

rate immediately. In the Fourth Plan we hope to get regional grids established and in the Fifth Plan an all-India grid will be there. Only thereafter we can try to get a uniform rate for all the parts of the country.

SHRI K. SUNDARAM : On page 2 of the statement dealing with the uniform minimum consumption guarantee it says that only in Bihar and UP the rates are high whereas in other States it is only 0.40 per HP. May I know whether there was any proposal that during drought conditions these stipulations will be relaxed so that the farmers will not be forced to pay these minimum charges? Also, during the drought period the Electricity Boards are not able to supply the full requirements of the farmers. May I know whether this has been considered or whether the Government will consider this?

DR. K. L. RAO : At the time of drought conditions, the Electricity Boards have been advised not to charge the minimum as with regard to the minimum guarantee, in the case of UP and Bihar the rates are rather high, as much as Rs. 120 per HP/year whereas the usual rate in the country is between Rs. 30 and Rs. 50 HP/year. We have taken up with both the State Electricity Boards that they should reduce the minimum guarantee amounts. I can tell the Member that whenever there are drought conditions, definitely they cannot charge the minimum rates.

RURAL ELECTRIFICATION IN MADHYA PRADESH

*336. **SARDAR D. K. JADHAV :** Will the Minister of IRRIGATION AND POWER be pleased to state :

(a) whether any scheme for rural electrification in Madhya Pradesh has been received by the Central Government under the Fourth Five Year Plan; and

(b) if so, the number of villages and towns in Madhya Pradesh which are proposed to be electrified during the said period?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF IRRIGATION AND POWER (PROF. SIDDHESHWAR PRASAD) : (a) No, Madam.

(b) Does not arise.

SARDAR D. K. JADHAV : The Government is aware that Madhya Pradesh is a very backward area and its capacity

to raise its resources is not at the maximum to-day. In this background will the Government grant special funds for Madhya Pradesh for this purpose?

DR. K. L. RAO : It is true that Madhya Pradesh is very backward in the matter of rural electrification and it will be the objective of the newly established rural electrification corporation, that we have set up recently, to look into this and see that sufficient funds are available to Madhya Pradesh to accelerate the programme of rural electrification in that State.

SHRI S. D. MISRA : Out of 5 lakh villages in the country to-day the villages electrified so far are hardly 60,000 to 65,000. Has the Minister prepared a blueprint and can he indicate the time-limit by which almost 100 per cent. of the villages will be electrified and has a scheme been made? Also there are regional imbalances. There are some States which have electrified 70 per cent. of the villages and there is a State like Madhya Pradesh that has hardly electrified 2 per cent. of the villages. What is being done to correct that imbalance?

DR. K. L. RAO : The number of villages in India is 5,70,000. Out of these we have electrified 70,000 by March 1969. It is true that if we compare the number of villages to be done, it looks that we have done little but we have to bear in mind that out of these 70,000 villages, most of the big villages, having more than 2000 population, have been electrified. There is also this peculiar fact in India that out of the 5,70,000 villages 3,50,000 are having a population of less than 500; they are all very small villages. So if we take the real facts into consideration, the villages that we have so far electrified account for 30 per cent of India's rural population. Therefore it is not so bad, and I expect that rural electrification will gain more and more momentum in the next three or four Plans. At least by the end of three Plans we should be able to electrify most of the villages in the country. With regard to regional imbalances, it is true that in the country there are quite a number of States where rural electrification has not gone far ahead. This aspect has to be kept in mind and I expect that funds would be made available from various sources in order to see that the imbalance is rectified to the maximum possible extent.

SHRI SWAISINGH SISODIA : May I know from the hon. Minister whether

