

of reconciling the billing has been done properly. The Government is trying to improve the state of affairs of DESU continuously.

[English]

Bombay Telephone Directory

*253. SHRI DHARAM PAL SINGH
MALIK†:
SHRI C. MADHAV REDDI:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether the Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited had entered into contract with the United Database India Limited for supply of now telephone directory to subscribers in Bombay by September, 1988, if so, the terms of the contract;

(b) the total demand of the subscribers;

(c) the number of copies for which order was placed and the number supplied by the United Database India Limited;

(d) Whether the United Database India Limited has committed breach of contract in respect of supply of copies of Directory and if so, the details thereof and the action taken against the firm; and

(e) When the new and updated telephone directory will be made available to subscribers in Bombay?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BIR BHADUR SINGH): (a) to (e). A Statement given below.

STATEMENT

(a) MTNL has a contract with M/s United India Periodicals (United Database

Limited) not only for Bombay Directory but also for Delhi Directory. It is one contract. The contract is for yearly issues for five years and not one issue of September, 1988. The important terms of the contract are:

- (1) The contractor will publish the directories with Yellow pages and supply the required number of copies free of cost to MTNL.
- (2) Supplementary directories will be published in between two main issues of the directories and the required number of copies supplied free of cost to MTNL.
- (3) The contractor will also pay royalty of Rs. 20.16 crores for five issues to MTNL in lieu of the rights to publish the directories with Yellow Pages and other advertisements.

(b) and (c). There is a total demand of about 7.6 lakhs copies and orders for the same have already been placed. 1,72,295 directories have already been received till 15-11-1988.

(d) and (e). The Bombay Telephone Directory has been printed on 30-8-88 and about 80,000 directories have been distributed to the subscribers. There has been delay in printing of the remaining copies of the directories. The contractor has reported this delay due to non availability of sufficient quantity of paper. Another about 92,000 copies of the directories have been received from the contractor and more are in the pipe line. The directory distribution will be resumed after MTNL has collected about 2 lakh directories. The delay in the supply of the directories by the contractor has been duly noticed and action as terms and conditions of the contract will be taken.

[*Translation*]

SHRI DHARAM PAL SINGH MALIK: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in reply to my question, the hon. Minister has stated in parts (b) and (c) of his reply that out of 7.6 lakh to be supplied only 1,72,295 directories have been received till 15.11.1988. First of all, I would like to know the date by which 7.6 lakh directories were to be supplied by the contractor because in the reply you have not revealed the date by which the subscribers were expected to receive directories as per their demand. Secondly, I want to know the conditions of the contract finalised by M.T.N.L. with the contractor under which action could be taken against the latter for not supplying the directories in time. I want to know these conditions in detail.

SHRI BIR BAHADUR SINGH: It is true that 7 lakh 60 thousand directories were to be supplied according to the contract and the last date for the supply was 5th June, 1988 but the number of directories, which were supplied was very small. The main reason for this was delay in supply of paper to the contractor due to which he could not supply the directories in time. He has, however, assured that it would not happen in future. Secondly, the paper, which was required for directories was not produced in the country and was to be imported. But contractor was not permitted to import the paper, this also caused delay. Arrangements had to be made for producing this paper in the country, thereafter the directories were printed, this also caused delay. The company has assured us that the directories would be printed in time in future without any carelessness.

SHRI DHARAM PAL SINGH MALIK: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has not given a clear reply to my question and the written reply seems to be very vague. First of all, I want to draw his attention to the last paragraph of the written answer wherein it has been stated that:

[*English*]

The delay in the supply of the directories by the contractor has been duly noticed and action as per terms and conditions of the contract will be taken.

[*Translation*]

Sir, six months have since passed, the contractor was to supply the directories by 5th June, 1988, I want a clear reply from the hon. Minister as to what action has been taken or proposed to be taken against the contractor during these six months? Do the Government propose to blacklist the contracting company? Secondly, will the subscribers in Bombay be compensated for not supply telephone directories in time while you had contracted for supply of directories in time?

SHRI BIR BAHADUR SINGH: According to the contract finalised with the company there is a provision for a penalty of Rs. 1 lakh on the contractor for delay in supplying the directories. But the quotation given by the company was so low and had the contract been cancelled, the Government and its Departments would have suffered a great loss. The way company behaved thereafter, it is expected that they will work properly in future. A warning has been issued to the company and they have assured that they will work properly next time and such mistake will not occur in future. In fact, non-availability of paper has caused the delay. We hope that such delay will not occur in future.

[*English*]

SHRI SHARAD DIGHE: From the facts disclosed in the reply, it is very horrifying to note that while the contract was for printing the Bombay directory and copies required to be supplied were 7.6 lakhs, the contractor has been able to supply only 172295 copies

till 15th November, 1988. Apart from the fact that, there was a lot of confusion when only some subscribers were supplied with these copies and suddenly the distribution was suspended; now it has been suspended indefinitely. From the reply also, it appears that further distribution will start after the MTNL has collected about two lakh directories. Nobody knows when that is going to be done.

This contract appears, as stated in the reply, not to have been fulfilled only due to non-availability of paper. Now, it is clear that the contract has been given to a wrong party and he has not been able to supply the copies in time. A very few copies have been supplied and still there is the non-availability of paper. That means, he is not in a position to fulfil the contract at all.

Will the hon. Minister take firm action against those who recommended the name of this contractor.

[*Translation*]

SHRI BIR BAHADUR SINGH: Sir, contract is given to the companies on the basis of lowest quotations. It is given in accordance with the rules. No favour is shown to any party.

As far as the delay in supply of directory is concerned I have already explained that delay is caused owing to non-availability of paper. As the hon. Member mentioned that some directories have been supplied and further supply has been stopped. In this

connection, I may tell you that distribution work of directory is being resumed again. Now about two lakhs directories are available with us. The Contractor has been warned that it should not happen in future. If such delay is occurred in future also the appropriate action will be taken according to rules.

SHRI DHARAM PAL SINGH MALIK: Whether the problem of paper has been solved now? Whether the paper is being imported from foreign countries.

SHRI BIR BAHADUR SINGH: They have got manufactured the paper in the country itself.

[*English*]

Solar Power Units

*254. SHRIMATI PRABHAWATI GUPTA: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of villages in the country where solar power units are working, State-wise;

(b) the steps being taken to encourage people in this regard; and

(c) the assistance given by Government to the States therefore?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY (SHRI VASANT SATHE): (a) to (c). A statement is given below.