

Title: Need to procure natural rubber by State Trading Corporation.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS (MUVATTUPUZHA): I sincerely thank you, Sir, for giving me the opportunity.

In fact, this is an issue which we have been raising time and again. The minimum support price for the natural rubber -- which is grown by the 90 per cent of the farmers and they are all poor farmers -- is fixed at Rs. 32.09. But the farmer is getting only Rs. 24 to Rs. 25 per kilo. So, an urgent action has to be taken in this regard by the Government of India so that the farmers do not have to suffer.

Sir, there is another aspect also. The farmer makes this rubber into smoke sheet, and the smoke sheet is an agricultural produce. But for smoke sheet, the duty has been bound at 25 per cent. This is very unrealistic. I think, there must be some mistakes. So, this matter has to be taken up with the WTO.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: So, you want that this mistake should be rectified.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS : Yes, Sir, of course, this mistake should be rectified, and it should be taken up with the WTO.

My view is that some farmers may also be sent along with the bureaucrats for the negotiations. It is not only for rubber that I am saying. For all negotiations, if the bureaucrats alone are going on, there is difficulty. Even for coconut and all these matters, the real issue is not being brought to the notice of the concerned persons for negotiations. Otherwise, how come that a pure agricultural produce as rubber has a bound duty of 25 per cent whereas for all the agricultural produces, the same is fixed at 300 per cent.

So, I urge upon the Government that this discrimination should be stopped.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The House stands adjourned to meet again at 2.30 p.m.

1328 hours

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till thirty minutes past Fourteen of the Clock.
