation for workers is given on this Board. Sir, worker is a very important factor in this. When Shrimati Leela Damodara Menon was speaking, a question was asked: What about toddy production? Sir, in toddy production itself, 22,000 workers are engaged and their family members constitute more than one lakh. Sir, the Coir Board has been given representation on this Board. About 12 lakh workers are working in the coir industry. Their main task is that of taking the husk and making coir yarn. The Government has not

[Shri P. K. Kunjachen]
thought it fit to give representation either to the coir workers or the toddy workers or the cultivators. Workers' interest has been completely ignored. Workers' representation has not been given. The Government should have thought on these lines and the workers' representation must have been given. Similarly, when representation is given to about 25 members on the Board, only three are from Kerala. Seventy per cent of the production comes from Kerala; on acreage basis also, 50 per cent is from Kerala. There are other Boards like the Coffee Board, the Coir Board, the Rubber Board. I would request the Minister to look into the constitution of those Boards. In those Boards more representation is given to Kerala because coffee production is there, coir industry is there, so also rubber. But, when we come to the Coconut Board, sufficient representation has not been given to them. So the Government must think seriously of giving more representation to Kerala on the Coconut Board.

Regarding the headquarters of the Board, where it should be located, I do not want to enter into a dispute. It should be in Kerala where coconut is grown on a large scale. It can easily be done by consulting the coconut growing organisations of Kerala. Others can also be consulted. I think it will not be a disputable factor. But the headquarters should be in Kerala.

Another thing is that some schemes are being taken up by the Government at present for coconut growing and also for protecting coconut. When the Board comes into being, the Board may also formulate so many schemes. There should not be any overlapping or confrontation between the schemes which have already been formulated by the Government of Kerala and the schemes of the Board. So all these aspects have to be taken into consideration. The Government must take serious steps firstly to protect the interests of the cultivators and also to protect cultivation. Lastly, I wish

to point out one thing. One of the major questions is that of price. On that account also, there have been so many agitations and it has been demanded year after year that copra and coconut oil should not be imported, but at times the industrialists influence through their pulls and pressures and the Government of India submits to their wishes and copra and coconut oil are imported as a result of which the price has been reduced much.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI G. LAKSHMANAN): Mr. Kunjachen, you please conclude.

SHRI P. K. KUNJACHEN: Yes, yes, I will close. So, this aspect should also be taken into account. All the import of copra and oil should be stopped on a permanent basis, and steps should be taken to produce more indigenously itself. That should be the approach with which the Government of India should move.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI G. LAKSHMANAN): Mr. Madhavan. Two minutes only as per your request.

SHRI K. K. MADHAVAN (Kerala): Sir, I want to say that *kera* means coconut and Kerala mean coconut lane. So, this Bill is ment, as stated, for the coconut industry. I make a distinction between coconut industry and coconut farming. Coconut industry has to be enumerated and stated specifically, otherwise the nomenclature of industry is likely to be misused to defeat the intention and purpose and practice and effect of agrarian reforms.

Another point is about the coconut growers.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI G. LAKSHMANAN): You can put some new points.

SHRI K. K. MADHAVAN: These are new points, Sir. This piece of legislation should not be an instrument in the hands of the bureaucrats to victimise small millers and to allow big millers to escape. That is my point. It is a very serious matter which should be taken care of at the stage of rule-making, and rule-making is not done here. So, that is a very important point.

Another thing is regarding unaccounted milling, unaccounted purchase and sale of copra. Here is the loophole which opens the flood gates of black money. What is the guarantee that black money will not be let loose or will not be allowed to be hoarded in some unknown quarters? From this point of view, this measure should be fool-proof. Of course, the next stage will be the rule-making stage. That has to be done. These are all details to be worked out at the stage of rule-making.

Lastly about prosecution business prosecution should not be misused, allowed to be misused, by the officers concerned, nor malicious prosecution should be directed against honest officers. That is also the position.

Then, my understanding is that this Bill has been defectively drafted, inefficiency drafted, allowing all sorts of loop-holes for the bigger people to escape and for the smaller people to be punished.

Thank you.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION (SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH): I am very grateful to the hon. Members who have participated in the debate relating to these two Bills. Nearly all of them have welcomed the establishment of the Coconut Development Board. In fact some of them have raised the question and rightly so and I am also of the same opinion: Why has it taken so long for the Government to establish this Board? Coconut is a very versatile plant, it is economically of great value. As stated by the lady Member, its every part is useful for the human race, and much should have been done to develop coconut cultivation in this country.

Certain apprehensions, of course, have been raised and will try to remove those apprehensions. It has been said that Boards have been formed in the past also with very good intentions, but they soon degenerated into some sort of exploitative ma-

chinery, that they, in course of them, became sort of brokers between the industry and the actual producers. Sir, let me assure the House that nothing like that is going to happen in this case. I will plead with the hon. Members that they should appreciate the difference of attitude between this Government and the earlier regimes. Our whole attention is diverted towards the protection of the small growers. It has just now been pointed out that in the past the Government of India imported various vegetable oils and that led to a lowering of prices, a reduction of prices, in this country, and that brought some difficulties in the lives of so many coconut growers. But only yesterday in the Finance Bill it has been provided that now customs duty will be imposed on any vegetable oil that is imported into this country. It is perhaps for the first time that any agricultural commodity which is imported is going to be levied customs duty. It is mainly to protect the interests of the growers.

Some hon. Members have said that a sudden rise from 60 paise per quintal to Rs. 5 per quintal is too high a jump. Sir, in this connection I have to submit that we were unable to do any thing with 60 paise per quintal. And that is why this Coconut Development Board is being established. Even at this rate the total realisation is not likely to be more than Rs. 1 crore. Now, to tackle all the problems of this important crop, Rs. 1 crore is not much. Therefore, this amount will be supplemented by loans and grants from the Central Government and sometimes from the State Governments, too. This is not the only amount which will be spent on the development of coconut. It will be supplemented.

SHRI HAMID ALI SCHAMNAD: What is the subsidy given to the coconut growers?

SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH: Let me deal with it. As far as this incidence is concerned, it may appear to be too much, but in fact, it means only one paise per nut. One paise per nut for the development of coconut—I do

[Shri Bhanu Pratap Singh]

not think even small growers will resent this. And, as I have said, this amount will be supplemented by grants from the Central Government. This Board will not supplement any of the existing research or extension agencies already in the field. In fact, this Board will only supplement whatever is being done.

Now, one hon. Member has said that in Kerala there are many kinds of taxes on coconut growers. While I may sympathise with the coconut growers there, I must say that I am helpless in the matter. Tax on land is a State subject. And it is for the State and the people there to determine what kind of taxes they will have. It has been suggested that because they are being taxed, therefore, the Central Government should subsidise the production of coconuts. It does not make sense. While on the one hand, there is a complaint that the coconut growers are being heavily taxed, on the other, it is expected that the Central Government will subsidise. Subsidise for what? Subsidised for enabling the State Governments to realise more taxes! This argument does not appear to me to be . . .

SHRI HAMID ALI SCHAMNAD: But if you make a comparative study of the coconut growers in Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and other places, don't you agree that they are more taxed than any other?

SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH: May be, true. I have said I have my sympathies with the coconut growers. But it is an area in which we are helpless. It is for the State Government to decide. We do propose to intensify research, mainly for finding remedies for this disease. It has been said perhaps our scientists are not capable. I may submit that India is not the only country which is producing coconuts. Even if our scientists had not been capable if some other country had evolved a remedy for this disease, then we would certainly have learnt from them. But unfortunately no remedy for this disease has been found out yet anywhere. It is not

that science has developed to a stage where we can find a remedy for everything. Take, for example, the disease of mankind—cancer. Nothing has yet been found to cure cancer. So we can all try and concentrate our efforts on finding a remedy for the disease. I don't think it is very charitable to blame our scientists for not being able to find what no other scientist in any other country has been able to find. Then, some doubt has been expressed about the ability of the Government to appoint a Collector. Now, 'Collector' has been defined in the Bill and it has also been said that the Collector will be appointed by the Government of India. Therefore, there should be no doubt about the authority of the Central Government to appoint the Collector who will function according to what has been laid down in the Bill. Regarding constitution of the Board it has been said that it is official-ridden. I do not think it is so. The total number of members on the Board will be 24, out of which only 8 will be officials. One will be the chairman. Now, the Chairman can also be a non-official. It is not ruled out. It is not said in the Bill that the chairman must necessarily be an official. He can also be a non-official. Besides these 8 officials there can be 15 non-officials. The choice has been left to the Governments, whether they appoint an official or non-official representation of workers. Well, we have tried to accommodate a representative of workers also. There are three categories: trade, labour and consumers. From out of these three categories two will always be represented by rotation. So it is not that we have altogether neglected the labour . . .

SHRI VISWANATHA MENON: Coconut trees are so tall and these workers are climbing up and down. And you are saying they are not to be represented. . .

SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH: I am not saying that at all.

SHRI VISWANATHA MENON: You are saying that. You say it is only on rotation. Are they not risking their

lives while climbing up and down the trees? And you are only thinking about the growers. What about the workers? You must give them also some representation

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE (West Bengal): Sometime the climbers will also grow.

SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH: That is what I was saying. In most cases growers themselves climb.

SHRI VISWANATHA MENON: A particular community in Kerala is doing this work.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: You should utilise their expertise.

SHRI VISWANATHA MENON: They must be represented on the Board.

SHRI HAMID ALI SCHAMNAD: Is there a proposal to have a mechanical ladder through which they can climb? I was told that in Kasaragod Coconut Research Station there was a proposal to provide a mechanical ladder.

SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH: These are matters of detail I am sure the Board will look into all these aspects. Not only they will try to find out the easier way to pluck the fruits, but they will also see that there are more fruits to be plucked.

While it is true that we are having a large area for coconut cultivation, the cultivation itself is very primitive and traditional. The main purpose of the Board is to modernise coconut cultivation. I do hope that the small growers will in course of time be organised into cooperatives. By providing some processing facilities to these cooperatives, they can derive the maximum benefit. I have always held the view that the processing of every commodity should be done by the producers. I think the Board will also try to establish cooperatives and provide them small processing units so that they may get the maximum return from their produce.

I think I have covered nearly all important areas and now I commend these Bills for the consideration of the House.

SHRI VISWANATHA MENON: What about the headquarters of the Board?

SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH: It is not provided for in the Bill. I personally think that the claim of Karnataka is overwhelming

SHRI VISWANATHA MENON: Karnataka? What about the claim of Kerala?

SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH: I am very sorry. I really meant Kerala.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI G. LAKSHMANAN): The question is:

"That the Bill to provide for the imposition of cess on copra for the development of the coconut industry and for matters connected therewith, as passed by the Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI G. LAKSHMANAN): We shall now take up clause by clause consideration of the Bill.

Clauses 2 to 20 were added to the Bill.

Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the title were added to the Bill.

SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH: Sir, I move:

"That the Bill be returned."

The question was put and the motion was adopted.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI G. LAKSHMANAN): I will now take up the second Bill. The question is:

"That the Bill to provide for the development under the control of the Union of the coconut industry and for matters connected therewith, as passed by the Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

4 P.M.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI G. LAKSHMANAN): We shall now take up the clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill.

Clauses 2 and 3 were added to the Bill.

Clause 4—Establishment and constitution of the Board

SHRI V. C. KESAVA RAO (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, I beg to move:

1. "That at page 2, line 37, for the word 'three' the word 'four' be substituted."

2. "That at page 2, line 38, after the words 'States of' the words 'Andhra Pradesh' be inserted."

3. "That at page 2, line 42-43, the words 'Andhra Pradesh' be deleted."

Sir, my amendments are very simple. In this Bill, according to clause 4(1) (g), three members are to be appointed by the Central Government. These three members will be from Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. I think, Sir, that there are other States also which grow coconuts, especially Andhra Pradesh, which has a length of more than 700 kilometres of coastal land and Andhra Pradesh grows a lot of coconuts and I do not know why Andhra Pradesh is neglected here. In Andhra Pradesh, the land is fertile land the yield there is more and, compared to the coconut grown in Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, the Andhra Pradesh coconut is four times the coconut grown in these States, because the land in this State is very fertile. But here in this State the Central Government has not taken any interest in developing coconuts here. So also, with regard to the representation here, it is like this. If you go to sub-clause (h) of clause 4(1), you will find that five members are to be appointed by the Central Government by rotation. So, each member will be for a half an year or one member will be there for one year and one State will be there for some time and after four or five years the same State will be represented again. This is wrong, Sir. Many States like Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Orissa, West Bengal, etc. also grow coconuts and these States must have one member each on this Board. But only three States have got one representative

each. So, my amendment is to this effect that clause 4 should be amended and I have given the amendments so that Andhra Pradesh may get one member along with the other States. The other amendments are consequential. I would like to request the honourable Minister to consider this and see that a major State like Andhra Pradesh is given representation and one member is there on the Board from Andhra Pradesh. Also, Sir, it will be good if he can appoint one member each from the other States like Orissa, Bengal and Assam rather than appointing five members for eleven States. Sir, this is the purpose of my amendments.

The questions were proposed.

SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH: Sir, through you I would like to request the honourable Member not to press these amendments and I will give very good reasons for that. I have got here a list of 13 States and Union Territories where coconut is produced in significant quantities, Kerala is, of course, at the top, producing 3443 million nuts; Tamil Nadu comes next, with 1094 million nuts; Karnataka, 777 million nuts; Andhra Pradesh is fourth, but with a very poor fourth. As compared to Karnataka, which occupies the third position, its production is only 20 per cent. If we concede this point, then Goa is very close to Andhra Pradesh in production. It will be difficult to deny the claim of Goa and we intend to have a compact Board, and not a very large body. Therefore, it is not just now possible to have representation from Andhra Pradesh on a permanent basis. But, for the information of the hon. Member, I have to point out that there will be representatives from the remaining ten areas, and they will be on the Board in the alphabetical order. So, in any case, Andhra Pradesh will be represented at least in the first Board. And if during this tenure of the first Board, you come up in a big way, then, of course, the claim of Andhra Pradesh can be considered. In any case, you get repre-

sentation immediately, and later on if coconut cultivation makes a headway in Andhra Pradesh, then the question can again be considered. I would also like to point out for the consideration of this House that if we accept this amendment, the Bill will have to go back to the Lok Sabha, and may be we have to wait for a long time to establish this Board.

Therefore, I request the hon. Member that in the light of the explanation given and also in view of the fact that Andhra Pradesh will in any case be represented in the first Board, he may kindly withdraw the amendment.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: I would like to seek one clarification. The hon. Minister said that those States which produce lesser quantity of coconut will be represented alphabetically. Therefore, Andhra Pradesh will come first. I was just trying to understand the rationality of having the representation alphabetically. According to the level of production if you decide that those who will be producing more, should get the first chance to represent in the first Board, one could have understood the rationality. For instance, after Andhra Pradesh, naturally Assam will come, though its production is much less. Though Goa is closely following Andhra Pradesh yet Goa is not to be represented in the second Board also. I was just trying to understand the rationality of having the representation on the basis of the name of the States. I am not insisting on it, but this is just for my own understanding.

SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH: It is already provided in the Bill that it will be in the alphabetical order. I do not think that Goa will be left out. It also starts with 'G' and therefore it will not be left out... (*Interruptions*)

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI G. LAKSHMANAN): Are you insisting on your amendments, Mr. Rao.

SHRI V. C. KESAVA RAO: No, I withdraw.

**Amendments (Nos. 1 to 3) were, by leave, withdrawn.*

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI G. LAKSHMANAN): The question is:

"That clause 4 stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clause 4 was added to the Bill.

Clauses 5 to 21 were added to the Bill.

Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Title were added to the Bill.

SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH: Sir, I move:

"That the Bill be passed."

The question was put and the motion was adopted.

THE BRAHMAPUTRA BOARD BILL, 1978—contd.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI G. LAKSHMANAN): We shall now take up further consideration of the Brahmaputra Board Bill, 1978. Shri Ajit Kumar Sharma.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR SHARMA (Assam): Sir, this is a Bill which deals with the only son of Brahma. Sir, for the last so many years the Central Government has been promising to bring forward this Bill. In 1959, about 20 years back, it was the late Prime Minister Nehru who assured the people of Assam that a comprehensive Brahmaputra Valley scheme will be adopted for the development and improvement of that State. Of course, during that period the State of Assam comprised the entire area of the North-Eastern region now under different political limits. But, unfortunately, Sir, instead of having a comprehensive Brahmaputra Valley scheme, we had to face a comprehensive scheme of dividing the State into five different political units. In that context, I congratulate the hon. Minister of Agriculture for bringing forward this long-awaited Bill to constitute the Brahmaputra Board

**For text of amendments vide col. 211 supra.*