

SHRI BIRENDRA SINGH RAO: To my mind, there is no such policy of the Government in favour or against any project of the type.

SHRI NIREN GHOSH: In view of the fact that Uttarkhand movement and the demand for Gorkhaland precisely is also within these three districts, will the Government tell us whether the Government will expeditiously clear the project so that development work can be undertaken very soon in order to counter this thing?

SHRI BIRENDRA SINGH RAO: As I stated, the project is receiving consideration of the Government at various levels and a decision will be taken as soon as possible.

Telephone Lines/Telex Circuits in Bihar

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*627. **SHRI HARI NATH MISHRA:**
SHRI KRISHNA PRATAP SINGH:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether most of the important telephone lines/telex circuits in Bihar remain dead for long because of faulty maintenance and neglect; and

(b) if so, the steps that have been taken or are proposed to be taken to improve the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KARTIK ORAON):

(a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

SHRI HARI NATH MISHRA: I am rather shocked to hear the reply of the hon. Minister. On the basis of my personal experience, and the experience of a large number of friends I can say that the grievances mentioned in this question are not only correct but it has also become a chronic problem which has been continu-

ing for years. In view of all this, I would like to know from the hon. Minister; has he made a comparative study of the performance in different States and State capitals before answering my question?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI C. M. STEPHEN): It has now come to a stage in which any observation of the performance of the telephone department has to be accepted as a gospel truth. But I am just taking my position that that is not the case. As far the analysis that has been done, that is with me and I can lay it on the Table of the House and supply a copy of that also to the hon. Member. With respect to the performance, I may say, Patna, the capital of Bihar is connected to the National network by a 1800 channel microwave link and about 960 channel of coaxial cable system. This is the national network. The other important towns in Bihar like, Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga, Samastipur, Jamshepur, Katihar, Ranchi Dhanbad and Bokaro have also been connected by a microwave system. The third system is radio links in UHF/VHF range which connect Chapra to Patna and Bettiah, Motihari to Muzaffarpur. The rest of it is by cable system. Wherever the connection is through microwave system, the performance is thoroughly satisfactory and it is hundred per cent efficient. As far as the coaxial system is concerned, there also the performance is satisfactory—it is between 90 and 100 per cent. As far as the UHF/VHF system is concerned, it also does not fail. But there are small district headquarters and other exchanges which are working on what is known as group system by cable connection. There the performance varies. The performances in certain areas, I must say, have gone down below 50 per cent. In the other areas, the performance is between 50 and 80 per cent. Below 50 per cent, is certainly poor performance, but generally speaking the performance with respect to the rest is satisfactory.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No, no!

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: I know this reaction. I am bound to debunk this reaction, which is not based on statistics. (*Interruptions*).

In a few areas, it may fail. but there is no use raising noise like this about it. (*Interruptions*). This sort of total condemnation will not be contributory to keeping up the morale of the staff. Even if they try their utmost, if this is the condemnation coming, it will not be good. I am on strong ground, based on figures. (*Interruptions*). It is no use merely expressing an opinion or a feeling. If there are calls failing, the information may be passed on to me. I do not say that the calls are coming just on the tip of it. I do not say that every call is coming without fail. There will be calls which will be failing. If that information is passed on to me, we will make an analysis about it. This is all I have to say. *Interruptions* I am prepared to sit with anybody and analyse it. I agree that it can be improved, but this sort of total condemnation will not do. (*Interruptions*).

MR. SPEAKER: The question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Employment Opportunities for Women

*615. **SHRI MANPHOOL SINGH CHAUDHARY:** Will the Minister of WORKS AND HOUSING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Asian and Pacific Centre for Women and Development in a workshop organised recently in New Delhi had suggested for larger employment opportunities for women to help raise their economic status;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto; and

(c) what measures Government propose to take for the development of women in the society?

THE MINISTER OF WORKS AND HOUSING (SHRI P. C. SETHI): (a) The Asian and Pacific Centre for Women and Development (APCWD) under the ESCAP recently held at New Delhi, a Workshop of representatives from different countries in the Region in which various issues relating to the position of women in human settlements were discussed and certain views were expressed. It will be before the APCWD/ESCAP to address any communication based on the Report of the Workshop, to the countries of the Region, if necessary. No such communication has been received by Government of India so far.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Various programmes are already under implementation

Delivery of Dak in Remote Areas

*616. **SHRI CHINTAMANI JENA:** Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in the remote areas particularly where the Adivasis are living, days are fixed for the delivery of mail and especially when Sunday or other holiday intervenes, there is a long gap in resuming postal delivery services; and

(b) if so, will Government consider this problem and arrange that on holidays falling on Saturdays and Mondays, which lead to large accumulation of mail bags at various post offices and transit points, postal delivery services are resumed without delay?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI C. M. STEPHEN): (a) and (b). No, Sir. Except for about 1250 villages, all other villages in India are covered by the Daily Delivery Scheme. According to this