

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:

(b) if so, the steps being taken by Government to look after their interests?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MUFTI MOHAMMED SAYEED): (a) and (b). Government are aware of the arrival of refugees from Sri Lanka in the recent past. Of the 1095 refugees who have arrived between 26th August and 12th December, 1989, 952 have been admitted in the transit camps at Mandapam and Kottapattu in Tamil Nadu. These refugees are being provided normal relief facilities aggregating to Rs. 700/- per month per family; these include an element of cash dole, clothing and subsidised ration. The remaining refugees have not sought admission in camps.

Public Telephones in All villages

262. SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether public telephones have been installed in all the villages of the country; and

(b) if not, whether there is any plan to this effect and the target date thereof?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT AND MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) It is planned to provide a telephone in every gram panchayat village during 8th Plan subject to the acceptance of this Plan by the Planning Commission.

Development to Small Ports in Kerala

263. SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposals have been

received from Kerala Government for the revival/development of small ports at Azhikkal in Cannanore District and Beypore and Calicut ports in Calicut District of Kerala;

(b) if so, the response of Union Government thereto;

(c) whether there is any specific comprehensive plan of Government to revive/develop small and medium ports along the Kerala coasts; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and allocation for the same?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT AND MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The State Government was informed in February, 1988 that due to existing constraint of resources, the Central Government was not in a position to bring more minor ports under the scheme of Central assistance.

(c) The Central Government has not drawn up such a plan. The development of minor ports is primarily the responsibility of the respective State Governments.

(d) The Government is quite responsible to suggestions to improve port facilities all along the Coast.

Opening of New Telephone Exchanges in Malabar Region of Kerala

264. SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the particulars of new telephone exchanges which have been opened in the Malabar Region of Kerala during 1989;