

[17 August, 2000]

RAJYA SABHA

Floor price for Rubber

2356. SHRI KHAGEN DAS: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have not declared floor price for rubber, so far; and

(b) if so, what are the effective measures Government intend to take *to save* the poor rubber growers of the country?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) Since the price of rubber is determined by market forces of demand and supply, fixation of floor price of rubber has not been considered necessary.

To ensure a remunerative price to rubber producers, Government of India through STC has made market intervention to procure Natural Rubber on Government account. The STC has already procured 40,217 MT of Natural Rubber till date and the procurement is continuing. To enhance the consumption of indigenous rubber Government has also imposed a ban on import of Natural Rubber under the Advance Licence Scheme w.e.f. 20.2.1999.

Production of Salt in Surendranagar Constituency

2357. SHRI BACHANI LEKHRAJ: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether salt is produced in constituency of Surendranagar, particularly Taluka Dasada, Patri and Dhangadra;

(b) whether the Government are exporting the salt to foreign countries;

(c) whether wages of the labour class have been increased accordingly;

(d) if so, how much;

(e) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(f) the other incentives being given to labour class?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Export of salt is permitted under OGL. The Government of India is, however, not directly engaged in its export.

(c) and (d) The Government of Gujarat has been periodically increasing the wages of salt labourers keeping in view the rise in the living index as per the provisions of Minimum Wages Act. The daily wages have been revised every six monthly as under:

From 01.10.1997	Rs. 58.50 basic
From 01.04.1998	Rs. 58.50 basic+3.20 D.A.
From 01.10.1998	Rs. 58.50 basic+5.60 D.A.
From 01.04.1999	Rs. 58.50 basic+12.50 D.A.
From 01.10.1999	Rs. 58.50 basic+14.60 D.A.
From 01.04.2000	Rs. 58.50 basic+16.80 D.A.

(e) Do not arise, in view of answer at (c) and (d) above.

(f) Financial assistance is provided by the Government for various labour welfare amenities, such as construction of rest shelters, providing drinking water facilities, organising health camps, etc. for the benefit of the labourers engaged in the salt industry.

Rate of Inflation

2358. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 5185 given in the Rajya Sabha on 15th May, 2000 and state:

(a) whether the comparative figures in the rate of inflation for the whole and the new series are obtained only on the basis of change of base year or the impact of additionality of the commodity basket and change in the relative weightage of the commodity groups have also being taken into consideration; and

(b) if so, the details of the different rates of inflation calculated