

government, if somebody selects his name for giving an award. But I would say that the promotion of international understanding was Panditji's ideal which he pursued in his life time and this is in consonance with that idea. India has friendly relations with other countries.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA: My fear is that his heritage may be exploited for the purpose of political indoctrination. That is why I asked this question

MR. SPEAKER: It is not relevant at all.

Refund of Telegraph Charges in Respect of Telegrams Sent by Post

237. **SHRI K. LAKKAPPA**

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken a decision to refund Telegraph charges when the telegrams are sent by ordinary mail; and

(b) if so, the date from which this decision will be given effect to.

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI JAGANNATH PAHADIA): (a). Yes Sir. Provisions already exist according to which, in case of telegrams disposed of by post and reaching the telegraph office of destination after the expiry of 24 hours in case of Express and 48 hours in case of ordinary telegrams, a refund voucher for the cost of telegram less 50 paise, is delivered along with the telegram, to the addressee who posts it, post free, to the sender to claim and obtain the amount of refund from the office of origin. In addition, refunds are ordinarily granted on complaints of delay, when the delay exceeds the normal postal mail time in case of ordinary telegrams and half that time in express telegrams.

(b) These orders are in force since April, 1963.

SHRI K. LAKKAPPA: There are several complaints regarding sending of telegrams which do not reach the destination, that is, the addressee in time. There is inordinate delay so far as this organisation is concerned. I would like to know whether the hon. Minister has made any assessment of the situation and, if so, what steps he has taken to improve the situation to see that the telegrams reach the addressees in time. What are the effective measures that they propose to take?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA) The delay in the sending of telegrams is not on a large scale. Therefore, the reply to the first part of the question is in the negative. So far as further reduction in the delay is concerned, with the introduction of mechanical system, that is, having the teleprinter service and working the circuits on coaxial and micro-wave, the delay is being further reduced. But it is true that a large number of areas are served by open wire lines, and long-distance transmission systems sometimes result in a number of breakdowns. It is the constant endeavour of the Government to see that this type of situation is further improved.

SHRI K. LAKKAPPA: I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether there are any cases of this nature as a consequence of the shortage of telegraph offices in the country and also because of the fact that the new mechanisation has not been improved and, if so, what steps they have taken to improve the system of mechanisation and to improve the telegraph system in the country.

SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA: It depends on the availability of funds and resources. As and when the funds are available, we are progressing in the matter.

SHRI K. LAKKAPPA: The answer that the hon. Minister has given is in general terms. I am putting a specific

question. What are the specific improvements that they have devised to improve the situation? This is a general complaint.

SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA: The question is general. I could not give a specific answer to a general question.

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH: May I know whether it is a fact that the large-scale theft of copper wire is also one of the contributing factors for the inefficient working of the telegraph system in the country and, if so, what effective steps the hon. Minister has taken to see that such thefts do not occur.

SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA: The open-wire line system is always subject to these thefts. My hon. friend has rightly pointed out that that is one of the major causes of break-downs in the system. So far as we are concerned, we have written to the Chief Ministers to help us in apprehending the criminals who are responsible for this type of activity. Secondly, we are converting copper wire lines into aluminium conductors which are not subject to thefts in the same measure.

SHRI MUHAMMED KHUDA BAKHSH: The hon. Minister said that a refund voucher for the cost of telegram minus 50 paise is delivered along with the telegram to the addressee. Would it not be more proper and correct to send it to the sender?

SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA: When the telegram reaches the destination, it has gone to the other end, and the other man knows the full address of the sender. We give him free postal service; he does not have to affix stamps; he is given a refund card; he has merely to write the address of the person and it is the sender who receives, who ultimately gets back his refund.

SHRI G. VISWANATHAN: The Minister was narrating a number of steps to reduce the delay in sending telegrams. I want to know from the hon. Minister by which year he is going to completely eliminate the delay in sending telegrams.

SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA: It is our effort to do it as soon as possible, but, obviously, it depends on a lot of things.

SHRI G. VISWANATHAN: As soon as possible, like the telegram itself!

प्रध्यायन महोदय : श्री शिवकुमार मास्ती नेक्स्ट क्वेश्चन ।

श्री शिव कुमार मास्ती : मैं नहीं पूछना चाहता ।

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी : प्रध्यायन महोदय, क्या कोई मैन्युअल सबन में उपस्थित रहते हुए यह कह सकते हैं कि वह सबनल कहीं पूछेगे ?

प्रध्यायन महोदय : वह यह कह सकते हैं कि बुझे सबनल कहीं पूछना है ।

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी : नहीं प्रध्यायन महोदय, वह मामला बड़ा गम्भीर है । अगर वह सबन में उपस्थित न होते तो मैं समझ सकता था या कह सकता था कि ले सकते थे । लेकिन सबनल में बिना जाने है, साहेंर बिपर पर है और वह सबन में आबूच है ।

प्रध्यायन महोदय : वह भी तुमको है कि वाजपेयी श्री प्रोटेस्ट करें तो वह सबनल में आबूच करे ।