

TRADE

Value of Imports Rise Nearly 60 per cent

The total value of Sri Lanka's imports during the first nine months of 1979, reached a record of Rs. 16.9 billion; an increase of almost 60

goods. This trend has continued into 1979 with a significant increase in the import of machinery and appliances, motor vehicles and parts and iron and steel. The table below gives the major items of import for the first nine months of the year, over the last three years, both in terms of value and also the percentage share of each item in the total import bill.

MAJOR ITEMS OF IMPORTS IN VALUE (Rs. Million)

	(Nine months ended Sept.)			Percentage of Imports		
	1977	1978	1979	1977	1978	1979
Petroleum ..	1,024.5	1,836.8	3,066.2	22.5	17.3	18.1
Cereals ..	820.4	649.5	875.6	18.0	6.1	5.2
Flour ..	796.6	1,811.4	1,438.0	17.5	17.7	8.5
Sugar ..	144.3	445.6	658.5	3.2	4.2	3.9
Cotton ..	283.5	499.1	828.4	6.2	4.7	4.9
Fertilizers ..	10.5	149.2	481.9	0.2	1.4	2.8
Pharmaceuticals ..	48.6	108.0	187.2	1.1	1.0	1.1
Boilers, machinery and appliances ..	226.8	870.0	1,549.0	5.0	8.2	9.1
Iron and steel ..	137.1	392.1	901.5	3.0	3.7	5.3
Motor vehicles and parts	171.4	1,046.7	1,535.2	3.8	9.7	9.1
Sub total ..	3,663.7	7808.4	11,521.5	80.5	74.0	68.0
Others ..	889.0	2,801.6	5,417.2	19.5	26.0	32.0
Total imports ..	4,552.7	10,610.0	16,938.7	100	100	100

Source: Statistics Division, Department of Commerce

percent over the value of imports for the same period last year, according to the monthly trade statistics maintained by the Department of Commerce. The items that have contributed most heavily to the import bill were mineral and chemical products, particularly petroleum; machinery and electrical equipment; vehicles and transport equipment and base metals and allied products.

The import value for the first nine months of this year which recorded Rs. 16,876 million were well above the total value of imports for the whole of 1978 which amounted to Rs. 14,686 million. The 1978 figure was the highest ever for any single year, reflecting last year both the effect of the exchange rate adjustment and also the increase in the volume of imports. The change in import expenditure in 1978 appears to have been accompanied by a structural change in the composition of imports. The percentage share to consumer goods in the total import bill declined from 42 in 1977 to 38 in 1978, while that of investment goods nearly doubled from 12 to 23 percent. There was also a significant increase of imports of intermediate

year increased from Rs. 730 million in 1978, to Rs. 1,790 million in 1979. Other major increases were recorded in the first eight months of 1979 for chemical and allied products from Rs. 667.5 million in 1978 to Rs. 1,108.1 million in 1979; base metal and products from Rs. 527.2 million to Rs. 1,114.4 million; machinery, mechanical appliances, electrical equipment etc. from Rs. 1,100.8 to Rs. 1,997.8 million and vehicles and transport equipment from Rs. 1,019.1 million to Rs. 1,573.2 million.

There was a notable change in the food import bill with a drop in quantity of imports in rice and flour. See table below.

Imports of Rice, Flour (Customs Data) January-August

	1978	1979
Quantity—Tons ..	137,435	130,59
Value—Rs. Mn. ..	472.3	582.9
C & F Price—Rs. Ton. ..	3,436	4,464
Flour		
Quantity—Tons ..	509,491	314,716
Value—Rs. Mn. ..	1746.1	1106.8
C & F Price—Rs./Ton ..	3,427	3,517

In terms of sources of supply the largest share of the country's imports over the first nine months have come in from Japan; followed by India, U.K., Singapore, Saudi Arabia, West Germany and USA. See table below.

SRI LANKA'S 25 MAJOR SUPPLIERS OF FOREIGN PRODUCTS (Nine Months ended September)

1. Japan ..	966.3	9.2	2,170.2	12.9
2. India ..	858.2	8.2	1,721.2	10.2
3. U.K. ..	1,024.9	9.8	1,517.9	9.0
4. Singapore ..	241.9	2.3	1,080.6	6.4
5. Saudi Arabia ..	1,064.2	10.1	1,036.6	6.1
6. Germany, F.R. ..	648.0	6.2	944.1	5.6
7. U.S.A. ..	744.8	7.1	905.5	5.4
8. China ..	265.5	2.5	804.0	4.8
9. Australia ..	656.6	6.3	787.0	4.7
10. Iran ..	677.4	6.5	575.6	3.4
11. Iraq ..	44.9	0.4	520.6	3.1
12. Netherlands ..	305.2	2.9	411.4	2.4
13. France ..	589.2	5.6	409.6	2.4
14. Pakistan ..	46.6	0.4	390.7	2.3
15. Hongkong ..	129.9	1.2	364.9	2.2
16. South Africa ..	59.5	0.6	256.7	1.5
17. Switzerland ..	76.3	0.7	253.6	1.5
18. Canada ..	168.8	1.6	254.2	1.3
19. Sweden ..	48.7	0.5	229.3	1.4
20. Italy ..	237.3	2.3	225.2	1
21. Burma ..	479.4	4.6	171.7	1.0
22. Thailand ..	27.9	0.3	128.9	0.8
23. Belgium ..	199.9	1.9	126.2	0.7
24. U.S.S.R. ..	194.5	1.0	115.4	0.7
25. New Zealand ..	95.1	0.9	93.5	0.6
Sub Total ..	9,850.40	93.1	15,494.60	91.8
Others ..	738.30	6.9	1,381.40	8.2
Grand Total (all countries)	10,588.7	100	16,876.0	100

Source: Statistics Division, Department of Commerce