

Wireless Telegraph and Radio Phone Services to Foreign Countries

2885. Shri N. M. Deb: Will the Minister of Transport and Communications be pleased to state:

(a) when the direct wireless telegraph service will begin to operate with Czechoslovakia, Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia; and

(b) when the direct radio phone service will begin to operate with Afghanistan and Czechoslovakia?

The Minister of Transport and Communications (Shri S. K. Patil): (a) and (b). The question of opening direct wireless telegraph and telephone services to Czechoslovakia will be considered as and when the position in respect of equipment for the Overseas Communication Service improves. There is also no proposal at present to establish direct wireless telegraph services with Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia.

As regards wireless telephone service to Afghanistan, the matter has recently been taken up again with the Royal Afghan Government. Earlier in 1955, the Royal Afghan Government had intimated their inability to provide the service owing to inadequacy of equipment.

Boat Accidents

2886 } Shri Keshava:
 } Shri Vidya Charan Shukla:

Will the Minister of Transport and Communications be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has taken up any scheme for improvement and reorganisation of the boat traffic for the pilgrims in India and obviate the frequent recurrence of accidents therein; and

(b) when is it to be implemented and how?

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Communications (Shri Raj Bahadur): (a) and (b). The Government of India have not taken up any such scheme but it has been suggested to the State Governments that important ferries should be run by State Government agency and not through contractors as the latter are prone to connive at over loading which has been found to be the main cause of the unfortunate accidents.

Hydro-Electric Project in the Hilly Areas of Punjab

2887. Shri Ram Krishan Gupta: Will the Minister of Irrigation and Power be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any hydro-electric scheme for the hilly areas of Punjab; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

The Deputy Minister of Irrigation and Power (Shri Hathi): (a) Yes

(b) As a result of a preliminary survey carried out to investigate the possibility of electrifying these areas, it has been decided to set up a small hydro-electric power unit, with an initial installed capacity of 100 kw, on Biling Nullah near Kyelong, the headquarters of Lahaul. The matter of setting up similar power houses at a few other places in Lahaul and Spitti areas is proposed to be taken up later on.

As regards hilly areas, excluding Lahaul and Spitti, it is considered relatively economical to electrify them by the extension of the existing transmission lines to various places instead of setting up small hydro-electric power houses.