

3. Expansion of area under coconut in 2500 hectares.
4. Integrated farming in small coconut holdings in 50,000 ha.
5. Promotion of drip irrigation in coconut holdings by installing 3,000 drip irrigation units.
6. Removal of root wilt disease affected palms in northern Kerala.

(c) The introduction of price support scheme for copra had a salutary impact in pushing up the price of copra. During the current year upto November, 1989, National Agricultural Co-operative Marketing Federation of India Ltd. (NAFED) procured 2503 metric tonnes of copra in Kerala and 125 metric tonnes in Andaman & Nicobar Islands at the support price of Rs. 1500 per quintal. The prices of copra were ruling at between Rs. 1590 to 1640 per quintal in the first fortnight of December, 1989, in Kerala.

#### **Pending applications for telephone connections in Kerala**

257. PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of applications for telephone connections pending in Kerala at present;

(b) whether Government have any scheme for speedy clearance of the pending applications in the State; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT AND MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN): (a) The total no. of applications for new tele-

phone connections pending in Kerala as on 1.12.89 is 139267.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Additional equipment to the tune of 4.2 lakh lines has been proposed for Kerala for the period 1990-95. This will enable conversion of several small exchanges to medium sized exchanges and medium sized exchanges to larger exchanges. Consequently, it will be possible to reduce the waiting time for telephones. The planning objective of the Department of Telecom is to make telephones available on demand by 1.4.95 in all exchanges below 5,000 lines capacity. For larger exchanges the average waiting period is expected to be reduced to one year by 1.4.95. The implementation of the proposed plan is subject to adequate allocation of financial and material resources in time.

#### **Modernisation of Telephone Exchanges**

258. PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated any scheme for the rapid modernisation of telephone exchanges in the country;

(b) if so, the salient features of the scheme;

(c) the number of manual exchanges out of the total exchanges in Kerala; and

(d) by what time these exchanges will be phased out completely?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT AND MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN): (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. Modernisation Plans of Telephone Exchanges proposed in the draft 8th Plan are: