

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) No, Sir.

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

Bank assistance under Self Employment Scheme in West Bengal

693. SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA:
SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the lead banks in West Bengal are disbursing and sanctioning loans under the self-employment scheme to registered unemployed persons; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EXPENDITURE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI B.K. GADHVI): (a) and (b). Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has reported that "Self Employment Scheme for Registered Unemployed" is a Scheme of the State Government of West Bengal for providing assistance to unemployed registered with the employment exchanges in the age group of 18 years to 40 years. Minimum educational qualification for beneficiary has not been prescribed. Under the Scheme, a composite loan not exceeding Rs. 35,000/- is admissible per beneficiary and subsidy at the rate of 25% of loan is provided by the State Government. The loan is repayable in 5-7 years and attracts interests as per RBI directive on interest rates. As this is a State sponsored schema, the progress under the Scheme is not monitored by RBI.

External Debts

694. SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's recent emphasis on increasing exports has anything to do with the revised estimated external debts; and

(b) if so, the current figure of the external debts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EXPENDITURE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI B.K. GADHVI): (a) It has been the policy of the Government to generate additional exports and contain in essential imports. Such an increase in exports is essential not only to finance critical imports thus containing the trade deficits within manageable limits but also to obviate the need for undue recourse to external borrowings to finance large trade deficits.

(b) The total external debt outstanding of the country is estimated to be Rs. 68831 crores as on 31.3.1989 at the exchange rate prevailing on that date.

[*Translation*]

Increase in Prices of Indigenous Natural Rubber

695. SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMMOOWALIA:
SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI:

Will the Minister for COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Trading Corporation (STC) has recently announced an increase in the price of indigenous natural rubber;