

Take Over of Sugar Factories

*97. SHRIMATI RAMDULARI SINHA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any provision to take over the management of sugar factories which are in arrears of more than ten per cent of sugarcane price;

(b) the number of sugar factories against which the payment for sugarcane is in arrears over ten per cent; and

(c) the number of sugar factories that have been taken over under such provision?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL RECONSTRUCTION (SHRI BIRENDRA SINGH RAO): (a) to (c). The Sugar Undertakings (Taking Over of Management) Act, 1978 provides for the vesting of management of sugar undertakings in the Central Government under specific circumstances, including having arrears of cane dues to the extent of more than 10 per cent of the total price of the cane purchased for the purpose of the undertakings during the immediately preceding sugar year.

During 1978-79, the managements of eight sugar undertakings were vested in the Central Government for having arrears of cane dues in excess of the prescribed limit. The management of three undertakings were vested in the Central Government for having failed to commence production by the appointed day. Out of these, managements of two undertakings have been handed over to the State Governments and one undertaking has been returned to the owners under the orders of the High Court.

According to the last review which was undertaken with reference to the cane dues as on 30th November, 79, 20 sugar undertakings had cane dues beyond the prescribed limit. Notices

have been issued to these undertakings under the Act and the replies received will be processed in accordance with the provisions of the Act.

Calcutta Telephones

*98. SHRI MUKUNDA MANDAL & SHRI CHITTA BASU:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the bad condition of the Calcutta Telephones;

(b) if so, the facts thereof;

(c) the steps being taken for improving the present condition of the Calcutta telephones;

(d) whether Government propose to bring normalcy in the Calcutta telephones; and

(e) if so, when and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI C. M. STEPHEN): (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. There is some deterioration in the telephone service in Calcutta city primarily due to the large number of faults in the underground cable network, and due to the poor availability of power supply. The cable faults occur mostly due to the damage caused by the works of various organisations and due to increase of thefts of cables and accessories. Because of the poor power supply, the airconditioning plants of the telephone exchange cannot be worked continuously and this results in poor service.

(c) and (d). To overcome faults in the underground cables and to improve the general functioning, a number of short-term and long-term measures are being implemented progressively.

(e) The effect of these short and long term measures on improving the service is expected to be felt gradually.