

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Daily Allowance Drawn by TRAI Members

*234. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU:

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that TRAI members had drawn a daily allowance of US \$500 as observed by the C&AC and reported in a section of the Press;

(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that such an allowance is more than those drawn by the executives of US administration—the "highest paid in the world;

(c) if so, the details thereof and under which statutory provision' this has been done; and

(d) the response of Government thereto and any corrective action contemplated thereof?

-THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAM VILAS' PASWAN):

(a) to (d) The C&AG in Chapter IV [Para 4.5.1.(i)] of his Report No. 4 of 1999—Other Autonomous Bodies presented to the Parliament on 29.10.1999 has inter alia observed as under:—

"the per diem allowance rates of TRAI were higher than the rates prescribed for the officers of International Civil Service" of United Nations which is the highest paid Civil Service in the world The Uniform TRAI rates of US \$500 was much higher than the U.N. rates even in the costliest cities like London, New York, Geneva, Singapore, Paris and Tokyo."

The Govt.' has since issued orders regularising the expenditure incurred by Chairperson and Members from the date of assumption of their office till 14.3.99. For the period from 15.3.99 onwards the terms and conditions of their service are governed by the notifications issued by Govt, in terms of Section 35(2)(a) of the TRAI Act along with certain relaxations and additional facilities

given subsequently. Other observations contained in the Audit report are being examined and suitable remedial steps will be taken.

Villages without Post Offices in Adivasi Districts of Maharashtra

†*235. SHRI SURYABHAN PATIL VAHADANE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) the names of villages in the Adivasi districts in Maharashtra where there are no post office facilities available within the distance of four to five kilometers;
- (b) whether Government would seriously consider to formulate a scheme to provide post offices so that the people of Adivasi districts can be saved from this hardship;
- (c) if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN):
 (a) to (d) There are as many as 113 villages in Adivasi districts of Maharashtra where there are not post offices within the distance of 4 to 5 Kms. The names of such villages are given in the annex. The Government is very keen to expand postal network in the rural including the tribal areas of the country. With this objective in view, relaxed norms are followed while determining eligibility for opening of post offices in such areas. In the normal rural areas for opening of an Extra Departmental Branch Post Office the existing norms prescribe a population of 3000 in a group of villages, including the village where the post office has been proposed, 3 Kms. distance from the nearest existing post office and the anticipated income to the tune of 33 V3% of the cost. These norms are further relaxed for opening of a Branch Post Office in tribal areas. The relaxed norms, are a population of 500 in individual village or 1000 in a group of villages, a distance of 3 Kms. from the nearest existing post office, which also can be relaxed in special cases and an anticipated income to the tune of 15% of the cost. Even for opening of Departmental Sub Offices, which are required to be self-supporting in the *mloaa*

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.