

duled Tribes (English and Hindi versions) on the Ministry of Finance (Department of Banking)—Recruitment of Probationary Officers in the Bank of India.

11.41/2 hrs.

STATEMENT RE. FALL IN PRICES
OF NATURAL RUBBER

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH): The price of natural rubber has been showing a downward trend since the middle of 1975. Representations have been received from rubber growers for allowing export of the surplus rubber in the country. The price at one stage touched a figure of Rs. 665/- per quintal against an average price of around Rs. 800/- per quintal till July 1975. A series of meetings were held in the Commerce Ministry with the growers of rubber and representatives of tyre/non-tyre manufacturers. It was found that the prices were sagging because of the inability of the manufacturing industry to maintain their rubber stocks for 2½ months which they were generally supposed to do. An appeal was, therefore, made to the industry to maintain the normal stock in order to give relief to the growers who were forced to hold abnormally high stocks. The representatives of the manufacturing industry indicated their financial problems in the tight credit conditions obtaining in the country at present which prevented them from holding such stocks. They already had a high inventory of finished goods held in stock by them. They were assured that their applications for credit facilities on being received will be forwarded to the Reserve Bank of India through the Finance Ministry for consideration. Only one application was received which was accordingly forwarded.

Though there was a temporary improvement in the price of rubber it started sagging again from December, 1975 and reached a low level of Rs. 680/- per quintal during the last few days. There were fresh representations from rubber growers for allowing export of rubber to relieve them of their stocks and also for stabilising rubber prices. This was also reiterated when I visited Kottayam on the 24th and 25th January, 1976.

On my return to Delhi, a meeting was immediately called by me with the Industrial Adviser, Directorate General of Technical Development and the Chairman, Rubber Board to review the demand and supply position of rubber. It was agreed that taking into consideration the anticipated consumption of rubber during 1975-76 by the industry, there would be some surplus of natural rubber after providing for the required buffer stock in the country for four months' requirements.

Government are seriously considering a solution to the problem of low price created by the surplus rubber and also the inability of the manufacturing industry to increase their off-take inspite of appeals by the Ministry. I expect that a decision would be taken in this regard shortly.

11.10 hrs.

QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE RE. ALLEGED ARREST OF KUMARI MANIBEN PATEL, M. P. AT DELHI.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS AND DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI OM MEHTA): Sir, according to a report received from the Delhi Administration, Delhi Police and information about the intended demonstration against emergency by some persons at Chandni