

SHRI DWARAKA NATH DAS : It is seen from the statement of the hon. Railway Minister that the use of wooden sleepers has completely been stopped. But in Assam, particularly in Branch line wooden sleepers are still used in spite of the fact that wooden sleepers do not last long because of rain and sun and it also causes deforestation.

My question to the hon. Minister is what steps have been taken by the Railway authorities to replace the wooden sleepers by cast iron or concrete sleepers, particularly in Assam Branch line as well as in other States.

SHRI K. C. LENKA : We had, in principle, decided not to use the wooden sleepers any more. The phasing out of the wooden sleepers had started from 1-11-1991 and the intake of wooden sleepers for turn-outs and bridges is also being reduced progressively. We are using some wooden sleepers in the turn-outs and bridges.

So far as the renewal of tracks is concerned, we have decided in principle that we would not use wooden sleepers in order to help the conservation of forests. All the track renewals are being done by replacement of wooden sleepers by the concrete sleepers. If necessary we are also replacing them by cast iron sleepers. (*Interruptions*)

MR SPEAKER : Question Hour is over. But there is a Short Notice Question.

Dr. Lal Bahadur Rawal.

New Channels of Doordarshan

SN.Q 1. DR. LAL BAHADUR RAWAL : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have decided to start three more channels of Doordarshan to check the 'Cultural Invasion' by several foreign satellite TV channels;

(b) whether the programmes on these channels can be seen only through dish antenna; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor particularly in view of the fact that the programmes proposed to be telecast on these channels are already being telecast on cable TV?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO) : (a) and (b). Yes, Sir, including the metro channel.

(c) Resources are not available to enable the terrestrial transmission of these channels all over the country.

[*Translation*]

DR. LAL BAHADUR RAWAL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is a matter of great concern that the cable TV. is invading Indian family, social and cultural life through it Western programmes. The programmes which are being telecast or will be telecast on the new channels by Government, have already been shown through cable T.V. Therefore, I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to what efforts are being made to show fresh programmes on these channels so that the growing craze of Indian Public for Western programmes could be checked.

I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether some yardsticks are being fixed for the programmes so that the viewers could be attracted towards Indian programmes. The second part of my question is whether it is a fact that due to the programmes shown on cable T.V. for a longer time, the crime rate has increased in the country. I also would like to know whether the hon. Minister is aware of the fact that through cable T.V., Pakistan is easily showing its programmes in India, including in propaganda and presenting a wrong picture about India before the Indian viewers?

[English]

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO : These channels will come into effect from the 15th of August. The channels have not yet come into being. When the Indian satellite gets into the geo-stationary orbit, therefore only these channels will come in one transponder and it may be collected through one dish.

As far as the Indian way of life is concerned, it is being depicted in the normal channel, the terrestrial channel, which is existing one.

As far as / the other four channels are concerned, time slots will be sold to various parties and there will be all the five channels. But it is the viewership and sponsors which will dictate what type programmes will be there.

Thirdly, about the crime rate, we have no information. We will consult the other Ministries and try to find out the information.

[Translation]

DR. LAL BAHADUR RAWAL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, my question was about the programmes which are being shown or proposed to be shown on new channels, have already been shown on cable T.V. and what appears to me from the reply is that resources are not available for the local transmission these channels all over the country but it is not the reply to my question. If that is the reply I would like to know as to when resources will be made available for local transmission on these channels throughout the country so that the people may benefit from useful programmes. I also would like to know the expenditure incurred so far by Government on introducing these new channels and the estimated expenditure for the year 1993-94?

[English]

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO : The world over, satellite channels are being used and we are

also trying to do exactly the same. A terrestrial channel will cost anything more than Rs. 2500 crore. The Planning Commission, when the subject was being discussed, said that we would have to find the money but the budgetary support has now come down from 80 per cent to 20 per cent. Therefore, all these five channels will be through satellite and this is what is happening all over the world. Anyone with a dish, if he has proper type of dish and it is aimed that particular satellite, can receive all these programmes anywhere in India.

[Translation]

SHRI HARI KISHORE SINGH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Government has failed in combating the attack being made daily by foreign television on our culture. Our Government has failed in combating attack on our culture by foreign T.V., particularly by Hong Kong, which has invaded our sky. I am happy that the hon. Minister, whom I hold in high esteem, and who has keen interest in sports and who has evinced the same interest in the field of sports should also evince such interest in this department. I am talking especially of Doordarshan. How facts are being distorted by Doordarshan. When I was listening Parliament News of Television.....*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : This is not allowed. This is not forming part of the record.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : What are you saying Hari Kishore Singh Ji.....

SHRI HARI KISHORE SINGH : So long as the Doordarshan continues to adopt such attitude, the Government will not be able to control it.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: If you wish, you can reply. Otherwise, you need not.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO: What is this question, Sir?

SHRI RAMKAPSE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Minister while replying to a query has said that the Planning Commission has cut down the expenditure of Doordarshan from 80 per cent to 20 per cent. I would like to know from the hon. Minister, in the given circumstances and in the interest of Indian culture, how the Ministry would decide about spending enough money at all the channels. Ultimately in the interest of Indian culture, we will have to do something. So, I want to know how the Ministry is preparing itself in that direction.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO: Sir, in the *suo motu* statement, which I had made in March, it is mentioned that out of the five channels there will be one for enrichment, which will have culture, human resource development, women's development, children's development, youth and sports. And these channels will be selling out times. And the times will be taken by various producers, who will get sponsors. The viewers will be the acid test about the success, the quality and the content of the programme. So, it is actually going to be quality programmes, which will be sponsored by various advertisers. And, therefore, it is the viewer who will dictate and the channels will also be on Indian culture. Also there is going to be a business news. There is also going to be current affairs on various subjects, which I had said in March.

SHRI PRITHVIRAJ D. CHAVAN: Sir, in view of the fact that most of the / new channels are going to be satellite based and the cost of the hardware is still beyond the reach of many Indians, I want to know whether the R&D wing of Doordarshan either by themselves or in collabo-

ration with Satellite Application Centre of ISRO would carry out R&D work to reduce the cost of the receivers and to reduce the size of the antenna so that it becomes low-cost and affordable by the poor.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO: Sir, it is a very useful suggestion by the hon. Member. We are already in touch with the Department of Space.

SHRI P.S. CHETAN CHAUHAN: Just now the Minister has replied that five channels will be started from 15th of August. I want to know whether there will be one channel exclusively for sports out of these five channels.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO: Yes, Sir.

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAN SINGH (Deoria): Mr. Speaker, Sir, advertisements are the major source of raising revenue Doordarshan. But even since the foreign T. Vs have started beaming programmes in the country, the Indian companies are diverting their advertisements to them as a result of which the Doordarshan is likely to suffer heavy loss and its source of revenue is likely to come to an end. Is Doordarshan and its department taking any step to ensure that the Indian companies give their advertisements to Doordarshan only?

[English]

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO: Sir, I would like to state that the prophets of doom have not succeeded so far. Doordarshan, in spite of foreign TV, has been increasing its revenue from advertisements. There are no rules as such because the Reserve Bank of India had given permission to foreign exporters in the interest of exporting to the foreign TVs. Now, the Finance Ministry has already written to the Reserve Bank that only genuine exporters will be allowed and rest of them will not be allowed.