

look into it, and if more is needed. We shall issue letters of intent for the establishment of more factories. But that is under consideration.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: From the statement made by the hon. Minister, it appears that letters of intent have been issued to many firms. I would like to know whether it is a fact that more industrial gas will also be produced in some of the public undertakings or separate units in the public sector producing industrial gas will be set up because the Government's policy is going to be that public enterprises should not depend upon private gas supplies.

SHRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: I do not see why we should not depend upon private gas. There is no such thing that gas produced in the private sector should not be used by the public sector units.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: Why do you not produce the gas yourself? Why do you depend upon the gas produced by the private sector?

Modification of Telephone Exchanges in Delhi

*820. **SHRI VIKRAM MAHAJAN:** Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to refer to the reply given to Starred Question No. 43 on the 14th November, 1973 regarding modification of telephone exchanges in Delhi and state:

(a) whether the modification work in the cross-bar system telephone exchanges in Delhi and New Delhi has since been completed; and

(b) the extent to which the telephone subscribers in Delhi have been given relief on this account?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (PROF. SHER SINGH): (a) The modification work in Crossbar Exchanges in Delhi Telephones is under

progress and the major portion of the work will be completed by October, 1974. The entire work is expected to be completed by March, 1975.

(b) About 25 to 40 per cent of the modification work has been completed in the various crossbar exchanges in Delhi. The extent to which the defects causing failure of calls are likely to be removed will be known only after completion of modification in all circuits. Considerable improvement in the quality of service is expected after the completion of the modification work.

SHRI VIKRAM MAHAJAN: Our Telephone Department is a wonderful Department. It takes a particular type of system without knowing its consequences and then it starts modifications without knowing what results will these modifications produce because the hon. Minister has just now stated that he will only know the improvements made after the modifications, I think when they have started the modifications they must have carried out experiments before and know what these improvements will lead to. Therefore, I want to know who advised you to take up this system of crossbar exchange and as it has proved a failure, have you taken any action against the officers who advised you to go in for it?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI K. BRAHMANANDA REDDY): This cross-bar system was decided in the year 1963-64, what is called the Pentecosta Cross-bar system was decided after a detailed techno-economic survey by experts.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Foreign experts?

SHRI K. BRAHMANANDA REDDY: Not necessarily foreign experts. Even our people are involved. Later some defects were noticed in the functioning. Several complaints were received

from the areas where they were introduced. Some Technical Committees have gone into it. They have identified some areas where defects take place. There are certain circuits where improvement is sought to be made and there are certain components being redesigned. The work in this regard has been undertaken. In fact a Committee has already gone into it how these several components should be remodelled to suit our conditions; that work is being taken by the ITI at Bangalore. They are doing it.

As my colleague has pointed out, upgrading work is going on in several areas. 25 to 40 per cent work is completed. We expect that major portion of the work will be completed by October and the whole work completed by the end of March, 1975. Even now our reports say that some appreciable change has occurred after this work has been undertaken. Therefore we have to wait and see.

SHRI VIKRAM MAHAJAN: There have been persistent complaints that your department has overcharged the subscribers in respect of the telephone bills and that no relief is being given to them. About a year back a question was put whether you have devised some sort of a meter which will enable subscriber to know the extent of calls which is made from his telephone. The answer is, experimentation is going on on this system. To what extent the experience has succeeded? Have you devised any instrument in this regard?

SHRI K. BRAHMANANDA REDDY: I cannot just now say whether any meter is being used. I can tell you this: there have been certain complaints which have come to us with regard to overbilling etc. And this matter is being looked into. If in a particular month or months there is some extraordinary over-billing they will naturally go into the causes why this is so and whether there are any special reasons for such increase in the bills

and whenever that is detected some relief is given.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: As one of those unfortunate people whose telephone is connected to this wonderful crossbar system as a result of which I can never get anybody's number and nobody who rings me can ever get my number, may I know from the Minister whether the whole trouble is due to this particular item of equipment—which we purchased from the International Telegraph and Telephone Company, USA—being defective in itself and so it is going to be modified? Sometime back also the company was asked to carry out certain modifications at their own expense. I would like to know whether the equipment itself is proved to be defective or whether it is a fact that the crossbar system as such is not suitable for the conditions, climatic and others, in this country. What is the real trouble?

SHRI K. BRAHMANANDA REDDY: Sir, the crossbar system as such is a system which is used in the entire world. But, what is relevant here is the Pentaconta system—cross-bar system—which we have adopted here. Several cross-bar systems are operating in the world—in several countries—and therefore this is what we have discussed with the B.T.M. Company and they have agreed to bear a portion of the expenditure for this upgradation work. In fact, an agreement has been entered into with them and I suppose about Rs. 122 lakhs worth of materials are being given by this B.T.M. Company. After further discussions with them, a sum of Rs. 80 lakhs is also agreed to be borne by them for expenses towards man-power

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: This is not my question. My question has not been answered. I want to know whether our own engineers and experts have come to the conclusion that this

particular equipment was defective—inherently defective—or whether they feel that this pentaconta system—cross-bar system—is not suitable for the Indian conditions and therefore it has to be upgraded.

SHRI K. BRAHMANANDA REDDY: No, Sir. After commissioning it we found. I am not an expert to express an opinion on this as to whether this type of cross-bar system is good or bad inherently. I would submit that on the basis of our own experience and on complaints made to us, we have gone into the matter.

MR. SPEAKER: The question was very simple. He wants to know whether this particular piece of equipment is defective or the system as a whole is defective.

SHRI K. BRAHMANANDA REDDY: I cannot just now say whether the system itself is defective. But, in India, on the basis of the experience that we have gained, as there are defects, are trying to remove those defects.

SHRI R. N. SHARMA: I want to know from the hon. Minister whether such kinds of complaints are coming from all the pentaconta—cross-bar—exchanges or only from Delhi.

SHRI K. BRAHMANANDA REDDY: There are complaints from all cross-bar exchanges that this system is defective but, in Delhi, that is much more. It may also be remembered that maintenance is a very relevant factor.

SHRI JAGANNATH RAO: May I know whether it is a fact that the present unsatisfactory state of affairs is due to the reason that you are finding it difficult to connect strodder system with the cross-bar system?

SHRI K. BRAHMANANDA REDDY: I do not think so.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: In reply to a supplementary by the hon. Member, Shri Mahajan, the hon. Minister said that whenever bills are prepared on the basis of the new cross-bar system and, if some complaints are there regarding over-billing, you do not go through the records of billing for many months but you take only the average for that particular period. If it is enormously high, in that case, you give some relief. Therefore, may I know from the Minister if there are complaints received that the billing for a particular period is fantastically higher as compared to the average bill for the respective months. But, the routine reply is that the bills have been checked and no relief can be given. If so, will you go into those cases so that relief is given to them also. I myself am experienced in this sort of thing.

PROF. SHER SINGH: If complaints are brought to our notice, we certainly go into them. And if there is fantastically high-billing, as the hon. Member has just now mentioned, we go into it and only the average money is charged. Even then we investigate into the matter.

**Raising the amount of Pension to
Freedom Fighters**

†
*822 SHRI RAMAVATAR
SHASTRI:

SWAMI BRAHMANANDJI:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to raise the amount of pensions granted to the freedom fighters from rupees two hundred per month in view of the high cost of living;

(b) whether Government have received a copy of a resolution passed