

[Translation]

### **Decline in Import of Natural Rubber**

4532. SHRI DADA BABURAO PARANJPE : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the import of natural rubber has declined upto 60% during 1996-97 in comparison to 1995-96;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps being taken by the Union Government to prevent this decline ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAM KRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) Yes, Sir. The import of natural rubber during 1995-96 was 51644 Tonnes whereas during 1996-97 it was 18057 Tonnes.

(b) The imports of rubber are influenced by the demand and supply situation in the internal market and the landed cost of the imported material.

(c) The import of natural rubber has since gone upto 29389 Tonnes during 1997-98. The Government has not found it necessary to intervene in the matter so far.

### **Fraud in the Disbursement of Loan by KVIB**

4533. SHRI JAGAT VIR SINGH DRONA : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government are aware of the fact that in Uttar Pradesh around 150 fake societies have disappeared after defrauding Khadi and Village Industry Board of about one crore and seventy five lakh rupees;

(b) if so, the details thereof and whether the said amount was taken by the above societies as a loan from the Board on the pretext of setting up industrial units;

(c) whether the role of the then officers in sanctioning the said loans to these societies is also doubtful; and

(d) if so, the action taken by the Government in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT) : (a) to (d) The information is being collected and the statement would be laid on the Table of the House.

[English]

### **Budget amount to N.E. States**

4534. SHRI SAMAR CHOUDHURY : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government have decided to earmark 10 percent of the budget of Central Ministries for the North-Eastern States;

(b) if so, the details in this regard; and

(c) the manner in which the Union Government propose to distribute this amount amongst the North-Eastern States?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) A non-lapsable "Central Resource Pool for developing the North-Eastern Region" has been created. This will be operated as a Reserve Fund in the Public Account. Into this pool will be transferred the unspent balances from out of the 10% of the budget allocations of the concerned Ministries earmarked for the North-Eastern Region and for Sikkim. The resources of the pool will be used for funding specific projects in the North-Eastern Region and in Sikkim. The projects will be identified in consultation with the State Governments and the North-Eastern Council.

### **Scientists in Coffee Board**

4535. SHRI NARESH PUGLIA : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) the number and details of scientists with the Coffee Board;

(b) the nature of research work carried out by these scientists during the last three years and results achieved; and

(c) whether the Government are satisfied with the outcome of their researches vis-a-vis expenditure incurred on them ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMKRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) The total number of scientists presently working in the Coffee Board is 84. The Research Department of the Board, which is headed by the Director of Research, consists of 1 Joint Director, 6 Divisional Heads, 4 Deputy Directors, 17 Subject specialists, 18 Assistant specialists, 10 Research Assistants Gr. I and 27 Research Assistants Gr. II.

(b) With a view to increase production and productivity of coffee and to achieve the target of 3 lakh tonnes of production of coffee by the end of Ninth Five Year plan, the Research Department of Coffee Board has been carrying out the following major projects, viz. (i) Plant Improvement Programme; (ii) Crop Management Programme; (iii) Project for Crop Protection; (iv) Post Harvest Technology; and (v) maintenance of Research Farms.

Because of research fraternity of Board, the production of coffee has increased from merely 18,000 tonnes in 1950 to 2.28 lakh tonnes in 1996-97. Similarly, productivity has risen from 500 kg./ha to 860 kg./ha.

Some of the achievements of the Research Department of the Board for the last three years have been as under -

Improvement of Congensis X Robusta inter-specific hybrid by sib-mating for compact bush and bold seed