

[Shri Rasabehari Behera]

Tauamul Rampur. There is no telephone connection between Nuapara which is an important sub-division and Bhawanipatna, the district headquarter. The MPs, MLAs and other high officials of these districts wait for hours together after booking the calls to Bhubaneswar and Delhi. Most of the time they feel awkward and helpless when they fail to send the urgent message to the State capital.

The people of this district have suffered a lot in the year 1979-80, due to the unprecedented drought situation. Due to the lack of the telephonic facilities it was found extremely difficult to maintain co-ordination in relief operations. The local volunteers, politicians and the high officials could not carry on the relief operation work in September 1980 when the State was reeling under the furious flood. The Government could not act immediately due to the lack of tele-communication facilities. Every one is aware that these floods have resulted in loss of life, property and cattle wealth. We could neither send the message to Bhubaneswar about the flood situation of the district, nor were we able to receive message from the Centre. The relief distribution work was hampered to a great extent due to the lack of communication facilities.

In view of this, I urge upon the Government to open a Post & Telegraphs Division at Bhawanipatna and to provide adequate telephone lines to all the blocks and sub-division headquarters.

(iv) POSTS AND TELEGRAPH SYSTEM IN WEST BENGAL

PROF. RUP CHAND PAL (Hooghly): The Post and Telegraph system is on the verge of total break-down in many parts of the country and particularly in West Bengal circle. In the R.M.S. Offices, huge number of letters have accumulated. In the Post Offices of Calcutta area only no less than one and a half-lakh letters await delivery. In the suburban areas a large number of telephone exchanges remain out of order for a long time. A large number of Telegrams and Money Orders could not be delivered for want of adequate staff. Moreover, in many cases, the equipments are also out of order. The overall situation in respect of Post and Telegraph at Calcutta is alarmingly bad. While Calcutta only needs about 65 vans for Railway Mail Service, there are at present

only 20 to 22 such vans available for the whole state of West Bengal. For want of necessary number of vans, parcels, book-posts and even post cards and postal stamps are not reaching the suburban and rural areas.

C.T.O. had given notice that they would not receive messages from people for Telegram. C.T.O. sends, on an average, about 5000 telegram messages daily and receives about 4,000 such messages. But such telegrams take 10 to 12 days, sometimes more than that, to reach the concerned people. The employees of the Post and Telegraphs Department have to face the wrath of aggrieved people in such cases. Thousands of West Bengal people are suffering as a result of delay in despatch and delivery of Money-orders. The major reason behind this alarming situation is lack of adequate staff. There, the number of approved posts needs be about 24,500 while the current staff strength is only 16,500. In the West Bengal Circles of Telephones also, about 5,000 people have to do the job of 6,000 or more.

The Central Government is urged to immediately look into the above matter and make arrangements to save the situation by providing adequate staff and necessary equipments and arrangements.

(v) REPORTED BEATING UP OF EMPLOYEES OF POST AND TELEGRAPH CIRCLE OFFICE AT BHUBANESHWAR BY ARMED POLICEMEN

15.00 hrs.

SHRIMATI PRAMILA DANDAVATE (Bombay North Central): The news appearing in the *Times of India* dated 27-11-80 states that the Armed Policemen entered the post and telegraph circle office at Bhubaneswar and started beating the employees, inflicting bleeding injuries to the Superintendent of Post Office and ten others.

It further states that policemen had gone berserk. Many cycles in the stand had been beaten out of the shape by lathis, window panes were shattered and took away wrist watches of the employees.

The General Manager of Telecommunication and Director of Post Offices have met the Chief Secretary in this regard.

I would request the Home Minister to make a statement.