

open market prices of sugar has continued to increase during recent months;

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that the sugar industry has refused to release sugar for free sale resulting in artificial shortage; and

(c) if so, what action has been taken against the industry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI R. V. SWAMINATHAN): (a) Yes, Sir. But the prices ruling at present in many of the main Centres are lower than the peak level touched in the first fortnight of May, 1980.

(b) and (c) The despatches from the factories have on the whole been satisfactory. As regards the sugar industry in general, according to the present rules, the factories are obliged to despatch a minimum of 20 per cent of the allotted quantity each week. In case of default, by individual factories in this regard, action is being taken under the provisions of the Essential Commodities Act in regard to such factories, wherever the default is proved to be wilful.

#### **Applications for Telephone Connections in Pali, Rajasthan**

26. SHRI MOOL CHAND DAGA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of applications pending for telephone connection at Pali (Rajasthan) at present; and

(b) the number of telephone connections which Pali is likely to have by the end of 1980?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI C. M. STEPHEN): (a) The number of applications on the waiting list for telephone connections at Pali Marwar (Rajasthan) at present is 191.

(b) About 32 connections are expected to be provided upto December, 1980 which will take the total number of telephone connections working to 1315.

It is expected to provide another 90 connections by about June, 1981.

#### **Discussion with States Re: Availability of Foodgrains and Sugar Price**

27. SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES:

SHRI M. V. CHANDRA-SHEKHARA MURTHY:  
SHRI GHULAM RASOOL KOCHACK:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Food Ministers of States and Advisors to Governors in those States which were under President's rule have discussed the availability of foodgrain and the sugar price situation; and

(b) if so, the decisions taken there-on?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI R. V. SWAMINATHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) After a general review of the availability position of essential commodities the Conference on 24-4-1980 discussed in detail the offer of the sugar industry for voluntary price regulation in respect of free-sale sugar. The consensus at the Conference was that the offer of the industry for voluntary reduction in the ex-factory price of free-sale sugar was not workable in view of the fact that some of the States are deficit while others are surplus and there could be no assured movement to the deficit States without statutory control. With regard to foodgrains supplies the States were assured that with adequate foodgrains reserves the Central Government will render all possible assistance to ensure that the requirements of the States are met to the utmost.

#### **Rigs in Drought Affected States**

28. SHRI K. PRADHANI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any assistance to the drought affected States has been provided by the Union Government by providing them rigs;