

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (DR. KARAN SINGH): (a) and (b) No hangar at Palam Airport was struck by lightning on the 13th September 1967. A news agency report which appeared in a section of the press on the 14th September 1967 that an Indian Airlines Corporation hangar at Palam airport was struck by lightning and some aircraft were damaged, was incorrect. This news item was contradicted by the Corporation which issued a Press Release on the 14th September 1967. What had happened was only an electric short circuit which necessitated the mains being switched off till the short circuit was rectified. There was no damage to any aircraft or hangar.

†PAKISTANI INFILTRATION INTO ASSAM

106. **SHRI S. K. D. PALIWAL:** Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the report of the Shillong correspondent of the English Weekly 'Current' published in the first two columns of page eight of its issue dated the 14th October, 1967 wherein it has been stated that Pakistan is sending infiltrators into Assam in a planned way; and

(b) if so, whether any effective steps have been taken by Government to check these infiltrators?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI Y. B. CHAVAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Vigilance has been stepped up and patrolling has been intensified. These and other measures taken by Government to secure the country's borders in the Eastern Region have had the desired result.

491. [Transferred to the 28th November, 1967.]

†Transferred from the 21st November, 1967.

CALLING ATTENTION TO A MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

UNUSUAL FALL IN THE PRICE OF INDIGENOUS RUBBER

SHRI P. K. KUMARAN (Andhra Pradesh): May I call the attention of the Minister of COMMERCE to the unusual fall in the price of indigenous rubber, in spite of the fixation of price of rubber by the Government?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI MOHD. SHAFI QURESHI): As honourable Members are aware, the Commerce Minister had made a statement in this House on the 18th August, 1967 announcing Government's decision accepting the fair price of Rs. 415 per 100 kgs. f.o.b. Cochin, recommended by the Tariff Commission for indigenous or/and rubber of RMA Grade I quality, the prices of other grades being fixed with corresponding adjustments. This decision was also notified in a Resolution published subsequently in the Gazette of India.

Following this announcement, the Government kept a close watch on the market behaviour of indigenous natural rubber and it was noticed that the market prices were falling steadily to levels far below the fair price announced. To safeguard the interests of the growers, therefore, Government decided on 20-10-1967 that the fair price of Rs. 415 per 100 kgs. of natural rubber should be notified as the statutory minimum price for RMA Grade I rubber with appropriate price differential for other grades, thus making transactions below the minimum illegal and punishable with imprisonment or fine or both. At the same time, the maximum price of RMA Grade I was fixed at Rs. 416 per 100 kgs.

In order to see that the demand for rubber also picks up, Government have suspended the issue of fresh licences and revalidation of old licences of/or import of rubber since April, 1967. As a result of these steps, Government expect that the demand for rubber will pick up in the next few weeks.

SHRI P. K. KUMARAN: Although new fresh licences are not being issued, the capacity of the existing licences is still there to make rubber available at