

MR CHAIRMAN. Now come straight to 1973-74.

SHRI C M STEPHEN:			
	Rs. lakhs	Rs lakhs	
1965-66	1,542		6
1966-67	7,685		3
1967-68	8,272		9
1971-72	21,667		125

This is the picture. What happened was that in the First and Second Finance Commissions, they only took the previous expenditure and took the average of the five years and then fixed this by adding to it 25 per cent of the figure arrived at. So, continuously, Rs 10 lakhs were allotted to Kerala. Even Rs 10 lakhs were not spent. Still, we did not come to Government of India for any additional amount. The first time that we came to the Government of India for the additional amount was in the course of past three or four years only. Before that we never came before them. I am emphasising the point for two purposes—firstly ours is not a State which would rather make a commercial deal which is mainly rejected. We are satisfied with our own humble lot. We did not want to work as a group in order to get money for developmental or non-developmental expenditure. That would be seen by the statistics that I have given. Secondly, as a result of the honesty of our people, of our government over a period of years, the amount allotted to us became only Rs 30 lakhs per year. This Rs 30 lakhs per year is nothing at all.

Therefore I am submitting let not the Sixth Finance Commission's Report be taken as a seal to refuse to discharge your obligations to the people. It is not the question of Kerala Government, it is not the question of Kerala Government versus the Central Government. It is the question of our people and the Government of Kerala but, who should bear the burden, is a matter to be settled between the Central Government and the Kerala Government. Sir, remember

the shivering and frozen men and women on the streets of Idikki District. Their houses have been destroyed; bridges were collapsed. Think of the starvation of the people and think of the men who have died. Think that you are here to discharge your responsibility to the people. These people are not idling. These people have laboured hard to make this country rich and prosperous. They are now the victims of a colossal attack by the cruel nature. Unless you go to their aid, they will just be wiped out. The question there is not one of relief but it is one of restructuring the districts that has been finished up. That task cannot be fulfilled by the State Government because the State Government is near to bankruptcy. That is a matter which everybody knows. The State Government is undergoing financial strain, it is undergoing difficulties in regard to food. We are labouring still. Over and above that, please do not put on us this task. If you put it, then it would be the last straw on camel's back. Do not that. Rush up aid to the people. I have to make an appeal to this House, through you, to Government of India and through Government of India, to the people of India to give the people food etc. I am making this appeal because here are the people who can never come here with a begging bowl. Please help us at this juncture. That is all what I want to submit.

SHRI C K CHANDRAPPA (Tellicherry). My hon Friend Shri Stephen has presented the case with great emotion. He has presented before this House a graphic picture of the tragedy which has befallen Kerala. So, I do not want to further dwell on that aspect of the matter.

At the outset, I would like to thank the Central Government for the friendly gesture that they have shown to Kerala at this moment of great crisis. They have come forward with the gesture of allotting of Rs 1 crore to meet the situation. My submission is that the situation is still more se-

rious and graver than was depicted before the Centre. A preliminary assessment, as was pointed out, has shown that the loss is to the tune of Rs. 6 crores, but it is now unofficially estimated, and it may be that it would be near correctness or nearer to facts, that the loss may be somewhere between Rs. 20 to 25 crores. When the Central Government were told that a loss of Rs. 6 crores had resulted because of this natural calamity they came forward with the gesture of providing Rs. 1 crores. My point is that if today the loss is much more than that, the Centre should come forward in a much bigger way than they have done at the moment.

This is not to be looked at as a tragedy which occurred in Kerala only. It should be understood as a national calamity. I know that there are floods and other calamities that occur in other parts of the country also.

But as Mr. Stephen has described, the seriousness of the matter and the gravity of the situation should be realised and it should be treated as a national problem. If the Centre would come forward to deal with it as a national problem, I think that nothing will stand in the way of the Centre's helping Kerala, because even though the Finance Commission might have granted only Rs. 30 lakhs, the Centre has already waived it and they have allotted Rs. 1 crore. I submit that in the same spirit they will have to come forward in a much bigger way to allot several crores of rupees to Kerala so that there can be reconstruction activities carried on in an effective manner. I have a suggestion to make in this regard, namely that the Centre should deal with this matter in a more serious manner on a war footing. They have to send immediately a team from the Centre to investigate what has happened there in Kerala. Let this team go immediately, and on the basis of their report, the Centre should take a fresh look at this matter and should take

a more sympathetic view and help the State so that the State will find itself in a situation where it can tide over the difficulties in which it is today.

There are two aspects which the Centre has to decide in regard to what they are going to do in future. One is short-term measures and the other is long-term measures. As a short-term measure, I suggested that a team might be sent to Kerala; they will come back and present a report and on the basis of that, the Centre will take a decision.

The minimum requirement is a big relief measure. Tens of thousands of people are today dispossessed; they are to be evacuated and they are starving and hungry. The Centre should immediately provide money so that they will be given some relief. Secondly, immediately food materials should be rushed to Kerala so that the people who are starving today would not die of starvation and hunger. I should say here that all the political parties, including my own in Kerala, are responsible for creating a serious ecological imbalance there. That is why the entire high ranges today have exploded due to soil erosion. It is not to be looked upon as merely a natural phenomenon that has come on like a thunder bolt. It is the result of indiscriminate deforestation which was carried on in that State. There should be perspective planning to stop this menace.

When such a situation has occurred in other countries they have adopted certain measures to help the people who were suffering. I remember some years ago there was a big earthquake in Tashkent. It was considered one of the biggest tragedies. The Soviet Government looked on it as a national problem. They called upon the entire country to rally behind Tashkent and every nationality, every state in the country sent voluntary help and within a short period Tashkent was rebuilt in a much

bigger way. The Centre should not only depend upon its budgetary resources which are dwindling because of the inflation as will be pointed out by Mr. Ganesh when he speaks but they should also call upon the people of the country to come forward and help Kerala in a big way so that in this period of struggle that State will be helped in a meaningful way.

DR. HENRY AUSTIN (Ernakulam): Sages have said it is wise to dedicate a day or two to the memory of those who passed away but the situation in Kerala is such that an hour or two should be set apart not only for those who have joined the majority but also for the land and homesteads that our compatriots there occupied. If one is to rely on reports in Kerala papers, areas occupied by thousands of people in my friend Mr. Stephen's constituency, people who have devoted their entire life for the development of that region, had been submerged not by ordinary floods but by big, unprecedented and unheard of cloud bursts and rock bursts and huge landslides. Here is a situation where not only human lives and their homesteads but whole regions are affected. These are some of the richest spice bowls of our land. Vast region have been submerged and if after a thousand or two thousand years somebody drills for exploration purposes, they may unearth in that place a big civilization. That is the magnitude of the situation that has developed.

In our State there are three clear topographical divisions. First is the coastal belt consisting of low lands where the density of population is highest, second only perhaps to Bali island in Indonesia. My own constituency is situated there. I know the havoc wrought as a result of floods consequent on the landslides in the hilly regions. Lakhs of fishermen live on the sea coast and they earn foreign exchange for the country. They sacrifice their lives to bring proteinous food. But their homesteads have been wiped away by sea erosion

and this has created a very difficult situation for them. They are managed in seasonal jobs and they have to sustain themselves for the whole year what they earn in 4 or 5 months. So, lakhs and lakhs of people have to be rehabilitated there.

Then we have the midlands where we raise vegetables, tapioca, which is almost our staple food, paddy, etc. Several of these beautiful hillocks have been washed away. I have a letter from one of my colleagues saying that Cochin city has been completely cut off from Alwaye town, 12 miles away in the midland region. People cannot travel by buses.

Then we have the highlands where we grew timber, rosewood, tea gardens, rubber plantations, cardamom, other spices and cash crops. In the fifth plan provision has been made for the development of Malnad in the Western Ghats. Now the sight there is awful. I just cannot picture the situation, which is so grave. All these three clear topographical divisions—highlands, midlands and low lands—have been gravely affected. The situation has been graphically described by Mr. Stephen whose constituency includes Idikki district which has been affected most severely.

I do not want to localise this issue. I am equally grieved over the disaster that has befallen Arunachal, Assam, Bihar, South Kanara and other parts of the country. We have to consider it as an integrated situation and think in terms of long range perspective.

I just want to narrate one incident.

I come from the coastal region. There was a terrible sea erosion in our area during my college days—that was the Maharaja's time—we went on a deputation to the Chief Secretary and to the Dewan saying, "The sea erosion is aggravating; something has to be done about it. Some anti-sea erosion works must be undertaken. You do something about it." We highlighted certain facts that mineral deposits like monozite, ilmenite, etc.