

(b) whether it is also a fact that three of the full-time directors have also resigned from the Corporation and their posts also remain vacant; and

(c) if so, since when these posts have been lying vacant and what are the reasons for the delay in making appointments to these top posts in the Corporation?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE (SHRI A. C. GEORGE): (a) No, Sir. Shri P. Sahai, Chairman of the Projects & Equipment Corporation was, as an interim measure, appointed as Chairman of the State Trading Corporation immediately the post of the Chairman of the State Trading Corporation fell vacant. The question of appointment of a regular Chairman is under consideration.

(b) Two Directors of the S.T.C. who belonged to the IA. & A.S. reverted to their parent cadre on the 10th August, 1972. The resultant two vacancies of Directors have since been filled-

(c) Does not arise.

FALL IN RUBBER PRICES

104. SHRI BALACHANDRA MENON: Will the Minister of FOREIGN TRADE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been a sharp fall in the rubber prices in recent months;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and (c) the steps taken to arrest the fall in rubber prices?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE (SHRI A. C. GEORGE): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. There has been fall in the rubber prices in recent months, which is mainly due to the commencement of tapping of trees after monsoon and consequent increase in supply position and low off-take of lower grades by manufacturers.

(c) State Trading Corporation of India has been directed to step up purchase of rubber to the level of

3,000 tonnes per month so as to absorb the entire quantity offered by small growers through Co-operative Societies. The Government also directed the manufacturers to purchase and keep stocks to the extent of 3 months of their requirements by the tyre-manufacturers and 2 months by non-tyre manufacturers. We have placed at the disposal of Kerala Government necessary finance to make additional purchase of rubber from the small growers.

DEVELOPMENT OF UDAIPUR AERODROME

105. SHRIMATI LAKSHMI KUMARI CHIINDAWAT: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to develop and modernise the Udaipur aerodrome; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (DR. KARAN SINGH): (a) and (b) Work on the extension of the terminal building at Udaipur aerodrome is already in progress, and the estimate of expenditure for extension and strengthening the runway to make it suitable for regular operations by Boeing 737 aircraft is under consideration.

SETTING UP OF AN AIR-LANDING PORT AT THEKKADI IN KERALA

106. DR. K. MATHEW KURIAN: SHRI M. R. VENKATARAMAN:

Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any request from the Kerala Government to set up a small Airlanding Port at Thekkadi Tourist Centre in Kerala;

(b) if so, when the request was made; and

(c) the action taken by Government in the matter?