

(b) if so, the steps which Government have taken in this regard; and

(c) whether Government propose to amend the law to provide for deterrent punishment to the offenders?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI I. K. GUJRAL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). (i) Departmental officers have been directed to intensify liaison with the concerned Police authorities.

(ii) The Chief Minister of the State has been addressed to direct the I.G. Police to take steps to prevent copper thefts.

(iii) The telegraph wires (Unlawful Possession) Act 1950 is proposed to be amended to provide more severe punishment to the ulpirits.

(iv) At places, copper wire is being replaced by copper-coated steel wire.

Supply of Sugar to States

*924. **SHRI HIMATSINGKA:** Will the Minister of FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the demand for sugar from the centre by the different States during January and February, 1968 and the quantity of sugar allotted to each State;

(b) the reasons for the shortage of sugar in the country and whether sugar production during the current season has so far been lower than in the corresponding period last year; and

(c) if not, what is the comparative increase in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION (SHRI

ANNASAHIB SHINDE): (a) A statement giving the required information is placed on the Table of the Sabha. [Placed in Library. See No. LT-643/68].

(b) The shortage of sugar in the country is due to fall in production of sugar during 1966-67 and 1967-68 as compared with 1965-66. The production of sugar during the current season up to 15th March, 1968 has been 19.43 lakh tonnes as against 18.78 lakh tonnes up to the corresponding date last year.

(c). About 65,000 tonnes.

खाद्यान्न की कीमतें

* 925. **श्री देवराज पाटिल :**

श्री नीतीराज सिंह चौधरी :

क्या खाद्य तथा कृषि मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या खाद्यान्न की महत्वपूर्ण मदों की कीमतों में कृत्रिम मन्दी को रोकने के लिये सरकार ने कोई कार्यक्रम तैयार किया है; और

(ख) यदि हां, तो उसकी मुख्य बातें क्या हैं ?

खाद्य, कृषि, सामवायिक विकास तथा सहकार मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री अन्नासाहिब शिन्दे): (क) और (ख). सरकार बुवाई शुरू होने से पूर्व प्रमुख खाद्यान्नों के न्यूनतम साहाय्य मूल्य निर्धारित करती है। कटाई शुरू होने से पूर्व प्रमुख खाद्यान्नों के अधिप्राप्ति मूल्य निर्धारित किये जाते हैं। अधिप्राप्ति मूल्य जोकि कुल मिलाकर न्यूनतम साहाय्य मूल्यों के ऊंचे स्तर पर हैं, मूल्य साहाय्य उपाय के रूप में कार्य करते हैं क्योंकि सरकार इन अधिप्राप्ति मूल्यों पर बिक्री के लिये पेश किये जाने वाले सभी खाद्यान्नों को खरीदने के लिये तैयार रहती है।