

मेरा विश्वास कि इन सब बातों को देखते हुए मास्तीजी इसका स्वागत करेंगे।

राष्ट्रीयकृत बैंकों या सहकारी समितियों के माध्यम से जो कर्जा दिया जाता है हो सकता है कि उस में थोड़ा बहुत ऐसे लोगों को चला जाता हो जहाँ गृही जा जा चाहिये। लेकिन छोटे लोगों की काश्तकारी की जरूरतों को देखते हुए सरकार ने उच्च स्तरीय ग्रुप बनाया था फार्मज सब्सिडि सोसाइटी के रूप में जो केवल कृषि ही नहीं और भी जितनी चीजें हैं, कंसल्टेंसी सब्सिडि है, मार्किटिंग है, रा मॅटेरियल है, इन सब के बारे में बताए कि किस तरह सहकारी समितियों, राष्ट्रीयकृत बैंक आदि के माध्यम में इन सारी चीजों का सामंजस्य बरके ज्यादा ज्यादा ऋण उनके पास पहुंच सकते हैं जिन को कर्जा की ज्यादा जरूरत है।

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The question is:

"That the Bill, as amended, be passed."

*The motion was adopted*

17.43 hrs.

INDIAN TELEGRAPH (AMENDMENT) BILL

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: This Bill is a simple one. The Government wants to legalise the levy of a small fee for application forms

SHRI DINESH JOARDER (Malda): Sir, a point of order in the list of business, against item 9, it is seen that Shri Jagganath Pahadia is to move the motion for consideration of the Bill. Has the Minister of Communications taken permission to move the motion?

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: It is all right; he has taken. Even so, Minister means any Minister, according to the rules.

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (DR SHANKAR DAYAL SHARMA): I move:

"That the Bill further to amend the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885, as passed by Rajya Sabha be taken into consideration."

Sir, as you have mentioned, it is a very simple Bill. This is an amendment to section 7 of the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885. This is just to legalise the levy of Rs. 10 with the application which was put through under rule 414, but later on the Committee on Subordinate Legislation suggested that it will be better if we amend the Act for providing this levy, that is, charging Rs 10 in the form. So, the amendment has been brought

The Bill has only three clauses one is for the title of the Bill. The second one deals with the amendment to section 7. The third one is only about legalising the recovery of the Rs 10 per form from 1st December 1969, to the passing of the Bill

As was said by the hon. Deputy Speaker, it is a very simple Bill and I hope the House will pass it

17.44 hrs.

[SHRI NAWAL KISHORE SINHA in the Chair].

MR CHAIRMAN: Motion moved:

"That the Bill further to amend the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885, as passed by Rajya Sabha, be taken into consideration."

SHRI DINESH JOARDER (Malda): I oppose this Bill. Though the Chair termed it is a simple Bill, this is not a simple Bill. It is going to legalise an illegal act committed by the P&T administration in 1969 in charging a fee of Rs. 10 termed an error. This error was a motivated and calculated error. The Indian Telegraphs Act was passed in 1885 and since then it was being applied. There was no chance of committing any error. It was known to the officers and the Ministry people also; they knew

[Shri Dinesh Joarder:]

there was no such provision in that Act without the sanction of Parliament. Almost for a century since 1885 till 1974 this Act has been in force and they were therefore fully in the know of things. So this is a grossly motivated and calculated illegal act and this House should not legalise this illegal act in any way by passing this Bill. This is clear imposition of a new tax on intending applicants who want to have a telephone. It is a public utility concern and it is an obligatory duty on the part of that department to provide telephones to subscribers who pay the subscription and rentals. But they are not able to fulfil that obligation; applicants are kept in the waiting list for years together and now they want to penalise those people. This is a peculiar way of imposing tax and a new way to fleece people. Since 1969 this levy was being charged and the Subordinate Legislation Committee, rightly held that without the sanction of Parliament if they did it, it was illegal collection of money. Since 1969, how many applications have been received. How much money had been collected and how many applicants had been provided with telephone connections. They must have collected at least a crore of rupees. I want to have year-wise figures of the telephone connections they have provided to applicants who paid this illegal levy of Rs. 10.

This House has been liberal in allowing the P&T Department to enhance the postal charges on all categories of mail such as post cards, inland envelopes, telegram charges, telephone rentals, etc. All kinds of charges have been increased over the last few years. About cent per cent increase is there. But what service do the consumers get from the P&T? Every day the service is deteriorating. Telephones are not working. Actually the entire telephone and trunk call system in the whole country, particularly in the eastern zone

and Calcutta is heading to a deadlock. Between Delhi and Calcutta, the trunk routes are out of order almost every day. Letters and telegram are not reaching their destination for days together. Letters meant for Calcutta are going to Shillong. Letters meant for Patna are going to Simla and so on. In Calcutta the number of RAS workers required is about 1200. But there are only 900 workers. About 100 mail vans are required for day to day despatch of mail. But P&T had only 72 mail vans in 1969-70, out of which only 22 mail vans are in working condition. Even out of this, most vans are defective and because of the traffic jam and other road conditions, they are not being properly utilised. So, letters, parcels and mail bags are lying heaped at different places. On the other hand, each and every worker is heavily over-worked. Previously they could work over-time and get over-time allowance. But since last year this over-time allowance has been totally stopped. We have no objection, but on the other hand, the numerical strength of the staff is not being increased. Previously one worker used to sort out only 691 letters a day and that was very much appreciated by the P&T administration.

MR CHAIRMAN: You are talking about post offices. We are concerned with telegraph.

SHRI DINESH JOARDER: I am explaining what kind of service the consumers get from the P&T department. Why this extra levy of Rs 10?

This is a new taxation.

Now they are being compelled to sort out thousands of letters a day. Similarly, because there is lack of manpower and the strength of the staff has not been increased the over-time allowance has been stopped, the mailmen are not there and the old

working conditions are not there, so letter bags are lying in heaps at different places and they are not being despatched to their destinations.

Now I want to mention some incidents about the telegraphic department. There are channels connected with different cities and different parts of the country. Most of the channels in Calcutta are out of order. There are also coaxial failures. The minimum requirement of channel services in Calcutta is about 250, provided they work regularly. At present there are only 136 channels out of which only 116 are in working condition. So, there is a big shortage of adequate channels in P&T in Calcutta.

We have 15 telephone exchanges in Calcutta. The average life of a telephone exchange and its machinery is not more than 20 years. All these exchanges and their machinery are more than 20 years old. The result is that most of the machinery require replacement of some parts and those parts are not available.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member may continue his speech tomorrow.

17.58 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Tuesday, November 19, 1974/Kartika 28, 1896 (Saka).*