

Shri Priya Gupta: No, Sir. In his reply the hon. Deputy Minister said that the question of bazaar prices is to be judged, but my question whether the criterion for paying these allowances is not the population there on the basis of which a city is declared to be A, B or C. I want clarification.

Shri Bhagavati: Yes, Sir. Certain stations have been classified on the basis of population as A, B and C—A Class exceeding 20 lakhs, B Class exceeding 5 lakhs and C class exceeding one lakh. It is presumed that where the density of population is very high, the cost of living index is high because the house rent may be high and some other incidental charges may also be very high.

Shri Priya Gupta: My point has not been clarified. What is the criterion?

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. Shri Banerjee.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: I want to know whether it is a fact that the Defence employees and railway employees of areas like Shyamnagar, Kankinada and Kanchrapara have also started a strong agitation against the nonpayment of city allowance and if so, whether it is a fact that the financial authorities are considering the matter, and whether it is within the knowledge of the hon. Deputy Minister.

Shri Bhagavati: I could not follow the question.

Mr. Speaker: The question is whether a demand has been made by other municipalities also and whether the Government is going to consider that or not.

The Minister of Shipping in the Ministry of Transport and Communications (Shri Raj Bahadur): So far as this particular point is considered as to whether these other Defence employees have made any demand or not, we have not got any information for the time being, but so far as the question of North Barrackpore and Ishapore was concerned, that was a

special case decided on an *ad hoc* basis, and it does not apply to other contiguous areas. That was entirely on an *ad hoc* basis.

Mr. Speaker: Next question.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: Arising out of this, may I ask one more question.

Mr. Speaker: I am very sorry.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: The answer prior to this is contradictory to this.

Mr. Speaker: The matter may be cleared some other time. After his clarification I have gone to the next question. I am sorry.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: You have allowed only three or four questions.

Shri Nambiar: Ladies are generally considered.

Mr. Speaker: I think she has no complaint. Shri Nambiar need not come to her help.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: I have a complaint, but I am helpless when you are not giving me an opportunity.

Telephone Bills in Calcutta

*655. **Shri Indrajit Gupta:** Will the Minister of Transport and Communications be pleased to state:

(a) whether telephone subscribers in Calcutta are lodging hundreds of complaints every month regarding incorrect telephone bills;

(b) if so, the reason for the sharp increase in such complaints; and

(c) whether any inquiry has been held to determine whether mechanical or human defects are responsible for wrong billing?

The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Transport and Communications (Shri Bhagavati): (a) Yes.

(b) There has been no increase in complaints.

(c) All complaints are enquired into.

Shri Indrajit Gupta: May I know whether it is a fact that on an average about 250 complaints per month of wrong billing are being received at the Calcutta Telephone Office and if so whether it is being investigated and found that this is primarily due to defective meters and defective instruments and cables, and if so, what steps will be taken to remedy them?

Shri Bhagavati: I shall give some figures to show that the complaints have come down. In 1959-60 the complaints were 4,165; in 1960-61 they were 2,988; in 1961-62 they are 2,784. The number of telephones has increased from 72,000 in 1959 to 92,000 in 1962. So, comparing the increase in telephones, the number of complaints has certainly come down, and it shows an improvement in the situation.

Shri Indrajit Gupta: Has the attention of the hon. Minister been drawn to the statement of the General Manager, Calcutta Telephones to the effect that if mechanisation is introduced in the billing process, then the causes for complaints may be reduced? May I know whether any steps are being taken?

Shri Bhagavati: It is true that due to the human element in some cases there are wrong bills. First as it causes great strain on eye there may be some defect in reading the meters correctly. Now the procedure of alternating meter reading and recording staff every two hours has been introduced; and this has helped considerably in reducing the clerical error. There may be another solution of this and that is to take photo autographs of the meters every month for the purpose of billing. It will be a very costly affair and will involve foreign exchange expenditure. So, it is not very easy to take that step.

Shri Indrajit Gupta: In view of the fact that it has appeared that both the human and mechanical elements

are responsible for wrong billing, can the Minister tell us what is the procedure which is adopted to deal with the complaints from the consumers? There is a widespread complaint that patently over-billing is carried out and in spite of repeated appeals no action is taken to have this remedied.

Shri Bhagavati: The complaints are not always for excess recording. Complaints are also for late submission of bills. The complaints are being enquired into duly and suitable action is also taken.

यूगोस्लाविया से खरीदे गये जहाज

*६५७. श्री विभूति मिश्र : क्या परिवहन तथा संचार मंत्री यह वताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या यह मंच है कि भारत सरकार ने यूगोस्लाविया से १९६१-६२ में जहाज खरीदे थे ; और

(ख) यदि हां, तो कितने और किस किसमें के जहाज खरीदे गए हैं ?

परिवहन तथा संचार मन्त्रालय में नौबहन मन्त्रा (श्री राज बहादुर) : (क) १९६१-६२ में भारत सरकार द्वारा यूगोस्लाविया से कोई भी जहाज नहीं खरीदा गया ।

(ख) सवाल नहीं उठता ।

श्री विभूति मिश्र : क्या आगे खरीदने का सरकार ने कुछ आर्डर दिया है ।

श्री राज बहादुर : सरकार का तो इसके खरीदने से कोई सम्बन्ध नहीं होगा, लेकिन सरकार द्वारा संचालित जो शिपिंग कम्पनी हैं तथा दूसरी कम्पनियाँ हैं प्राइवेट सेक्टर में वे खरीदती हैं । उन्होंने एक एक जहाज खरीदा है ।