

LOK SABHA

Thursday, 8th December, 1955

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the clock

[MR SPEAKER in the Chair]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Press Telegrams

\*631. **Sardar Hukam Singh:** Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state:

(a) whether rates for press telegrams from India to other countries vary from country to country;

(b) if so, the principle which governs the rates of the telegrams; and

(c) the names of the countries, if any, with which agreements have been entered into for reduced rates?

**The Deputy Minister of Communications (Shri Raj Bahadur):** (a) Yes, with the exception of the Commonwealth countries.

(b) The rates for telegrams are fixed by mutual agreement.

(c) China, Indonesia and Thailand.

**Sardar Hukam Singh:** May I know whether there is any international schedule of rates for press telegrams and whether particular agreements have been reached at the same rate or each individual agreement has to lay down different conditions so far as the rates are concerned?

**Shri Raj Bahadur:** There are international conventions about fixed by the International Tele-communications Union. According to article 75 of the regulations of the I.T.U. there is a limit fixed for European and non-European telegrams. The European rate is 50 per cent less than the rate for the ordinary private telegrams, and for non-European countries it is 66 2/3 per cent less. To that extent we may say there is a convention.

**Sardar Hukam Singh:** So far as Commonwealth countries are concerned, may I know whether we have a different agreement with them or whether they are governed by different methods?

**Shri Raj Bahadur:** Yes, Sir, we have a different one, because under article 79 the member countries have the option to modify the conditions, and taking advantage of that, the Commonwealth countries have reduced their press rates to one penny per word.

**Shri Kamath:** In the matter of these cable rates, is the Government, rather the Deputy Minister, aware that during the course of the Debate here on the Press Commission's report the Minister of Information and Broadcasting promised the House that the matter of discrimination against Asian news agencies such as KYODO of Japan and Antara of Indonesia, as compared with Reuters and Agence France Presse would be looked into, and the Government would take steps to redress these anomalies? Have Government taken steps already in this direction or not?

**Shri Raj Bahadur:** That question has to be addressed to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. But I may say that the mother countries of the respective news agencies, namely, Reuters, Agence France Presse, have helped these particular agencies, taking advantage of article 79. As against that we have been trying for a reduction of the rates for press telegrams to Japan also. But we have not so far succeeded there.

P. & T. Complaints Organisation

\*632. **Shri Shree Narayan das:** Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state:

(a) whether the working of the Complaints Organisation of the Posts & Telegraphs Department has been reviewed;

(b) if so, when and with what results; and