

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith their cost, dates of purchase and the companies for which these have been purchased;

(c) whether some of the above helicopters have gone out of order;

(d) if so, the number thereof and the amount spent on their maintenance and repairing during the above period; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government to ensure that these helicopters are not misused ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPT. SATISH KUMAR SHARMA) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (e) Do not arise.

#### Telephone Connections

645. SHRI V. DHANANJAYA KUMAR :

SHRI BRISHIN PATEL :

SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY :

SHRI BRIJ BHUSHAN SHARAN SINGH :

SHRI NAWAL KISHORE RAI :

DR. LAL BAHADUR RAWAL :

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether a large number of consumers have been waiting since long, specially in the rural parts of the country, to get new telephone connections;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the future plans to provide new telephone connections expeditiously and by what time new connections would be given on demand throughout the country ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM) : (a) and (b) No, Sir. In the rural parts of the country, telephone connections are given practically on demand except some cases, where it may be delayed due to resource constraints.

(c) National Telecom. Policy 1994 envisages the provision of telephone connections on demand throughout the country including rural parts by 1997. For this purpose, participation of the private sector is also being allowed to provide basic telephone services.

#### Linking of Rivers

646. SHRI SANDIPAN BHAGWAN THORAT : Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government of Maharashtra has submitted any project to the Union Government for linking of Bhima and Sina rivers in the state;

(b) if so, the total cost thereof;

(c) the steps taken by the Union Government in this regard;

(d) the time by which the said project is likely to be completed; and

(e) the share of the Union Government therein ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI P.V. RANGAYYA NAIDU) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (e) Do not arise.

#### Joint Venture for Oil Exploration

647. DR. VASANT NIWRUTTI PAWAR : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal to promote private sector joint venture in oil exploration;

(b) if so, the reasons thereof and

(c) the expected investment during the current plan under this proposal ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPT. SATISH KUMAR SHARMA) : (a) Government of India has in March 1995 offered 28 blocks under the Joint Venture Exploration Programme to private companies for exploration of oil and gas.

(b) The main reasons are

- technology would be upgraded through the induction of state-of-the-art technology companies.

- additional resources from the private sector would be deployed in exploration activities with the aim of adding to country's hydrocarbon reserves.

(c) Total investment will depend on the number of contracts signed and the quantum of work committed to in each of these contracts.

[Translation]

#### Reservation in Services in Madhya Pradesh

648. SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government have received any proposal from the State Government of Madhya Pradesh for inclusion of the provision of 69% reservation in Madhya Pradesh Government services in the Ninth Schedule to the Constitution;

(b) if so, whether the Union Government propose to bring a Constitution Amendment Bill in this regard; and