

mic levels, purchase operations through public/cooperation agencies and/ or exports are undertaken. Whenever edible oils, pulses and potatoes are sold through public distribution system, interest of the consumer is also kept in view while fixing their retail prices.

Growth of Population

185. SHRI U. R. KRISHNAN: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the concrete steps taken by Government to check of population growth;

(b) the probable decline in birth rate envisaged as a result of the measures so far taken; and

(c) the concrete programmes, if any formulated by Government for more vigorous efforts in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI JAG-DAMBI PRASAD YADAV): (a) and (c) the Government of India have made it clear that the Family Welfare Programme is to be implemented vigorously on a wholly voluntary basis without any element of compulsion or coercion. The Government have reiterated their commitment to the achievement of the national objective of reduction in birth rate to the level of 30 per thousand by 1978-79 and 25 per thousand by 1983-84.

The new statement of policy announced on 28-6-1977 clearly lays down that the Government is totally committed to the Family Welfare Programme and will spare no effort to motivate people to accept it voluntarily in their own interest and in the interest of their children as well as in the larger interests of the nation. The Government's approach will be educational and wholly voluntary. All methods of contraception including voluntary sterilisation are being promoted so that the acceptor may choose any method according to its suitability. Voluntary organisations are also being

encouraged to come forward and participate in the programme increasingly. The most important change that has been brought about in the programme in its reorientation towards the total family welfare concept. Increasing attention is to be paid towards Maternity and Child Health Services and the well being of the mothers and infants. Minister for Health and Family Welfare has addressed the State Chief Ministers on this important subject drawing their attention to the urgent task of ensuring honest, sincere and conscientious effort by the workers engaged in this Programme.

(b) On the basis of Family Welfare performance achieved upto 1976-77 it is estimated that birth rate this year would be below 33 per thousand of population as against the rate of 41 per thousand population during the decade ending with 1971.

Distribution of Fertilizers andl Seeds

186. SHRI U. R. KRISHNAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION be pleased to state:

(c) what steps Government have taken to ensure scientific and stream lined distribution of fertilizers and seeds so as to benefit the common man;

(b) whether Government have studied the system of distribution of fertilizers and seeds as operating at present in various States; and

(c) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION (SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH): (a) to (c) The information is given below in regard to Fertilizer and Seeds:

(1) Fertiliser

With a view to ensure adequate and timely availability of fertiliser to the cultivators, Zonal Conferen-