

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Choubey....
(Interruptions).

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Rubber comes from Kerala. So Kerala members may be given preference.

SHRI E. BALANANDAN: In part (b) of the hon. Minister's reply he says that the government will review from time to time the import of rubber. Can the hon. Minister give an assurance to us that this year rubber will not be imported into India?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: I cannot give a blanket assurance. What I told the other day I can reiterate—that we are watching the situation and definitely we would not like to see that the prices crash. But what is the present position of the market today? Rubber prices are going up, they are not going down.

PROF. P. J. KURIEN: From the hon. Minister's reply it is clear that 47000 tonnes were imported from 1978 onwards but the lifting of the companies seems to be very sluggish. The reason obviously should be that the quantity imported was calculated on a wrong basis.

I would rather request the Minister and would like to know from him whether he would make an objective study of the quantity of indigenous production in the country and on the basis of that will he review the policy of imports? And if he is convinced that the indigenous production is sufficient to meet our demands in the country, will he impose a total ban on the import of rubber?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: My whole difficulty is that whatever study we make, the hon. Member does not find it objective. I mentioned that the total requirements of the country are 175,000 tonnes. When I was replying to the debate I mentioned that our total production is in the order of 150,000—155,000 tonnes. Therefore, there is a gap. But the hon. Member does not agree with that point of view.

Therefore, I do not know what should be the criteria for an objective study.

PROF. P. J. KURIEN: The problem is that you are calculating the internal demand assuming that all the factories will work throughout the year and that there will be no power shortage and in that way, an exaggerated calculation is made. In fact there will be strikes in the factories and there will be power cuts. So naturally your calculation of the internal demand is exaggerated.

SHRI XAVIER ARAKAL: Is it not a fact that the Government of Kerala and the Rubber Board, both of them, were equally guilty of not informing the Central Government about the actual production and demand of rubber in the country.... (Interruptions). Let me finish. Will the Minister categorically make a statement that rubber will not be imported to the detriment of the rubber-growers from Kerala and the country?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: As regards the latter part of the hon'ble Member's question, I have already assured that import will not take place as it affects the interests of the growers and affects the indigenous availability.

Protest from Buyers of jute from Australia

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*910. SHRI CHANDRA BHAN
ATHARE PATIL:

SHRI BALASHEB VIKHE
PATIL:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether he is aware that some big buyers of jute goods from Australia have protested in regard to the supply of jute cargoes with so much dirt that they had to quarantine the containers and fumigate them before deliveries could be taken by the buyers, thereby incurring heavy demurrage expenses during the process.

(b) if so, whether any enquiry in the matter has been made; and

(c) what has been the finding thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND STEEL AND MINES (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) A representative of the Australian buyers has met the Jute Commissioner on 2nd July to bring to his notice some complaints of this nature.

(b) and (c). The Jute Commissioner has taken up the matter with the Shipping Corporation of India. The SCI have stated that survey reports of independent Cargo surveyors in Australia and original documents would be necessary to form a judgement regarding allegations made.

SHRI CHANDRA BHAN ATHARE PATIL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in view of the answer given by the hon'ble Minister may I know the amount of damage and demurrage expenses caused by this transaction and, if so, from whom the same expenses have been recovered?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Sir, it is difficult to determine the extent of damage because all the figures are not available with us. I can give the figures about the claims that the buyers have made. But my difficulty is if I quote the figures about the claims the buyers will utilise the same to substantiate their demands. That is why I will request the hon'ble Member not to press for these figures. Let us have the detailed figures and let the Shipping Corporation of India examine them.

SHRI CHANDRA BHAN ATHARE PATIL: In view of the difficulty expressed by the Minister I do not

press for the figures. I want to ask the hon'ble Minister whether the Commissioner had asked the Shipping Corporation of India to obtain necessary records as mentioned in the answer?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Yes, Sir. Secretary has written to the Vice-Chairman of the Shipping Corporation of India to look into it and have an enquiry.

** (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing is to be recorded without my permission.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Investment by Unit Trust of India in Mackinnon Mackenzie and Co. Ltd., Bombay

*901. DR. A. U. AZMI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state;

(a) whether it is a fact that Unit Trust of India has invested a large amount in the Mackinnon Mackenzie and Company Limited, Bombay, and has also appointed a Director as its nominee on the Board of the Company;

(b) if so, the total amount of such investment;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the Company is trying to bring about change in the management by transfer of shares in the Company so far held by foreigners; and

(d) if so, what steps are being taken to prevent such transfer of shares by the company, consequent transfer and/or change in the management of the company and to protect the interest of Government?