

activity such as blackmarketing, profiteering, and hoarding, restraining undue expansion in money supply and bank credit, increasing production and more efficient management of infrastructure. Further steps will be taken as and when necessary.

Rubber Cultivation

711. SHRI P. K. KODIYAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Rubber Board has a proposal under consideration to bring an additional 60,000 hectares under cultivation of rubber;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether Government have any plan to spread the rubber cultivation to other prospective areas such as Konkan in Maharashtra and the North-Eastern States?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND STEEL AND MINES (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c). The Rubber Board has submitted a Rubber Plantation Development Scheme aimed at bringing a total area of 60,000 hectares under new planting/replanting in the country during 1980-81 to 1984-85. This would include newplanting of rubber in 13,500 hectares in non-traditional areas like Konkan and North-Eastern States. The scheme envisages capital subsidy at differential rates to rubber growers owning upto 20 hectares and those owning rubber plantations exceeding 20 hectares, interest subsidy to growers owning rubber plantations upto 20 hectares, input subsidy to growers owning not more than 6 hectares and free advisory and extension support.

Extraction of Natural Rubber from Guayule Plant

712. SHRI P. K. KODIYAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it has been discovered that natural rubber can be extracted from guayule plant a desert shrub;

(b) if so, whether this plant can be grown profitably in arid and semi-arid regions of Rajasthan, Gujarat and other States; and

(c) if so, whether Government have been taking any measures in this regard?

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

(b) It is likely to grow well in semi-arid regions. The profitability can be ascertained only after cultivation.

(c) Preliminary investigations on this plant have been initiated by the Rubber Board.

Proposal of European Economic Community to include Handlooms in Quota System

713. SHRI P. K. KODIYAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the European Economic Community has proposed to include handlooms in the quota system;

(b) if so, to what extent it will affect our handlooms export trade; and

(c) what is the Union Government's reaction to the E.E.C.'s proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI): (a) No, Sir.

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

Import of Coking Coal

714. SHRI M. V. CHANDRA-SHEKHARA MURTHY:
SHRI GULAM RASOOL
KOCHAK:

Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Steel Authority of India Ltd. have approached Govern-

ment for import of interim quantity of five lakh tonnes of coking coal immediately to be followed by same quantity on global tenders;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government;

(c) whether India has already received almost the entire present targeted quantity of 1.2 million tonne coking coal to run the steel plants under SAIL;

(d) whether the present balance of imported coal available at various parts in the country for supply to various steel plants and also expected coal from Australia will be sufficient only upto the 15th of June;

(e) whether the Steel authorities have impressed upon Government the urgent need of a continuity in import of coking coal to tide over the heavy shortfall in coal received, particularly of prime coking coal from indigenous sources; and

(f) if so, the steps being taken in the matter?

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

(b) The matter is under consideration.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The stock of imported coking coal is likely to last upto the end of June, 1980.

(e) Yes, Sir.

(f) A final view in the matter is yet to be taken.

Trade prospects during 1980-81

715. SHRI M. V. CHANDRASHEKHARA MURTHY:

SHRI GULAM RASOOL KOCHAK:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have admitted that during 1980-81 the trade prospects are very dim;

(b) if so, the main reasons for this low prospects of trade;

(c) whether Government have taken any steps to improve the trade prospects; and

(d) if so, the main points of the new proposals and to what extent these schemes will help to improve the trade prospects?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE, AND STEEL AND MINES (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b). The trade prospects for 1980-81 are considered difficult in view of persistent recessionary situation in world economy, particularly in industrial countries. Besides there are domestic constraints like shortage of power, coal and certain basic raw-materials, transport and shipping difficulties.

(c) and (d). Government is taking possible measures to identify and remove constraints in export production and infrastructural facilities, so as to boost exports. For the current financial year 1980-81 the export target has been fixed at Rs. 7100 crores (provisional) which is no less ambitious. The Import Policy for the current financial year 1980-81, which was announced on 15th April, 1980 has been given export orientation. In order to help exports, the policy contains the following salient features:

(i) Manufacturer-exporters will have a wider choice than before for the import of items against their replenishment licences.

(ii) The scheme for the grant of advance licences with benefit of duty exemption has been made more wider in scope than before.

(iii) A scheme has been introduced to allow duty free imports against replenishment licences. To begin with, the scheme is applicable to a few export products only.

(iv) The import policy for Export Houses has been liberalised to enable Export Houses to render greater