

India offered to meet the requirements of that Government on a loan basis or did they offer to give the foodgrains free?

Shri M. V. Krishnappa: Our proposal was to give them the grains on a no-profit no-loss basis.

GIRL TELEPHONE OPERATORS

*555. **Shri D. C. Sharma:** (a) Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state the method of recruitment of telephone girl-operators?

(b) What are the minimum educational qualifications prescribed for the post?

(c) What is the number of telephone girl-operators in the Punjab?

(d) How many of them are permanent and how many are temporary?

The Deputy Minister of Communications (Shri Raj Bahadur): (a) According to the present orders, outside candidates (irrespective of sex) are to be recruited for appointment as Telephone Operators in the F.&T. Department by Selection to be made by a Selection Board of departmental officers. The main criterion for selection is the total marks secured in Mathematics (or Arithmetic), Geography, English and Hindi (or local regional language) in the Matriculation or an equivalent examination. Candidates with higher educational qualifications and those with any previous experience of telephone working will get some weightage.

(b) A pass in the Matriculation or an equivalent examination.

(c) The total number of girl operators in the Punjab Circle as on the 14th October, 1953 was 146:

(d) 8 are permanent and 138 temporary.

Shri D. C. Sharma: May I know, Sir, if the method of selection is the same for all the States in India, and is a different method employed so far as the Punjab is concerned?

Shri Raj Bahadur: It is all over the same.

Shri D. C. Sharma: May I know, Sir, (which departmental officers are selected—I do not want their names but their designations—for the purpose of recruiting these girl operators?

Shri Raj Bahadur: According to the latest rule, the selections will be made by the Circle heads—that is under their supervision—on the basis of marks obtained in the Matriculation examination plus some weightage being given for higher qualifications.

Shri D. C. Sharma: I am afraid the hon. Minister.....

Mr. Speaker: Order, order.

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty: May I know if the families of the operators are entitled to free medical treatment, and in the case of the girl operators will the husband come in the category of the family?

Shri Raj Bahadur: That depends upon.....

Mr. Speaker: Order, order.

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty: I think it is a very important question.

Mr. Speaker: The point is no doubt very important, but the chief question is whether it is within the scope of this question.

Shri D. C. Sharma: May I know why there is such a large disparity between the numbers of permanent and temporary operators?

Shri Raj Bahadur: There are several reasons. One of them is that the staff that opted finally for India, from Pakistan, and the staff that has been taken over from the States of Pepsu etc. has not yet been fixed properly, and a decision is to be taken in regard to them still. Apart from that, some time ago, in 1950, we took a decision to 'feminize' the exchanges. But later on when we came to know that proper arrangements in all towns

could not be made in regard to their night-rest, dormitories etc., we decided to keep the scheme in abeyance. Pending decision on these questions, the list of temporary girl operators has swollen up.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF OFFICIAL TRAVEL ORGANISATIONS

*556. **Shri D. C. Sharma:** (a) Will the Minister of **Transport** be pleased to state whether India was represented at the Eighth General International Conference and General Assembly of the Official Travel Organisations held at Lisbon in the month of October, 1953?

(b) If so, has the representative submitted any report?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Shahnawaz Khan): (a) Yes.

(b) The report is awaited.

Shri D. C. Sharma: May I know what was the agenda, particularly with reference to India, that was discussed at this meeting?

Shri Alagesan: It contained several items. I can give it to the hon. Member, if he wants it. Problems of general tourist interest were discussed at the conference.

Shri D. C. Sharma: May I know whether the delegate who went as a representative of India, was given any particular brief by the Ministry?

Shri Alagesan: Yes, he was certainly briefed.

Shri D. C. Sharma: May I know what that brief was like?

Mr. Speaker: Possibly, the hon. Minister may place it on the Table of the House or give it to him privately.

Shri Alagesan: I can share it with him privately.

Shri N. M. Lingam: Is it a fact that a branch of this Organisation is going

to be opened in Bombay, and if so, are Government going to give any aid towards the same?

Shri Alagesan: There is another branch consisting of the South East Asian countries, of which India was president, and Japan is president now. There is no proposal to open an additional office in Bombay.

Mr. Speaker: Next question.

Shri D. C. Sharma: One question, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: It is too late now, I am going to the next question.

COVERED PLATFORMS ON NORTHERN RAILWAY

*557. **Shri D. C. Sharma:** (a) Will the Minister of **Railways** be pleased to state the names of the stations on the Northern Railway where platforms are proposed to be covered during the year 1953-54?

(b) How many of these are on branch line and how many on main line?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Shahnawaz Khan): (a) In all 56 stations on the Northern Railway have been included for this purpose in the 1953-54 Works Programme and a list of these is laid on the Table of the House. [See Appendix III annexure No. 30.]

(b) 37 on main line and 19 on branch line.

Shri D. C. Sharma: May I know the policy of Government with regard to covering the platforms of these stations? How are the representations from the people of these areas being considered?

The Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri L. B. Shastri): The Railway Zonal Users' Committee draw up the list. They have also appointed a small sub-committee called the Passenger Amenities Committee, which