

(b) if so, the measures taken in this regard;

(c) whether Government is having any plan to simplify the prescribed format for filling anti-dumping petitions; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. The Designated Authority, under the Indian Customs Tariff Act and Customs Tariff rules/thereunder, has initiated anti-dumping investigation concerning import of Isobutyl Benzene originating from the People's Republic of China.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Suggestions for simplifying the questionnaire for lodging anti-dumping complaint have been invited from the domestic industry. After taking into account the suggestions of the domestic industry it is proposed to simplify the questionnaire.

Bench Mark Price of Natural Rubber

4473. SHRI P.C. THOMAS: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have received any representation from the growers for revising the bench mark price of natural rubber announced on February 22, 1994;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. A representation has been received from the Indian Rubber Growers Association requesting for revision of the Bench Mark Price based on latest cost of production (1993-94).

(c) The Bench Mark Price was announced as recently as February, 1994 @Rs. 24,900/- per MT for RMA - 4 Grade and Rs. 24,400/- per MT for RMA - 5 Grade of natural rubber based on the recommendations made by the Cost Accounts Branch of the Ministry of Finance. This bench mark price was recommended taking into account the cost of cultivation and the cost of inputs used by the farmers. Therefore, it is too early to revise the bench mark price of natural rubber now.

Debt Equity Ratio of Shipping Industry

4474. PROF. UMMAREDDY VENKATESWARLU: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the debt equity ratio proposed by the Shipping Credit and Investment Company of India (SCICI) for Shipping Industry; and

(b) its impact on the growth of Shipping Industry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.V. CHANDRASHEKHARA MURTHY): (a) The debt equity ratio for shipping industry proposed by SCICI currently ranges between 1.5 : 1 to 1 : 1 for the company as a whole completion of the project.

(b) SCICI has informed that a lower debt equity ratio would have a positive

impact as it would ensure the long term health of the industry.

Trade Development Board of Singapore

4475. DR. RAJAGOPALAN SRIDHARAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Trade Development Board of Singapore has opened its office at Madras recently;

(b) whether the Union Government have given its approval for the said office; and

(c) if so, the conditions on which approval has been granted to such Trade Boards of foreign countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) to (c). The Singapore Trade Development Board (STDB) intends to open an office in Madras in November this year for which they would need to seek appropriate approval from the Central Government.

However, in order to facilitate trade and investment links between Singapore and South India, presently the Singapore Trade Development Board (STDB) is being assisted by an Indian national functioning as an Honorary Trade Representative based in Madras.

Export of Tobacco

4476. SHRI D. VENKATESWARA RAO:
SHRI S. B. SIDNAL:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the tobacco exports has increased during the year 1993-94;

(b) if so, the percentage of increase as compared to the corresponding period of last year and the reasons therefor;

(c) the details of countries to whom tobacco is likely to be exported with its quantity during 1994;

(d) the foreign exchange likely to be earned from its exports during the above period, country-wise;

(e) whether Russia has approached India for importing tobacco during 1994; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) For the period April-January, 1993-94, the increase over the corresponding period in 1992-93 was 22.79% in quantity terms and 0.53% in value terms. This increase was mainly due to (i) higher exports to Russia and Estonia, and (ii) export of sizeable quantities of tobacco to Ukraine, Belarus and Latvia for the first time.

(c) and (d). Item-wise/country-wise targets have not been fixed.

(e) and (f). No orders have been placed so far the current Andhra crop.