

46. That with reference to statements made in para 64 the same are denied. I say that the Andaman and Nicobar Administration is sensitive to the ecological fragility of the region and consequently more than 20% of the geographical area has been assigned the status of national parks, sanctuary and biosphere reserve and about 35% of the area is assigned the status of tribal reserve. Some of the tribal reserves are also reserved forests. This ensures protection of not only the interest of the tribals but also their habitat.

Harvesting of mangroves has remained suspended for more than a decade. There is no proposal for introduction of exotic species in the forests of the islands and the surrounding areas. In fact, growing of teak which was introduced in these islands in the beginning of this century for its commercial value and quick growing character has been discontinued since more than a decade.

I further say that the red oil palm is the only exotic species introduced in Little Andaman by the respondent Corporation. During 1975-76, an area of 160 Ha. of red oil palm plantation was raised by Forest Department.

This was transferred to the Corporation when it was established in 1977. Thereafter, the area was extended