

Then, Shri Kali Prasad Pandey.

Then, Shri Amarsinh Rathawa...

Prof. K. V. Thomas.

Import of Natural Rubber

*179. PROF. K. V. THOMAS :
SHRI AMARSINH RATHAWA :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have authorised immediate import of natural rubber;

(b) if so, the quantity of natural rubber likely to be imported this year;

(c) whether it will have any effect on the growers of rubber and if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps being taken to increase the production of national rubber in the country to save foreign exchange ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN) : (a) to (d). A statement is given below.

Statement

(a) to (c). Yes, Sir. Likely imports of natural rubber in 1985-86 may be around 29,000 tonnes. Decisions on quantum, timing and release price of imported rubber take into account the need to maintain domestic prices at a steady level which is remunerative to the growers.

(d) The Rubber Board is providing subsidies, extension advisory support rain-gardening materials, high yielding planting materials etc. for growers and is also undertaking research on various aspects of rubber cultivation, with a view to increasing rubber production in the country.

PROF. K. V. THOMAS : In the statement laid on the Table of the House the Hon. Minister has said that 29,000 tonnes of natural rubber may be imported in the year 1985-86. Already the import of cocount oil in the form of industrial oil and under

OGL has already broken the backbone of the coconut cultivators in Kerala. Similarly, the decision to import natural rubber will be a great blow to the rubber-growers of Kerala. According to the information received the internal output of natural rubber during this year and next year will be sufficient for our internal use. If this information is correct, will this decision of the Government of India be reconsidered and, if you must import rubber, then will the imported rubber be put as a buffer stock ?

SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN :

There is definitely a shortage of rubber and there is a gap of 30,000 metric tonnes between the production and actual requirement. But I certainly agree with the Hon. Member that this imported rubber should be released when the indigenous rubber is not available or prices shoot up to more than Rs. 16,500/- per tonne.

PROF. K. V. THOMAS : In the last session during the discussion on the natural calamities, an assurance has been given on the floor of the House that plantation, especially, the rubber plantation in Kerala which has suffered a lot during the havoc, rain and landslides will be helped by the Rubber Board and other Commodity Boards. But now we find that assurance has not been kept. Will the Hon. Minister kindly look into it ?

SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN : As far as the assurance is concerned, a number of things have been done and if I read them, I will take the time of the House. So I can pass it on to the Hon. Member.

SHRI SURESH KURUP : I want to know whether the Government has received any memorandum from the tyre manufacturers association in this country regarding import of rubber and if so, how much quantity of rubber—they have demanded to be imported?

SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN : Sir, I have already mentioned that the difference between production and requirement is about 29,000 tonnes.

SHRI SURESH KURUP : Sir, I wanted to know whether any memorandum has been received by the Government from the tyre manufacturers.

SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN : They are also consumers of rubber and naturally they will need rubber.

SHRI SURESH KURUP : Sir, my question has not been replied. I wanted to know whether any memorandum has been received by the Government from the tyre manufacturers.

SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN : Sir, about the memorandum I will have to check up.

PROF. P. J. KURIEN : Sir, if you permit I want to ask a very pertinent question.

MR. SPEAKER : No. No. I have passed on to the next question. I am not going to make flexible my rule today otherwise it would hurt me.

PROF. P. J. KURIEN : It is a very pertinent question. May I put the question ?

MR. SPEAKER : Next time. You did once today.

PROF. N. G. RANGA : Sir, in view of our experience of yesterday and today, the maximum number of oral questions put down for a day should be increased.

MR. SPEAKER : The question List is over. I will go over the List again so that if any of the absent Members are now present they may put their questions. . . I find no such Member is present. We will take up the next item.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[Translation]

Export of Gold Ornaments

*162. **SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL :** Will the Minister of Commerce be pleased to state :

(a) how much gold ornaments were exported during 1985 till date;

(b) what is the contribution of India in the world market of gold ornaments; and

(c) what steps are being taken by Government to increase the export of gold ornaments from India keeping in view their increasing demand in the world market ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI ARJUN SINGH) : (a) Export of gold jewellery from India during April—October, 1985 are estimated to be of Rs. 53.13 crores.

(b) Indian exports of gold jewellery constitute a negligible share of the world trade in precious metals jewellery.

(c) Product and market development for gold jewellery exports in addition to liberalisation of policies governing the export production of gold jewellery are some of the important steps taken by the Government in this regard.

[English]

Misuse of Baggage Concession

*164 **SHRI MAHENDRA SINGH :** Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether large scale misuse of baggage concession under the baggage rules with proliferation of "Carrier" traffic was brought home by the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament ; and

(b) if so, the steps taken or being taken in the light thereof to prevent misuse of these rules by passengers undertaking frequent trips to neighbouring countries to take out and bring goods from and into the country which allow big margin of profit due to difference in prevailing prices thereof in the country and abroad ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARI) : (a) In its Seventh report presented to the Eighth Lok Sabha, the Public Accounts Committee had urged that Government should devise a system which would combine faster clearance of passengers with prevention of abuse of baggage rules.