

various schemes apart from the schemes for benefiting the individuals.

DR. KRUPASINDHU BHOI: Due to error of judgement previously, under the DPAP, some chronically drought affected areas are not covered. May I know whether the Government or the Minister is considering to include under this Programme these chronically drought prone areas which have been submitted by the State Government of Orissa? These chronically drought affected areas are not covered by the DPAP whereas some places around those areas have been covered. For example, Padampur sub-division, Bango Munda, Kaprakole, Chanda Handi Block, etc., have been submitted by the State Government of Orissa. May I know whether the Minister is considering to include those areas under the DPAP? These areas have suffered drought for more than fifteen years.

SHRI BIRENDRA SINGH RAO: The drought-prone areas were identified on the recommendations of the State Governments and the Central teams. As I said, the whole country is not yet covered under the scheme. There are only 557 blocks so far taken up. Then there are other schemes for other areas also. Assistance is given also under the Integrated Rural Development and Desert Development Programmes. So, we are trying to see that the entire country is covered under one scheme or the other for benefiting the people in the drought-prone areas.

MR. SPEAKER: Next Question—
Shri Narayan Choubey.

Shri Indrajit Gupta.

Then Question No. 311—
Shrimati Pramila Dandavate.

Shri Arjun Sethi.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: On the basis of surname, can I ask the question, Sir?

MR. SPEAKER: I may not allow it.

Next question—Prof Ajit Kumar Mehta.

Shri R. L. P. Verma—he is here.
Again that epidemic is setting in.

News-item 'A much wanted Nuisance'

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*312. **SHRI R. L. P. VERMA;**
PROF. AJIT KUMAR MEHTA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether his attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "A much-wanted nuisance" appearing in the 'Indian Express' dated 2nd June, 1980;

(b) the nature of difficulties faced by the telephone subscribers; and

(c) the remedial action contemplated in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KARTIK ORAON):

(a) Yes, Sir. The Department is aware of the article which appeared in the Indian Express dated 2-6-1980

(b) Nature of the grievances faced by the subscribers as pointed out in the article are as under:

(a) Getting wrong numbers and engaged tone.

(b) Lines faulty for prolonged periods.

(c) Excess Billing.

(d) Misuse of telephone by unscrupulous elements.

(e) Non-registration of complaints.

(c) The article itself spells out some of the measures being taken. The highlights of the Department's programmes are:

(i) Addition of new lines.

(ii) Strengthening of the Area Managers organisation.

(iii) Opening of District Complaints cell.

(iv) Pressurisation and ducting of cables.

(v) Amendment of Telegraph Act.

श्री रौलबाल प्रसाद बर्मा : अध्यक्ष महोदय, आप के माध्यम से मैं मंत्री महोदय को यह बताना चाहता हूँ कि दिल्ली में कोई डेढ़ लाख से अधिक टेलीफोन सब्सक्राइबर्स हैं, जिनके लिए 42 एक्सचेंज हैं और 12 हजार से ज्यादा स्टाफ है। इसके बावजूद, 4, 5 शिकायतें जो 2 जून 1980 के इन्डियन एक्सप्रेस में आई हैं, उनका कोई निदान नहीं दिया है बल्कि एक सब्सक्रिबर्स की तरह से केवल सुझाव दिया है। सरकार की ओर से क्या व्यवस्था हुई है, उसकी कोई जानकारी नहीं दी है। आप यह भी जानते हैं कि हम लोगों को भी प्रति दिन टेलीफोन की जो व्यवस्था है, उसमें संयंकर कठिनाई अनुभव होती है। हम यह देखते हैं कि लेख में चार-पांच कठिनाइयाँ बताई गई हैं लेकिन उनके बारे में जो बताया गया है वह यह है कि हम नई लाइनें चालू कर रहे हैं, क्षेत्रीय प्रबंधक संगठनों का सुदृढीकरण कर रहे हैं, जिला शिकायत कक्ष की स्थापना, केबलों का दाम्बीकरण तथा लचकीला कर के तगाना और तार अधिनियम में संशोधन करने जा रहे हैं लेकिन उन्होंने उत्तर में यह नहीं बताया है कि कितनी नई लाइनें चालू कर रहे हैं, कितने क्षेत्रीय संगठन होंगे और कितने डिस्ट्रिक्ट कम्प्लेट सैल होंगे, यह कोई जानकारी नहीं दी है। मंत्री जी ने तो केवल सुझाव दे दिया है। इसलिए मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि वे यह बताएं कि कितनी नई लाइनें चालू करेंगे और क्या क्या प्रबन्ध उन्होंने इस सब के बारे में किये हैं, यह स्पष्ट रूप से बताएं?

अध्यक्ष महोदय : वह तो बता दिया है और

MR. SPEAKER: Do you want elucidation further?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI C. M. STEPHEN): I have elucidated sufficiently. Sir, the question is based on an article in a paper and it concludes like this:

'The Telephone Department is subscribers and to boost the morale well aware of the problems of the of the work force, commission more

exchanges, increase the capacity of existing ones and ensure that lines do not get jammed, replace worn-out manual and testing equipment and instal better air-conditioned plants.'

This is the certificate this article which criticised the department has given and that has spelt out all that is being done. The article writer is aware of the fact of the matter. The whole position is that there is a huge waiting list here. We have got to clear it. We have got 42 exchanges in this Delhi Area and most of them are overloaded. The only answer is—adding of more lines. There is a programme for adding 45,000 lines to Delhi Telephone System in 1981-82. Rajouri Garden Exchange with 10,000 lines is to be commissioned from 1980-81. Besides, suburban areas are also covered. Under this programme, Karol Bagh is being expanded by 2,000 lines in the current year and by another 2,000 lines in the year 1982-83. It is also proposed to connect Ghaziabad to Delhi by co-axial cable with a capacity of 2,700 channels out of which 900 will be commissioned in this year itself. The service offered by the exchange will improve considerably once this is put into service. The important exchanges which are to be commissioned during 1981-82 are:

Karol Bagh and Nehru Place with 10,000 lines each. Nehru Place Exchange will give relief to Haus Khas which are all new connections but which are standing frozen because of heavy load on Jor Bagh besides Nehru Place. This is the current minimum programme which will enable us to improve the quality, particularly, when the co-axial cable is laid out and with the clearance of the lines, we will obtain improvement to an extent. There is considerable load as a result of which the quality is affected. That is now made up.

Now, as far as the complaint is concerned, we have spelt it out in details. There is a complaint cell of course. We have set up a Complaints Cell to receive complaints and monitor them subsequently. These things are to be done in a Central Area. That is why we shall see that in those areas the staff strength is increased. With that, these things will be monitored and relief will be given. Cable is interfered with. To remedy that, we propose to gas pressurise the cable and put it in the PVC pipe which will have a concrete coating so that it may not be interfered with and the work through the cable goes on uninterrupted. There is an operational plant also which we have set up to monitor the service and to plan where exactly the new exchanges are to be improved. These are the steps we have taken. Now there is interference with the lines and misconnections resulting in wrong metering. The only answer is to amend the Telegraph Act. A total Telegraph Act amendment is under way now. I will be coming to the House with the new Telegraph Act Amendment Bill shortly which will plug the loopholes and which will give very deterrent punishment to those people who are thieving the calls to the detriment of the subscribers' calls. These are the steps we are taking.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Verma, do you want to put your supplementary?

SHRI R. P. L. VERMA: .

अध्यक्ष महोदय, मंत्री महोदय ने आखिर में अपने कार्यक्रम को बतलाया कि गाजियाबाद 85, शाहदरा 20, तीसहजारी 22 और दिल्ली गेट 27 और 26 हैं। ये एक्सचेंज बहुत इनइफेक्टिव हैं। तीस हजारी का एक्सचेंज तो आउटडेटिड और आउट मोडिड एक्सचेंज है। इस दृष्टि से वहां बहुत कठिनाई है। क्या इनको भी चेज करेंगे ?

अध्यक्ष महोदय ; यह तो उन्होंने बता दिया है।

He has already replied, Shri Parulekar.

SHRI BAPUSAHEB PARULEKAR: Sir, one of the grievances of the subscribers mentioned at (c) to part (b) of the question is about excess billing. It has not been mentioned as to how the excess billing takes place. May I therefore know from the hon. Minister whether it is a fact that the grievance of the subscribers is that the S.T.D. lines are not immediately disconnected at the end of conversation which is leading to higher billing. So, what steps are being taken to see that these lines are immediately disconnected? I find in the highlights of the programme mentioned that the answer is not given.

As far as part (c), misuse of telephones by unscrupulous elements, is concerned, even Sir, the highlights of the programme do not provide an answer. I would like to know what steps Government proposed to take in view of the excess billing because of the non-connection of STD immediately after the conversation and secondly on account of the unscrupulous elements?

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: As far as excess billing is concerned, I readily concede that there are cases of wrong metering coming in but the percentage is not as much as we think. The total national percentage as we could make out is only 0.7 per cent. As far as Delhi is concerned it is little on the high side. It is 1.6 per cent. Sir, formerly the position was that if either this end or that end keeps on the metering will also go on. Now, the position is that if either of the two puts down its gets disconnected. But we have in our directory warned the subscribers not to put it and get away because the meter may be going on. Ensure that the meter gets disconnected. Otherwise, there is a chance of its going on. Whenever such a complaint comes it is gone into. There are genuine cases and in one of the five cases we caught we suspended our employee because he was involved; in another case four to five people were involved and ac-

tion is being taken. In the third case a stock broker firm had meddled with it and got advantage. His telephone was dis-connected but the court came in and we had to re-connect. Now, the Telegraph Act is being amended. We have also found that in a large number of cases the subscribers do not realise and they keep on talking on the STD while the STD meter is also going on. So, when you talk on STD you have to be careful.

Sir, in quite a number of cases we have given the refund but in certain cases we cannot give because the investigation reveals this is not so. We compare with the previous bill and also put the machine under observation and if we find there is no mechanical fault then we cannot refund. To the extent possible we give the subscriber the benefit of doubt but when the facts show that the meter is alright then the benefit of doubt is given to the Department.

MR. SPEAKER: Next question. The hon'ble Member is not there. Next question. Again the concerned Member is not present. I will have to do something about it.

Revival of Rice milling Industry, West Bengal

*318. SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received a memorandum dated 28th April, 1980 from Bengal Rice Mills Association, Calcutta containing suggestions for reviving the Rice Milling Industry in West Bengal; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by Government on the suggestion?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL RECONSTRUCTION (SHRI BIRENDRA SINGH RAO): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A copy of the memorandum has been forwarded to the Government of

West Bengal who are concerned with most of the points raised in it and they have informed the Government of India that it is being examined. On receipt of the comments of the State Government, the matter will be further considered.

SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE: My supplementary is this: When has it been sent to the State Government? May I know whether the State Government had submitted any proposal before this memorandum was sent to them regarding the setting up of the mills and keeping them running, that is, before you sent the memorandum back to them, whether they have previously sent any proposal or any recommendation to you? This is my question.

SHRI BIRENDRA SINGH RAO: I am not able to give the details off-hand when this Memorandum was sent to the Govt. of West Bengal. I will let the hon. Member know about it.

Recommendations of Agricultural Prices Commission re: Storage of Foodgrains

*319. SHR MOOL CHAND DAGA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the main recommendations of the Agricultural Prices Commission with regard to the storage of foodgrains;

(b) the action taken to implement them; and

(c) the efforts being made to make the agriculturists conscious of the benefits of proper storage?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL RECONSTRUCTION (SHRI BIRENDRA SINGH RAO): (a) The Agricultural Prices Commission have been recommending due attention to storage; proper planning and review of storage position by the Food Corporation of India; and building up of adequate storage to meet the needs of buffer stock.