

such leasing company was also included which was not there in the last scheme. Design loan and service charges which were 6.5 per cent were reduced to 3 per cent. In case of direct procurement, these charges were reduced to 1.5 per cent from 2.5 per cent. We have also said that if Railways would fail to provide prescribed number of wagons in time, then it will pay compensation Rs. 4 per tonne. It proved very effective. In 1994-95, we had orders for 797 wagons and in 1995-96, we received orders for 4572 wagons and up to November 1996-97, we received orders for 4650 wagons. I think that this trend is very encouraging and we have been successful in attracting the investors.

[English]

SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS : There is poor maintenance in regard to the cloak room, provision of bed rolls in mail and express trains in Rayagada, Langigarh road, Kesinga, Titilagarh, Kantabanji, Khariar Road, Sambalpur, Rourkela Stations. So, I would like to know from the Government as to what specific steps are being taken to improve the maintenance of the above mentioned railway stations and what amount has been provided so far for this purpose.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : Mr. Speaker, Sir, there are mainly two parts of the scheme. One is 'Wagon Scheme' and the other one is 'BOLT'. Hon'ble Member has said about maintenance. This issue was deliberated in the supplementary budget of Railway till one O'clock in the night yesterday and we have explained this position in this regard. We are keeping a close watch with regard to maintenance. So far as bed rolls etc. are concerned, we have categorically stated that there would be no shortage in AC II Tier and so far as maintenance is concerned, special cells have been set up for this purpose. We are strictly taking action also. I assure hon'ble Member that so far as two parts of maintenance is concerned—one is maintenance of bed rolls etc. and the other is maintenance of coaches—we are improving the maintenance of coaches and bogies. We have shortage of sufficient number of coaches, but we are improving the condition of coaches that are available with us, by getting them repaired and through other means. Besides, we are also seriously talking measures to overcome the shortage of the coaches.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Question No. 407, Shri V.M. Sudheeran - not present. Question No. 408, Shrimati Vasundhara Raje - not present. Question No. 409, Shri Anant Kumar Hegde - not present. Question No. 410, Shri George Fernandes - not present. Dr. Laxminarayan Pandey - not present.

Question No. 411, Dr. M. Jagannath.

DR. M. JAGANNATH : Question No. 411, Sir.

Government Policy on Pvt. Telecom Operators

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*411. DR. M. JAGANNATH

SHRI GOPALKRISHNA T.

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned 'Government Policies throttle Pvt. telecom operators', appearing in the Economic Times dated November 21, 1996;

(b) if so, the facts thereof and reaction of the Government thereon;

(c) whether telecom regulatory body has been constituted; and

(d) if not, when it is proposed to be constituted?

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) to (d). A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

The news item emphasises that refusal of the Government to permit long distance service, the ceiling on tariff set by the Government, the arbitrary fixation of interconnect and port charges and the limit on the number of Circles that an operator can implement have made private investment in basic services unprofitable. The parties which responded to the tenders were aware of the Government's stand on long distance service, the ceiling on tariff and also the number of Circles in which a private operator would be allowed to operate as these were clearly spelt out in the tender documents. The Government, therefore, do not agree with the contentions made in the news item. The prospective operators, however, have drawn Government's attention to the problems that have arisen on account of the non-transferability of the licence and also expressed the apprehension that their projects will not be financially viable. These problems are being looked into by the Government.

The Bill for constitution of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India has been introduced in the Lok Sabha and was referred to Standing Committee on Communications whose report has been laid on the Table of Lok Sabha on 21st Nov., 1996 and on the Table of Rajya Sabha on 26.11.96. Further action is being taken in the matter.

[English]

DR. M. JAGANNATH : The IIM, Bangalore has said that private operators would not get more than 2.5 per

cent annual return for their investment. I would like to know whether the operators are not allowed to provide long distance services. 55 per cent of the revenue of the Department of Telecommunications comes from domestic and long distance services. Then, why is it that the Government is not allowing this? I would like to know whether the basic service operators would not get 2.5 per cent return. Is it true? Why, no national policy has been not evolved get?

MR. SPEAKER : The Minister is standing to give a reply to you. Please sit down.

[Translation]

JUSTICE GUMAN MAL LODHA : He has not understood the question.

MR. SPEAKER : Translation is time consuming.

SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA : It will have to be looked into. Pragmatic approach would be adopted in this regard.

12.00 hrs.

[English]

SHRI T. GOPALKRISHNA : Sir, I would like to know what the hurdles in achieving the objectives enunciated in the National Telecom Policy and also the reasons for the delay in appointing the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India.

[Translation]

SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA : The Telecom Regulatory Bill was introduced in this House it was referred to the Select Committee. The Committee has submitted its report. After taking a final decision on that, it will be laid on the Table of the House.

SHORT NOTICE QUESTION

12.00½ hrs.

Ban on Use of Oxytocin Injection

SNQ 1. SHRI MANABENDRA SHAH : Will the Minister of ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING be pleased to state :

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the newsitem, appearing in the 'Hindustan Times', dated December 6, 1996 regarding injecting the cows and buffaloes with Oxytocin for increasing the milk output;

(b) if so, whether the Government have taken any steps to ban its use;

(c) whether the Oxytocin induces poison in the milk;

(d) whether the Government have made any investigation in this regard; and

(e) if so, the findings thereof?

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH) : (a) to (e). A statement is laid on the table of the House.

STATEMENT

(a) Yes Sir. The Government is aware of the news item published in Hindustan Times dated 6-12-1996. Oxytocin is sometimes used in the cows and buffaloes which suffer from let down problem. In such situation, animal's own oxytocin is not released in the circulation. Use of this injection, however, does not increase the milk output.

(b) Oxytocin is a scheduled - "H" drug. Therefore, as per the provisions of Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940; Rules 1945 (Rule 65) sale of oxytocin injection is permitted only against the prescription of a registered medical practitioner (this includes veterinary practitioners also). The powers to implement the Act is vested with the Drug Controller of India and the State Drug Controllers. The Drug Controller of India has already given instructions to the State Drug Controllers to regulate manufacture and distribution of oxytocin.

(c) No Sir.

(d) and (e). Since Oxytocin is a peptide hormone, it can not directly pass from blood to the milk. Thus elimination of oxytocin in the milk does not appear to represent an important path. Moreover, it is fast eliminated from circulation (its half life is about 1-5 minutes only) and is destroyed by the kidney and liver apart from being utilized by the mammary gland/udder for let down of milk.

[English]

SHRI MANABENDRA SHAH (Tehri-Garhwal) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the reply given by the hon. Minister does not categorically state that oxytocin is harmful to human beings. All that the Minister has said is that it gets diluted. Therefore, I would like to know what preventive steps are taken by the Government prior to the milk being supplied in the market so that any trace of oxytocin is diluted or diffused. No satisfactory categorical reply