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Title: Need to impose import duty on rubber.

SHRI P. KARUNAKARAN (KASARGOD): Madam Speaker, I am sorry to say that my name was fourth in the list.

HON. SPEAKER: I know, but he has also given notice on bird flu issue. So I have allowed him. But he has changed the subject suddenly and that is why I said that it should not be done like that in future.

SHRI P. KARUNAKARAN: Madam, I would like to place before this House a very serious issue with regard to rubber cultivators in Kerala. The price of rubber last year was Rs. 235 to Rs. 250. Now it is reduced to Rs. 80 to Rs. 85. Kerala produces the highest quantity of rubber and also the best quality. The marginal farmers are the largest in number among the total number of rubber farmers. So, the decline in the price of rubber directly hits the ordinary people.

The reason as stated by my dear colleague is the uncontrolled import of rubber. When we have sufficient production in the domestic market, there should be a mechanism with regard to the need and demand of the imported rubber. It is not seen by this Government. There are two issues with regard to control of its price. One is imposition of import duty of rubber and also there should be a mechanism in place. Of course, I do not disagree that there should be import and export of rubber. But, at the same time, it should be in connection with the needs of the domestic market.

So I strongly request the Government to take some measures to give sufficient protection to the rubber farmers. Otherwise, as far as the rubber farmers are concerned, they are really on the brink of committing suicides.

HON. SPEAKER:

Shri P.K. Biju is allowed to associate with the issue raised by Shri P. Karunakaran.