

(iii) Alternative solutions for provision of low cost higher reliability transmission facilities for telecommunications in the rural areas.

(iv) Problems relating to physical plants and their protection from lightning and induction from high tension parallelism.

(v) Problems of providing suitable power supplies in remote areas where no regular power supply system exists.

The Seminar brought out that the problems of development of telecommunications in rural areas in developing countries differ considerably from those in the developed countries. Most of the solutions applied for developed countries for extending the telephone and telegraph facilities in the rural areas cannot be applied directly to the developing countries and that considerable amount of research and development work will have to be undertaken to work out low cost high reliability switching and transmission systems for the rural areas.

(c) and (d). The Rural Telecommunications Seminar concentrated on the identification of special problems and finding technical solutions to the problems of development of telecommunications in rural areas. It was not used for discussing specific plans of the participating countries or any foreign assistance, Technical or financial, in this regard.

However, the Department has drawn up proposals for opening 15,000 Long Distance Public Call Offices and combined Telegraph Offices in the rural areas in the country during the 6th Plan Period. It is further proposed to expand the telephone facilities in about 2,400 villages by replacing the L.D. Public Call Offices by telephone exchanges. Foreign Exchange requirements for the above proposals shall be met from the normal foreign exchange reserves including Bilateral and Multilateral credits, loans and grants.

Social Security Schemes for Railway Posters and Vendors

752. SHRI VIJAY KUMAR N. PATIL: Will the Minister of PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated Social Security Schemes for Railway Porters and Vendors and other categories of employees;

(b) if so, furnish important details of the schemes formulated;

(c) how soon these schemes are proposed to be implemented; and

(d) the details of steps taken for early implementation of these measures?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. RAM KIRPAL SINHA): (a) to (d). The existing social security schemes e.g. Provident Fund and Health Insurance are applicable to wage earners subject to the coverage described in the Employees' Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952 and the Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948. For the present, the Government's endeavour is to extend the benefits of these laws to more wage earners.

Shortage of Steel

753. SHRI VIJAY KUMAR N. PATIL: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that large number of industrial units using steel as a raw material are facing serious crisis in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and other States due to acute shortage of steel;

(b) if so, furnish State-wise details of the estimated number of units affected by steel shortage in the country giving details of monthly requirement State-wise of the small scale units for steel for the last six months vis-a-vis the actual steel supplied to these units;

(c) whether the association of such units have represented central authority in this regard and details thereof; and

(d) the details of measures taken to meet the requirement of steel for the small scale industrial unit?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI KARIA MUNDA): (a) Presumably the reference is to the industrial units in the small scale sector. The requirements of the small scale units are to be met by the Small Industries Corporations of the States concerned. Supplies to these Corporations have been considerably stepped up as compared to the previous years. In spite of this, some Corporations, like those of Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, are finding it difficult to meet the requirements of their units, particularly in the case of those iron and steel items which are in short supply.

(b) State-wise details about the units affected and the actual demand and supply to individual units are not available with Government.

(c) Representations from some Small Industries Corporations and associations of small scale units have been received, mainly about non-supply of material to the individual units.

(d) During the current financial year, about 4,50,000 tonnes of pig iron and 4,40,000 tonnes of steel are planned to be despatched on a priority basis to the Small Industries Corporation from the integrated steel plants as against 2,25,000 tonnes of pig iron and 1,76,000 tons of steel despatched in 1977-78. Periodical meetings are held by the Iron and Steel Controller with the producers to review the supplies. Subject to over-all availability, the producers try to meet the requirements of the small scale units holding essentiality certificates and those manufacturing agricultural implements. Meetings are also held with the representatives of the SSI Corporations to sort out the problems.

R.P.O. for Himachal Pradesh

754. SHRI DURGA CHAND: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to refer to the reply given to Unstarred Question No. 5145 on 24th August, 1978 regarding opening of a Sub-Regional Passport office in Himachal Pradesh and state whether a departure in the criterion required for opening a passport office is proposed to be made in respect of Himachal Pradesh being a Hilly State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SAMARENDRA KUNDU): Government of India have reviewed the matter and have decided to open a Passport Office in Himachal Pradesh to alleviate difficulties of Passport applicants from the State. Action to open the office will be taken in consultation with the Government of Himachal Pradesh and it is expected that the office will be opened in the early part of the next financial year.

Implementation of Recommendations of Wage Board and Payment of P.F. to Workers by Private Iron Ore Mine Owners

755. SHRI G. M. BANATWALLA: Will the Minister of PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of workers directly employed by each of the private iron ore mine owners in the country who supply iron ore for export purpose;

(b) the number of contractors in each of these mines and the categories of work handled by them;

(c) whether all the mine owners have fully implemented the recommendations of the Iron Ore Wage Board and paid provident fund dues to the workers; and

(d) the names of those concerns (mine owners) who have so far not implemented the recommendations of the Wage Board and failed to pay provident fund dues and the steps