

given to Starred Question No. 710 on the 17th September, 1963 and state:

(a) whether any decision for import of fertilisers and tractors has since been taken;

(b) if so, from which countries the additional import of fertilizers and tractors is to be made and the extent of each to be imported from each of the countries; and

(c) the amount of additional foreign exchange required for the purpose?

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (Dr. Ram Subhag Singh): (a) Yes.

(b) and (c). *Fertilizers*—for the year 1964, foreign exchange equivalent to Rs. 30 crores has been allotted for import of fertilizers. Orders for the supply of 50,000 tonnes of Urea from Japan valued at Rs. 1.95 crores have been placed so far. Purchases against the balance allocation are still under consideration.

Tractors.—Licenses have been issued during 1963 for import of 3790 tractors from U.S.S.R., Poland and Czechoslovakia. The number of tractors to be imported from each country and the foreign exchange involved in import are indicated below:

| Name of country | No. tractors to be imported | Foreign exchange involved |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | | Rs. |
| U.S.S.R. | 2,290 | 150.00 lakhs |
| Czechoslovakia | 200 | 46.63 lakhs |
| Poland | 1,000 (in S.K. D. packs) | Exact amount not known as a number of locally manufactured components are to be fitted in the imported tractors. |

Arrangements for import of tractors during 1964 have not yet taken a final shape.

Expansion of Railways in Western Rajasthan

502. Dr. L. M. Singhvi: Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to carry out any developmental expansion of the railways in Western Rajasthan in the remainder of the Third Plan period;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Railways (Shri S. V. Ramaswamy): (a) to (c). Apart from Udaipur-Himmatnagar—133.53 miles M.G., and Hindumalkot-Sriganganagar—17.12 miles B.G., which lines fall wholly or partly in Rajasthan and which have already been sanctioned for construction, no other new lines in Rajasthan are programmed for construction during the remaining period of the Third Five Year Plan, as there is no provision in the Third Five Year Plan for any more new lines.

Telephone Department

503. Dr. L. M. Singhvi: Will the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received complaints of deteriorating efficiency in the Telephone Department and particularly in the decline of promptitude and courtesy among telephone operators;

(b) whether Government have undertaken or propose to undertake work studies to investigate and assess the working of the Telephone Department; and

(c) the steps Government have taken during the last two years for improving services in the Telephone Department and to what extent these steps have proved satisfactory and efficacious?

The Deputy Minister in the Department of Posts and Telegraphs (Shri Bhagavati): (a) No. There has not

been complaints showing deteriorating efficiency. However, in any public utility since there are complaints and complaints are received from the public with regard to telephone services and some of these complaints pertain to inattention or discourtesy on the part of the operating staff. Our observation is that the number of complaint faults are also systematic upon certain remedial measures taken during the recent years.

(b) To assess the quality of service and evaluate the improvements effected, sampling of service is undertaken through centralised service observation, and test calls in most of the telephone systems. Routine and complaint faults are also systematically analysed to locate the areas of trouble and to take remedial action.

(c) Some of the major steps taken recently are:

- (1) Opening of new exchanges and increasing the capacity of existing ones, thereby reducing complaints due to congestion and over-loading and also due to old equipment in some of the telephone systems.
- (2) Replacement of overhead lines by underground cables.
- (3) Replacement of manual exchanges by automatic ones.
- (4) Introduction of mechanised system of maintenance of local telephone systems.
- (5) Refresher course for various cadres of staff in telephone exchanges for effecting proper supervision and inspection.
- (6) Strengthening of maintenance and supervisory staff in Telephone Districts.
- (7) Re-arrangement of telephone systems for effective control of major telephone systems.
- (8) Laying of co-axial cables on main routes.

(9) Introduction of single link operator dialling system on important trunk circuits.

(10) Introduction of subscriber trunk dialling service, etc.

The above measures are being progressively implemented and have brought about some improvement in the telephone services. However, the additional load introduced in telephone systems is considerable, and the improvements made therefore do not show as much as would be the case otherwise.

Development of Forests

504. Shri Surendra Pal Singh: Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the scheme of developing forests on village waste lands under the management of Panchayats, has more or less failed; and

(b) if so, the main reasons for the same, and whether Government are considering taking over such village forests under their control?

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (Dr. Ram Subhag Singh): (a) A scheme on Farm Forestry for developing forests on common lands; wastelands and field boundaries in the villages in order to meet the fuel requirements of the villagers is being implemented during the Third Plan period. While no detailed information about the exact progress of the scheme in the various States is available, it is known that the scheme has achieved good progress in Madras and appreciable progress in, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh and some others. The position varies from State to State in regard to transfer of waste lands to the village panchayats. While, in Madras, Andhra Pradesh and Orissa, wastelands as well as some arable lands are placed at the disposal of the village panchayats, in States like Rajasthan, not much progress has yet been registered. In Madras, these waste lands are being put