

of the people. Will the Hon. Minister look into it ?

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : She wants an exception.

[Translation]

SHRI P.V. NARASIMHA RAO : Mr. Speaker, Sir, there can be many other ways of remembering the bravery of the fore fathers of that region. It was thought during the British time that there were certain regions in India, the people of which were very brave and the people of other States were not so brave. Such sections of the people were called martial races. After independence, we have rejected this hypothesis. We consider every citizen of India to be equally brave, provided he gets an opportunity to show his bravery.

Telephone Exchanges in Gujarat

450. SHRI NARSINH MAKWANA : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of the small telephone exchanges in Gujarat and the number of telephone connections provided therefrom ?

(b) whether Government are aware that the number of complaints about telephones there is on the increase because small telephone exchanges do not function properly; and

(c) whether Government propose to set up 1000-line big exchanges in place of small exchanges, which will result in reduced number of complaints, increased efficiency and prove less expensive ?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA) : (a) The number of small telephone exchanges (MAX-III) in Gujarat are 514 and the connections

provided therefrom are 16135 as on 30-9-1984.

(b) Small telephone exchanges in Gujarat are generally working satisfactorily. Any complaints received are attended promptly.

(c) Setting up of 1000 lines big exchanges in place of small exchanges depends upon the demand, financial viability and availability of Automatic Switching equipment.

[Translation]

SHRI NARSINH MAKWANA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I had asked whether Government were aware that the number of telephone complaints was increasing because small telephone exchanges did not function properly. It has not been stated in the reply whether the number of complaints has increased. I would like to know the number of complaints and the steps being taken in that regard.

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : Sir, it is not possible to give the number of complaints now but we have evolved a procedure to deal with the complaints and to attend to them. Whenever a complaint is received and registered, it is sent to the concerned officer and efforts are made to redress the complaint.

If we take the month of December, I would like to inform him that so far as Gujarat is concerned, the percentage of calls which could not materialize in small exchanges was only 1.9 and it was 2.6 in respect of other exchanges. So far as the question of trunk calls is concerned, the percentage of effective trunk calls since 1970-71 is 76. However, we endeavour to provide still better facilities to our telephone subscribers and especially for Gujarat, we have formulated a scheme in the Seventh Five Year Plan to replace the old exchanges including the small exchanges in a phased manner and to install new exchanges.

SHRI NARSINH MAKWANA : Whatever the Hon. Minister has now said in reply is also given in the written reply, i.e., the installation of 1000-line big exchanges depends on the demand, financial viability

and availability of automatic switching equipment. I would like to know from the Hon. Minister, through you, whether Government have placed any demand for automatic equipment and formulated any programme or scheme for that purpose. If so, what are its details ?

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : Let me give one or two examples in respect of Gujarat. During the current year, two electronic exchanges of 2000 lines each are being imported and installed at Gandhi Dham and Veraval through modern methods and in 1985-86, electronic exchanges will also be installed at Porbandar, Mehsana and Gandhi Nagar. Though the Seventh Five Year is Plan a very ambitious plan, I cannot say for certain about other places, but the work in these five places which I have referred to, going on and efforts will be made to complete it soon.

SHRI PRATAP BHANU SHARMA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to tell the Hon. Minister that most of the complaints in respect of the small telephone exchanges are due to the fact that proper maintenance is not there. I would like to say on the basis of the information about my own constituency that due to non-availability of maintenance staff, which comprises technicians and linemen in sufficient number, they are unable to attend to the faults in the exchanges. I would like to know whether the Telephone Department have issued a circular to the effect that no selection of technicians and linemen can be made even for the sanctioned posts ? Has this ban been imposed for whole of next year ?

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : There is truth in what the Hon. Member has said. At some places there is shortage of line staff and other technical personnel and the main reason for that is the ban on the creation of new posts imposed for the last one and a half years.

SHRI PRATAP BHANU SHARMA : Is there any base in respect of the posts already sanctioned ?

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : There is ban on making new appointments even on

those posts, but we are requesting the Ministry of Finance that keeping in view the discussions which are raised in this House quite often regarding telephone services, ban should not be imposed on the operational posts of this Department. If they agree to it, there will be a considerable improvement in the matter which the Hon. Member has raised.

SHRI MOHANBHAI PATEL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the telephone exchange in Junagarh is the biggest manual telephone exchange in Asia. I have received hundreds of telegrams during the last three days regarding complaints about Junagadh exchanges and so have the Hon. Minister also. I would like to know the steps proposed to be taken by the Hon. Minister considering the fact that the Junagadh Exchange, as everyone is aware is the biggest manual telephone exchange.

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : What the Hon. Member has said is true to some extent. I am aware that this is a very big manual exchange having 3,200 lines and I admit that ever since this exchange was flooded a lot of problems are being faced in running this exchange, We propose to replace this exchange, for which a scheme has been formulated and, I am sure, it will be completed during the Seventh Five Year Plan.

SHRI MOHAN BHAI PATEL : Installation of automatic exchange will take several years, but what do you propose to do till then ?

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : For the time being, efforts will be made to run the existing exchange as efficiently as possible and we shall try to install new equipment as early as possible.

SHRI MOHAN BHAI PATEL : You did not give the number of complaints.

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : What can be more serious than this that the Hon. Members themselves are complaining ?

SHRI SOMJIBHAI DAMOR : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the condition of telephone exchanges in our Gujarat State is such that for 10 minutes, nobody gives response from the exchange

and if somebody makes a complaint, his telephone disconnected. Thus, they neither put through local calls nor trunk calls. They say 'no reply' and disconnected the telephone. I want to ask the Hon. Minister by what time this manual exchange will be converted into an automatic exchange ?

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : Sir, as I have said, it is not possible to replace all the exchanges at once, but the exchanges where the situation is rather grim are being replaced on a priority basis.

SHRIMATI USHA THAKKAR : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I welcome the statement of the Hon. Minister regarding the telephone exchange at Gandhi Dham. Kutch, Abdasa, Lakhpat and Mandavi are border areas, where the telephones remain dead for days together. I would like to know the steps proposed by the Hon. Minister to replace the exchange there.

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : Sir, I do not have information about the places about which the Hon. Member has specifically asked. If she writes to me a letter, I shall send complete information about that.

[English]

Allocation of Alcohol for Industrial and Potable purposes

* 451. **SHRI SATYAGOPAL MISRA :** Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be please to state :

(a) whether some of the sugar producing States have started altering the 2:1 ratio for allocation of alcohol for industrial and potable purposes against the advice of the Central Molasses Board, thus upsetting the production schedule of industrial alcohol-based chemical industries all over the country;

(b) if so, the steps taken to reverse the diversion in this respect; and

(c) the results achieved so far from such measures ?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS

AND FERTILIZERS AND INDUSTRY AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL) : (a) to (c). A statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

No ratio has been fixed by Central Molasses Board for allocation of alcohol for industrial and potable purposes. However, at the meetings of the Central Molasses Board, since 1980, the State Governments have been consistently requested to strike a proper balance between the use of Alcohol for potable and industrial purposes so that requirement of the Chemical Industries are fully met.

From 19.11.1975, the Government banned the creation of additional capacity or expansion of existing capacity for distillation or brewing of alcoholic drinks except in 100% export oriented cases. Units for manufacture of Industrial Alcohol, however, are considered for grant of approvals on merits.

While making Inter-State allocations for the alcohol year 1983-84 (Dec. 1983-Nov. 1984) the demand of deficit states of alcohol for potable use was pegged to the 1982-83 consumption level and allocation were made separately for industrial and potable use. For the current alcohol year 1984-85, the Sub-Committee of Central Molasses Board has decided to restrict the demand of alcohol for potable use of all States/Union Territories to the 1982-83 consumption level while for industrial purposes a 10% growth has been allowed. In order to enable the alcohol based industries to utilise better their capacity, the Government has waived custom duty on import of denatured spirit for industrial use upto 30.11.85 and permitted imports on a case to case basis.

These measures have resulted/are likely to result in restricting the production and consumption of alcohol for potable use and improve the availability of alcohol for industrial use.

SHRI SATYAGOPAL MISRA : The chemical units in different States like Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh are either closing down, or are facing difficulties due to the shortage of industrial alcohol. In view of this fact, may I know