

for which they are accountable to their legislatures or to the Parliament if the State is in under President's Rule. Some of the State Governments have passed through periodic Ways and Means problems in the current year. The position of cash balances and overdrawal, if any, of the State Governments may vary from day to day and State to State. Ministry of Finance has rescheduled release of funds to the States and also provided Ways and Means Advance to help them overcome temporary mismatch in receipts and disbursements during the year.

Insurance Company

Delinking of NIAC from GIC

1639. SHRI KAMAL NATH : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the New India Assurance Company Limited, wholly owned subsidiary of General Insurance Corporation has strongly advocated for delinking it from the parent organisation in view of likely competition from the private sector; and

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (BANKING, REVENUE AND INSURANCE) (SHRI KADAMBUR M.R. JANARTHANAN) : (a) to (b) It has been reported that no proposal has been made by the New India Assurance Co. for delinking it from the parent organisation although their officers' associations through various platforms has been advocating such delinking.

5-16

Prices of Rubber

1640. SHRI P.C. THOMAS :
SHRI S. AJAYA KUMAR :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government had initiated steps to procure natural rubber so as to prop up the prices in the domestic market;

(b) if so, the quantity of rubber procured so far;

(c) whether there are demands for hiking the benchmark price of the rubber; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. So far, STC has procured 9310MT of Natural Rubber. This is in addition to 9596 MT of Natural Rubber procured earlier.

(c) and (d) Government has received representations for raising the Benchmark Price of Rubber. Since the present Benchmark Price has been fixed recently in September, 1998 on the recommendation of Ministry of Finance based on a thorough field study conducted by them after taking into accounts such variables as salaries and wages, cost of fertilisers, spraying materials etc. involved in the cultivation of rubber, further increase in this price is not immediately called for.

6

Sale of Stake of UTI

1641. SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Unit Trust of India (UTI) has proposed to sell out its stake in ITC to BAT of the U.K.; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA) : (a) As per information provided by Unit Trust of India (UTI), UTI has neither received any proposal from BAT Industries, U.K., to purchase UTI's stake in ITC nor has UTI taken any step whatsoever to sell ITC shares to BAT.

(b) Does not arise.

5-17

Setting up of Grievances Panel for PSUs

1642. DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Law Commission headed by Justice Desai of the Supreme Court had recommended for setting up of Grievance Panel for Public Sector Undertakings;

(b) if so, the salient feature of the recommendations;

(c) the names of the Public Sector Undertakings which have so far constituted such Grievance Panel;