25 May kindly peruse the office notes from 18/n onwards. This is regarding recommendations contained in the 5th report of the Standing committee on Labour and Welfare of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

26 I discussed the recommendation with Shri Nautial, ACF (P&S), PCCF office over phone today. In terms of the above discussions the recommendations so far as they relate to the A & N Islands are discussed as under :-

2.71 ***Leasing out of the Forest Divisions / Ranges to Private Parties / Contractors***:-

27 As per the notification No.ANPATR/3(1)/1 dated 2nd April, 1957 the Tribal areas inhabited by the Tribals in A & N Islands has been declared as reserved area under the A & N Islands (Protection of Aboriginal Tribes) Regulation Act, 1956 (a copy of the notification is placed at flag 'A'). However, subsequently some areas in South and Middle Andaman, Little Andaman, Katchal and Great Nicobar Islands were excluded from the tribal reserved areas for settlement of refugees from Bangladesh, Srilankan repatriates etc.(a copy of the Administration's notification dated 19th July, 1979 and notification dated 20th April, 1972 are placed at flag 'B' and 'C'). The tribal reserved area is mostly covered by the forests, so the tribal reserves have also been declared as reserved / protected forests by the Forest department. In other words, the tribal reserved area and reserved forests are one and the same wherever the tribal reserved area is covered by the forests. So the forest law is applicable to the forests in the tribal reserved area.

It is understood that there is no working plan in respect of the forests in the tribal reserved area both in Nicobars Forestry Division and South Andaman Forestry Division. The cane and bamboo are the only significant minor forest produces, which can be commercially exploited, are available in the forest falling under the tribal reserved area. The Forest Department has not reportedly leased out any area for extraction of cane and bamboo to any private party / contractor. The tribals do not exploit the above minor forest produces for commercial purpose. If they come forward to do so, they will have to make payment of royalty prescribed for extraction of the MFP under the Forest law. However, there is no restriction on collection of the minor forest produces free of royalty by the tribals for their bonafide use.

2.72 ***Variation in the rate of procurement Minor Forest produce*** :-

29 There is no TRIFED functioning in this UT, nor is there any agency handling procurement and marketing of minor forest produce. The rate of royalty for extraction of cane and bamboo from the forests has been prescribed by the Forest Department. The tribal co-operative Societies, if interested to do their business in minor forest produce, could exploit cane and bamboo in the tribal area on payment of the royalty.

If approved we may send reply to the Govt. of India along the above lines.

6.6.2000

Research Officer (TW)

Director (TW)

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