

are not fit for such jobs. I request the hon'ble Minister concerned to please draw his attention over the matters. Then, Sir, with regard to the travel from Madras to Delhi, I wish to say something. So many of us, Members of Parliament, travel from Madras to Delhi and Delhi to Madras. We are the recipients of unwanted difficulties. We are considered as first-class passengers. We are faced with unwanted difficulties and problems. We have so many difficulties to encounter. We have to inhale so much of dust and dirt in the train that, I think, if we travel two or three times like this from Madras to Delhi, we will get a'l unwanted diseases, being forced to inhale so much of dust and dirt containing germs.

There is the facility of paying one-third of the fare and travelling in the air-conditioned first class coach. Hon'ble Members have not been given this facility. I wish to request the hon. Minister to consider this aspect and extend this facility to Members also. When we, who are considered to be first-class passengers face so many difficulties, you can easily imagine the difficulties of the third-class passengers. I also request you, Sir, to please do provide some more bogies with the fast passenger from Trichy to Renigunta via Villupuram, since the public are thrown on the platform every day for want of bogies. I also request to provide new construction of lines from Chidambaram to Trichy via Perambalur and a line from Ariyalam to Salem. I would also request the hon'ble Minister for Railways to look into the very condition of Katpadi Railway Junction where the very old godowns are being utilized as Railway Stations and it is lying without any improvement. I request that the Minister should take some improvements to remodel the station to suit the convenience of the public.

In conclusion, Sir, I want to express my regret in connection with the increase of fare by the railway

authorities. To say, Sir, the railway transport which was considered as a common man transport now has turned into a transport equivalent to a richer one. Sir, it can compete any ordinary transport both by way of carrying passengers as also goods. Comparing to the road transports whatever they pay for the lorry services, the Railway transport seems to be more higher and more delayed. I, therefore, request that proper action can be taken to rectify such things and reduce the rates at least up to 50 kms. and earn more money and let the transport be used for common purposes. I also request you, Sir, that there should not be any increase in fare for II Class ordinary passengers upto 50 kms, as such increase will certainly not give us any source of income, but it will affect the entire source of the income of the railway. As I said before the road traffic will take off such incomes of the railways. The increase of platform tickets is absolutely not correct and it should be deleted. Lease rents for the advertisements could be raised and charges for lockers instead of 50 nP. it can be raised to Re. 1.

I finally request the authorities to please go into the matters in detail and see that proper supervision, attention and care is paid by the staff as well as by the supervising authorities on the Railways. I thank you for giving me this opportunity to take part on this budget.

17.40 hrs.

IMPORT OF RUBBER*

Shri K. M. Abraham (Kottayam):
 Mr. Speaker, Sir, today at this time when I am initiating this discussion the small rubber growers of Kerala are conducting a satyagraha before the Raj Bhavan Trivandrum, Kerala. This is intended for pressing upon the Central Government the urgency of the matter, to redress the grievances, to stop the import

[Shri K. M. Abraham]

of rubber, to cancel import licences, to fix a reasonable price for rubber and also for purchasing 23 000 tons of accumulated rubber. Sir, we, the Members of Parliament from Kerala tried to raise this question during the last session itself. I had requested for a half an hour discussion for which permission was not granted. The situation has deteriorated considerably since then.

The net result of the import of rubber has been that the price of indigenous rubber went down considerably. This affects mostly the growers of Kerala who produce 95 per cent of the output in India. There is a strong misconception that rubber production is controlled by big planters. It, however, is a fact that 99.9 per cent of the persons engaged in rubber plantation are small rubber growers having 1 acre to 50 acres of rubber cultivation. More than 76,000 small rubber growers, 3 lakhs of workers and 25 lakhs of people are adversely affected by the sudden downfall in the price of rubber. Kerala Government also incurs heavy losses from its own rubber plantation and its tax revenue also has been reduced considerably as a result of this.

The price of rubber has a tremendous impact on the economy of the State as such. The livelihood of thousands of small growers, their families lakhs of workers and their families depend entirely on the fortune of rubber. Any fall in prices and consequent retardation of production would cause incalculable harm to the economy of the State. In 1965-66 when the price was Rs. 6½ per kilogram, 50 530 tons of rubber contributed Rs. 36½ crores to the State exchequer. Now, when the price is Rs. 3½ per kilogram, the State is likely to get only Rs. 16 crores.

As the House is aware, the rubber manufacturing industry in India is dominated by well-known foreign

monopolies. When the price of rubber reached Rs. 6½ these manufacturers approached the Government for increasing the import of rubber. The reasons they stated are: (1) there is a gap between production and actual consumption of rubber and (2) the world market price of rubber is much less. The plea that the production of rubber is far below the requirements is totally baseless. It is a fabricated story by the profit-mongering manufacturers, who are manipulating production and consumption figures deliberately to widen the gap between the two. Normally, two months' stock of raw rubbers is sufficient for the manufacturers but they deliberately take into consideration three months' stock with a view to creating an artificial deficit. If we calculate the requirements on the basis of two months' stock, there is a surplus of 8,000 tonnes.

Even if we suppose that there is a gap, how to overcome it? The Planning Commission has admitted that it would be done only through internal production. The targets fixed by the Planning Commission were fulfilled only in this sector; perhaps, the production was a bit higher than was anticipated. The majority of growth was in the small rubber plantations which cultivated 2 lakh acres. The Kerala Government also entered the field and planted thousands of acres. Therefore it would not be correct to say that the gap could be filled only by imports.

Then, as to the second question of world market prices being less than the Indian prices, why is it applied only to rubber? It is totally incorrect to take into account the international price of rubber since it is being controlled by the big monopoly combines to suit their requirements. From 1959 up to 1960 rubber prices were much lower than the world market prices. During 1960-61 alone the rubber growers lost on this account Rs. 12 crores.

Rubber being an agricultural product, while calculating its cost of production we have to take into consideration the value of land which is Rs. 5,000 per acre. Moreover, seven years of nursing of the plant costs roughly about Rs. 4,000. Tapping fertiliser and spraying etc. may come up to Rs. 800 per year. The crop per acre is 200 kilograms. The fertiliser price has risen by 30 per cent after the inquiry of the Tariff Commission. Taking this into account a reasonable price for rubber should be fixed by the Government so that rubber growers are not compelled to sell their estates at a loss.

The Tariff Commission was asked to inquire into the reasons of price increase of rubber at the instance of the rubber manufacturers. The inquiry is now complete and the report may come very soon. The Government should not take any hasty decision in the matter without consulting the Kerala Government. Moreover, it is not enough to inquire into the cost of production of raw rubber alone. The Tariff Commission must go into the entire cost structure of the rubber manufacture. But the Government is not doing this to protect the interest of foreign-owned rubber manufacturers. After all, raw rubber constitutes only one fifth of the ingredients of tyre. It should be noted that the prices of rayon and other products have gone up substantially higher.

When there is adequate stock of rubber in the country the Government succumbs to the blackmailing tactics of rubber manufacturers and imports rubber with a view to bringing down the price of rubber and add to the already high profit of rubber monopolists. This was done at a time when India was facing a big foreign exchange crisis. Crores of rupees of valuable foreign exchange were thus frittered away. This has also crushed the entire economy of small rubber growers and seriously hurt the livelihood of thousands of rubber workers. During the first

three months of this year itself 7,800 tonnes of rubber was imported with a total value of Rs. 2.97 crores.

The Government is taking shelter under the plea that there is no stock. It is a totally untrue statement. If the Government is prepared to purchase at least at the *ad hoc* price surely 23,000 tonnes of accumulated rubber could be purchased within two days. When we met the Commerce Minister, he told us that the *ad hoc* price was Rs. 410 per 100 kgs. Why the Government do not see that the entire stock is purchased at this price to protect the interests of the rubber growers? The question is that the manufacturers are not prepared to buy at this rate with the prices having gone down considerably. On the top of this, the rubber manufacturers further fleece the growers by lowering the gradation of the rubber and paying less price to them.

Only the foreign monopolies are the real beneficiaries who earned enormous profit during this period. Unless the import policy of the Government with regard to the rubber is radically changed, it will have disastrous consequences for the whole country.

I, therefore, emphatically state that the following steps should be taken by the Government without any delay to protect the interest of small rubber growers:

(1) Government should put a ban on imports of rubber and cancel all import licences.

(2) Government should see that the accumulated stock of rubber in the market is lifted at the *ad hoc* price fixed by the Government.

(3) Government should fix a reasonable price of rubber taking into consideration the cost of production of rubber.

Shri Vzaudevan Nair (Peermade):
Sir, here is a very clear case of the Government's profession and the case of practice which has nothing to do

[Shri Vasudevan Nair]

with the profession. They always talk so much about self-sufficiency, swadeshi and so on. Here is a specific case where you have indigenous rubber, accumulated stock of rubber, and, at the same time, you allow foreign exchange to the tune of Rs. 10 crores or even Rs. 15 crores to import rubber. The excuse given is that there was no rubber in the country at that time.

In answer to our Question, the Government has made a statement that there is no accumulated stock of rubber inside the country. Now, we give a challenge to the Government. We have got figures from the Rubber Board which is a statutory body and this Government, when they deal with problem of rubber production, always quote figures from the Rubber Board. Also, our information is that to answer this Question, the Rubber Board sent statistics to this Government and the Rubber Board said that there was accumulated stock upto the tune of 23,000 tonnes in the country. But strangely enough, we got an answer on the floor of the House that there is no stock. So, we should like to know which part of the story is correct. As a people coming from the State which produces 95 per cent of the Indian rubber, we can sell to the Government if they are prepared to purchase, nearly 25,000 tonnes of rubber, just now.

Shri Nambiar (Tiruchirappalli):
Within 24 hours.

Shri Vasudevan Nair: Within 24 hours.

The answer to our question is that they have again given import licences to the tune of nearly Rs. 3 crores to import 7,800 tonnes of rubber from Malaysia, from the international market.

Shri Banga (Srikakulam): They should never have done it.

Shri Vasudevan Nair: My point is that this import of rubber from

September, 1966 to March, 1967 had a purpose. The purpose was that the tyre manufacturers wanted a tariff commission—the rubber growers did not want a tariff commission—the tariff commission was appointed and at the time the tariff commission was going to recommend a floor price, they wanted to see that the market price was brought down and that there was a depression of the market price of rubber. So, coinciding with that particular time the Tariff Commission has gone into the costs of production and all that. They have allowed such imports as to see that the market prices are at the rock bottom and the market prices come down. They say there is a glut in the market. In spite of assurances by the Minister to some of us and in spite of assurances to the Kerala Agriculture Minister by the hon. Minister here, the fact remains that no company is making substantial purchases in spite of offers from the producers as well as dealers at the ad hoc price fixed by the Government. An ad hoc price was fixed behind the back of the growers; the growers were never consulted; the Government fixed an ad hoc price of Rs. 4,100 for one tonne of natural rubber. This was the purpose. I should like to get specific answers to the specific questions that we are putting before the Government.

When they decide to import rubber spending foreign exchange—we have such a foreign exchange crisis, you know that—we want to know whether they will really make a calculation of the real deficit and whether, for that purpose, they will consult the Rubber Board and take their advice and also consult the rubber growers as well as the Kerala Government. We should like to get an answer about future imports. According to us, there is absolutely no case for import of rubber in 1967-68 because even according to the Rubber Board, the gap is only a thousand tonnes I have no time;

otherwise, I would like to go into the figures of production, etc.

Mr. Speaker: You have already gone into so many details. You may conclude now.

Shri Vasudevan Nair: I am concluding.

Secondly, I should like to know this. I have an information that they have received the Tariff Commission's report. If that is so, I should like to know what are their recommendations and the basis of their recommendations. Then I should also like to know whether they will live upto the promise that they have given to the Kerala Agriculture Minister and to the MPs that they will see to it that all the accumulated stock is lifted at the *ad hoc* price. At present, the price is only Rs. 3,500 in the market. I should like to know what they are going to do to lift the entire stock at Rs. 4,100 at least.

Shri Nambiar: Yesterday they were asking for price. Today they are offering rubber. What a change within 24 hours!

Shri E. K. Nayanar (Palghat): We want to know whether it is correct that Government have allowed foreign monopolies to import synthetic rubber for Rs. 296½ lakhs and if so, who supported this import. In India there are five rubber monopolies—Dunlop, Good Year, Firestone, Ceat and Madras Rubber Factory which is in collaboration with West Germany. Kerala produces 95 per cent of rubber. We are sponsoring Swadeshi, but at the same time we are supporting these big foreign monopolies, those who are monopolising the rubber industry in India. About 75,000 small growers of Kerala are suffering due to the accumulation of 20,000 tonnes of rubber, but the Government are supporting the monopolies. From September 1966 to January 1967, i.e., during five months, the monopolies imported 16,676 tonnes of rubber. But

at the same time the Kerala rubber rate has been reduced. The foreign monopolies are importing at Rs. 5 per kilo.

Mr. Speaker: All this was stated by the previous speaker.

Shri E. K. Nayanar: I want to know whether the Government will revise their policy of allowing the foreign monopolies to import synthetic rubber and help the Kerala rubber growers—about 75,000 growers are suffering. We want to know whether Government will take immediate steps in that direction.

श्री एचु लिम्बे (मुंनेर) : मैं यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि व्यापार मंत्रालय जब रबर के बारे में जब अपनी आयात-नीति निश्चित करता है, तो वह सारे नुष्यों के आधार पर करता है या इस का कोई कार्पनिक आधार रहता है। यह तो कच्चे रबर की बात है, लेकिन कुछ साल पहले मंत्रालय ने स्टेट ट्रेडिंग कारपोरेशन की मार्केट टायरों का आयात किया। उस वक़्त मंत्रालय का कहना था कि देश में टायरों की बड़ी कमी है, जब कि कारखानों के मालिकों का यह कहना था कि कोई कमी नहीं है। मंत्रालय ने बड़े पैमाने पर टायर मंगाए और ख़राब टायर मंगाए। बाह्र में उस के सामने यह समस्या खड़ी हो गई कि उन टायरों को कैसे बेचा जाये। मंत्रालय ने जबरदस्ती कर के उन टायरों को विभिन्न ट्रान्सपोर्ट कारपोरेशंस को बेचा। और, यह मामला भ्रमण है। आज मंत्रालय कच्चा रबर आयात कर रहा है, जिस-का नतीजा यह है कि रबर पैदा करने वाले जो हमारे बनीचे वाले छोटे लोग हैं, वे आज तबाह हो रहे हैं। मैं मंत्री महोदय से यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि हमारे देश में जो उत्पादन है, जो रबर की आवश्यकता है और जो कमी है, क्या इस के आधार पर यह आयात किया गया है? यदि हाँ, तो आईन्दा के लिए मैं यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या सरकार आयात करके कच्चे रबर

[श्री मधु लिमये]

पर देश में कुछ स्टॉक रखेगी और जब दाम बहुत ऊँचा उठने लगे, तब उन स्टॉक्स को बेचेगी ? जब तक ऐसा नहीं होता है, तब तक क्या सरकार इस तरह के अमर्शावित और अकीर्णित धायात को बन्द करने के लिए कोई कार्यवाही करेगी ।

Shri A. Sreedharan (Badagara): This is only one among the many instances of the most unimaginative, unscientific and irresponsible import policy of the Government of India. They never make a survey of our import necessities....

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member should put his question straight and give some time to the hon. Minister to reply.

Shri A. Sreedharan: I am preparing the background so that the hon. Ministers will understand because they do not study things.

Mr. Speaker: Why should there be any preface?

Shri A. Sreedharan: I am coming to my question.

Hon. Members have pointed out that there is an accumulated stock of 23,000 metric tons of rubber with the traders and the cultivators. In reply to a question put by me, the hon. Minister said in this House that there was an acute shortage of rubber, which is not borne out by facts. Even, according to the figures estimated by the Rubber Board, the annual shortage of rubber in this country is only 1000 metric tons, and to meet that shortage Government are saying that they have given import permits to the tune of 8000 tons of rubber. This has been done to help the monopoly interests and their foreign masters and collaborators.

In view of these facts, I would like to ask Government whether they will

take immediate steps to freeze the quantity of imported rubber in this country till such time as the accumulated stocks with the cultivators are lifted. Secondly, will they form an advisory board consisting of the rubber cultivators, the representatives of the Rubber Board and representatives of the State Governments in those States where rubber is cultivated abundantly, and consult them before fixing the quota of import? What steps will the Government of India take to intensify rubber cultivation and what sort of help do they intend to give to the poor small rubber cultivators so that the deficit may be wiped out and this country would become self-sufficient in rubber?

Shri F. F. Esthese (Movattupuzha): How much of foreign exchange is being spent on the import of the synthetic and natural rubber? Will the Government take immediate steps to remove the glut in the rubber market and to lift the accumulated stock at the shortest possible time and at reasonable prices?

Shri Vasudevam Nair: Where is the Cabinet Minister disappeared? We are happy the Deputy Minister is here, but the Cabinet Minister was here five minutes back. If he had some other urgent business, I could understand; otherwise, he could listen and understand what the Members are saying.

The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Commerce (Shri Shaik Qureshi): I have a submission to make. My hon. friend is a leader of the proletariat. I am also from the proletariat. Why should he insist that the Minister should reply and not the Deputy Minister? You want a reply, you can have it from me. (Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker: Anyway the Minister is here, he is replying.

Shri E. K. Nayamar: It is unfair to the rubber industry.

Shri Shafi Qureshi: It is not a rubber question. It is a Ministers question. (Interruptions).

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy (Kendrapara): The members only feel that Sheo Narain is no substitute for the Cabinet Minister!

Shri Sheo Narain (Basti): There is no quorum in the House.

Mr. Speaker: After such a discussion, we should not close without hearing the reply.

Shri Shafi Qureshi: As the House is aware, indigenous production of natural rubber and synthetic rubber is not adequate to meet the full requirements of the rubber goods manufacturing industry. Imports to the extent necessary to cover the gap between supply and demand, have been allowed every year.

Owing to the acute shortage of foreign exchange in 1965-66, imports of rubber had to be severely restricted that year. This resulted in shortage of rubber in the country. The shortage was further aggravated by a setback in the production of synthetic rubber due to a fire in the only factory producing it.

जी मरु लिमिटेड : मंत्री महोदय पहले से जो माचन लिख कर लाये हैं, वह उसी को पढ़ रहे हैं। यहाँ जो कुछ कहा गया है उस का वह जवाब नहीं दे रहे हैं। इसलिए यह पक्का है कि वह माचन टेबल पर रख दिया जाये, जिस से सदन का टाइन कराव न हो।

Shri Shafi Qureshi: I am also going to deviate from the text.

Mr. Speaker: Like the questions you put with background, he is also giving the background. After that he will come to the points mentioned by the hon. Members.

Shri N. K. Samant (Nagaur): Will you see to it that he replies?

Mr. Speaker: After all, when the hon. Minister says so, you must accept it.

Shri Shafi Qureshi: As a result, from about the middle of 1965 till up to September, 1966 the price of indigenous rubber rose to abnormally high levels reaching at one time a peak of about Rs. 7,000 per tonne as against the price of about Rs. 3,200 per tonne obtaining before June, 1965 and the floor price of Rs. 3,200 per tonne.

Since rubber is the main raw material for a number of essential industries, the scarcity of rubber and consequent high prices were adversely affecting the consumers. This had to be remedied. Therefore, after a careful assessment of the situation, Government decided to issue licences for the import of about 30,000 tonnes during 1966-67. This was spread over seven instalments, taking into account the supply and demand situation on each occasion. On examination of the matter in regard to the stocks of rubber, it has been seen that the total stocks in the country were more or less normal. However, it is a fact that the off-take of natural rubber by manufacturers declined substantially during September to December, 1966, which was due to the very high prices prevailing during that period. As a result of the imports allowed by Government during 1966-67, the price of indigenous raw rubber, which had reached abnormally high levels owing to restricted imports in the previous year, came down to about Rs. 4,100 and currently stands at about Rs. 3,800 per tonne.

Shri Vasudevan Nair: Not even that.

Shri Shafi Qureshi: The hon. Members from Kerala have made four suggestions. One is that we should ban the import of rubber; second is that we should cancel all the licences

[Shri Shafi Qureshi]

which we have issued so far; thirdly, the stocks of rubber which are lying with the growers should be lifted and fourthly, fixation of rubber prices. These are laudable suggestions. For one or two points, I shall refer to the material that I have with me and the other points, I will answer orally.

No fresh licence for import of rubber has been issued during the last month and a half; also no licences for import of rubber have been revalidated during this period. But for one manufacturing firm which had a strike in their factory from the 3rd March to the 16th May, 1967, the manufacturers have purchased rubber during April and May 1967. The tyre manufacturers have also given an assurance to Government that they are prepared to purchase their requirements of natural rubber from indigenous sources provided it is made available at a price of Rs. 4,100 per tonne f.o.b. Cochin.

The question of fixing a fair price for rubber has been referred to the Tariff Commission. I expect to receive the report of the Commission in a few days. I am, therefore, inclined to await their report before deciding on the future course of action rather than taking a decision immediately.

I might add that Government fully appreciates the important role that rubber plays in the economy of the country. At the same time, the Government must also take into account the vital role that some of the rubber products play in that economy. The price of rubber has to be fixed at a level which would be equitable not only to the growers but to the consumers as well.

As regards the licences which have already been issued, I have informed the House that we are not revalidating the old licences. Government has taken this step deliberately to see that the indigenous rubber available in the country is lifted by the manufacturers. Recently, I have received

information that the Dunlop rubber company has taken 1490 tons in April and 1120 tons in May at a price which varies from Rs. 4,092 to Rs. 3,964 a ton. Government gave a directive to the manufacturers that we do not want to revalidate their old licences or issue new licences unless the indigenous stocks available in the country were exhausted by the manufacturers first. It is in view of that direction that the manufacturers had started taking from the cumulative stocks from these areas.

As regards the price, my hon. friends know that the Tariff Commission has gone into the whole process...

Shri Vasudevan Nair: I might give you a bill showing the Dunlop's prices—they purchase at Rs. 370 or Rs. 363 or Rs. 357. That is what this bill shows.

Shri Shafi Qureshi: That might be of a different kind; I am talking of RMA grade I; the price is Rs. 4,092 and for lower grades, about Rs. 3,800 and so on.

Shri Vasudevan Nair: That is another trick. No producer will get that price.

Shri Shafi Qureshi: I have said that the matter is before the Tariff Commission and when the report is received by the Government, the hon. Members in this House who are interested in rubber plantations will be consulted. But I must make one point clear to the hon. Members. High prices will destroy the Kerala rubber industry. If you say you should get Rs. 7,000 a ton, the old and uneconomic and useless holdings will not be cut and there will be no incentive to the growers... (Interruptions.) We cannot think of certain tyres and tubes only. We should make our prices competitive so that our goods sell in foreign markets. That is possible if rubber prices are kept at the proper level. If we pay Rs. 7,000 a ton to a rubber grower the planter will never cut the uneconomic units; he would

prefer to get whatever he could from them because the price is high. Low prices too are not good to the growth of the industry. Because, then the growers will not have any incentive to grow more rubber and have replantations in the old plantations. So, between the two, abnormally high price and the low price, we have to strike the mean.

Mr. Speaker: You have not covered the point as to what is the difference between the imported price and the local price.

Shri Shafi Qureshi: I am coming to that.

Shri E. K. Nayanar: Should not the huge profits of foreign monopolists be cut out?

Mr. Speaker: Let us hear the Minister on one or two important matters before we adjourn the House.

Shri Nambiar: There is a specific case. He says it is 3,900. But here it is 370. One more zero is added.

Shri Shafi Qureshi: My hon. friends have confidence in the Rubber Board. They have been quoting figures from the Rubber Board, and I am quoting the figures from the same Board. And they have given entirely different figures. First of all, there has been a divergence of views expressed by Shri Abraham and Shri Nair. One said the supply is good, so as to meet the demand fully; the other said there is some gap and that we must enquire as to what the gap is. So, first of all, let there be reconciliation between the two Members, and if there is deficiency, whether there is deficiency in the supply of rubber or not, that will have to be gone into thoroughly.

Then, I am coming to the main point. For the imported rubber which we are importing from Malaysia and Ceylon, the landed cost in the factories is Rs. 4,100, while this rubber is now selling in Kerala and other States, at

about Rs. 4,700. Naturally, we have offered them—the growers, a price which is quite reasonable, Rs. 4,100 per ton, and we are trying to persuade the manufacturers to lift rubber at that price. Please do not be under the misconception that—this Government will be dictated by any monopolies or monopolists, and our prime interest is to see that the grower gets a reasonable price and the consumer does not suffer because of high prices.

The second thing we have in mind is that the consumer at the other end gets the end-product at a proper and reasonable price. That can be done only with your co-operation. If the hon. Member says that the price of rubber should not shoot up but should be maintained at a proper level, that can only be done when we take into consideration the Tariff Commission report.

There is one point which Shri Madhu Limaye had made, and that is, how are we going to improve the situation. So long as this gap between the supply and demand remains, we have to import. We are not going to starve the industry. Unfortunately, the only synthetic plant in the country got burnt and naturally that deficiency was there. We have to meet that deficiency by importing some quantities of rubber. If the hon. Members are in a position to give us details, that there is more supply than the demand in the country, the Government will consider it. We are not after all lured by import. It is our policy to see that more and more indigenous rubber is made available and imports are cut. If there is any suggestion, if there are reliable figures given and if there are difficulties, Government will consider them. We have an open mind in the matter.

12-15 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Friday, June 2, 1967/Jyulstha 12, 1967 (Saka).