

(d) whether Government have released funds for the Board's plantation loans to the tea estates?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) and (b) As per section 29(2) of the Tea Act the Accounts of the Tea Board shall be audited every year by Auditors appointed by the Central Government. Accordingly the accounts of the Board are audited every year by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India.

(c) The Government is not aware of any such complaint.

(d) The Government have sanctioned a sum of rupees twenty-five lakhs towards Tea Board's Tea Plantation Finance Scheme for B E 1982-83. The amount in question is being released.

#### Import of Rubber

140. SHRI SURAJ PRASAD: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the import of rubber has been decanalised;

(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that it will lead to tremendous fall in the prices of indigenous rubber which will severely hit the peasants; and

(c) what is the quantity of rubber imported in 1980-81 and 1981-82 and how much is likely to be imported this year?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Quantities of natural rubber imported during 1980-81 and 1981-82 are 9,250 tonnes and 42,750 tonnes respectively. During 1982-83, the State Trading Corporation of India has been authorised to import 40,000 tonnes of natural rubber.

#### Export to Soviet Union and import from USA

141. SHRI G. C. BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what are the reasons for more exports to the Soviet Union and more imports from the U.S.A. as a result of which benefits of trade from the Soviet Union are transferred to the U.S.A.; and

(b) what steps Government propose to take to stop this?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) and (b) India's trade with the USSR is conducted under bilateral balanced basis with payments in non-convertible Indian Rupees. Trade with U.S.A. is conducted on multilateral basis with payments in free currency. The system of trading with the two countries being such, the question of transfer of trade benefits derived from the Soviet Union to the U.S.A. does not arise.

#### Special fund to modernise textile industry

142. SHRI U. R. KRISHNAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to create a special fund for the modernisation of textile industry;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard; and

(c) whether it is a fact that textile industry is suffering from shortage of credit facilities and if so, what steps Government propose to take to meet the credit requirement?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) and (b) A.