

prosecution and attached his property. There is no question of being lenient to the capitalists because the Labour Ministry is concerned with the workers' dues and to see to the interests of the workers.

IMPORT OF SUGAR

*751. SHRI BANKA BEHARY BAS: Will the Minister of FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

() Whether the Government of India have decided to import Biigar during the current year 1968;

(b) If so, to what extent and at what price; and

(c) the reason for this sudden departure in policy for import of sugar?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION (SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE): (a)

No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

SHRI BANKA BEHARY DAS : May I know whether the Minister is aware that about two months back all the national dailies of Delhi published the news that the Government is considering the import of sugar th is year? May I also know whether after the publication of that news item the Government decided to drop that idea? May I know whether there was at any stage any proposal with the Government to import sugar?

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE : What can we do with news items which are published in the papers? I have

said authoritatively that we have not decided to import sugar.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT : May I know the international price of sugar and the internal price here? Why is the internal price so high? That may be the reason why some Government-officers in the Ministry may be thinking of importing sugar. May I know the reasons for the difference in the prices?

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE : I do not know. I will require notice for this question regarding the information we get from the paper. The prevailing international price is £ 22 or 23 per tonne.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT : What 'are the reasons for this high price in i India?

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE : In all the exporting countries, the prices are much higher than the countries i where sugar is produced at all. This j is the peculiar phenomenon of the in- j ternational sugar industry because j there is an acute competition in the I international market and the countries I which export sugar incur heavy losses. All the countries that export incur heavy losses.

SHRI A.G. KULKARNI : May I know from the Government, apart from importing of sugar, whether it is not a fact that they exported sugar when there was a dire need of sugar required by the masses in this country and, if so, apart from the international contract, was it not possible for the ; Government to purchase sugar where it was cheaper in the international j market and fulfil the deliveries which ' we had already contracted for? What made the Government export sugar from this country in such acute scarcity conditions?

SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE : I wish it was so simple as has been suggested by the Member. This position was explained on an earlier occasion by the Minister for food when the sugar policy statement was made. There were some prior commitments and we could not get out of those commitments. We have to carry out those commitments and there is also an additional factor because last year and this year we were in a difficult position because our sugarcane crop suffered as a result of drought but next year there will be a good production and there would be the problem then of finding an export market. So, we have to maintain contacts with the international market. Simply because we are in difficulties in a year, we cannot completely get ourselves divorced from international contacts.

PANDIT S.S.N. TANKHA : What is the total consumption of sugar in an average year in India and what is the production this year ?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It will come in the next question.

*752. [The questioner (Sardar Ram Singh) was absent. For answer vide col 5913 infra.]

*753. [The questioner (Shri K.P. Mattikarjunudu) was absent. For answer vide col 5913 infra.]

*754. [The questioner (Shri I. Then-gari) was absent. For answer vide cols. 5.)H-16 infra.]

WORKING OF TELEPHONES IN BOMBAY

*755. SHRI A.D. MANI : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a letter of Shri

Dahyabhai Patel, M.P. in the *Indian Express*, Bombay dated the 13th February, page 6, on the working of telephones in Bombay ;

(b) whether it is a fact that in Bombay telephones of Members of Parliament are disconnected when they are away from station on tour; and

(c) if so, the action taken by Government in the matter?

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

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

SHRI A. D. MANI: The Minister must have seen the cutting referred to that Mr. Patel mentioned that his own telephone had been disconnected. Am I to understand that Mr. Patel made an incorrect statement to the Press?

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL: I have seen the press cutting of Mr. Patel's letter. I would not dare to say what the Member is wanting me to say but I would only say this that the telephone connection was not disconnected for the reason written in the letter.

SHRI A. D. MANI: Arising from this question, how many persons are on the waiting list for telephones in Bombay ?

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: The number of people on the waiting list is fairly large—I think it is approximately 100,000