

(c) the impact of modernisation on employment in jute industry?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES AND CO-OPERATION (SHRI MOHAN DHARIA): (a) to (c). At the instance of the Government of India, the Industrial Development Bank of India has formulated a "Soft Loan Scheme" to provide financial assistance on concessional terms to production units in certain selected industries including jute for modernisation, replacement and renovation of their machinery and equipments to enable the units in these industries to increase their productivity and competitiveness. No discussion with the Trade Union was held. The scheme does not involve any retrenchment.

Problems of Rubber Growers in the State of Kerala

*203. SHRI G. M. BANATWALLA:
SHRI SKARIAH THOMAS:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES AND CO-OPERATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether rubber growers in Kerala State have not been getting suitable price for their rubber products; and

(b) if so, whether Government propose to explore new rubber markets in foreign countries for the betterment of rubber growers in that State?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES AND CO-OPERATION (SHRI MOHAN DHARIA): (a) The price of rubber has been fluctuating. In August, 1974 it went up to Rs. 1,012 per quintal for lot rubber (grades 3, 4 and 5) as against the minimum price of Rs. 520 per quintal of grade I rubber (RMA 1-X) fixed by the Government. In October, 1976 the lot rubber price came down to Rs. 520 per quintal. At

present the price is ruling around Rs. 620 per quintal.

(b) Yes, Sir. The STC has already exported about 14,000 tonnes of rubber mainly to Japan, Singapore and West Germany. They have also effected exports of rubber to Yugoslavia and Rumania which are new markets. They are also exploring new markets.

Scheme for strengthening Consumer Cooperative Societies

1643. SHRI K. SURYANARAYANA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES AND CO-OPERATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have drawn up a central scheme for strengthening consumer Co-operative Societies in the country; and

(b) if so, the main features thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES AND CO-OPERATION (SHRI MOHAN DHARIA): (a) There is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme in the Fifth Plan for strengthening Consumer Cooperative Societies.

(b) The main features of the scheme are given below:—

(i) The scheme envisages development of the Consumer Cooperative movement under an integrated All India plan of action involving:

(aa) establishment of new department stores and retail outlets in selected areas;

(bb) accelerated development of existing institutions which have a good potential for growth, on sound lines; and

(cc) strengthening the wholesale sector at the level of State