

company has a right to submit their tenders. The reason for selection of this Korean party was that their tender was the lowest and as it was the lowest, we had no option but to select them.

PROF MADHU DANDAVATE : Lowest in quality ?

SHRI SHIVENDRA BAHADUR SINGH : What about technically—Quality-wise ?

SHRI NAWAL KISHORE SHARMA : It is acceptable from the point of view of quality and also the lowest from the point of view of price. Whenever a tender is floated, then the technical aspects of it are gone into and when it is approved that it is technically all right, then only you go for such and such party.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DAS MUNSI : Will the Hon. Minister tell us whether it is a fact that ONGC every year requires apart from this a lot of other equipment like pumps, drilling machines, etc. for their operations and whether it is also a fact that the ONGC in 1982 made an appeal to the Indian industry to make these equipments indigenously so that we can reduce our imports and become self-reliant ? If so, if such equipments are available in the country, will the Hon. Minister assure the House that instead of importing them, they will go in for the indigenous Indian equipments for ONGC operations ?

SHRI NAWAL KISHORE SHARMA : We are interested in indigenisation and our attempt is towards that direction. We are trying to get as much of equipment as is required and which is available in the country. Therefore, there is no question of assurance, rather it is the policy of ONGC. If my friend has any question about it or any doubt about anything, he can certainly write to me.

Introduction of Fibre Optics for Commercial use

*290. **SHRI G. G. SWELL :** Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have experimen-

ted with fibre optics for transmission or any other purpose;

(b) if so, the results thereof; and

(c) whether Government have adopted any time-frame within which fibre optics will be introduced for commercial use ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA) : (a) Yes, Sir. Some trials have been carried out for telecommunications transmission.

(b) The results have shown that this technology has applications in the telecommunication net-work in India for digital transmission.

(c) The 7th Five Year Plan proposals provide for introduction of fibre optic cables in some of the routes in the telecommunication network for commercial use.

SHRI G. G. SWELL : I am afraid the Minister is, I would say, trying to slur over the question and has not made clear where these trials have been made—he could have mentioned that—and with what results, whether these fibre optics are being produced today within the country or whether you are importing some of them. I am saying this because fibre optics are one of a new order of the 21st century and the Prime Minister has said that we should prepare ourselves for the 21st century from to-day. I am sure the Minister knows what are the capacities of a fibre optic. They are hair-thin glass fibres which can be taken around corners. They are so powerful that they can transmit laser beams through fibre optics. In comparison to the copper wires which carry only 24 messages, the hair-thin fibre optics can carry 1000 messages, together with a picture of the people who are using the telecommunication from one side to the other. This is the kind of thing. I would like to know where these trials have been made, whether we have taken steps to manufacture the fibre optics within the country and what preparations you are making.

SRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : I agree with the Hon. Member that fibre optics is a very modern method of transmission of messages.

It has tremendous advantages for use in telecommunications. Optical fibre cable is a modern technology for transmission of a large volume of telecommunication signals in the digital format making use of a hair thin glass like transmission media in contrast to metallic conductors normally in use. It has lot of other advantages. For example, it is difficult to steal it. In so many places we find the brass wire is stolen. Water cannot affect it. It has lot of other uses also. We are conducting experiments in Poona from 1979 on a certain stretch as to how it can be used and what are the difficulties in a particular situation. Our Telecommunication Research Centre is conducting these trials and we are awaiting the results. In addition to this there are various other places also where we want to have trials of this nature so that we can assess how we can use it in our set-up. This is for short distances. As regards long distances from Ahmedabad to Baroda we are planning to lay 120 k.m. fibre optical cable to see how it can work for both long distances and short distances. We are also contemplating its manufacture in the country. It has been decided that Hindustan Cables Ltd. should be allowed to proceed with formulating a scheme for manufacturing it indigenously and we hope it will come into production very soon. We hope in the Seventh Plan the manufacturing facilities will be set-up in the country for the latest technology. In that way we are not only conscious of the tremendous potential of the system but also we have taken steps to experiment with it in various circumstances and situations as well as manufacture it indigenously.

SHRI G. G. SWELL : I am happy with the answer of the Hon. Minister that they are taking steps to manufacture these things within the country and that they are thinking of making the provision in the Seventh Plan. I would like to know whether he has a figure for allocation for this research and development of this new technology and whether he envisages a time-frame when the present outmoded copper wires which are causing such a lot of problems in the country could be replaced by the fibre optic cable ?

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : In the Seventh Plan we have projected a time-frame. In the long distance network it is proposed to cover 11,000 k.m. but it all

depends on the resources which are made available to us in the Seventh Plan. The Hon. Member wanted to know the money we are incurring. Just to give an example for this 120 km. proposed trial from Ahmedabad to Baroda we have made a provision of Rs, 2 crores to start with.

Rise in prices of Automobile Tyres

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***291. SHRI SATYENDRA NARAYAN SINHA :**

SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether tyre manufacturers have raised the prices of automobile tyres from 5.5 to 9.6 per cent recently as reported in 'Financial Express' of the 7th March, 1985 ;

(b) whether there is any price control on tyres;

(c) whether Government consider this price increase as justified ; and

(d) if not, the remedial steps proposed to be taken by Government ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN) (a) to (d). A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) Prices of tyres vary from unit to unit depending on the quality and market reputation of tyres manufactured by each unit. While the prices of tyres have been increased by the industry during February and March 1985, it is not possible to indicate the percentage by which the industry, comprising 14 units, each manufacturing a wide variety of tyres, has increased the prices. However, according to Automotive Tyre Manufacturers Association (ATMA), overall price increase resorted to by the tyre industry in February/March 1985 did not exceed 4%.

(b) to (d). There is no statutory control on the prices of tyres at present. In the absence of control on the prices of raw materials and conversion costs and in the