

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. A. SANGMA) : (a) By the year 1999-2000, it may be possible to attain self sufficiency in Natural Rubber.

(b) The following steps are being taken to increase production of Natural Rubber in the country :—

- (1) Assistance is given under Rubber Plantation Development Scheme for accelerating New Planting and Replanting of Rubber :—
 - (i) Cash Subsidy at the rate of Rs. 5000/- per hectare to small growers and Rs. 3000/- per hectare to large growers.
 - (ii) Additional assistance to small holders owning not more than 6 hectares of land which comprises re-imbusement of cost of planting materials used, half the cost of fertilisers applied during immaturity period and subsidy upto Rs. 150/- per hectare for soil Conservation work undertaken.
 - (iii) Interest subsidy at the rate of 3% on Loan availed from NABARD.
 - (iv) Extension advisory support to all growers regarding planting and maintenance.
- (2) Raising and distributing high yielding planting materials.
- (3) Popularising rainguarded tapping, spraying against diseases and imparting training in tapping rubber trees.
- (4) A project has been approved by the Government in 1984 for accelerating the development of rubber plantations in North Eastern Region.
- (5) The Rubber Research-Institute under Rubber Board is under taking research on various aspects of cultivation and production of rubber.

- (6) Rubber Research-cum-Development Station is also functioning in Andamans.

The targets proposed for plantation is 100,000 hectares and Replantation 35,000 hectares during the 7th Five Year Plan. Research activities are proposed to be intensified which emphasises on the needs of non-traditional areas.

Assessment of Domestic Requirement of Rubber

4557. SHRI K. MOHANDAS : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have ever considered that the demand for rubber projected by the user industries is at times exaggerated;

(b) if so, whether any import was allowed without verifying the genuineness of the demand; and

(c) if so, the steps being taken to assess correctly the domestic demand ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. A. SANGMA) : (a) Government forecast demand for rubber in consultation with Department of Industrial Development and Rubber Board and also keeping in mind past consumption trend and future prospects. Forecasts thus arrived at are periodically reviewed taking into account the actuals and day to day developments. Imports are regulated within the gap between supply and demand. According to Rubber Act, 1947 and Rules framed thereunder, all the manufacturers using rubber have to take out licence from the Rubber Board and they have to furnish true and correct monthly return to the Board giving details of rubber consumed, purchased and stock held etc. These are also cross checked and verified by inspectors.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.