

OVERSEAS COMMUNICATIONS SERVICE

*490. **SHRI PREM CHAND VERMA:**
will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS
be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that on the 31st March, 1965, the book debts of the Department of Overseas Communications Service stood at Rs. 96.03 lakhs out of which debts of more than Rs. 15 lakhs were more than two years old;

(b) if so, how these large amounts had become accumulated and the steps which have been taken to realise the dues; and

(c) the extent of Sundry debts as on the 31st March, 1967 and the amount which was due for more than two years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI I. K. GUJRAL): (a) As on 31st March, 1965, the book debts of the Overseas Communications Service were of the order of Rs. 96.03 lakhs, out of which an amount of Rs. 4.81 lakhs only was more than two years old.

(b) The book debts represent mostly the amounts due to the Overseas Communications Service from Foreign Administrations in respect of telecommunications traffic balances. Normally, it takes about 7 to 8 months to settle traffic balances with Foreign Administrations. The amounts due to Overseas Communications Service as on 31st March, 1965 have since been settled, except for a sum of Rs. 4.81 lakhs (post-devaluation figure Rs. 7.59 lakhs) which is due from the United Arab Republic. The matter has been taken up with the Government of United Arab Republic at diplomatic level to expedite settlement of these dues.

(c) The book debts as on 31st March 1967 were of the order of Rs. 244.97 lakhs, out of which a sum of Rs. 7.59 lakhs due for United Arab Republic has been outstanding for more than two years.

SUBSIDY ON FERTILISERS

*491. **SHRI P. VISWAMBHARAN :**
SHRI MANGALATHUMADAM:
Will the Minister of FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government

propose to abolish or reduce the subsidy on fertilisers and manures distributed to agriculturists; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION (SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE): (a) and (b). At present the subsidies allowed are the following:-

- (i) Subsidy of 18.25% of the C.I.F. cost subject to a maximum of Rs. 78 per M.T. on Muriate of Potash.
- (ii) A subsidy of Rs. 30 per M.T. on ground rock-phosphate.

In the light of the recommendation of the Agricultural Prices Commission, to reduce fertiliser subsidies in two stages and the opinion of the National Development Council in favour of elimination of subsidies the question of withdrawing these subsidies is under consideration.

A subsidy of 20% on nitrogenous fertilisers and 40% on phosphatic fertilisers is available in backward areas of Manipur, Tripura and Andamans and Nicobar Islands. In 1968-69, the subsidy will be reduced to 15% on nitrogenous and 25% on phosphatic fertilisers. The rate of subsidy for fertilisers used in Laccadive and Minicoy Islands is 75% for demonstration plots and 50% for general use.

The Pool Issue prices of fertilisers from the Central Fertiliser Pool were revised upward from 1st April, 1967 to reduce the losses suffered by the Pool. A loss of Rs. 15 crores had been originally anticipated. However, due to lower procurement prices of imports, the loss to the Pool is expected to be considerably reduced. The Issue Prices of fertilisers from the Central Fertiliser Pool will continue to be fixed on a 'No profit, no loss' basis.

RESTRICTION ON USE OF CEREALS IN HOTELS

*492. **SHRI M. L. SONDHAI:** Will the Minister of FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to lift the ban on the use of cereals in hotels on