

14.41 hrs.

### ANNOUNCEMENT RE: POSTPONEMENT OF SITTING OF HOUSE FOR WANT OF QUORUM

[English]

**Secretary-General :** There is no quorum. So, the House cannot meet; and we cannot start the House till there is quorum. Hon. Deputy Speaker has directed that the House will re-assemble at fifty-five minutes past Fourteen of the Clock.

14.57 hrs.

[English]

*The Lok Sabha re-assembled of Fifty-Seven Minutes  
past Fourteen of the Clock.*

(Mr. Deputy-Speaker in the Chair)

### INDIAN TELEGRAPH (AMENDMENT) BILL—Contd.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker :** We will take up further consideration of the Bill. The Hon. Minister has spoken. Now, I shall call Major D.D. Khanoria of BJP to speak.

The Time allotted to this subject is two hours. Each political party has given the names. The list is there. It is very difficult to accommodate them. Therefore, I would request the hon. leaders of political parties to see who are the persons who are to participate in this debate. The time shall have to be limited.

When two hours were allotted, we dragged on up to four to five hours with the result that we were not able to finish the business of the House. So, kindly stick to the timings also. Of course, each political party has been allotted time—for example, congress 40 minutes, BJP 25 minutes, and CPM 8 minutes. So, kindly try to arrange yourselves according to the time allotted to each political party. Thank you.

[Translation]

**Major D. D. Khanoria (Kangra) :** Sir, the Indian Telegraph Amendment Bill, 1995 brought by the hon. Minister of Communications was the need of the hour in our country. I would like to congratulate Shri Sukhramji for this Bill. People in remotest corners of the country are benefited by the telephone facilities and the telecom network throughout the country has expanded to the maximum possible limit. It would have been better if a statutory body had been constituted under the Bill instead of non-statutory body as we know that telecommunication is a permanent feature. The field of Telecommunication will immensely progress through setting up of 'Telecommunication Regulatory Authority of India' as we have suggested.

15.00 hrs.

Setting up of Regulatory Authority of India will benefit its employees, on the other hand, customers will get all the

facilities. When we talk of foreign companies, there is an apprehension that these companies may dominate indigenous smaller companies. Therefore, the hon. Minister should think over this aspect so that small companies get encouragement and also benefit. At the same time, all employees of this Department from the lowest rank to the highest, should be given promotions. It has been found that there is a shortage of staff in every Telephone Exchange due to which most of the telephone connections, STD are dead. Therefore, more employees should be recruited in this Department so that it may make progress.

Today, telephone facility is available everywhere in the country. Hon. Minister, is making efforts to strengthen the system and I hope that he will succeed in his endeavour and our Telecommunication Department will March ahead and make more progress in the near future.

In some offices of this Department the employees are not satisfied. We will have to abide by the rules and regulations to fulfil their hopes and aspirations. If we satisfy them, they will benefit our customers also and the number of grievances of subscribers regarding overcharging of Bills and other complaints would certainly come down. Besides, if our workers are trained in adequate number, they will be able to solve the problems of customers where telephones remain out of order for several days.

I would like to give more suggestions in this regard. Generally, wire-thefts are reported in this Department. The Government should form squads in order to stop such thefts. These wires are very costly, that is why their theft should be stopped because we have found that telephones remain dead for several days only due to such thefts. Such thefts cause huge loss to this Department, to the Government as well as to the whole country. Therefore, squads should be formed and they should function under the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India. The Secretariat of this Authority should control the Telecommunications in the entire country.

With these words I conclude and thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak.

[English]

**Shri Shraavan Kumar Patel (Jabalpur) :** Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I stand in support of this Bill. Telecommunication has become the most crucial factor of economic development.

15.05 hrs

(Shri Tara Singh in the Chair)

The new Economic Policy—when this Government took over in 1991—has enunciated two main objectives. Number one is 'achieving rapid economic growth through globalisation' and number two 'inviting foreign investments on a scale that could sustain the proposed development'.

The new Telecom Policy 1994 has therefore to be dovetailed keeping in view these twin objectives in mind. The new Telecom Policy obviously aims at upgradation of our telecom services to world standards; meeting the ever-increasing consumer