

SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA : As I have said earlier that the new scheme of the department was accepted in 1994. At that time the target fixed was that one P.C.O. would be allotted for the population of 500 but as private operators are not getting their way into it hence DOT is making efforts for it. As per the efforts made by an agreement would be reached on 600 by the end of the year. It is not far away. One P.C.O. would be allotted on 600...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : That is why, I should not allow any more supplementaries.

*(Interruptions)*

SHRI A.C. JOS : Sir, the Question is different, the answer is different. Will you kindly give a direction to the Minister to reply properly?

MR. SPEAKER : You have not heard the full answer. How can you come to that conclusion? You first listen to the Minister.

SHRI A.C. JOS : After listening to the Minister, I find that they are not answering questions properly. The questions is different, the answer is different.

[Translation]

SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA : The question is that P.C.O. has been set up in a very close proximity. Our target was to set it up for the population of 500. One P.C.O. would be set up for the population of 600 by the end of the year. Previously our target was to set up a P.C.O. for the population of 500 by the end of 1997 but the target is not being achieved. You have said about your constituency. The question is not for the constituency but you give it in writing separately. We will consider that seriously...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : I know that it is important. But it is not possible.

*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

### Telephone Tapping

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\*304. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY :  
SHRI VIJAY GOEL :

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to amend Telegraph Act, 1885 so that the tapping of telephones of political leaders, political parties, journalists and social workers and censoring of their letters may be checked keeping in view such allegations being made from time to time; and

(b) if so, the progress made in this regard so far?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) No, Sir, there is no proposal to amend the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 with regard to tapping of telephones as enough safeguards are available in Section 5 of the Act. Censoring of letters is not governed by Indian Telegraph Act.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

[English]

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister to this very important subject. He has given a reply that he has no proposal to amend this Act.

As we all know, even as per the Indian Telegraph Act, 1865, the Government has got the right to have the tapping in the interests of sovereignty, integrity and also security of the country or for maintaining public order or for preventing incitement of offences. No doubt, this is a good point. But, at the same time, there are so many occasions where the tappings have taken place, allegations and counter allegations have been made on political leaders, executives and various other persons.

Recently, as we all know, hon. former Prime Minister, Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao's telephone was tapped. It is a big allegation and the hon. Prime Minister had ordered a C.B.I. inquiry also.

Now, I would like to ask the hon. Minister, as on today, about the state of that inquiry of C.B.I. which was ordered in the case of the former Prime Minister's telephone tapping. This is my first Supplementary question.

[Translation]

SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA : Sir, during the last few days, after publishing a news item in the newspapers a demand was raised that telephones of some leaders are being taped. Prime Minister handed over its enquiry to the C.B.I. and the CBI has also given its report to the Prime Minister. As per report the news that was published in the newspaper, was found as baseless.

[English]

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : So, the House can take the guarantee.

My second question is that the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 is too old. It was actually introduced before Independence. Now, with the present modern system, modern philosophy and modern civilisation, it is the right time to consider to amend the present Act. But I am rather surprised that the hon. Minister gives a reply that he has no plan to amend it.

I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether, in view of the fact that allegations and counter allegations

are coming from various political leaders which put the Government in an embarrassing position, he would not think it proper for the Government to amend this Act, which is totally outdated.

[Translation]

SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA : Sir, my department provides only technical facilities of telephone tapping. Ministry of Home Affairs gives approval thereof. So far as you are talking of modernity, on the one hand we are becoming modern in other fields but on the other hand our national security is being jeopardised from all things and even internal security is jeopardised. In this connection, it is necessary that such type of set up should be continued but the department does not do itself. When the Department of Home Affairs seeks our permission, we provide it technical facility only. What you said in this regard that it is out dated law, it is law of English time, it is not correct. But the present Attorney General is also of the view that there is no need of any amendment in this Act.

[English]

SHRI P.C. THOMAS : We have a very good opinion about the Department and the Department is capable of doing very positive work.

Now, what has been said is about the official tapping. As per the law, it is allowed and it is possible. But there are so many cases of unofficial tapping which are possible and which can be done.

This is the age of cellular telephones and now we have so many agencies coming in this field. Is it not time to think of a positive law by which we would have control over the whole media in this sector (Interruptions). The changes have to be taken into account. That is why I would like to bring this aspect also to the Minister's attention. There are two parts of my question. One is, whether the Minister would take into account the new scenario and bring out some legislation or think of some legislation which needs to be brought in this regard. The second part of my question is, as I said, this is the age of cellular telephones. The Department is not bad. We have got a very good infrastructure and we have got a very good work force. Also, we have got a very good opinion about the Department. So, why not think of giving the cellular telephones also to the department, rather than giving them only to private parties?

[Translation]

SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA : Sir, I am thankful to the hon'ble Member that he expressed our concern through a question. I have discussed the issue with my officers today itself that tapping facility should be developed in cellular telephones and they are trying their best for this. There is no facility of tapping in Cellular telephone now, but we do understand the need

of tapping technology therein. When there comes up a point of our internal security or national security here, there is no arrangements for monitoring. We would make such arrangements in our technical machinery very soon.

[English]

SHRI P.V. RAJESHWAR RAO : Sir, four months back, in Andhra Pradesh, they have given cellular phones and many people bought them but they are not in operation. Whenever we talk to the persons concerned, they say that the Department has not finalised the things and they have not given the permission. For the last four months, the phones have become only ornamental. People are having the phones but they are not in operation. So, I want to know whether the Government is going to take any action in this regard and decide the things immediately.

[Translation]

SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA : Sir, I think that this question is not basically related to the main question. But we would ask the department to look into the suggestion made by the hon'ble member.

[English]

#### TV System with the Help of INSAT 2C

305. SHRI SANAT MEHTA : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether Doordarshan proposes to club together DD 3 and Movie Club, the movie channel, to beam the channel via one of the transponders allotted to the national broadcaster on INSAT 2C;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the improvements likely to be made in television system with the help of INSAT 2C;

(d) whether proposals have also been received in this regard;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) how far it is likely to ensure longer telecast hours and help in generating more revenue?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) to (f). A statement is laid on the table of the House.

#### STATEMENT

(a) and (b). Yes Sir. The Movie Club channel has been clubbed with the DD 3 Channel w.e.f. 1.11.1996 on C-3 Transponder of INSAT 2C Satellite.

(c) Transmission from C Band Transponders of INSAT 2C has not only improved the quality of this