

190

-3-

As regards the demand of Shri Abdul Latheef that the " Andaman Trunk Road should be closed and all settlers in various camps within this area be relocated....." unfortunately the petitioner is clearly unaware of the ground realities and has made a baseless demand. The Andaman Trunk Road which is nearly 330 Kms long was built by the Border Roads Organisation (Yatrik) in the 1960s and 1970s and constitutes the lifeline between South Andaman and North Andaman Island and passes along the eastern periphery of the Jarawa reserve. This trunk road links important population settlements not only in South Andaman (including Port Blair, the capital), but also Baratang, Rangat and Mayabunder (Middle Andaman) and runs right up to Diglipur at North Andaman. It is vital not only from the point of view of passenger transportation to and fro between South Andaman and North Andaman but also from the point of view of essential supplies, not to mention normal commerce. This road is also crucial from the security point of view to facilitate transportation of security forces and police in case of any eventuality. The Andaman Trunk Road by itself does not impose any threat to the Jarawa reserve which is to the west of the same (further details are in the enclosed note). In view of this, closure of the Andaman Trunk Road or any part thereof is neither advisable nor an acceptable option the Jarawa area at present is 649 Sq.Km. and it will be ensured that no part of the reserved area is de-reserved. A rough estimate of Jarawa population is 350.

The Administration is presently involved in the following important area :-

- (a) to understand the spoken dialect of Jarawas. The Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore has worked in this direction and a dictionary has already been prepared;
- (b) to enrich the Jarawa area by teaching the Jarawas to plants fruit trees etc. to which they are used to;
- (c) to teach them fishing by use of nets;

Cont..4/