

out. Having worked out the charges they prepare the price lists.

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI C. M. STEPHEN): They are losing because they are not charging the higher rates.

SHRI CHANDULAL CHANDRAKAR: The ITDC may be losing not because of this factor only.

SHRI A. NEELALOHITHADASAN: May I know whether Government has taken steps to see that the wastage is avoided in the hotels.

MR. SPEAKER: Next Question. Question No. 401.

Ban on import of Cloves and Nutmeg

*401 **SHRI GEORGE JOSEPH MUNDACKAL:** Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have permitted the import of cloves and nutmeg;

(b) whether Government are aware that all these commodities are already surplus in our country from our own production and the prices here are substantially lower than those prevailing in international market; and

(c) if so, whether Government propose to impose a ban on import of all these commodities?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND STEEL AND MINES (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government have no such information.

(c) No, Sir.

SHRI GEORGE JOSEPH MUNDACKAL: Is it a fact that some two or three years back nutmeg and cloves were priced at Rs. 60 and 400 a kg. respectively? Now the price has come down to Rs. 17 and 130 per kilo—a

reduction to 30 per cent. There is thus a reduction to 30 per cent in their prices over the original prices. We are finding it difficult to get foreign exchange. I can understand if you are importing some medicines for treating cancer. That is all right. But for spices like nutmeg and cloves, if you are importing and thereby losing foreign exchange I cannot understand that. At the same time, that is giving troubles to the poor cultivators. I cannot understand this. So, will you please take action to stop the import of cloves and nutmegs in the near future?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: The hon Member will appreciate if the indigenous price is less than who is going to import by paying 100 per cent plus 20 per cent auxiliary duty? Who is going to import by paying such heavy duty when the indigenous price is lower. Sir, I also got it checked up with the Ministry of Agriculture and they say that they do not have any such information and theoretically also it is not possible that a thing which is sold cheaper indigenously will be imported at a higher rate and also pay the high duty on its import also.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Import of Natural Rubber by S.T.C.

*388. **SHRI B. K. NAIR:** Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to lay a statement showing:—

(a) the complete details regarding the import of natural rubber handled by the S.T.C. on the last occasion including the total quantity imported, the import price, the handling charges and the rate at which it was offered for sale;

(b) whether any portion of the imported rubber had to be disposed of as unfit for sale being of low quality, water-damaged or badly stored;