

No.11-52/83- FRY(CONS)

August.27- 1983
BHADRA, 5, 1905-SE

Dear Shri.

Please refer to your d. o. letter no..S.11011/10/83-BL dated 18-7-1983 regarding the release of forest land for the rehabilitation of freed bonded labourers in Kerala. The earlier letter dated 31-3-83 from Shri Lakshmidhar Mishra referred to in your letter was not received in this Ministry. Anyway I have checked up and find that no proposal for there lease of any forests land to bonded labourers, under the Forests (Conservator) Act, 1980 has been received form the Government of Kerala. The proposal will not doubt be considered on merits when received. Proposals from the other States have also not been received in this regard.

I may, however, point out that a number of proposals are being received from the state Governments for the rehabilitation of the ourstees of irrigations, power and other projects. Though the Forests (Conservation) Act, 1980, has significantly checked the pace of disforestation, considerable forests areas have still to be released for essential development works. It has, therefore, been our policy not to release forests areas for rehabilitation purpose. The concerned State Government should either locate non-forest land for the purpose or provide alternative means of employment to the affected persons.

We have lost a lot of forest areas for such purpose in the past and every effort must be made to save and preserve that is still left of our valuable forests.

I hope you will appreciate this view-point and advise the State suitably.
With regards,

Sd/-
Rao Birendra Singh

Shri Veerandra Patil,
Minister of labour & rehabilitation
Government of India,
Shram Sakti Bhavan,
New Delhi.