

Availability of Subsidies and Concessions for Rubber Export

2927. SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of Kerala has requested the Central Government to classify natural rubber as a regular export item and make available various subsidies and concessions from the Market Development Fund of Government of India; and

(b) if so, the reaction of Central Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION (SHRI MOHAN DHARIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Till recently India was an importer of rubber. As from 1st April, 1973, import of rubber was banned. Since then, upto 1974-75, the production and consumption were more less balanced leaving very small surpluses. In 1975-76 and 1976-77, the surplus was significant enough to depress internal prices and so Government authorised the export of 21,000 tonnes of rubber last year. The annual surplus of about 12,000 tonnes is only a small portion of the overall consumption of natural rubber and synthetic rubber in the country. As such the time has not yet been reached to regard rubber as a traditional export commodity.

Export of Rubber

2928. SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether taking into account declining trend in the price of natural rubber and the resultant hardship to

the rubber growers Government have taken any decision about allowing the export of rubber; and

(b) if so, the facts thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION (SHRI MOHAN DHARIA): (a) and (b). Government have already allowed the export of 21,000 tonnes of rubber which was surplus in the country. Consequently the price of lot rubber (Grades 3, 4 and 5) which came down to Rs. 520/- per quintal in October, 76 has now improved to around Rs. 600/- per quintal as against the minimum price of Rs. 520/- per quintal for grade I rubber fixed by the Government. A proposal for raising the minimum notified price is also under consideration.

Development of Tourism in Andaman and Nicobar Islands

2929. SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to develop tourism in Andaman and Nicobar Islands;

(b) if so, what are the proposals;

(c) whether a large number of foreign tourists visit Andaman; and

(d) whether any big hotel is proposed to be constructed there and if so, when?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PURUSHOTTAM KAUSHIK): (a) and (b). Due to restrictions placed on the visit of foreign tourists to these Islands and constraint on resource development proposals at present are for providing cottage and dormitory type of accommodation for middle income group tourist strengthening of tourism organisation of the Administration, providing publicity mate-

rial, and improving transport facilities.

(c) During 1976, the number of foreign tourists who visited the Andaman Islands was 92.

(d) Government do not propose to construct any hotel in the Islands. However, Department of Tourism has received two proposals from private parties for approval of hotel projects at Port Blair.

Opening of a Branch of State Bank at Diglipur, North Andaman

2930. SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND REVENUE AND BANKING be pleased to state:

(a) when Government took decision to open a branch of State Bank at Diglipur, North Andaman; and

(b) whether the branch has since been opened and if so, when?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND REVENUE AND BANKING (SHRI H. M. PATEL): (a) and (b). The Reserve Bank of India have reported that a licence to open a branch at Diglipur, North Andaman, was issued to the State Bank of India on February 24, 1970. The Bank has not, however, been able to open its office at this place due to lack of certain infrastructural facilities. Considering these difficulties the Reserve Bank have been extending the validity period of the licence upto December 30, 1977.

Representation from Workers of Rubber Plantation at Kachal, Nicobar District

2931. SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any representation from the

workers of Rubber Plantation at Kachal, Nicobar District against misuse of powers by the Officers of Rubber Board during emergency;

(b) if so, what are the charges and action taken thereon;

(c) whether services of a number of workers were terminated during emergency with fake charges; and

(d) if so, action being taken for their reinstatement?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION (SHRI MOHAN DHARIA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d). The enquiries so far made by the Government reveal that no worker of the rubber plantation at Kachal has been removed from service on fake charges during the emergency. However, services of one worker had been terminated by Rubber Board on 31st May, 1976 on the advice from the Andaman and Nicobar Administration, as the concerned family was not inducted into the island under any scheme of the Government. Another worker was dismissed from service on 19th February, 1977 for rioting and abusing superior officers. This action was taken by the Board after the worker was found guilty after holding a Departmental enquiry. The dismissed worker has submitted an appeal which is under consideration of the Rubber Board.

If any case of victimisation is brought to the notice of the Government it will be enquired into.

Proposal to Open Regional Office of Chief Controller of Imports and Exports at Gwalior

2932. SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether a proposal for opening a Regional Office of the Chief Con-