

- * 125. [The questioners (Shri G. G. Swell and Shri Chimanbhai Mehta) were absent. For answer vide Col. 34.....*infra*].
- * 126. [The questioners (Shri Ram Jethmalani and Shri Viren J. Shah) were absent. For answer vide Col. 35.....*infra*].
- * 127. [The questioners (Shri Chimanbhai Mehta and Shrimati Mira Das) were absent. For answer vide Col. 43.....*infra*].
- * 128. [The questioners (Shri Shankar Dayal Singh) was absent. For answer vide Col. 45.....*infra*].
- * 129. [The questioners (Shri Anantray Devshankar Dave and Shri Chimanbhai Mehta) were absent. For answer vide Col. 47.....*infra*].
- * 31. [The questioners (Shri Aas Mohammed and Shri Ish. Dutt Yadav) were absent. For answer vide Col. 48.....*infra*].
- * 131. [The questioner (Shri Janardhan Yadav) was absent. For answer vide Col. 49.....*infra*].
- * 132. [The questioners (Shri K. R. Malkani and Prof. Vijay Kumar Malhotra) were absent. For answer vide Col. 50.....*infra*].

Waiting list for telephones in major cities of Karnataka

*133. SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of persons who are in the waiting list for telephones in major cities of Karnataka as on 15th July 1994; and

(b) what measures are proposed to be taken by Government to clear the waiting list?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) Waiting list in Major cities of Karnataka as on 15th July, 1994 is given below:-

1. Bangalore	1,01,216
2. Belgaum	1,920
3. Hubli & Dharwar	4,703
4. Mangalore	2,230
5. Mysore	8,367

(b) National Telecom Policy, 1994 envisages to provide telephone con-

nections on demand by 01.04.1997. However, efforts are being made to liquidate the entire waiting list during the current financial year plan subject to availability of funds. Expansion of telephone network in Karnataka is being planned accordingly. During 1994-95, 1.18 lakh lines of Net Switching Capacity is being added and a target of providing 7900 telephone connections has been fixed in Karnataka. Efforts are also being made to lease 110K lines of additional equipment at Bangalore. These measures are likely to clear the waiting list in Karnataka circle by the end of the year 1994-95.

SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARY:

Sir, I am thankful to the hon. Minister for giving the assurance that efforts are being made during the current year and that the Government is going to liquidate the waiting list. May I request the hon. Minister to give a categorical assurance to the House that the waiting list will be liquidated during the current financial year?

SHRI SUKH RAM: Sir, I have already made this statement when I visited Karnataka two days ago, and I adhere to my comment. I give an assurance on the floor of the House that Karnataka is one of the best administered States so far as telecommunication is concerned. Karnataka has one of the highest density as regards telephones. It has 22.23 per cent density which is the highest in the country. We are doing very well. I can assure the hon. Members and this House that by the end of this year the entire waiting list of Karnataka will be liquidated and that Karnataka will be one of the two or three States where telephones will be made available on demand, maybe from the 1st of April, 1996.

SHRI G. SWAMINATHAN: What about Tamil Nadu? The same assurance should be given for Tamil Nadu. The Minister is very partial. He is assuring it only for Karnataka. I want to know whether he will give an assurance for Tamil Nadu also....
(Interruptions)...

SHRI SUKH RAM: The question pertains to Karnataka; it does not pertain to Tamil Nadu... (Interruption)

SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARY: I thank the hon. Minister for the assurance he has given in the House. I am satisfied with the answer.

SHRI K. R. JAYADEVAPPA: As per the statement made by the Minister, the waiting list is being cleared in Karnataka. The Minister has assured that it would be cleared subject to availability of funds. If funds are not available, what will happen? (Interruptions)...

SHRI SUKH RAM: Sir, generally ifs and buts are there when one replies in Parliament. But here, I have made a statement that I would ensure that additional funds would be made available or liquidating the waiting list in Karnataka... (interruptions)

SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA: Sir, reply given by the Minister. The list was read out. At least if the list was supplied to us, we could have gone through it.

Secondly, Karnataka has twenty districts. The waiting list in Karnataka according to the Minister, is in only five districts. What about the other fifteen districts? Has he cleared the waiting list in those districts? Or is there no waiting list at all in those districts? There are important cities, Davanagere, Chitradurga, Hassan, Chikmagalur, Gulbarga etc. Waiting lists are there in all these cities. Will the Minister assure that he would clear the list for 1994-95? According to the Minister, the waiting list is only in five cities. What about other cities? What about the demand in those cities?

Added to this, there is no expansion. Expansion is more important. Will the Minister assure us that the telephones will function, that no wrong number will get connected and that the required number will get connected? Rather this assurance is required. I am not happy at just keeping the telephone on my table. It should function. Whenever I ring up, I should get the number. I want a categorical assurance from the Minister that he will see that there will be not only expansion but also the telephones function and that the purpose is served.

SHRI SUKH RAM: Sir when I said the entire waiting list of Karnataka will be liquidated, that means wherever there are waiting lists, they will be liquidated. I have received a list of these cities when there are waiting lists. If the hon. Member has some knowledge...

SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA: Sir, my city has thousands of names in the list.

SHRI SUKH RAM: Listen to me. If your city has got some waiting list and I have not received any information about that, you should let me know about that. But I may tell him Sir, that when I say the entire Karnataka, all the lists the cities of all the towns, where waiting lists exist, will be liquidated. As far as the question of wrong number, etc. is concerned; when you are dealing with thousands and lakhs of customers, there are sometimes problems also. But, we are trying our best to modernise the transmission system, so that these complaints are not there.

SHRI B. K. HARIPRASAD: The assurance given by the hon. Minister is a stereotyped assurance. In his reply he has already said that efforts are being made to clear all the wait-listed telephones if the funds are provided. It is a stereotyped answer we have been hearing for the past so many years. Sir, Bangalore City being the fastest-growing city in South-East Asia along with Vijayawada facilities and infrastructure which are available to the people who are thronging into Bangalore are very meagre as far as telecommunication are concerned. Through Bangalore, known as the first electronics city of the country and again in Karnataka itself we have the second electronics city, Mysore,—it is very unfortunate that the electronics system has totally failed there in Bangalore and in other parts of Karnataka. I would like to have a specific answer from the Hon. Minister as to when these antiquities in telephones i.e. crossbar exchanges and other such exchanges would be replaced with the electronics exchanges in Karnataka.

SHRI SUKH RAM: Sir, I do not think I have committed a mistake by making a statement that we would liquidate the entire waiting list in

Karnataka. I do not have any remedy for removing their doubts. When the Government makes a statement on the floor of the House, the hon. Members should at least attach some credibility to that. When I have made this categorical assurance, and when I have made it clear that additional funds also will be provided, though according to our National Telecom Policy the entire waiting list number of 2.5 lakhs has to be liquidated by the end of 1997, I also want that there are two or three States which should be the first in the country where there should not be any waiting list and the telephones should be made available on demand. I do not think the hon. Member has done justice to the DOT by saying that I am making a sweeping generalisation that the telephones are not functioning in Bangalore and other places. There may be mistakes and certain problems somewhere. We are there to attend to those problems. Bangalore, I know, is one of the fastest-growing cities and Karnataka is one of the States which is the highest percentage of lines connected with electronic exchanges. I may further inform the hon. Members of the House that I passed an order that any subscriber who has got an STD facility will be given connection from the electronic exchange. Even if the electronic exchange is not available, that has to be provided by the Government. It is obligatory now. Previously the subscribers used to make an application for that, but now I have made it obligatory for the Department to ensure that connections are given from the electronic exchange so that this over-billing problem is reduced to the minimum.

SHRI G. Y. KRISHNAN: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the answer given by the hon. Minister to the question put by my friend is not clear. My friend has asked, "What about the

cross-bar arrangement, cross-bar system and also the demands for exchanges which are pending?" It has to be clearly answered.

SHRI SUKH RAM: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I had that in mind. But at the moment, I do not have this information. However, I may assure the hon. Member that it will be my attempt, my effort, to replace non-electronic exchanges electronic exchanges within two years' time. As far as Karnataka is concerned, replacements will be done in a matter of year or so. But the replacement involves about Rs. 400 to Rs. 500 crores. In fact, I want to do it within a year's time but the question is where the money is for replacement. Now Karnataka is receiving our attention in this respect also. We want to replace cross-bar exchanges, non-electronic exchanges, with electronic exchanges within a couple of years in the entire country.

SHRI K. R. JAYADEVAPPA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, Karnataka has been totally neglected; especially the rural part is worse. May I know from the hon. Minister whether he would take any action to provide telephone connections in the rural areas?

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Mr. Chairman, Sir the hon. Minister is answering the question very tactfully. He said that all the cities would be taken care of. The Government policy is to provide telephone connections in the rural areas also. Not only that, the Department of Telecommunication and other Departments in the States....

MR. CHAIRMAN: If the Minister wishes, let him answer.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: I want to make only one point Sir. I want to know whether they are including....

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have not called you actually.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Honourable Chairman, Sir, this is about the rural areas; which concern the people in those areas.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is it about Karnataka?

SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES: Is it about Pondicherry?

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: I would like to know from the hon. Minister apart from districts and towns, how many persons are there in the waitlist from rural areas in Karnataka. The hon. Minister has tactfully answered that districts and cities will be covered. Regarding rural areas, there is no reply from the hon. Minister. I would like to know whether his assurance covers rural areas also.

SHRI SUKH RAM: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the main question pertains to the waiting list for telephones in major cities of Karnataka, not in rural areas. As per our national telecom policy, our programme is to provide telecom facility in all the villages in the country, numbering, 576,490, by the end of 1977. We have revised this target. According to the Eighth Five Year Plan, we were committed to provide facilities only in the panchayat villages. Now, I think, Karnataka has the highest number of villages which have already been provided with that facility. According to our expansion programme, we are giving priority to the rural areas. The main question pertains to the waiting list for telephones in major cities. So, I have replied to that. I have not said that we are not doing anything for rural India. Rather we are expanding our activities. But finance is our big problem. Now, we have found out a method to raise funds for purchasing equipment on leasing basis. The matter is under examination. Our attempt will be that we expanded our activity not only in Karnataka but in other States also in such a way that the waiting list is liquidated as soon as possible.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Q. No. 134, Shrimati Kamla Sinha, Dr. Bapu Kal-

date, absent. Q. No. 135, Shri Inder Kumar Gujral, not present.

- * 134. [The questioners (Shrimati Kamla Sinha and Dr. Bapu Kal date, were absent. For answer vide Col51.....infra.]
- * 135. [The question (Shri Inder Kumar Gujral) was absent. For answer vide Col.52.....infra.]

Income Tax payers in the country

*136. SHRI P. UPENDRA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that tax payers are just 1 per cent of total population in India, while they are around 10 per cent in countries like Nigeria and South Asian countries;

(b) what are the reasons for not bringing wider segments of the population of India into the tax net;

(c) whether it is a fact that tax revenue is likely to be 100 per cent more if evasion of taxes are checked;

(d) whether such observations are made by experts; and

(e) if so, what is the quantum of evaded revenue as observed by experts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M. V. CHANDRASHEKHAR MURTHY): (a) to (e) A Statement is being laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) The number of individual income-tax taxpayers in India is less than 1 per cent of the total population. It is indicated that in other developing countries including most South Asian countries, the percentage of income-tax paying population is higher than India.

(b) Agricultural income is exempt from tax under the provisions of the Income-tax Act. Therefore, persons deriving income only from agriculture fall outside the purview of the Income-tax administration.

In order to expand the tax base, a simple presumptive scheme of taxation for the taxpayers in the unorganised sector is under implementation for the past two years. A new estimated income scheme has been introduced for contractors and truck owners, in the Finance Act of 1994. Procedures have been simplified for promoting voluntary compliance. A single sheet return of income has been introduced for taxpayers having tax-able income not exceeding Rs. 1,20,000 from sources other than business or profession.

Survey of business premises are undertaken on a continuous basis so that new taxpayer are brought on the registers of the Income-tax Department.

(c) to (e) If evasion of taxes are checked the tax revenues will increase substantially. On account of the measures being taken by the Government, there has been appreciable growth in the revenue from income-tax in the last four years.

SHRI P. UPENDRA: Sir, the Minister has admitted that the number of individual income-tax payers in India is less than one per cent of the total population. It is not a question of the mere number but the categories of people covered by income-tax. Whereas most of the salaried class are coming under the purview of income-tax, those in the unorganised sector, those who are self-employed, etc. are evading taxes. My first supplementary is, what is the proportion of the salaried class to the others in this one per cent of