

natural gas in the future plans for energy utilisation as reported in the Statesman dated 19 December, 1987;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto and the steps taken or contemplated by Government in this regard;

(c) the details of free gas fields which have not been tapped as yet; and

(d) the quantity of gas being flared due to lack of channels for its utilisation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI BRAHM DUTT): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government have been taking various steps to improve utilisation of natural gas. This has increased in the past three years from 4141 million cubic metres in 1984-85, to 7072 million cubic metres in 1986-87.

(c) The South Basin free gas fields have so far not been tapped; they are expected to be utilised in 1988-89.

(d) In 1986-87, 2718 million cubic metres of gas was flared.

Experience of Autonomous Mahanagar Telephone Nigam

*561. DR. PHULRENU GUHA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) what has been the experience of autonomous Mahanagar Telephone Nigam constituted for Delhi and Bombay; and

(b) whether this experience would be utilised for augmenting the telephone facilities in other cities?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI VASANT SATHE): (a) and (b). A single telephone Nigam, namely Mahanagar Telephone Nigam for Delhi and Bombay was formed on 1.4.1986.

Formation of the corporation has resulted in certain amount of autonomy and flexibility in management which has resulted in improvements in certain spheres.

It has been possible to sanction projects and process cases of strengthening of organisation etc. much faster. It has also been possible to press into service various consultancy organisations for advising on different aspects of the operations.

The years 1986-87 and 1987-88 have seen significant improvements in the telecommunication services in Delhi and Bombay which included:

- speeding up of projects
- improvement in the quality of service
- improvement in metered calls per D.E.L.
- (direct exchange line) and revenue per D.E.L.

However, during this period similar improvements have been noted in other large cities where no Nigam has been constituted. It has thus not been possible to assign the improvement in Delhi and Bombay entirely to the formation of the Nigam.

On the other hand with the formation of the Nigam there has been some increase in the overhead expenditure particularly on the Corporate Office which is carrying out some of the tasks which were earlier being handled in the headquarters of the Depart-

ment of Telecommunications.

The issues regarding permanent transfer of staff to the Nigam and payment of terminal benefits to them still remain to be resolved. The terminal payments due to the staff on permanent transfer to Nigam involve fairly large sums. In addition, there are already demands from the staff for parity in respect of pay and allowances and other terms of service and benefits with other public sector undertakings including payment of bonus on the basis of profit. In turn, there are likely to be demands within the Department of Telecommunications for parity with the emoluments of the Nigam staff performing similar duties.

The creation of Nigam has also resulted in the partitioning of the integrated telecommunication network which has, in turn given rise to some problems of coordination, interworking and revenue sharing.

It has thus not been possible to make a

clear assessment which could justify the formation of similar Nigams for other cities.

Improvement in Power Position In States

*562. SHRI H.N. NANJE GOWDA: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the power position in the States has now improved;

(b) if so, to what extent; and

(c) if not, what further measures are contemplated?

THE MINISTER OF STATE I THE DEPARTMENT OF POWER IN THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY (SHRIMATI SUSHILA ROHTAGI): (a) and (b). The overall power position in the country has improved during the last four months, as follows:-

	<i>Requirement (Million Units)</i>	<i>Availability (Million Units)</i>	<i>Shortage (%)</i>
December, 1987	18406	15874	13.8
January, 1988	18602	16365	12.0
February, 1988	17735	15818	10.8
March, 1988 (Provisional)	18350	16672	9.1

(c) In order to offset the shortfall in hydel generation, a contingency plan was formulated and implemented to increase thermal generation which was more than the target during 1987-88 by over 6 billion units. The measures taken to further improve the availability of power include expediting

commissioning of new capacity, optimum utilisation of existing capacity, implementation of Centrally sponsored Renovation and Modernisation progress for thermal stations, reduction in transmission and distribution losses, implementation of demand management and energy conservation measures.