

(c) In some areas bone deformities found in human beings can probably be attributed to the use of fluorine rich waters in many villages of Sirohi and Nagpur districts. The Geological Survey of India is, however, assisting the State Government in locating fresh water resources nearest to fluorine rich areas with a view to transporting it to the affected area through pipe lines.

### Prices of Steel

1256. SHRI PRABODH CHANDRA : Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether certain rolling mills in Delhi have arbitrarily increased the price of steel during the period 1st March to 15th April, 1971;

(b) the steps Government propose to take to control the price of Steel;

(c) whether M/s Guest Keen Williams Ltd., Delhi, who are primarily manufacturing steel used for the production of motor spring has increased the price arbitrarily over six months ago resulting in great set back to spring industry; and

(d) the action Government propose to take to control the price of this category of steel?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI SHAH NAWAZ KHAN) : (a) Since there was no control on the prices of re-rolled products during this period, precise information regarding the prices charged by the rolling mills is not available.

(b) In order to regulate production distribution and prices of steel items rolled by the Billet Rollers, Government have introduced a new scheme with effect from 1.5.1971. A copy of the Announcement (No. 1 dated April 28, 1971) giving the details of the scheme as also the schedule

of prices is laid on the Table of the House. [Placed in Library, Ser. No. LT-302/71]

(c) M/s. Guest, Keen Williams have reported a small increase in the prices of their spring steel flats due to normal commercial factors.

(d) There is no proposal at present to control the prices of spring steel flats, which are made by a number of other parties as well.

### Area under Forests

1257. SHRI M RAM GOPAL REDDY : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) the area under forests in the country;

(b) whether the area under forests in the country has gone down during the last three years;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor, and

(d) the measures Government propose to take to increase the area under forests?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHER SINGH) . (a) The total area under forests in the country during the year 1968-69 was 75,273 thousand hectares

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) These areas have had to be released Permanent alternative use, such as river valley projects, agricultural purposes, transmission lines, establishment of industries and other miscellaneous purposes.

(d) "Forests" is included in the State List of the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution. However, the Central Board Forestry of which the Minister of Agriculture (Krishi Mantri) is the Chairman has recommended time and again that encroachment in any form upon forests should be prevented and that the existing areas be augmented to bring it to 33% of the total land area of the country as prescribed