

storage of edible oils. They have been successful to some extent at places like Bombay and Kandla. The reasons for STC's not being able to broad-base their hiring activities completely are the inability of new entrepreneurs to acquire land at certain ports, risk involved in making investment in storage tanks without tie-up arrangements for their use and the uncertainties associated with imports of edible oils through different ports.

STC has been encouraging new entrepreneurs in providing their storage tanks by way of waiving earnest money deposits for tenders any by taking up with Deptt. of Civil Supplies for permission for using storage tanks of vanaspati units to break the monopoly of non-vanaspati storage tank owners.

Impact of Drought on Rubber in Kerala

7067. PROF. P.J.KURIEN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the impact of drought which occurred last year in Kerala will have its impact on rubber cultivations after a few years;

(b) whether any study has been conducted to assess the long term impact of drought on rubber;

(c) if so, the findings thereof; and

(d) the steps proposed to be taken to eliminate the impact of drought on rubber?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI NARAYAN DATT TIWARI) : (a) to (d). As per the study conducted to assess the impact of drought on rubber the major effect of the drought is on initial establishment and depending upon the severity of the drought vacancies to the tune of 50% have been observed. The drought in certain cases will

affect the growth rate and the immaturity period will get lengthened. Studies have also been conducted on drought tolerance and susceptibility on different clones of rubber. The Rubber Board has approved a proposal to give financial assistance to farmers for water conservation measures and irrigation. The research institute has given priority to breeding and selection of drought tolerant clones.

Setting up of New Export Processing Zones

7068. SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are contemplating to sanction some new Export Processing Zones (EPZs) in 1988-89; and

(b) if so, the number of such EPZs proposed to be sanctioned in 1988-89?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI NARAYAN DATT TIWARI) : (a) and (b). Government have agreed in principle to the location of a possible export processing zone at Visakhapatnam. The modalities of implementing the possibility have to be worked with reference to the relevant techno-economic considerations. There is no other proposal to sanction new Export Processing Zones.

Sophisticated Looms From USSR

7069. SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether National Textile Corporation proposes to buy sophisticated looms from the Soviet Union;

(b) if so, the cost of those looms includ-