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Title: Demand for assistance for re-plantation of the major crops like coconut, coffee, tea, pepper and cardamom in Kerala.

SHRI K. FRANCIS GEORGE (IDUKKI): Sir, as has been pointed out by my colleagues from Kerala, Kerala is facing an unprecedented situation in which more than a hundred farmers have committed suicide. The districts of Vayanad, Idukki and Palakkad have been mainly affected. It has been admitted by the hon. Minister of Agriculture that Kerala's case is a peculiar case and he has agreed to a discussion on this.

The main point is that because of the price fall of cashew and spices, the farmers of Kerala have been adversely affected. You know that Kerala's cultivation is mainly of these crops. These crops require massive re-plantation and rejuvenation and funds have to be allocated for that. Without liberal Central assistance nothing is going to happen. You know very well the condition of the State's finances.

Natural rubber used to get fair prices but that too has now started sliding down because of a recent decision of the Government. The Commerce Ministry recently decided to remove port restrictions on imported rubber. Earlier, rubber used to come only through Kolkata and Vishakaptanam ports. Now, anybody can import rubber through any port and this has caused a massive cut in the price of natural rubber. This is going to lead to a massive collapse of the total agriculture sector of the State of Kerala. So, I request the Government to give a thought for providing massive assistance or a massive package for re-plantation of the major crops like coconut, coffee, tea, pepper and cardamom. There has to be a massive re-plantation with Government assistance and steps have to be taken to re-impose the port restriction as far as import of natural rubber is concerned.

Thank you very much.