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**Title:** Regarding need to protect the interests of palm cultivators particularly in Karnataka – Laid.

SHRI G.S. BASAVARAJ (TUMKUR) : To make the country self-sufficient in edible oil, the Government of India decided to promote oil palm cultivation. Many farmers in Karnataka had switched over to Oil Palm cultivation in the hope that their produce will find a better market in the State, in comparison to indigenous oilseeds. But the oil palm growers are finding it difficult to market their produce (fresh fruit bunches of Oil Palm) because of lack of demand. This is due to rampant imports of edible oil (including palm oil from Malaysia) at very low duty rates. In order to save the oil palm cultivators in Karnataka, the Government had initiated market intervention for Fresh Fruit Bunches of Oil Palm in the market to the extent of only 1160 MTs under minimum support price. The State Government has already requested the Centre, almost a year back in this regard.

I urge the Central Government to extend and enhance the quantitative ceiling for procurement of Fresh Fruit Bunches of Oil Palm to 5000 MTs till 31.03.2001.