

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SATYA NARAYAN SINHA) : (a) Yes, Sir. The copper wire pairs on the alignment between Katihar and Malda have been subject to very frequent thefts.

(b) 70

(c) (i) Rs. 76,776

(ii) Rs. 8,345

(iii) Rs. 5,012

(iv) This cannot be correctly assessed, as in case of interruption of the circuits provided on copper wire pair, every attempt is made to pass the traffic on the circuits provided on a copper-weld pair on this route.

(d) So far as this particular route is concerned, the Postmaster General, Calcutta has taken up the matter with the Chief Secretary to the West Bengal Government, and the Inspector General of Police, Calcutta.

As regards the General question of thefts of copper-wire in the country, the Minister for Communications has personally addressed all the Chief Ministers of the States. The Department is also progressively replacing all copper wire by copper weld or Aluminium Wire depending on availability and technical suitability.

Agitation by Punjab Farmers Regarding RS-09 Tractors Allotted to them.

*807. SHRI D. N. PATODIA : Will the Minister of FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Punjab Farmers have threatened to resort to an agitation, if the Government did not take back RS-09 tractors imported from East Germany ; and

(b) if so, whether Government have received any formal representation in this

regard either from Punjab Government or From the Punjab farmers ; and

(c) if so, reaction of the Government in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION (SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE) : (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. Representations in this regard were received from the RS-09 Tractor Owner's Association, Punjab, Jullundur, and also the Punjab State Agro Industries Corporation.

(c) The matter is under consideration of Government.

Credit for Sugar Industry Estimate of Sugar Production and Payment of Cane Price in Bonds

*808. SHRI LOBO PRABHU : Will the Minister of FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to refer to the news-item "Sugar Industry needs Rs. 500 crores credit" in the *Hindustan Times* dated the 2nd December, 1970 and state :

(a) how Government propose to make available Rs. 500 crores credit required by the Sugar Industry ;

(b) the production of sugarcane estimated this year and whether it will leave an even greater quantity of unsold sugar than last year ;

(c) if so, whether reduction in excise duties is under consideration of Government in order to encourage greater consumption of sugar ;

(d) whether a committee is to consider the area for sugarcane cultivation in future for which minimum prices can be provided ; and

(e) the reasons why part of the price of Sugarcane is not paid in Government bonds in view of the shortage of money ?

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

COOPERATION (SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE) : (a) The Reserve Bank of India has been requested to arrange for adequate credit for the Sugar Industry during the current season. The figure mentioned in the news-item is, however, an over-estimate.

(b) According to the All-India First Estimate of sugarcane, the area under this crop during 1970-71 is about 1.5 per cent less compared to the Corresponding estimate for 1969-70. It is expected that the needs of internal consumption and exports during the year will balance the production of sugar during the current season and there will be no addition to the carry-over stocks.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) The implication of this part of the Question is not clear.

Damage to Cotton Crop of Maharashtra due to Boll-Worm, Red-Worm and Seliolithic Diseases

*809. **SHRI K. G. DESHMUKH** : Will the Minister of FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that there has been a serious attack of Boll-worm, Red-worm and Seliolithic diseases on the crop of cotton in Maharashtra recently ;

(b) whether Government of Maharashtra has made a representation to the Central Government to declare "Epidemic" on cotton crop and take necessary remedial measures to check these terrible diseases ; and

(c) if so, what measures Government have taken or propose to take to save the cotton crop from the clutches of diseases in Maharashtra ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION (SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE) : (a) The Government of Maharashtra sent a report to the Government of India about the attack of Heliolithic (and not Seliolithic) on cotton in two Taluks of Amraoti District of Maharashtra.

(b) The Government of Maharashtra wanted that the affected areas may be surveyed by the Central team and subsidy on pesticides may be sanctioned to them under the Calamities Relief Fund.

(c) 30 villages in Dhariapur Tulak (30,000 acres) and 13 villages in Achalpur taluk (10,000 acres) have already been declared as 'epidemic' affected areas by the State Government under the Pest Control Act so as to take adequate plant protection measures to save the new flush of cotton crop in this tract. Owing to continuous heavy rains, plant production measures could not be taken by the State Government till the end of September, 1970. 9,000 acres in a compact block have been aerially sprayed with endrin in Dhariapur Taluk in November last and in other areas the crop has been treated with endrin/sevin by ground operations. The Zilla Parishad has already selected 40,000 acres of land in Achalpur and Dhariapur Taluks for providing intensive plant protection measures. The State Government have further decided to spray the cotton crop with endrin/carbarayl at intervals of about 7 days for combating this attack.

As desired by the State Government, a Central Team surveyed the affected areas in Achalpur and Dhariapur Talukas. the Central Team did not recommend sanction of assistance from the Calamities Relief Fund, as the cotton plucking was over in most of the areas and there was no prospect of new flush of cotton from the present crop.

Internal and Export Price of Sugarcane

*810. **SHRIMATI ILA PAL-CHOUHDURI** : Will the Minister of FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to rumours current in Delhi and other cities that while the export price of sugar fixed by the Government of India average; about 0.50 paise per kg., the internal retail price has been fixed at Rs. 1.78 paise per kg. which comes to about three and a half times the export price ;

(b) if so, the exact position as regards the export price of sugar per kg. ; and