

12.12 hrs.

STATEMENT RE : STEPS TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY OF TELECOMMUNICATION SERVICES.

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI ARJUN SINGH) : Hon'ble Members will recall that the Prime Minister in his Budget Speech had mentioned : "Our principal objectives are the elimination of poverty and building of a strong, modern self-reliant and independent economy". He had further said; "Efficiency and productivity have to be increased".

I believe that the Department of Telecommunications has a very important contribution to make in these objectives through effective and efficient communication services.

The Department of Telecommunications has drawn up plans to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its services and is working hard towards this. Whole-hearted cooperation and dedication of all categories of staff is a prerequisite in this regard.

The Hon'ble Members will recall that some time back we had a series of agitations in the Department of Telecommunication arising from the dissatisfaction with the pay-scales etc. and the recommendations of the 4th Pay Commission. In particular, in October/November 1986, there had been a serious deterioration in services due to the agitation launched by the Junior Engineer Telecommunications. I am happy to report that the matter has been resolved satisfactorily. I am happy to inform the House that the employees have themselves come forward with a detailed Action Plan to improve the quality of service. The JEs have promised that they will take special steps to bring down the fault rates, from the present 35 to 20 faults per hundred telephones per month by December, 1987 and to 5 faults per hundred telephones per month by 1990. They have also undertaken to improve the local call and STD call completion rates and the trunk efficiency. Some of the targets they have proposed are

an improvement on what we were hoping to achieve during the 7th Five Year Plan.

They have also undertaken to build up a team spirit with their colleagues down the line in achieving the above objectives.

It is not only the JEs but all other staff and the trade unions who have pledged their support and cooperation to our efforts for improving the quality of service. I have held discussions with the Secretaries-General of the three Federations of the Staff Unions in the Department of Telecommunications. All of them assured me unequivocally that they will work towards improvement of the telecommunication services. As a result of the discussions, we have constituted Quality Circles of officers and staff at the grassroots levels which have started functioning. On our part, we are looking at the genuine problems and grievances of staff of all categories and plan to settle them amicably.

The Hon'ble Members will recall that we had recently organised a National Conference on the Telecommunications Mission. As a follow-up action we have constituted 31 Task Forces, each consisting of 6 to 8 people, officials and non-officials, having expertise in various fields, including consumer activities, trade union leaders management experts, businessmen, industrialists, etc. We have requested these Task Forces to draw up action plan in each of their areas to improve the quality of service. We have requested them to make their recommendations by the middle of April, 1987.

We intend to promptly follow up the action plans drawn up by these Task Forces to give better satisfaction to the customers.

Some of the State Governments have been concerned about the prompt provision of telecommunication services to the new industrial estates and townships being established by them in the suburbs of major cities and towns. I have started a dialogue with the Chief Ministers to exchange views on the steps necessary and our effort will be to meet these requirements in a reasonable time frame.

The task of bringing about "Better Communication", as entrusted to us by the Prime Minister shall be attended to at all levels in the Department. with dedication and commitment. I shall report to this august House the progress made in this regard.

12.15 hrs.

ELECTION TO COMMITTEE

[English]

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI VSHWANATH PRATAP SINGH): Sir, I beg to move :

"That in pursuance of section 12 (1) of the National Cadet Corps Act, 1948, the members of this House do proceed to elect, in such manner as the Speaker may direct, one member from amongst themselves to serve as a member of the Central Advisory Committee for the National Cadet Corps for a term of one year from the date of election, subject to the other provisions of the said Act and the Rules made thereunder".

MR. SPEAKER : The question is :

"That in pursuance of section 12 (1) of the National Cadet Corps Act, 1948, the members of this House do proceed to elect, in such manner as the Speaker may direct, one member from amongst themselves to serve as a member of the Central Advisory Committee for the National Cadet Corps for a term of one year from the date of election, subject to the other provisions of the said Act and the Rules made thereunder."

The motion was adopted.

MR. SPEAKER : Now, we shall take up Matters under Rule 377.

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

[English]

- (i) Need to take necessary measures to improve rail facilities in Bihar.

SHRI C. P. THAKUR (Patna) : Sir, Bihar is an economically backward state. To improve its economy, it is essential that rail facilities are improved :

1. *Rail bridge on the river Ganges at Patna* : This bridge will connect North and South Bihar and will greatly facilitate the movement of goods from one part to another. Many a time assurances have been given that this bridge will be taken up for consideration by the Government. Unfortunately; nothing has been done so far. The matter has been raised by many Members in Parliament. Some of the districts of the North Bihar will be immensely benefited by this bridge.
2. *Doubling the single line between Patna and Gaya* : This line again carries heavy load of traffic. Its doubling is over-due and it should be done without any delay.

[Translation]

- (ii) Need to take necessary measures to prevent theft of precious antiques in Bihar.

SHRIMATI MADHUREE SINGH (Purnea) : Bihar is an important state of India, having old traditions. Every Indian is proud of historical and religious traditions of Bihar. Bihar has also been an old Centre of various religions and knowledge as also birth place of tenth guru of sikhs and field of activities of Muslim Saints and Lord Buddha and Jain Tirthankars. Mithila is considered to be the "birth place of Sita". Bihar has been a land of temples and various stories of Puranas. It has made a special contribution in the integration of the country. At present, precious antiques and rare pieces of art, statues and paintings are being stolen and smuggled out of the country.