

Commission had made provisions for providing financial assistance to the State Governments under the 'rarest of the rare' circumstances;

(b) if so, the names of the States to which assistance has been given so far under the above provision and the amount thereof;

(c) whether the Union Government propose to provide financial assistance under this provision to the drought affected States;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR): (a) The Ninth Finance Commission observed that if any region faces a calamity of such dimension and severity as to warrant its handling at the national level, the Central Government will take appropriate action as the situation demands and incur the necessary expenditure.

(b) No Central assistance has been given to any State Government so far under this provision.

(c) to (e). The present drought situation in no part of the country is of such rare severity as to warrant its handling at the national level and to provide any additional central assistance.

#### **Mentha Cultivation**

\*343. SHRIMATIDIPIKAH. TOPIWALA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the States where Mentha is cultivated in the country;

(b) the total quantity of Mentha produced

during the last three years;

(c) whether any support price has been fixed to help the farmers;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, whether the traders have been given a free hand in regard to the fixation of its price?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR): (a) Mentha is cultivated mainly in Terai and adjoining districts of U.P. and in parts of Punjab and Haryana.

(b) Mentha is not a forecast crop and as such, official estimates on its production are not available. However, as per rough estimate, approximately 1.4 lakh tonne of fresh mentha herbs are produced annually.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) Normal market forces determine the price of the produce in the market.

[English]

#### **Cropping Pattern**

\*344. SHRI B. DEVARAJAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have undertaken any market study of various agricultural commodities to advise the State Governments in the matter of planning their cropping pattern; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR): (a) No, Sir.