

(c) and (d). The equipped capacity of the mobile radio telephone system in Delhi is 100, which can be increased if there is demand for the same.

Power through micro-hydel projects to Sikkim

307. SHRIMATI D.K. BHANDARI : Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that in hill areas power through micro-hydel projects could help in arresting denudation of wood used for fuel consumption ;

(b) if so, the number of micro-hydel schemes that have been thought of by Government in areas which have high power generating potential ; and

(c) if the reply is in the affirmative, whether Sikkim has been included as one of those areas ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF POWER (SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) & (c). Micro/mini/small hydel schemes are currently being executed under the various State Plans and 87 schemes are under operation and 78 schemes are under construction in different parts of the country. In Sikkim, there are 3 such schemes under operation and 2 more under construction.

Oil exploration in West Bengal

308. SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DAS MUNSI : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether any programme of fresh oil and gas exploration is likely to be taken up this year in West Bengal ;

(b) if so, the details thereof ;

(c) whether entire sea coast of Digha (Contai), Midnapore is full of oil reserves ; and

(d) if so, the details in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR SINGH) : (a) & (b). During the current year (1985-86) six seismic and one gravity magnetic parties are in operation in West Bengal. Three rigs are also engaged in exploratory drilling.

(c) & (d). The area is considered prospective but so far no commercial discovery of hydrocarbons has been made.

Opening of branch post offices

309. SHRI UTTAM RATHOD : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of branch post offices sanctioned in each state in 1983-84, 1984-85, 1985-86 ;

(b) how many of these branch post offices were opened ;

(c) reasons for not opening the remaining branch post offices already sanctioned ; and

(d) the time by which these branch post offices will be opened ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA) : (a) The number of branch post offices sanctioned in each State in 1983-84 and in 1984-85 is indicated in the attached statement. During 1985-86 no post offices were sanctioned on account of the ban on creation of posts.

(b) Out of 2314 post offices sanctioned during 1983-84, 2146 were opened. During 1984-85, 62 post offices which were sanctioned on the basis of a special relaxation obtained from the Ministry of Finance were also opened.

(c) During 1983-84, 168 post offices sanctioned were not opened on account of the ban on creation of posts.