

(b) Their numbers sub post office-wise/ Branch post office-wise in each district are furnished in the statement attached.

(c) The Department of Telecommunica-

tions has planned to provide telephone facilities in all village Panchayats during 1991-95. These telephones will be located at post offices, panchayat office, Grocer's s'hops or other places with public access.

STATEMENT

<i>District</i>	<i>Departmental Sub-Office.</i>	<i>Extra Departmental Sub-Office.</i>	<i>Extra Departmental Branch Office.</i>
East Sikkim	11	2	2
West Sikkim	2	nil	2
North Sikkim	1	5	nil
South Sikkim	3	nil	1

Freedom Fighters' Pension to Malabar Special Armed Police

6862. SHRI K. MURALEE DHARAN: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the applications for the grant of freedom fighters' pension from the re-trenched Malabar Special Armed Police (MSAP) personnel for disobeying the British orders during freedom movement are still pending; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the time by which these applications are likely to be finalised?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI M.M. JACOB): (a) and (b). The Malabar Special Armed Police Strike has not been recognised as a part of the national freedom struggle for the purposes of pension under the Central Freedom Fighters' pension Scheme. As such, participants in the said

strike are not eligible for pension.

Establishment of Irrigation Development Bank

6863. SHRI H.D. DEVEGOWDA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal for the establishment of an Irrigation Development Bank to mobilise resources for speedy completion of on-going irrigation projects in the country; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA): (a) and (b). A proposal for setting up of an Irrigation Finance Corporation to provide funds for the expeditious completion of nationally important projects was recommended by the Working Group on Major and Medium irrigation Programme for inclusion in the VIII Plan. The proposal is to provide resources by the Central Government to the Corporation in shape of equity and loans.

Further it is proposed that the Corporation would be given authority to raise resources from domestic and international financial agencies as well as market borrowings. As the Planning Commission, has not favoured the setting up of such a Corporation, an alternative has been proposed, that is to undertake a scheme for providing special assistance for the expeditious completion of Nationally Important Irrigation Projects.

Advisory Committee to Improve Functioning of Passport Offices

6864. SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to constitute Advisory Committees consisting of eminent local personalities to improve the functioning of the passport offices in the country; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the time by which such committees likely to be constituted?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) and (b). It is proposed to constitute a Passport Advisory Committee attached to each Passport Office in India as early as possible for closer interaction between publicmen and Passport Officers, to monitor public grievances more accurately and to recommend remedial measures.

Telephone Exchanges

6865. SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of telephone exchanges in different states and the four Metropolitan cities as on June 30, 1991;

(b) the types of exchanges (Electronic, Manual etc.) percentage of utilisation of switching facility as on June 1, 1991;

(c) the demand for new telephones in OYT and Non-OYT categories as on June 1, 1990, separately;

(d) the percentage of growth rate of new demand during the last three years;

(e) the number and the percentage of such demand which is being met annually; and

(f) the steps proposed to meet the demand for telephone connections and exchanges and the investment required?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): (a) and (b). The information as on 1.4.91 is given in Statement I and II enclosed.

(c) The information is given in statement III enclosed.

(d) The percentage growth rate is as under as on 31st March:

<i>Year</i>	<i>New demand (lakhs)</i>	<i>Percentage growth over the previous year</i>
1988-89	5.07	9.97
1989-90	7.12	12.73
1990-91	7.32	11.58